

**ENHANCING INTRINSIC MOTIVATION IN EFL CLASSROOM:  
IMPLEMENTING SDT CONCEPTS ON HOMEWORK  
MA thesis**

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## ABSTRACT

In academic literature, homework is defined and examined in terms of both its advantages and disadvantages; however, in most cases the beneficial link between students' academic achievement and homework is emphasized (Chang et al. 2014: 1049). That said, in school environment, homework contributes to the knowledge of those students who participate in doing it. Thus, the instructions and types of activities are essential when trying to create interest in doing homework, a crucial part of intrinsic motivation. Support to cater everyone's needs in learning may come from self-determination theory, which emphasizes paying attention to the three basic needs: competence, autonomy, and relatedness which are essential for growth and development.

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze whether utilizing two collections of project and activity ideas, created keeping in mind the three basic needs, would help in raising 6<sup>th</sup> grade EFL students' intrinsic motivation in doing homework. Despite the sample and scope of the research being relatively small, the thesis wishes to inspire and support further research in the area. Along with wanting to know if the two collections of homework ideas can help the students become more internally motivated in doing homework for EFL lessons, an additional goal is to point out the benefits and drawbacks of the compiled collections of activity ideas.

The thesis consists of three main chapters: the first chapter is literature review, the second chapter is empirical part describing methodology and the project, and the third chapter is results. Literature review introduces self-determination theory (SDT), describes two types of motivation: *intrinsic* and *extrinsic*, justifies the reasons why this thesis focuses on internal motivation, and introduces the research conducted by Akioka and Gilmore (2013), which inspired the present thesis. The second chapter presents the methodology of the homework project, explains the goals and objectives and describes the compilation principles of the two collections of homework ideas as well as those of the questionnaires used for getting feedback from the students. The third chapter presents the discussion of the outcomes of the project based on the questionnaires, open-ended feedback questionnaires and reflections from teachers' journals. It also offers a thorough examination of the data acquired from the questionnaires and positions the findings in relation to earlier research. The conclusion summarizes the findings of the thesis.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

SDT – Self-determination theory

EFL – English as a Foreign Language

CEFR – Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

ADHD – Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder

## INTRODUCTION

In the Estonian health protection requirements for school timetables and organization of study adopted in 2001, it is stated that homework is not given to first grade students, the day after the holidays and the first day of the term (Riigi Teataja 2001). The type of homework is not regulated. On that note, in 2018 there was a debate on the topic of homework where leaders and teachers from different schools and different education levels expressed their thoughts on the topic. The leading notion was that homework has its benefits and drawbacks that need more investigation (see E.g., Vapper 2018; Eesmaa 2018; Ojasalu 2018). Furthermore, the participants were of opinion that homework should be more meaningful and thought-out. Kaasik (2018) drew attention to the fact that omitting homework from the curriculum may lead to longer school days, revision of curricula, individualization of teaching, which to his mind is problematic due to the number of students per class, and inclusive education. Researchers at the University of Tartu emphasize the need to reconsider giving traditional types of homework that in their opinion should be done at school and that homework should not be there to make up for lost time in lessons that in turn would reduce the level of motivation to tackle homework (see E.g., Poom-Valickis 2015; Tagamets 2018; Reps 2018). At the same time it is pointed out that homework enables students with different speed and abilities to catch up with others and participate in activities that develop various skills. In other words, small projects that enable to revise topics covered in lessons and help to provide ways to personalize learning and engage all students are seen more profitable in the

eyes of parents, student council, researchers and lecturers of the Institute of Educational Science of the University of Tartu. Tagamets (2018) points out that the issue of homework has not received enough attention in the currently valid national curriculum for elementary school, thus it is a topic that we should be more aware of, a thought that also echoed after the debates in 2018.

In this point we can say there have been recent discussions in Estonia on the topic of homework, whether to assign homework at all, and if then what are the benefits and reasons behind it. However, there is a division of opinions and views. On one end, homework is seen as a link between knowledge gained at school and revision done at home. Furthermore, the link between students' academic achievement and their positive attitude towards homework has been brought out (Chang et al. 2014: 1049). On the other end, homework is seen as something to be reduced since excessive assignment of homework decreases its efficacy and leads to inefficient results (Parker 2014). Taking into account the two opposing views, homework affects only those who participate in doing it, therefore it is crucial to showcase for the students the possibilities and opportunities doing homework might bring into the process of obtaining knowledge. Yet the questions of how to engage students to participate in doing homework and what kind of homework is seen as motivating and profitable are challenging. Thus Blooms' (1968) search for the universal instruction that is based on understanding our students' needs and most efficient ways of learning in order to obtain knowledge is still very relevant. A probable solution may come from the self-determination theory (SDT) that contributes to the discussion of motivation in connection to different surroundings such as school and when taking into account various subjects. Bloom (1968: 3) emphasizes the need to take aptitude for learning into consideration. In other words, he points out that some of us

may have inherited a predisposition to sounds that give us an advantage when learning music and languages. When it comes to learning other subjects, generating interest, special type of instructions and training may help to start mastering knowledge. Therefore, the question is how to prepare activities that would interest a vast majority of the students in a classroom setting, since academic success depends on interest, a powerful motivating factor that drives learning, guides choices, and enables students to draw attention to a topic and later return to it (Harackiewicz et al. 2016: 2). Interest, alongside with pleasure received from engagement in an activity, and enjoyment are the key aspects to intrinsic motivation (Deci et al. 2017: 21).

It is clear that in school context homework will remain to be part of study process at least to some extent. However, in order for it to be efficient, students' motivational factors such as growth and self-actualization (Nickerson 2021) for doing it need to be examined, since they are out of the sphere of control of the teacher. Students may have various types of motivations to perform work at home assigned by their teachers; nevertheless, completing assignments does not always lead to the same quality outcomes. For that reason it is important to distinguish between *intrinsic* and *extrinsic motivation* when talking about the willingness to undertake a home assignment and understand which of them drives the students the most. In terms of *extrinsic motivation* the students embark on an activity for specific goals, in order to receive an award or avoid any sort of punishment. Furthermore, the perceived autonomy in those activities is low, since the instrumental reasons, such as praise and recognition are more important. That said, students who lack intrinsic motivation can still profit from *extrinsic motivation* when it is consistent with their self beliefs in terms of behavioral, affective, and cognitive outcomes (Guay 2021: 76). Nevertheless, according to Deci and Ryan (2000: 70), when the surrounding environment is encouraging, initiative promoting, and caring, humans

are prone to being proactive, thus the conditions created by schools and teachers impact greatly students' self-motivation and their development. As reported by Akioka and Gilmore (2013: 35), the more motivation tends towards the intrinsic end of the theory, the better effect it has on student outcomes. Therefore, for the purpose of this thesis the attention will be on *intrinsic motivation* that according to Deci and Ryan (2000: 70) is a natural desire to seek out new information, overcome obstacles, challenge oneself, and participate in educational pursuits and it is typically connected to the enjoyment of learning (Kovas 2015: 52).

Intrinsic motivation is something people have naturally when they are born in order to explore the surrounding world, learn new skills, engage in playful activities, and communicate. In this point what is worth bringing out is that the type of motivation exists even without the outer motives (Harter 1978). For that exact reason, without maintaining and supporting it, the level may decrease; resulting in lack of motivation to engage in activities that are not rewarded, thus the level of interest may subside. As Guay (2021: 78, 79) points out, when students possess intrinsic goals, they tend to be more persistent in their studies, as well as have better results in their tests, and analytical skills. Furthermore, already Carroll (1963: 8) draws attention to different types of learning: first of them merely spending time on learning and the second-being actively engaged. Regarding the latter, as result, the level of perseverance is higher and the level of frustration is lower, thus attaining mastery is more likely. In order to help learners to develop as social agents, independent language users, and responsible participants in the society, language education should establish motivating learning contexts for the students to take charge of their own learning (CEFR). A viewpoint also supported by Schaaf, Zayas, and Jukes, the authors of *Learner Choice, Learner Voice* (2022), a book that provides innovative, learner agency promoting and student centered

viewpoints and activity suggestions, who emphasize the need to allow the students to take charge of their learning and knowledge. Furthermore, according to Schaaf et al. (2022: 268), providing a stimulating and interactive learning environment that motivates students to participate in class is considerably more important than being adept at imparting knowledge, lecturing, and doing paperwork. Therefore, intrinsic motivation is something we need to pay attention to in order for the students to have positive outcomes in education and for them to be supported in the most effective way. Due to the latter, research projects examining whether changing how a school's homework program is delivered to better meet students' needs for autonomy, relatedness, and competence would result in more positive student attitudes toward homework, and whether there is a possibility to enhance motivation, are welcoming ones (Akioka and Gilmore 2013).

According to SDT (Deci and Ryan 2017) all humans have three basic psychological needs that underlie growth and development, these are competence, autonomy, and relatedness. Competence is the need for feedback concerning activities and performance, meaning positive feedback during the process can enhance intrinsic motivation (Deci 2000: 70), in other words have more positive outcomes (Guay 2021: 86), therefore activities that have several steps or parts enable the teacher to provide more constructive feedback before the end of the project. With this in mind, growth mindsets in students are encouraged by utilizing a variety of evaluation strategies to produce constructive feedback and feedforward cycles. It is crucial that teachers do not evaluate or disparage the work of their pupils in their feedback, but rather concentrate on the process of assisting students in growing and developing for the future (feedforward). What is more, even if positive feedback is beneficial, it could merely serve to confirm what the learner already knows; hence instead of just giving

feedback, teachers should assist their students in realizing what is possible to achieve (Shaaf et al. 2022: 260-261). Furthermore, competence alone cannot enhance the level of intrinsic motivation; it needs to be supported by autonomy, the sense of self-determined actions. According to Fischer (n.d.) choice gives students the sense of empowerment and encourages them to be invested in their education (Shaaf et al. 2022: 7), thus through providing choices teachers can enable students to take more control over their actions (autonomy) and involve in activities for their own sake (Grabe 2012: 175-194). In addition to competence and autonomy, the third important factor is the need for relatedness, closely connected to the level of intrinsic motivation, since teacher-student and student-student interactions may lead to more secure environment in which the students are more prone to explore, challenge themselves and evolve overhaul. Going back to Bloom (1968), collaboration between students rather than constant rivalry is seen as a means of learning from one another and supporting those who do not possess predisposition in a specific subject. Thus, projects that enable various types of work, individual, pair work, and cooperative learning are encouraged (CEFR).

Taking into account the three basic needs for growth and development (competence, relatedness, and autonomy) and also different types of motives behind students' actions that can be distinguished as autonomous or controlled reasons is important, since they are connected to the self and volition to engage in an activity (Guay 2021: 78). In terms of self-determination, intrinsic motivation is seen as autonomous. This means that things are done for enjoyment, interest, and inherent satisfaction for the action itself and when intrinsic motivation has been taken into account and the three basic needs mentioned above have been supported, people are more persistent in their behaviors and have a better outlook on their

lives (LaGuardia 2017). Carroll (1963: 731) draws our attention to perseverance, the time the student is ready to spend on learning, and points out that people may have different levels of it, therefore more effective method would be to reconsider the instructions and types of materials given to students that in turn would support their level of interest and mastery in a subject.

Tobias Ley (2019), an educational innovation professor who has spent nine years in Estonia exploring how to study smarter, has reported that the best learning happens during the work process, hence getting students involved and interested is crucial in raising their level of motivation. Furthermore, according to Ley (2019), teachers in Estonia are generally curious and interested in experimenting with new ideas, therefore, the experiences and opportunities a teacher presents to students enable them to achieve academic success, and as Schaaf et al. (2022: 8) point out, students develop lifelong skills like critical thinking, cooperation, creativity, and build a passion for learning while also acquiring and boosting critical literacy. According to the Future of Jobs Report (2020: 36) the above mentioned skills are personal development and self-management skills which are in constant demand when taking job-relevant skills into consideration. During the lessons, it is easier for the teacher to give assignments and control interaction, but when it comes to homework, it needs to be engaging for the students to work on it. As mentioned above, there are two sides to doing homework, on one side, it can be a tedious and time-consuming task that some students are reluctant to undertake; on the other, it can be an enlightening and challenging way to engage students in preparing them for the lessons, hence, it is beneficial to direct students to educational activities that also amuse them. This thesis includes the creation and practical testing of motivation enhancing homework project ideas. In order to ascertain the effect the instruction

and type of homework may have on students' inner motivation, the aim of this thesis is to answer the following research questions:

- 1) How intrinsically motivated are the EFL students to embark on homework tasks after the end of the homework project?
- 2) What are the perceived benefits/drawbacks of the homework project devised for this research based on the teachers' diaries and post-project questionnaires?

To answer these questions, a universally applicable collection of materials was created for Estonian 6<sup>th</sup> grade EFL learners that was utilized by two teachers in two schools and commented on by Teacher 1(me) and Teacher 2. The thesis consists of 3 main parts: a literature review, an empirical part describing the methodology and the EFL homework project, and results.

# **1. SELF-DETERMINATION, HOMEWORK AND LEARNING: CONCEPTS AND TERMS**

This chapter gives an overview of the important concepts and terms that are relevant for the homework project described and tested in the present thesis. It begins by giving an overview of the self-determination theory that is the foundation for the thesis. It carries on by introducing two types of motivation and explains the reasons behind concentrating on intrinsic motivation rather than extrinsic motivation. The chapter also concentrates on homework and learning and introduces the previous study by Akioka and Gilmore (2013) that inspired the current one.

## **1.1. Self-determination theory and motivation**

Self-determination theory (SDT) created by Richard Ryan and Edward Deci, is a comprehensive explanation of human motivation and personality that looks at how people interact with and depend on their social environments. SDT defines intrinsic and many types of extrinsic motivation and describes how these motivations affect personality, social and cognitive development, and situational responses in several domains (Legault 2017: 1). Although the theory consists of 6 mini-theories that attempt to describe human behavior in various domains such as work, relationships, education, religion, health, sports (Deci et al. 2000: 68), in the central point in all of them are the three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Maarten Vansteenkiste (n.d.), a developmental psychologist, points out the necessity to the identification of the needs saying that when the

needs are met, humans are prone to being pro-active, growth-oriented, and interested, but when not met, humans tend to be passive, demotivated, and disengaged, thus the needs are important in terms of psychological wellbeing and autonomous motivation.

Being involved and taking initiative in one's actions are key components of autonomy. It is boosted by experiences that are interesting and valuable and not affected by external factors (Ryan et al. 2020: 3). Competence is connected to mastering new skills in an environment that is supportive where constructive feedback and challenges are provided. Relatedness is expressed through mutual respect and care (Ryan et al. 2020: 3). According to Ryan *et al.* (2020: 3) failing to meet a need (competence, relatedness, autonomy) may have a damaging effect on motivation, since supporting needs leads to higher levels of intrinsic motivation and achievement, while control over students hinders their willingness to cooperate, thus lowering the level of motivation (Ryan et al. 2020: 2). Furthermore, Ryan et al (2020: 2) point out the necessity to support the needs in terms of students' wellness, and emphasize creating a supportive and safe environment in which all students, regardless of their academic achievement, feel included (Ryan et al. 2020: 18).

Motivation, according to Ryan (2000: 69) is not an unambiguous construct, since people are driven by various factors in life and that is also the reason why it should be in the central point of education in addition to other parts of lives. People can be motivated because they possess interest towards an activity or topic, or they can be forced to act by external factors such as punishment and rewards (Deci et al. 2020: 4). In terms of education, intrinsic motivation fosters exploration, expansion of skills, supports passion and learning due to interest, an experience that an object is worth further investigation and returning to (Harackiewicz et al. 2016). Learning should prepare the students for their lives, thus

collaboration, communication, thinking outside of the box, ability to solve problems are seen as essential parts of the learning process (Shaaf et al. 2022: 268). Extrinsic rewards may weaken intrinsic motivation (Deci 2000: 70) since they lower the level of autonomy (Ryan et al. 2000: 70) as opposed to freedom of choice, relatedness, taking initiative which support the level of intrinsic motivation and lead to higher level of autonomy (Ryan et al. 2000: 70). Due to the latter, intrinsic motivation and supporting students' autonomy, relatedness, and competence are in the focal point of the given thesis.

## **1.2. Homework and learning**

Homework, a means of consolidating knowledge obtained at school in which students are expected to be self-disciplined, has been around since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century (Gordon 1980: 27). Regardless of its well-intentioned aim, homework is often seen as a burden (Katz et al. 2012: 405) that may cause stress to the students and their families, since at the beginning given reading, writing, mathematics assignments were easy to execute, as they consisted of materials that needed to be memorized or practiced, nowadays the students are given complicated assignments throughout the school curricula (Vatterott 2013: 9) which in turn can lead to undone homework assignments and procrastination, postponing an assignment until it causes stress (Katz et al. 2014: 111). Latter emphasizes the need to support students' level of intrinsic motivation, which is seen as a means of strength to combat unfavorable outcomes (Katz et al. 2014: 112).

Education researchers started to approach homework in a more serious and methodological way during 1960s. Carroll (1963: 723-733) emphasizes the necessity to have

enough time for learning, linking it to mastery in a subject. Hence, Carroll is of opinion that enough time enables students to obtain knowledge in a given subject, yet again only time spent purposefully and in a meaningful way can take away the stress and frustration that quite often goes hand in hand with doing homework. Benjamin Bloom in his 1968 article discussed the relationship between homework and academic achievement, bringing out the issues of time each student needs for learning, their specific needs, and the instructional method provided at school and at home, also pointing out the extensive research that has been done in order to seek for the universal instructional method that suits each student. The latter is especially important, since research shows that failing to complete homework assignments may have a negative impact on academic achievement (Cooper et al. 1998: 70-83). Cooper et al. (1998) revealed in their study “the average high school student in a class doing homework would outperform 75% of the students in a no-homework class. In junior high school, the average homework effect was half this magnitude” although, the findings may not affect the mindset of students and generate willingness to pursue education, they showcase how students’ academic achievement can be supported in case of more advanced curriculum (Eaton & Sheppard 2014: 2). According to universal consensus, homework gives students the chance to concentrate on, practice, and put in use particular skill sets that have been introduced, demonstrated, and discussed in class. Furthermore, compared to a teaching approach that only relies on in-class instruction and activities, a teaching strategy that includes homework, well-designed lessons, and formative activities should help students gain a more thorough and in-depth understanding of a concept, principle, event, or topic (Boyle 2019: 90). On that note, teachers can make choices regarding instructions, pace, success of the activities, and the applicability of tasks having an insight into students’ progress based on

their completed homework assignments. For that reason, homework is not only valuable for the students, but the teachers as well. What is more, Bryan *et al.* (2001: 167-180) claim that cooperation and appreciation from students is necessary for learning, hence students need to find homework to be of use and importance for it be beneficial. Thus research on motivation plays an important role attempting to create an environment which takes the three psychological needs (autonomy, relatedness, competence) into consideration and provides opportunities to work willingly when completing homework assignments. CEFR, a standard framework used throughout Europe to create textbooks, exam materials, foreign language curricula and their guides, points out the significance of encouraging students to focus less on learning the language and more on using it (CEFR 2020: 29), being social agents, therefore the approach and the activities matter in raising the level of motivation in order to access maximum benefit from regularly assigned and completed homework in terms of academic achievement.

Homework projects are an essential part of the learning process for students, since taking cognitive factors, such as aptitude and ability into consideration there is a certain amount of time that every learner needs to master an assignment (Carroll 1984: 26), therefore having additional time at home enables the student to better understand the gaps in learning and benefit from cooperative learning. The primary responsibility of the teacher is to encourage the students to participate in learning activities that serve their purpose and ensure or are likely to result in the wanted outcomes (Schuell 1986: 429), in other words as Schaaf *et al.* (2020: 3) point out activities are done “for their own sake”. Furthermore, student’s own initiative and active participation in the classroom has a great impact on their performance; hence the activities the teacher chooses and presents to the students in lessons and as

homework assignments is essential. According to Marco-Fondevila (2022: 428), increasing student participation is the fundamental condition for every educational program or practice to be effective, since it noticeably enhances students' ability to recall knowledge and further their academic outcomes (Prince 2004: 3). Furthermore, having different types of activities and implementing various teaching methods, aids to achieve the learning objectives in the given subject (Bonner 1999: 11-12) and acquire skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, independent and cooperative learning, and the ability to analyze materials and activities. In terms of learning words, successful vocabulary-building strategies, according to Sinatra et al. (2012: 333-334), include multiple exposures to words, the use of props to explain words, as well as the use of words to recount stories and take part in dialogues. Konza (2010: 6) underlines the necessity for pupils to comprehend the meaning and context of the phrases in order to begin utilizing them confidently and actively. Thus, acquired knowledge affects greatly self-esteem and willingness to participate in educational pursuits (Ryan 2020: 9). According to Cottell et al. (1994: 286), cooperative learning, in the given thesis practiced in 10 mini-projects, can improve student performance, connections between group members, help raise self-esteem, and have an effect on students' attitudes regarding a given subject. Cooperative learning is seen as a supportive method within a small group for receiving and providing feedback, as well as delegating tasks within an assignment (CEFR 2007: 184).

In Vatterott's (2010) opinion ideal homework assignments can be characterized by five qualities: aim, ownership, competence, efficiency, as well as aesthetic appeal. The students need to understand the purpose of the given assignment, they need to be able to practice the presented topic and apply learnt skills when solving assignments. In order to boost autonomy, the assignments should offer choices. To promote competence, homework

should be relevant for the students and evoke interest. What is more, the students need not to be afraid to ask for help and communicate with the teacher (relatedness) (Minke 2017) and since there is no instructional method that suits each student when it comes to homework, assignments need to be personalized or there should be an opportunity to do so (Bennet et al. 2006).

### **1.3. A model for the present thesis: Akioka and Gilmore (2013)**

Akioka and Gilmore (2013) studied whether incorporating components (autonomy, relatedness, competence) that have been connected to greater student motivation for learning (Ryan & Deci 2000) would be beneficial in raising students' level of motivation. The study took place in a private school in Brisbane, Australia. It used a repeated measures design, which means the same students took part in learning Maths, English, Science, and Studies of Society and Environment before and after conducting the study. The study and control groups were randomly assigned and several sources of data for each participant to investigate a modified homework program were collected. The study included the whole class of Year 7 students. There were two classes allocated at random to the study groups and two to the control groups. In the study and control groups, there were two classes with the same teachers, but only one teacher assessed each class. After the first 10-week term of the school year, students completed the questionnaires concerning motivation, homework attitudes and habits in an online format. The school's website urged parents to complete a questionnaire concerning their child's motivation in an online manner. The study itself took place throughout the entire second term (10 weeks). Classes in the control group followed the

standard school homework policy during this time. Early in the third term, all students were again given online access to questionnaires. Once more, parents were requested to complete the questionnaires as well.

Autonomy, relatedness, and competence were incorporated into the study's design since they have all been consistently associated with increased student motivation for learning (Ryan & Deci 2000). The first author of the given study, worked with the head of curriculum to alter the typical homework schedule at the school for the subjects of English, Math, Science, and Studies of Society and the Environment. During the first week, students in the study group also took part in a teacher-led class intended to connect the abilities they learned via homework with the accomplishment of future goals.

Autonomy was targeted by offering more options in the homework program. Relationships between students and adults as well as between students and their classmates were in the focal point. For students to have access to their teacher's advice and direction with more substantial homework-based assignments, the English teacher organized open consultation periods during particular lunch breaks. Additionally, during these sessions, students were urged to use one another as resources. More regular and personalized feedback on the repetitive, high-volume homework assignments which were previously just assessed for completion, not accuracy, was used to put more of a focus on competence.

Akioka and Gilmore's (2013) study design was used as a source of inspiration in creating the project for the given thesis, thus the methodology section underwent some changes to better accommodate the aims of the current study.

## **2. EFL HOMEWORK PROJECT**

### **2.1. Methodology and materials**

#### **Timeline for the project:**

- June-August 2022: compiling materials for the collections, creating questionnaires;
- August 2022: sending materials to Teacher 2;
- September 2022: face-to face meeting and discussion with Teacher 2;
- October 2022- pre-project questionnaire in 2 schools;
- October-December 2022: project in 2 schools
- December 2022: post-project Questionnaire, open-ended feedback questionnaire in 2 schools;
- December 2022: meeting Teacher 2 for a post-project conversation.

#### **2.1.1. Comparison: the given project and Akioka and Gilmore (2013) study**

The given project was inspired by Akioka and Gilmore (2013) study, however, my project underwent several changes considering the local context. The participants in the present study were in form 6 (initially in form 7), both boys and girls took part in the study (initial study was in a single-sex school), instead of conducting lessons in a private school (initial study), the study took place in public schools, parents were not included in any form, no control groups were involved, the teachers taught and assessed their own groups, feedback and consultation were given in class, hence no separate lessons were conducted for them, the students did not have a choice whether to participate in the projects or not, they did have choice in how to work on and present their projects, the head of curriculum in both schools was aware of the given project, but did not involve in changing anything for it. The Akioka and Gilmore (2013) study concentrated more on giving choices between 'standard' and

‘creative’ type of homework, the given study used mini-project ideas from collections put together especially for the study.

### **2.1.2. The EFL homework project: introduction**

The aim of my project is not to assign homework as a means of punishment (not contribute to the extrinsic motivation), but rather to increase achievement levels by using intrinsic motivation: mapping the gaps in students’ education, as well as teaching i.e. time-management skills (Carroll 1984: 26). The homework project has been carried out in the duration of three months, from October to December 2022, in form 6 in two secondary schools in Estonia. The schools are located in different cities; vary greatly in size, and the number of students per group. Two groups of the same school will be taught by me (Teacher 1), and the third group by another teacher (Teacher 2) in a different school. The homework project created for this thesis consists of two collections: ten activity ideas for mini-projects and fifteen activity suggestions for teaching and practicing vocabulary. Using Schaaf et al. *Learner Choice, Learner Voice* (2022), a book that is packed with a variety of learning activities that should inspire students to take an active role in their own learning (Marco-Fondevila 2022: 428), thus boost their level of autonomy (Ryan et al. 2020: 3), I have compiled a set of materials for the first collection of the project. Schaaf et al. (2022) was chosen since there is an abundance of suggestions for low-tech to digital, self-expressive to collaborative, creative to critical thinking activities that should aid to impact the students in gaining more ownership, agency, and choice in their learning journeys, thus support the three basic needs (autonomy, relatedness, competence). The selection for the collection was made by own initiative keeping in mind firstly the descriptors for level A2 present in CEFR,

secondly the versatility of the activities and an option to combine them, and thirdly an opportunity to foster curiosity in students in order to familiarise themselves with ideas, people, and activities from other cultures, a notion also supported by CEFR (Dolmaci et al. 2021: 16). The first collection was created into a Word document that enabled an opportunity to add comments and notes. Each activity was accompanied by keywords, online sources, and a description of the activity, alternative methods, audience, suggestions, and activity combination ideas. Some of the activities had extra photo materials as examples. It was not mandatory to present them in the same order or to cover all of the activities within the given time frame. The aim of the projects was to provide teachers with activities they could assign to their students in order to get their attention, since as Ryan et al. (2020: 3) point out interesting experiences are the base for autonomy, prepare them for upcoming lessons, allow ways to be creative, learn to work independently (see E.g., Bonner 1999), cooperatively (see E.g., CEFR 2007: 184; Cottell et al. 1994: 286), and think critically through diverse activities, and hence aid to develop their receptive and productive skills. According to Schaaf et al. (2022: 72) the primary goal of education should be to instil in each student the fundamental skills, knowledge, and habits required to flourish in the contemporary world.

Although the book consists of 100 mini-project ideas, I have chosen ten different activities from the book to be tested out within the given time frame with the intention to be used as the basis for student projects before and after lessons. In order to gather activity ideas for the collection, all of the 100 mini-projects were read through. The final choice was based on my own assumptions about 6<sup>th</sup>-graders' interests, wish to have an opportunity to combine the activities with one another, also to have a possibility to adjust activities according to the class setting and the needs of the students, a viewpoint also supported by Bennet *et al.* (2006),

according to the topics and the wishes of the students (work on computers or in a traditional way- on paper). The activities were divided into three groups: 1) digital competence/skills, 2) cooperative learning skills, creativity, critical thinking, 3) public speaking, self-expression, and vocabulary. The mini-project ideas that came from Schaaf et al. (2022) were not altered in terms of conducting them, since they enabled me to incorporate the wished topics, vocabulary, and grammar and get the inspiration I needed for creative activities that would meet the criterion of an ideal homework assignment (see E.g., Vatterott 2010).

The second collection of the project consists of fifteen vocabulary teaching suggestions for the teacher to use and adapt according to the topic dealt with and the level of the students in lessons. The activities were to aid the students to familiarise themselves with the vocabulary needed to prepare and present their mini-projects (see E.g., Sinatra 2012; Konza 2010). The aim was also to have entertaining activities for the lessons. The activities were chosen with the intention to have a creative and movement requiring purpose, also provide gamification elements, that according to Jackson (2016) are speed, points, leader boards, and badges, hence the idea was to conduct team-games, competitions, and to enable the students ways to prepare themselves at home for revision at school. The activities included ideas for revision and explanation of vocabulary, ways to be creative and incorporate movement and realia into learning, as well as provide ways for active student participation, since the emphasis should be more on active usage through activities rather than isolated learning (CEFR 2020: 29). Materials for the second collection were not based on Schaaf et al. (2022), because the idea was to have shorter activities that would prepare the students vocabulary-wise for the upcoming projects that are enlisted in the first collection. The second collection materials were based on activity ideas gathered from various online sources and personally

created materials, tested throughout previous years. There were activity suggestions for learning vocabulary at home as well as engaging students through activities in class.

Furthermore, Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 kept an activity journal in order to reflect on the feedback we got from the students in lessons, also to note down suggestions for improvement, and to indicate instructions that need to be changed due to the level of students. We also noted down the activities we could not put into use in lessons or that we altered completely. In addition to teachers keeping a journal, the students were asked to have a separate sheet of paper in their folders in order to note down positive and negative thoughts on the conducted activities. They had the following key points to consider: usefulness, time spent, and the level of engagement. They were aware of the open-ended feedback questionnaire part at the end of the given project.

### **2.1.3. Questionnaires**

In order to determine students' thoughts on doing homework as well as find out their attitudes connected to competence, autonomy, and relatedness, a Likert-scale questionnaire consisting of 15 questions was created and used prior to the project. The basis for the questionnaire was SDT and the three basic needs: competence, autonomy, and relatedness, essential for motivation. The questions were targeted at topics such as the importance of homework and completion of it (competence), the necessity of learning English (competence), the type of assignments done in class and at home (autonomy), cooperative learning versus independent learning (relatedness), and freedom of choice (autonomy) as well as the support of the teacher to the students (relatedness). The questions were in English and were translated

orally before the students had the time to answer them. In the following, I will elaborate more on the outcomes of the questionnaire.

#### **2.1.4. Pre-project questionnaire: results**

The questionnaire was created in order to comprehend students' viewpoints better and understand whether there was lack of motivation to do homework in the first place, hence justify the necessity of the project. That said students may have other reasons that may hinder their motivation to tackle homework, such as lack of time, place, materials, sufficient amount of support. Yet, they are the additional EFL learning issues that are not covered within the current research.

The following chart shows the results from the Likert-scale questionnaire completed in October (pre-project time).

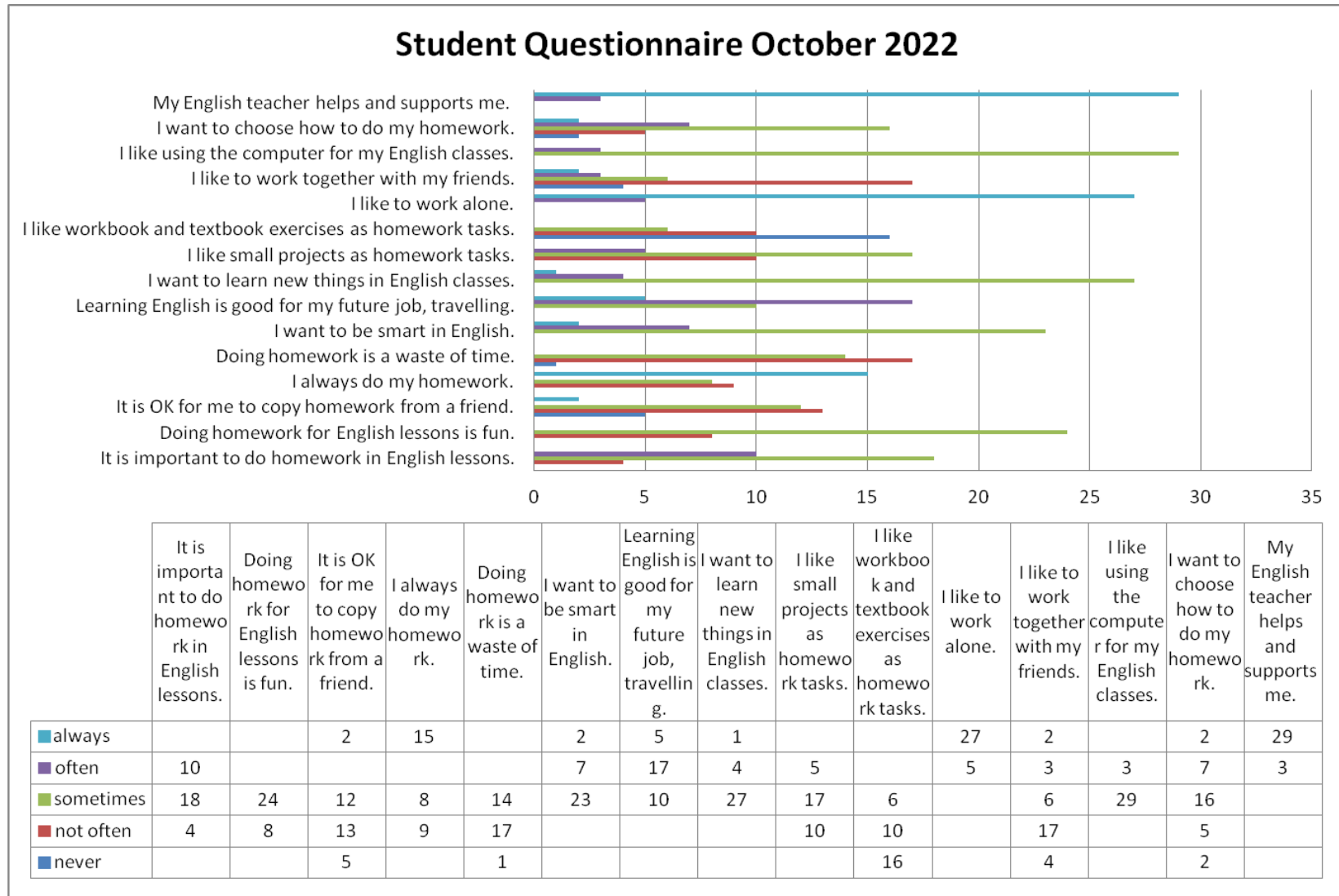


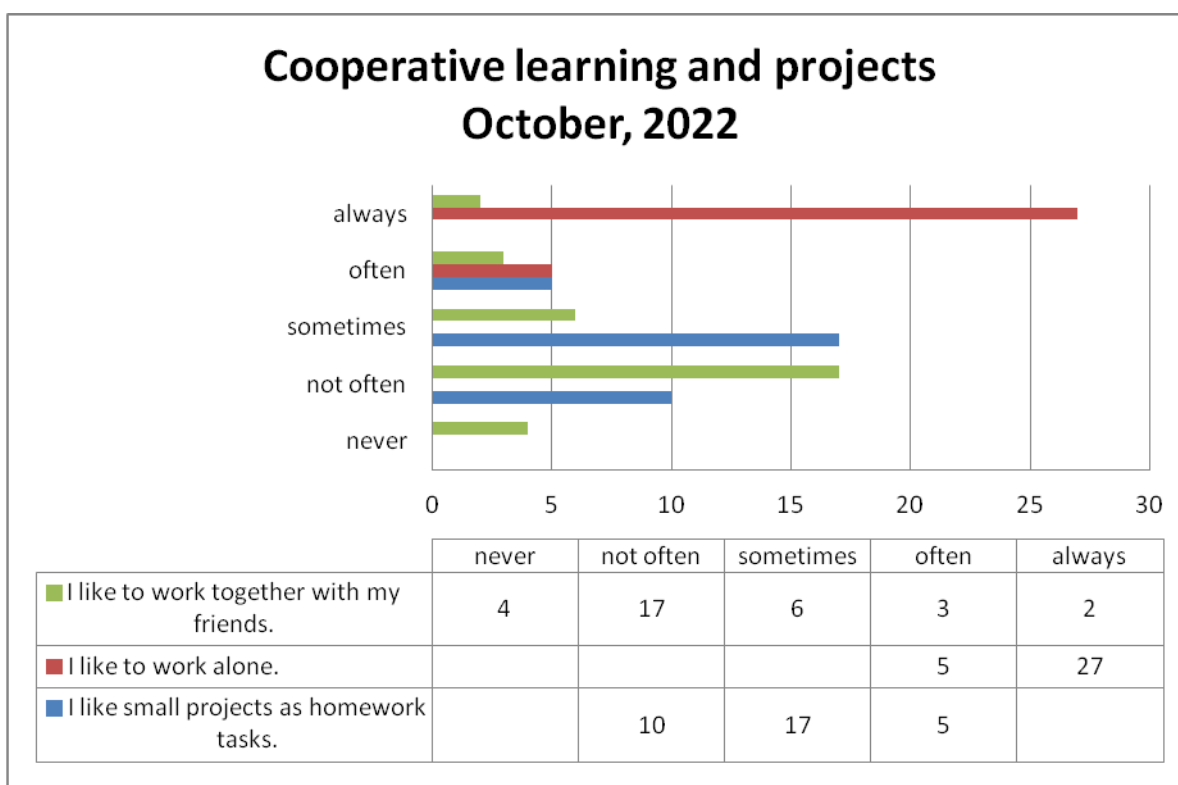
Figure 1. Student pre-project Questionnaire, October 2022

In total 32 students answered the questions in 2 schools. The statements and the results can be seen on Figure 1. When comparing the answers to statements 'it is important to do homework in English lessons' and 'I always do my homework' they show that even though the students do not always understand the importance of homework given to them, they still tackle it. Furthermore, statement 'doing homework for English lessons is fun' shows that 24 students out of 32 consider homework in English lessons to be sometimes fun. In addition to the latter, 14 students out of 32 consider homework to be a waste of time. Therefore, it can be summarized, students complete homework assignments out of sense of duty that results from the extrinsic motives, rather than interest and enjoyment connected to intrinsic motivation. Yet again, 17 students marked 'often' and 5 students 'always' to the statement that learning English is good for their future job. Showcasing the necessity to obtain knowledge in the given subject. What is more, 16 students out of 32 answered 'never' to the statement 'I like workbook and textbook exercises as homework tasks' indicating the need to come up with an alternative to the workbook and textbook tasks. What I concluded from the questionnaire conducted in October 2022 was that students in those 2 schools were driven by outer motives rather than inner ones and that there was a need for a homework project that would better meet the needs of the students, and would therefore have a positive effect on students' intrinsic motivation to perform homework in English lessons.

#### **2.1.5. Pre-project cooperative learning and participation in projects**

Figure 2 provides the statements and results to the Likert-scale pre-project questionnaire with the emphasis on cooperative learning and projects. According to the questionnaire

conducted in October 2022, 27 students out of 32 answered 'always' to the statement 'I like to work alone,' and 'not often' to the statement 'I like to work together with my friends'. Therefore, the students are not in the habit of cooperative learning, but based on the Cottell et al's (1994) research I might assume they benefit greatly from it. 17 students out of 32 responded 'sometimes' to the statement 'I like small projects as homework tasks,' therefore indicating their interest to tackle alternative homework assignments.



*Figure 2. Cooperative Learning and Projects, October 2022*

The same questionnaire as seen in *Figure 1* was used after the project in December 2022 in order to see whether there was any change compared to the initial answers given in October. The students were directed to base their answers solely on English lessons and activities conducted there. In order to do so, a chronological activity plan was projected on the board, the students had to bring as many created projects into the lesson as they could, take

their mini-journals containing comments on the activities and form small groups where they were given an opportunity to reflect on the activities. In addition to the questionnaire, an open-ended feedback questionnaire was created in order to give the students an opportunity to express their thoughts on the perceived usefulness and impact on willingness to engage in the activities. The students were expected to give feedback by highlighting favourite activities and commenting on the least liked ones.

For the purpose of this thesis- to analyse whether students' learning outcomes could be enhanced by creating more appealing and motivating ways to learn independently at home and to find out the benefits of the materials - I created a homework project, that consisted of two collections that could be used simultaneously. The project was introduced in classroom and executed at home.

## **2.2. Collections of materials for the EFL homework project**

The collections of materials were handed to two teachers who could present the suggested activities to their EFL students according to their needs, interests and covered topics. The created materials were not linked to specific topics and could be combined with one another and they could be presented as online or traditional activities. Teachers were allowed to give homework on their own initiative and from other sources as well, but needed to incorporate the activities from the presented collections in order to see whether the students' level of inner motivation could be boosted with the help of the given ideas, as well as understand their usefulness in preparing the students for the upcoming lessons. During the project time, the teachers were able to and were also advised to give some feedback, ask questions and discuss

used materials' advantages and disadvantages with one another and with the students. Since the teachers taught the same students throughout the project time, they could analyze the perceived level of interest the students portrayed before, during and after the projects and reflect on the collected information by making an entry to the personal journals.

### **2.2.1. First collection: The types of the activities**

The collection includes the following ten homework activities' suggestions for EFL teachers, keeping in mind different skills.

#### **Digital competence/skills**

- 1) **An advertisement** is the first activity featured in the collection. Students can create advertisements for books, fictional/nonfictional characters, places, historical events, topics discussed in the class. Since the advertisement can be created on a paper or transferred into an online source and made into a video/audio recording, it gives the students an opportunity to choose their desired method. It is suggested to pair up for the given assignment and to enhance digital competence.
- 2) **Audio/video recording**, the second featured activity, is closely connected to the above mentioned, since it also allows ways to express students' thoughts, point of views, and demonstrate their comprehension and fluency, at the same time having a more relaxed format. Alternatively, students can create poetry, short stories, and lyrics.
- 3) **Avatar**, the third featured activity, also enables students the ways to enhance their digital competence, as well as creative writing and storytelling. The given activity can easily be combined with the previous activities. In the case of the given activity, the

students can create an alternative character for themselves, use their imagination and feel free to express ideas without fearing to reveal personal details.

- 4) A **blog**, the fourth activity in the collection, allows students to demonstrate understanding or express themselves in an authentic published format. Learners can develop communication skills by responding to others' blogs by sharing opinions and asking questions. Blogs are excellent for formative assessment, since students are expected to write multiple entries, thus showcase their writing abilities that expand on a longer period of time.

#### **Collaborative learning skills, creativity, critical thinking**

- 5) A **board game** helps to enhance collaborative learning skills, creativity, critical thinking in a more traditional way – on paper. It also helps to further literacy understand by creating games that demonstrate the application of grammar rules or take players through the story of a novel study.
- 6) A **cereal box** activity is intended to strengthen collaborative learning skills, creativity, and critical thinking. Within a cereal box, learners can creatively come up with a title, a character to advertise the cereal box, a cute story that introduces the cereal, and a list of ingredients. Students can then add fun games, such as word searches, crossword puzzles, or mazes, hence learn and revise vocabulary without noticing it. The cereal boxes can be designed taking events and holidays into account. There can also be competitions for the best looking and fun cereal box. Thus the small activities that are incorporated in the cereal box can and should be divided among group members,

which in turn motivates them to take initiative in order to ensure a good rank in the upcoming competition or an exhibition.

### **Public speaking, self-expression, vocabulary**

- 7) A **costume design**, the seventh activity, can be seamlessly integrated into language classes. Learners can develop costume designs based on texts in the textbook, home reading, their hobbies, music, other cultures, and animals. It is intended to aid creativity and provide ways for integrated learning, as well as provide students with opportunities to share their thoughts in a more stress free atmosphere.
- 8) A **crossword** can be carried out on a paper or online. Crossword puzzles mix the excitement of learning new vocabulary with learning their meaning through strategy. Crossword puzzles based on a book, unit, theme, topic, or subject can provide valuable vocabulary instruction to learners. Crossword puzzles are also ideal for reviewing previously learnt words and their definitions. Since it is advised to allow students an opportunity to create their own various crosswords, the activity supports creativity, digital competence, and literacy.
- 9) In education, **drawings** also have amazing value. Sketches, doodles, drawings, story boards, and pictures allow students to demonstrate their understanding in a creative and artistic format. Learners can draw pictures of vocabulary words or concepts, illustrate what they internally visualize after reading fiction or nonfiction, or create their own artwork inspired by others. Drawings help to boost digital competence, critical thinking. Provide ways for integrated learning, for revising grammar and vocabulary.

10) **Genius hour** is the final activity in the collection. The format revolves around learners conducting independent research on their topic and then developing a product of their choice to share with the class. The created products can be presentations on specific topics, for example hobbies, travelling, and history. Students can create something and present it to the others. The given activity can be combined with art, handicraft subjects where students present projects they finish there.

The projects above enable the students to tackle with various types of activities that try to foster soft skills such as empathy, effective communication, critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving attitude, and above all curiosity that helps to encourage life-long learning. According to Cortez (2017) making something, as in the projects above, instead of merely consuming is an important part of active learning. Furthermore, activities that require students' active participation help to raise their level of motivation and lower failures in subjects (Prince 2004: 6).

Time-management is something that also the teachers need to keep in mind since, although it is not mandatory to get through the entire collection within the given time frame, it is advised to use at least 5 of the activities above. What is more, the two participating teachers agreed to divide the activities between them in a way that allowed all of the activities to be tested out. The last activity is a recurring one; this means that every week on an agreed day, a student presents his/her interest or hobby to others.

### 2.2.2. Second collection: The types of the activities

The second collection of the project consists of fifteen vocabulary activities with the aim of having more student initiative in learning new vocabulary and creating materials for learning. The emphasis is on student participation and their own material creation in order to maximize time spent on learning, revision and retention of knowledge.

- 1) Two-sided **note-cards** are created by students and kept in a zip-lock bag. They can add new cards as new words come up. The cards can be used at home and in class for revising and self-checking. An alternative is to add or draw pictures that would serve the purpose of a definition in order to appeal more to visual learners. The pictures can be described in detail as the vocabulary expands.
- 2) **Poems and short stories** created out of new vocabulary. The emphasis is on the most complicated words that students use to create a poem or a short story. They write a word beginning with every letter in the given word, thus create a short story that can have made-up feel or aim to be realistic. An alternative is to create shape poems, where written lines would resemble shapes given in advance.
- 3) **Crosswords and word searches** created for co-students. Depending on the purpose, they can be solved on paper or on a computer. The emphasis is on student initiative, since by creating a crossword they are exposed to the words they are expected to acquire.
- 4) **Gapped vocabulary assignment** is the fourth activity in which students choose 10 words from the vocabulary list that they struggled with the most. Write them on a paper, but leave out some of the letters. In class, students switch their papers and try to

fill in the missing letters. The given assignment is aimed at revision and correct spelling of the words.

- 5) Drawing **Alias** cards is the fifth activity. Students choose 5 words from the list of vocabulary and draw the corresponding pictures. In class students pair up or work in groups of 3-4, pile up their pictures and play a game of alias or just try to say the correct word. Later a poster can be made out of the words which could be hung up on the wall. Later, when the students have acquired the words, the small picture cards can be used as story cards for creating sentences in order to practice learnt grammar or spontaneous speaking.
- 6) **Keywords into sentences** is an activity in which grammar and vocabulary are being combined. Students are instructed to form sentences at home using the learnt vocabulary. In the next lesson, the teacher hands a group some of the keywords on pieces of paper; the students take turns to present their sentences. Later the keywords can be used as the basis for running dictation. The keywords are placed on the walls of the corridor. The students pair up. One of them needs to run to the corridor, select a keyword, recall the example sentence, run back to his/her partner, and recite the sentence. The other one needs to listen and write the sentence. During the process, all of the four skills are being put in use.
- 7) **Vocabulary vocaroo recordings** is the seventh activity. The students use vocaroo.com and record their vocabulary and add some example sentences. The teacher can make a general comment on the pronunciation in the next lesson or send a personalized comment back to the student. It is an activity that also appeals to the students who are not accustomed to speaking in class or need more time to prepare.

- 8) **Vocabulary explanation** activity is the eighth activity. The students are asked to come up with the explanations for the new vocabulary at home. In the next lesson, the teacher shows a picture or writes the answer on the board after which the students can present their explanations. In case the students are more eloquent, they can have a discussion on the best explanation and vote for their favorite one.
- 9) A **dice game** is the ninth activity. Students roll the dice: 1-define, 2-use it in a sentence, 3-synonym, 4-antonym, 5-draw it, and 6-act it out. They can practice the activity at home and play as a group in class. Depending on the word types, the instructions on the dice need to be altered.
- 10) **Vocabulary basketball** is the tenth activity. The teacher needs a ball, and a hamper, box, etc. Teams are formed. Students are asked for a translation. When they answer correctly, they are granted a chance to throw the ball. When it goes in, the team gets a point. First option is to translate the word into students' native language, but as their knowledge gets better, they can use synonyms, antonyms, English-English definitions instead.
- 11) **Build it** is the eleventh activity. The students draw individual letters on pieces of paper. In class they lay out their letters on the desk. The teacher tells them the word and they "write" it using their letters. The letters can later be used for alphabet stories. The students agree on the first letter, create a sentence beginning with it. The next student needs to form a sentence beginning with the next letter. The given activity promotes improvisation and mimics real-life speaking.
- 12) **Realia stories** is the twelfth activity which focuses on students' creativity, hence they can use everyday things (toothbrushes, spoons, cars) to talk about activities; they can

draw maps of prepositions, individual flags for countries, forests, people, and use them to engage in speaking and writing activities. Using realia helps engage students who are visual learners.

- 13) **Tell me the word** is an activity which can be used after the students have learnt their new words at home. The teacher throws a ball in class to a student asking for a translation. When answering correctly, the student can take the teachers role and carry on asking other classmates. When the activity has ended, the students need to write down as many words as they can remember. An activity that allows time for recalling knowledge.
- 14) **Wheel of Fortune** is the fourteenth activity in which the students are asked to form teams. Each team gets “money” they can use to buy letters in the game of Wheel of Fortune. The first team to answer correctly gets the point. They can use the leftover money for the next round.
- 15) **Jeopardy** is the last activity. The game can be created by the teacher or the students and various topics, skills can be incorporated.

### **2.3. Participants and Procedure**

The experiment took place from October until December 2022 in 3 groups of 6<sup>th</sup> graders in two schools. A total of 32 students participated in the project. They were chosen based on the convenience sampling method (Business Research Methodology) in other words the participating teachers taught their own students. The students were from three different groups, of which two were taught by Teacher 1 and the third group by Teacher 2. Two out of

the three groups had a similar level in English proficiency (1 group from each school), whereas the third group, taught by Teacher 1, consisted of 8 students with various types of learning difficulties (dysgraphia, ADHD, speaking difficulties), hence their level of English was uneven compared to the first two. There were 10, 14, and 8 students per groups. The students were between 12 and 13 years old and studied in 6<sup>th</sup> grade. The specific age group was chosen due to the fact a previous study (Akioka & Gilmore 2013: 34) on a similar topic with students whose mean age was 11,2, conducted in 2013, in a single-sex high school highlighted the need for further research in co-educational schools, with younger and older students. The research for the given thesis included girls as well, as opposed to only boys in the previous one, and the students' age was slightly higher (mean= 12, 5) than in the mentioned Akioka and Gilmore (2013: 36) research. The mean age of the students who participated in the given project can be seen on Figure 3. Taking into account the relatively small amount of participants in the given thesis, no groundbreaking generalizations can be made based on the project, although, small contributions can be made into the research.

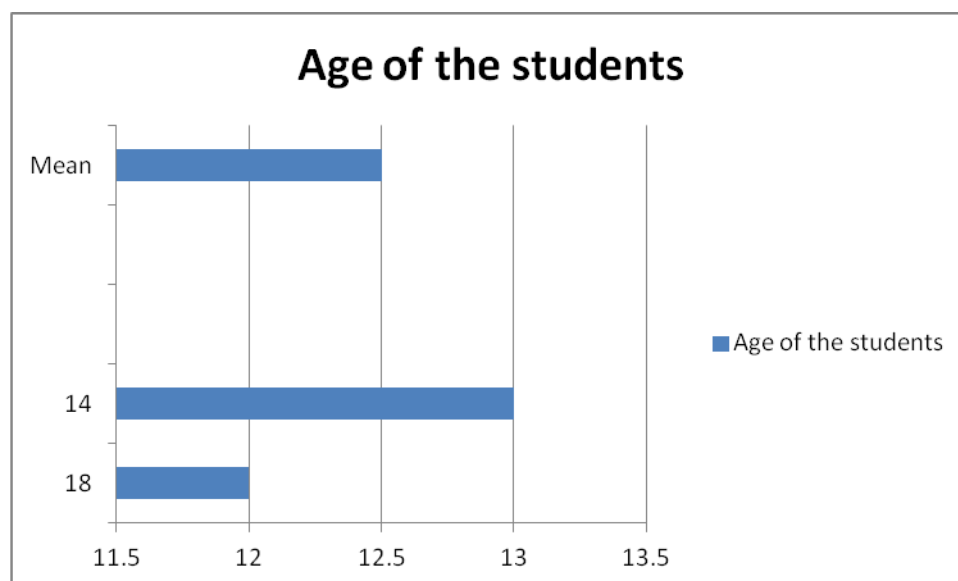


Figure 3. Age of the Students

Taking into account the age of the students, they were given a consent form that needed their parents' signature. Even though, it was also possible not to participate in the research, all of the 32 students listed in class journals did. Including Teacher 2, who taught 1 group (14 students) was found important, in order to have more data to contrast and compare, also to understand whether the instructions to the activities were unambiguous, to gather comments and suggestions for future alterations to the project, and better understand whether the students from different schools found the activities easy to relate to.

Prior to the project, the students used a textbook, a workbook, and a notebook for their learning and doing exercises. From time to time, they were given additional worksheets in order to practice grammar. Homework assignments consisted of grammar drills, vocabulary list memorizing activities (learning words by heart), and occasional reading/translating assignments.

There are three 45-minute lessons per week. The students were informed of the upcoming research, the purpose of it, and of the participation requirements. The students were instructed to keep a journal for comments, suggestions, and note down feelings towards specific activities. The journal was to aid them in completing a post-project questionnaire and an open-ended feedback questionnaire at the end of the project.

The activities from the collections needed not to be presented and conducted in a specific order. What is more, for the purpose of having opinions on all of the activities in the first collection, they were divided between the two teachers. Even numbers were assigned to Teacher 1 and uneven to Teacher 2. Both of the teachers could take additional activities from one another's list. The initial idea was to plan two weeks per homework project, in order to

have time to cover the mandatory curriculum topic in class, practice vocabulary with the help of the second collection, present the upcoming project, form groups and start working on the projects. It was advised to form groups with different students for different projects in order to benefit from working with various people. Due to the fact that some mini-projects took less time than others, it was possible to have weekly projects. One of these was Genius Hour on every Wednesday. Students needed to present a written free-form activity plan on Mondays that gave the teacher an idea of the expected results, aims, materials needed, specific vocabulary/phrases needed to present their materials/information and the workload of the students in case it was a co-project. The students were allowed to be creative, thus present something they were good at and interested in, they could teach co-students crafts, dances, songs, make Power Point presentations, recite poems and organize exhibitions. The main requirement was to use English as much as possible.

### **2.3.1. Feedback and grading**

Each of the projects had key points that the students needed to keep in mind while completing an assignment. The grading rubric consisted of five categories: required elements, creativity, neatness and attractiveness, understanding of content and overall effectiveness and completeness. Under the required elements they had to use learnt and practiced vocabulary, combine target grammar into their sentences and texts. In order to get high points in creativity clever and unique approaches in showing deep understanding were expected. In case the project was created for others to solve, it needed to look inviting and exciting and have a neat design and layout. Due to the fact that the projects needed to be presented by all of the

members of the group in front of the class, the students divided topics between themselves as to show sophisticated understanding of the material and practice public speaking as well. During the project, the goal was to provide ongoing feedback in the form of formative assessment, in which the projects got overhaul points and the participating students got personal comments and recommendations based on their work done in the project. In case of Genius Hour project, the students were allowed to use grammar and vocabulary needed to explain, present, and teach other students, although they were encouraged to incorporate covered materials.

After every project the students had an additional time in the upcoming lesson to reflect on the activity, fill in their journal sections in the personal folders, and have a short discussion on the process with co-students and the teacher. Upon which, the teachers could also note down the students' observations and add their own to their journals filled in on paper or online.

### **2.3.2. Post project activities**

In December 2022, the students were handed the same Likert-scale questionnaire as in October, in order to compare the answers to the ones given the first time and understand whether the conducted project had any impact on students' attitude towards doing homework, working in groups, and learning English. Additionally, they were instructed to fill in an anonymous open-ended feedback questionnaire consisting of 5 questions which contained questions about their least liked and most liked activities, doing projects as homework assignments, their future wishes concerning homework and opinions on homework overhaul.

The questions were in English, which were translated orally in class, after which the students had 20 minutes to answer them, taking into account the finished project and lessons in the given group.

The two participating teachers exchanged opinions and made suggestions to the activities after the end of each project. A process most valued, since the observations and experiences helped to improve the type of instruction the teacher who had not yet conducted the given project could use. In December, the two participating teachers met face-to-face with the aim of discussing the whole project, the usefulness of it, go over the made notes and alter the project materials according to the gained experience.

### **3. RESULTS BASED ON THE POST-PROJECT QUESTIONNAIRES**

Two questionnaires were used in order to have a better overview of the results. The first of them was identical to the questionnaire used pre-project time and the second one consisted of five open-ended feedback questions. Additionally, feedback and reflections on activities from the teachers' journals that they filled in during the project time were used to evaluate the results. The following presents an overview of them.

#### **3.1. Post-project questionnaire**

In December, the students were asked to fill in a post-project Likert-scale questionnaire, stemming from SDT, as in October in order to assess the impact of the given project. The answers given in October were compared to those given in December, with an emphasis on doing homework; work on projects and ways of learning (cooperative or individual). The questionnaire consisted of 15 questions and a five-point Likert-scale. The questions were grouped in four categories: doing homework, competence, relatedness, and autonomy. They were also instructed to answer a set of open-ended questions to gather thoughts on the process and to get some constructive feedback for future projects. The participating teachers were asked to share their observations on the presented and conducted activities either in writing or using a recording network site.

The results from the post-project questionnaire show change in students' opinions after such a short period of time. The statements and results can be seen on Figure 4. All of the 32 students participating in the project were able to fill in the questionnaire.

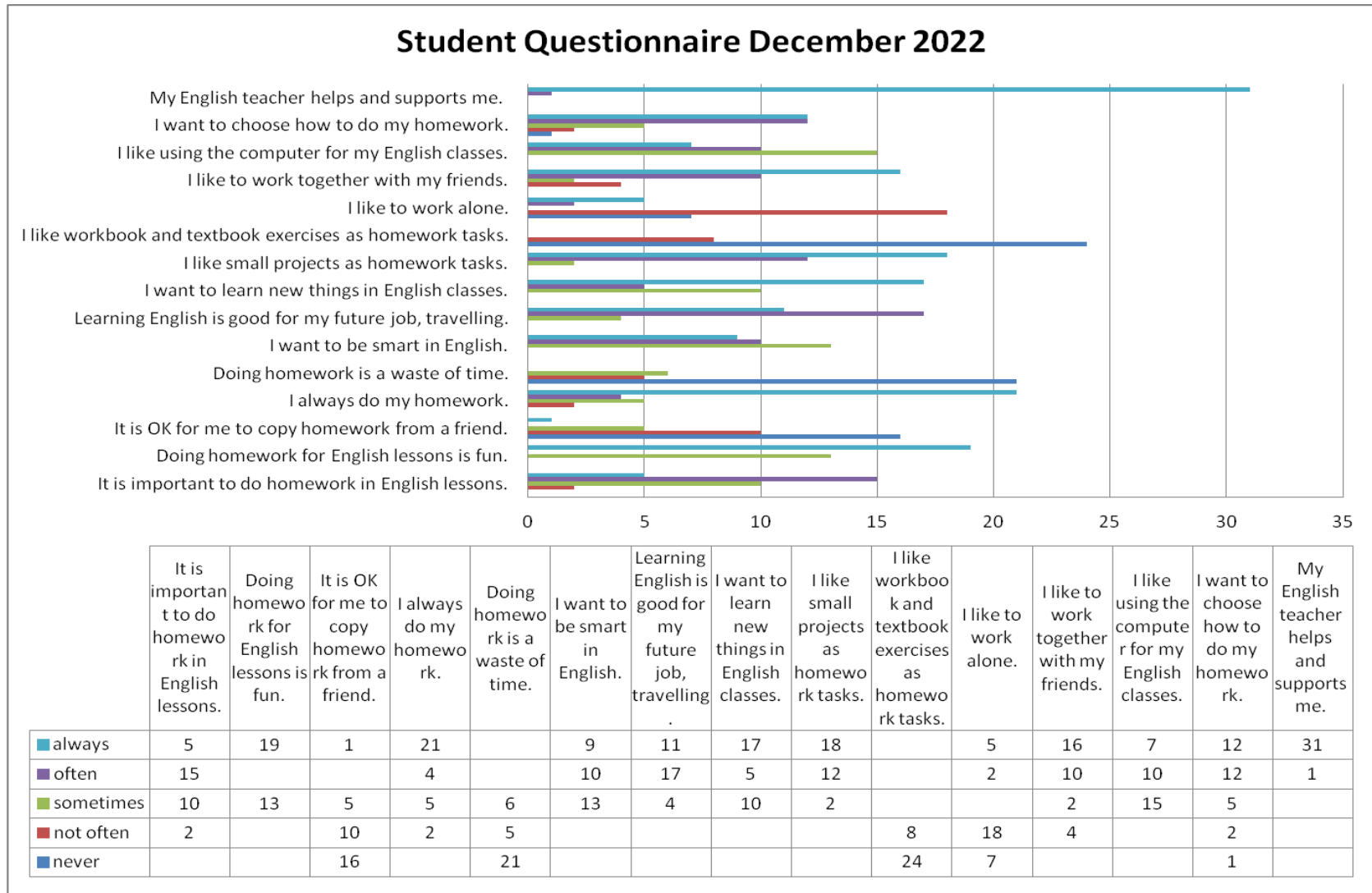


Figure 4. Student Questionnaire, December 2022

When taking competence into account, the statement 'it is important to do homework in English lessons' had a significant shift in answers compared to the ones given pre-project time. More students see the necessity at this point to undertake homework assignments given by their English teacher. What is more, 19 students out of 32 responded always to the statement 'doing homework for an English lesson is fun' compared to the answer sometimes given by 24 students pre-project time. Therefore, students' enthusiasm to participate has had a rise. In October 1 student responded never to the statement 'doing homework is a waste of time.' When expressing thoughts on this statement, the students were asked to take homework given in EFL classroom into account. In the post-project questionnaire 21 students responded never to the same statement, indicating that students found the experience of doing activities and projects from the two collections to be worthwhile. The number of students who do their homework has also risen in the process. Overall, the students became more eager to obtain new knowledge and skills in English lessons and they were more willing to boost their digital competence, since more students agreed to use computers for their studies.

In terms of relatedness and cooperation, the students' interest towards doing small projects has risen, none of them responded 'always' to the statement 'I like small projects as homework tasks' compared to 18 in post-project questionnaire, therefore the students are more prone to working collaboratively and choose rarely to work alone, since 18 responded not often and 7 never to the statement 'I like to work alone.' During the project, more students became closer to the teacher, and felt being supported and helped, thus student-student and teacher-student relationships improved as well.

The results to the statements that concerned authority also varied. After the end of the project, more students (12) as opposed to pre-project time (2), wish to choose how to do their

homework. Therefore, giving students choice helps to improve the level of involvement, planning and analytical thinking. What is more, while the number of students who responded 'never' to the statement 'I like textbook and workbook tasks as homework' has not risen dramatically, the results can still be interpreted as a proof that students are reluctant to do textbook and workbook tasks, since the total number is 24 out of 32, showcasing the necessity to give students more options and types of activities that enable them to show initiative and think creatively.

While the answers given to each statement varied to the ones given in pre-project questionnaire, showing positive effects, the results cannot be generalized to the overhaul population. Nevertheless, the conducted project proved successful and worth carrying on.

### **3.2. Results from the open-ended feedback questionnaires**

While giving answers in the open-ended feedback questionnaires, the students had the opportunity to respond to 5 questions. The students prepared for the process with the help of a journal that they kept during the project time. After each project they had to comment on the efficiency of the activity, willingness to participate and if possible, give feedback.

The first statement in the questionnaire was "My favourite project was..." Due to the fact that the students could respond based on their own preferences, the most popular activity among students was the **genius hour** which was mentioned by 21 students out of 32. The reasons mentioned most often were "I could show my classmates what I like," "I liked to teach others and be a teacher" and "I found out more about my hobbies." Two other popular activities were the **board game** and the **cereal box**. The reasons brought out were "We could share the tasks,"

“we could do different things for one project” and “I liked to work together with my classmates.” Most of the students brought out more than two liked projects, saying it was difficult to choose among the conducted ones. Thus, the students appreciated the variety of mini-projects made available to them and valued the opportunity to showcase their hobbies to co-students.

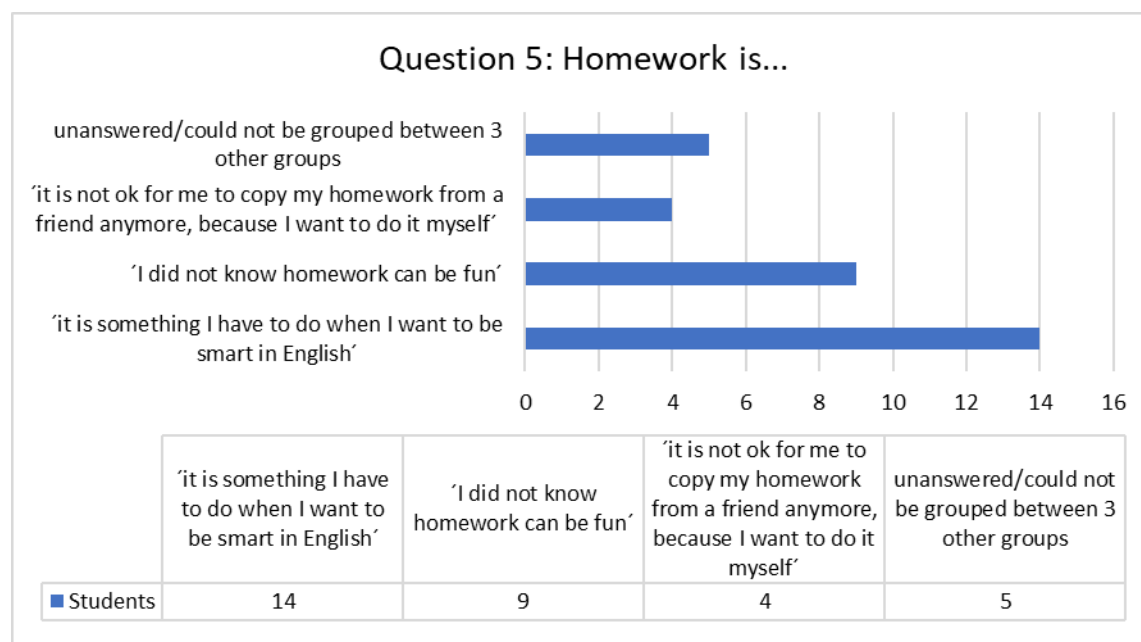
The second statement, “My least favourite project was...,” was the one that students skipped at first. Some of the students, (7), did not finish this statement saying all of the projects had their own purpose and they liked all of them. The students who answered mentioned drawings and crosswords as the least liked ones, emphasizing the level of skills when it comes to drawing and their willingness to show made pictures to classmates. When it came to crosswords, the students mentioned lack of novelty in the given assignment. Nevertheless, they said the activity was still attractive since understanding the instructions was effortless and enjoyment in solving was high. They added that precision was something they needed to pay more attention to, since misspelling words meant the crossword was inaccurate and did not serve its purpose.

For the third statement, the students were asked to share their thoughts towards projects conducted. In order to have a better overview of the activities, the students were asked to bring as many projects to the class as they could. With the help of the visual materials, the notes in their journals, and the discussions in class, the students’ most frequent answers to the statement “The homework projects we did were...” were ‘very interesting’, ‘cool’, ‘fun’, ‘helpful’, and ‘very different to the homework we did before the project. I liked them’. The positive reactions to the activities might be the result of change in their traditional homework assignments (grammar drills, learning vocabulary by heart, reading and translating texts), and the aspect of novelty. At this point, it is merely a speculation, since no additional comments were asked to give to the initial statement. Nevertheless, the answers showcase the necessity to have a variety

of activities in teacher's repertoire to engage students. That said, the responses are an effect of a short-term project, the initial enthusiasm might decrease after time.

The students were also asked to express their thoughts on future homework assignments given to them after the end of the project (question 4). The vast majority of the students, 29 out of 32, expressed their desire to continue with homework projects. Nevertheless, they drew attention to the issue of time, pointing out that in some cases, they lacked of it, especially when someone from the group had fallen ill or was due to unmentioned reasons unable to perform duties.

The last question (question 5) entailed students' interpretations and thoughts on homework. Yet again, since no options for answers were given in advance, only generalizations can be brought out. The students and their answers fell into four tentative categories. The results can be seen on *Figure 5*.



*Figure 5. Open-ended feedback questionnaire, question 5. Homework is...*

In the first one were the students who completed homework assignments before the given homework project and ensured 'it is something I have to do when I want to be smart in English'. These students, 14 out of 32, complete assignments out of sense of responsibility and the project did not affect them so much. In the second category were the students (9) who said 'I did not know homework can be fun'. Therefore proving that when assignments are personalised and purposeful, students are willing to tackle them and learn along the process. The third category comprised of students (4) who pointed out 'it is not ok for me to copy my homework from a friend anymore, because I want to do it myself'. The students were ensured beforehand that all answers were anonymous and that no judgement was to follow their comments and answers. Due to the latter, some of them were brave enough to admit of previously copying homework from a friend. In the last category were students (5) who left the question unanswered or the answers could not be grouped between the three previous ones.

### **3.3. Results based on teachers' journals**

In addition to analyzing results based on 2 Likert-scale questionnaires and open-ended feedback questionnaires, it was most important to gather thoughts and feedback from the two participating teachers. Since I (Teacher 1) compiled the 2 collections for the project, it was important to obtain knowledge whether the instructions and aims were understood in the same way. Luckily, interaction between I and Teacher 2 was more active than initially anticipated, thus no misunderstandings arose. Both of us had a worrying comment about conducting all of the activities in the list, thus it was seen as more manageable to divide the activities between ourselves. Time management is something that needs to be considered in the future. What is

more, according to Teacher 2 the collections were logically built, and even though there were some example pictures to accompany the activities, additional ones in order to get more ideas would be helpful. The activity that needs more thorough instructions is the Blog. The instructions how to create an account were understandable, but additional guidelines for student comments would be needed in order to give clearer explanations to the students on how to comment privately and how to add comments that are visible to everyone.

Both of us noticed an increase in students' interest to tackle homework, and that they needed less time to revise grammar in class, since the students revised the learnt material while compiling assignments for one another and while solving them in lessons. I (Teacher 1) taught the group with learning difficulties and I noticed a rise in concentration, willingness to commit to assignments and work collaboratively. The students were especially eager to participate in Genius Hour projects, since the students were really interested in crafts, art, and creative assignments that enabled them to express themselves. That said the projects that needed grammatical accuracy and proper spelling were more challenging ones and could not be assigned on the same level to everyone within the group. The students with writing disabilities wished to use more computers and tablets, in order to check their spelling and present assignments readable by co-students. Therefore it was important to consider preferences and personalised approaches when assigning projects. Both of the teachers commented on the future necessity of adapting projects according to specific needs and learning disabilities.

At the beginning of the project, both of the teachers were slightly intimidated by the ideas that they are about to give more power to the students, implement a more creative approach, be using more materials in terms of crafts in their lessons, create rubrics for grading the students' progress, and get used to providing formative feedback. After seeing the results from the

questionnaires, both of the teachers are willing to continue with giving project type of homework assignments, but emphasise the importance of having a support group in the form of fellow teachers.

## CONCLUSION

According to research, a student's learning motivation type can predict their academic experience-related emotions and actions, such as their feelings when engaging in academic tasks, their perception of competence, concentration, grades, and their persistence when tackling assignments (Ryan et al. 1989) given in school or as a homework task. Based on SDT, motivation has a higher impact on student outcomes the more it leans toward the intrinsic end (Deci 2000: 70) and therefore supports students' wish to engage in activities, search for new information and stay interested for longer periods of time. What is more, Deci (2000) explains that although intrinsic motivation is inherent to humans, and the form of motivation also exists in the absence of external motives (Harter 1978), there is evidence to claim that in case of unfavourable conditions and unsupportive environment the type of motivation may not flourish. Therefore, supporting the three basic psychological needs (autonomy, relatedness, competence) within SDT is crucial since for example more autonomy supported classrooms lead to better academic outcomes (Guay et al. 2010) and when the needs are met, students are prone to engage better and perform at a higher level, thus possess higher levels of intrinsic motivation.

When students feel in charge of their education, their intrinsic motivation increases (Deci et al. 2008: 15), and they are more likely to persevere through difficult academic tasks and process information fully (Huang 2005: 204). By allowing students to select their own learning objectives, contribute to the course materials, and use the learning practices that work best for them, teachers may enhance student autonomy. Though autonomy plays a crucial part in obtaining knowledge, competence, a feeling of acquired skills, awareness of being able to

accomplish tasks and grow (Ryan et al. 2020: 2), has also an important role within students' level of intrinsic motivation. It is best supported in the autonomous, well-structured environments in which challenges and feedback are provided. Furthermore, when students feel able (competent) to work on the assignments, their level of interest is supported and they are less likely to abandon the assignment (Haimovitz 2010: 748). The third important component, relatedness, is supported by caring, initiative promoting and feedback providing environment (Ryan et al. 2000: 71) that is based on teacher-student and student-student interactions, thus working side by side with a teacher or co-students is encouraged in terms of keeping one another on track, since homework assignments serve their purpose both ways, allowing the students to acquire skills and knowledge necessary in their future lessons and life, but at the same time informs the teacher of the students' progress and the instructions used. The aim of the given thesis was to examine how motivated the Estonian EFL students were before and after the homework project, and thus comprehend whether activities that tried to support the students' three basic needs (autonomy, competence, relatedness) were effective in raising the participating students' level of intrinsic motivation. In addition to the latter, another aim was to analyse the project, point out its benefits and drawbacks.

The first chapter gave an overview of the concepts and terms within the given thesis. It started by introducing SDT and the three basic needs (autonomy, relatedness, competence) within the theory, also bringing out the necessity to support them from an educational point of view, since based on analyzed literature supporting the needs leads to higher levels of intrinsic motivation (Ryan et al. 2020: 3). The chapter also highlights the necessity of the three basic needs in terms of creating a supportive and safe environment regardless of the students' academic achievements (Ryan et al. 2020: 18). The chapter then explained the reasons for

concentrating on intrinsic rather than extrinsic motivation. The chapter also focused on the concept and background information on homework and drew attention to the benefits of various types of learning activities. Lastly, the chapter introduced the previous study conducted in 2013 that was a source of inspiration for the given thesis.

The second chapter began by pointing out the aim of the conducted homework project and introduced the design of the project created for this thesis. It also explained the rationale behind the choice of activities within the collections and gave an overview of acquiring feedback. Two teachers were presented with two collections of materials for mini homework projects and for learning and practicing vocabulary in class and at home. The activities were meant to boost students' collaborative and time management skills, digital competence, critical literacy, public speaking, aid in learning and recalling vocabulary, help to use language in order to further their knowledge in culture and topics of interest, and above all raise their level of intrinsic motivation in order to keep them interested and motivated to acquire knowledge in EFL lessons. The students were presented with activities from the lists and were later asked to note down comments on them into their journals. The participating two teachers from the two schools kept a journal of their observations.

After the end of the project, the students were asked to fill in a Likert-scale questionnaire, consisting of 15 questions which were based on SDT and homework, and an open-ended feedback questionnaire of 5 questions. The feedback from the two teachers and the results gathered from the questionnaires were analyzed in the context of the literature reviewed for this thesis. Due to the fact that the students were asked to fill in a pre-project questionnaire as well, the results were seen to differ quite a lot from the post-project questionnaire. It was found that students seemed to benefit greatly from the mini-projects that differed from their traditional type

of homework. The students were more willing to work cooperatively, that in turn improved relationships within the group and enhanced students' performance, the results are also supported by literature on the subject (Cottell et al. 1994: 286). The students wanted to have more saying in the choice of activities and appreciated being heard by their teacher, thus, it can be concluded that their level of autonomy was supported by the project. A larger number of students wished to acquire new knowledge and skills in the EFL lesson, and as a result homework was seen as a means to achieve it. The number of students who saw the importance of learning English for the benefit of their future job also showed a rising tendency. Based on the open-ended feedback questionnaire's answers, a majority of the students wished to continue with similar mini-projects as created for the thesis. Due to the fact that not all groups were even when taking into account their level of English, some of the projects and activities needed to be altered according to the students needs, yet again an opportunity to do so is emphasized in literature analyzed (Bennet et al. 2006).

Based on the teachers' journal entries and conversations, both of the teachers admit the project being an ambitious, yet well-intended one. Even though, the projects were time-consuming and needed thorough planning, the level of intrinsic motivation rose within the teachers as well. Thus, the two collections tested for the given thesis serve as a source of inspiration and demonstrate that by utilizing them and changing the method of instruction, students' level of intrinsic motivation can be raised regardless of their academic starting point, abilities, needs, and attitudes.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1

Collection of 10 mini-project ideas for the thesis:

#### ADVERTISEMENT (page 32)

**Keywords:** vocabulary, grammar, cooperative learning, presenting skills, digital competence, relatedness, autonomy, competence

**Online sources:**

- Video advertisement examples: <https://www.adforum.com/creative-work/best-of/15361/best-ads-directed-towards-children/play>

**Description:** Students can create advertisements for books, fictional/nonfictional characters, places, historical events, topics discussed in class, etc. They can use keywords, phrases, pictures, drawings.

It can be created on a large piece of paper. Layout: on top a catchy title, in the middle a circle/square with sections containing information. Please see picture below.

**Alternative usages:**

- Students can create an advertisement online
- Advertisements can be turned into recorded videos
- Students can present their work individually/as a group. Gold stars can be given by other students to one another's works.

**Audience:** Pair work/group work

**Suggestions:**

- The teacher can draw some example advertisement layouts on the board.
- Look up some advertisements online/in newspapers/magazines.

**Combine:**

- Costume design activity when creating a video of an advertisement.
- Video/audio activity

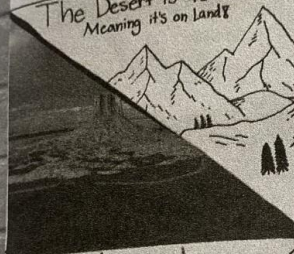
Example of an advertisement:

# DESERT

Are You Thinking About Moving to the Desert?...

### The Desert is Terrestrial...

Meaning it's on land!



### The Climate in the desert is...

- Dry
- Very hot
- Often super sunny
- Rain is rare
- Stays warm all throughout the year
- Coastal deserts usually have cool winters followed by fairly long, warm summers.

### Characteristics

- 30 centimeters of rain a year
- Full of life with animals, plants, rocks and more.
- Temperatures range from 23 degrees all the way to 120 degrees
- Desert land forms are mountains and rocks such as strangely shaped hills and big rocks.
- Plants there are often called "Desert Plants"

### Plants and Animals...

Some of the animals in the desert are...

- Camels
- Snakes/geckos
- Rabbits
- Scorpions
- Roadrunners
- Lizards

Some plants in the desert are...

- Mesquite bush
- Sage brush
- Saguaro
- Cholla
- Cactus

### Challenges to Living in the Desert...

- It rarely rains in the desert
- It is very hot and dry
- There are not a lot of things surrounding you
- You need to be aware there are a lot of snakes and deadly animals in the desert.

### Strengths to Living in the desert...

- You don't have to deal with it always raining
- Not all deserts are hot but they are very dry.

### Other Factors...

Deserts cover about one fifth of Earth's surface.

Death valley is a desert in the United States, it's one of the hottest places on Earth.

Deserts get less than 10 inches of rain in a year.


Dust storms can reach the height of 20,000 feet in the desert.

### Biotic Factors...

- Plants
- Animals
- Grass, cacti, yucca, etc.

### Abiotic Factors...

- Solar panels
- Rain/water
- Soil
- Sun



## AUDIO/VIDEO RECORDINGS (page 32)

**Keywords:** reading comprehension, public speaking, expressing ideas, shy students, creativity, autonomy, competence

**Online sources:**

- Audio recording link: <https://vocaroo.com/>
- Audio and video recording link: <https://info.flip.com/>

**Description:** Allow students to create audio/video recordings of their thoughts after/before reading activities to express their ideas, point of views, ask/answer questions, demonstrate their comprehension and fluency, memorize new words and definitions. Voice recordings are excellent for students who are not comfortable sharing their thinking in the classroom with everybody else. Students share their links in Google docs or send them to the teacher's mail.

**Alternative methods:** Allow students to create poetry, lyrics, short stories in class, and record the texts later at home.

**Audience:** Individual work/ pair work

**Suggestions:** students can practice reading out loud while recording their own voice, relisten and gain confidence when speaking

**Combine:**

- advertisement activity
- costume design activity

## AVATAR (page 32)

**Keywords:** digital competence, creativity, innovation, autonomy, relatedness, competence

**Online sources:** <https://www.voki.com/> (no sign up is required, created links are active for 14 days.)

**Descriptions:** The use of online learning environments is a growing part of our everyday lives. In digital environments, learners can create their own avatars to represent themselves and enhance digital storytelling.

### Alternative methods:

- Let students create their avatars and describe them using audio/video recording web pages.
- Students can create short stories/poems/lyrics and type in the text for the avatar to present it.
- Students can copy the link and share it with the teacher and co students.

**Audience:** individual work/pair work/group work

### Suggestions:

- Students can create avatars for their short stories/poems/advertisements.
- Students can send virtual mail as avatars to their pen friends.

### Combine:

- Advertisement activity
- Audio/video recording activity

Example of a created avatar on voki.com:



## BLOG (page 33)

**Keywords:** digital competence, collaborative learning, vocabulary, grammar, expressing thoughts, journals, competence, relatedness, autonomy, critical thinking

**Online sources:** [www.edublogs.org](http://www.edublogs.org)

**Description:** Writing blogs allows learners to demonstrate understanding or express themselves in an authentic published format. Learners can develop communication skills by responding to others' blogs by sharing opinions and asking questions. By sharing what learners have gained in classes and through activities, blogs are excellent for formative assessment. **Example of a blogpost:** <https://ilon.edublogs.org/>

### How to create an account and write a blog post:

- type in [www.edublogs.org](http://www.edublogs.org)
- sign up
- create a username, password
- choose student
- agree to terms
- create a site
- dashboard appears
- on top, under next steps choose write your first blog post
- add a title and a text
- on the right choose publish
- on the next page, on top there is a button indicated with a sign plus and a word new. Students can add new blog posts there.

### Alternative methods:

- Students can share their favourite songs, pictures on blogs.
- Students can follow one another's blogs by clicking on a heart icon.
- Students can read each other's posts and pick a pen friend to write to.

**Audience:** individual work

### Suggestions:

- In a computer class, the teacher can model how to sign up and create a new blog post.
- The teacher can create a google docs document and collect the addresses for blogs in order to check them and follow the progress.

- Students can share their blog posts with each other and leave comments, ask questions, and cheer one another.
- Use a QR code generator to turn students' webpage addresses into easy to use QR codes. For example: <https://www.qrcode-monkey.com>
- Print the codes out and hang them on the wall. Students can scan them and read.



Example of a QR code (scan it):

## BOARD GAME (page 33)

**Keywords:** collaborative learning, relatedness, creativity, vocabulary, grammar, reading, critical thinking

### Online sources:

- How to make your own board game: <https://scoutlife.org/hobbies-projects/projects/172763/how-to-make-your-own-board-game/>

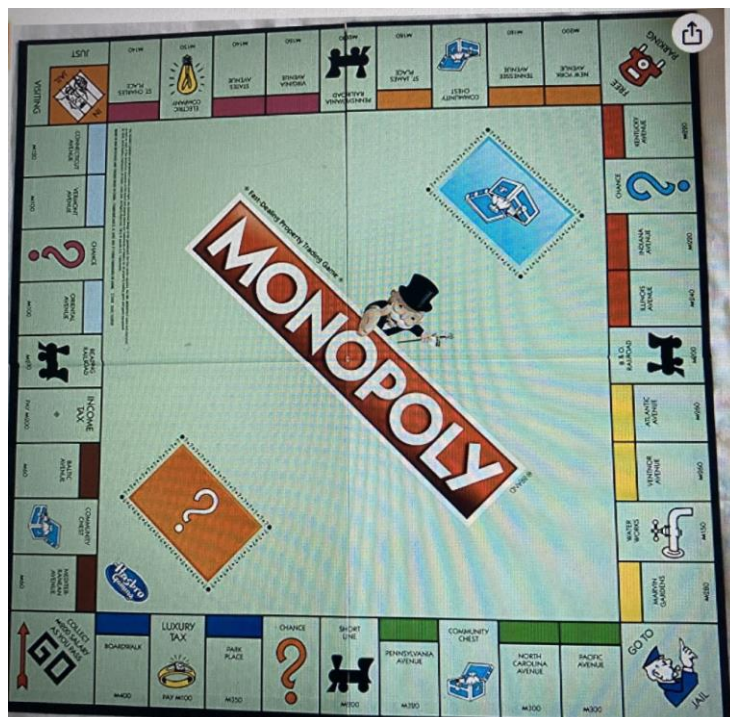
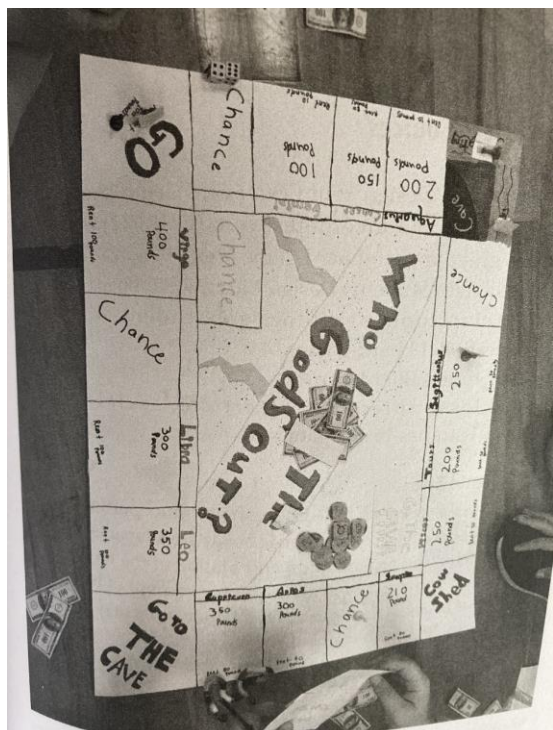
**Description:** Students develop writing skills by inventing directions and rules. Learners can also further literacy understanding by creating games that demonstrate the application of grammar rules or take players through the story of a novel study.

**Audience:** pair work/group work

### Suggestions:

- Show students some pictures of board games in order to understand the components to them.
- Take a board game into your lesson, let students study it.

### Examples of board games:



## CEREAL BOX (page 33)

**Keywords:** collaborative learning, creativity, autonomy, relatedness, critical thinking, competence

**Online sources:**

**Description:** Within a cereal box, learners can creatively come up with a title, a character to advertise the cereal box, a cute story that introduces the cereal, and a list of ingredients. Students can then add fun games, such as word searches, crossword puzzles, or mazes.

**Audience:** individual work/pair work

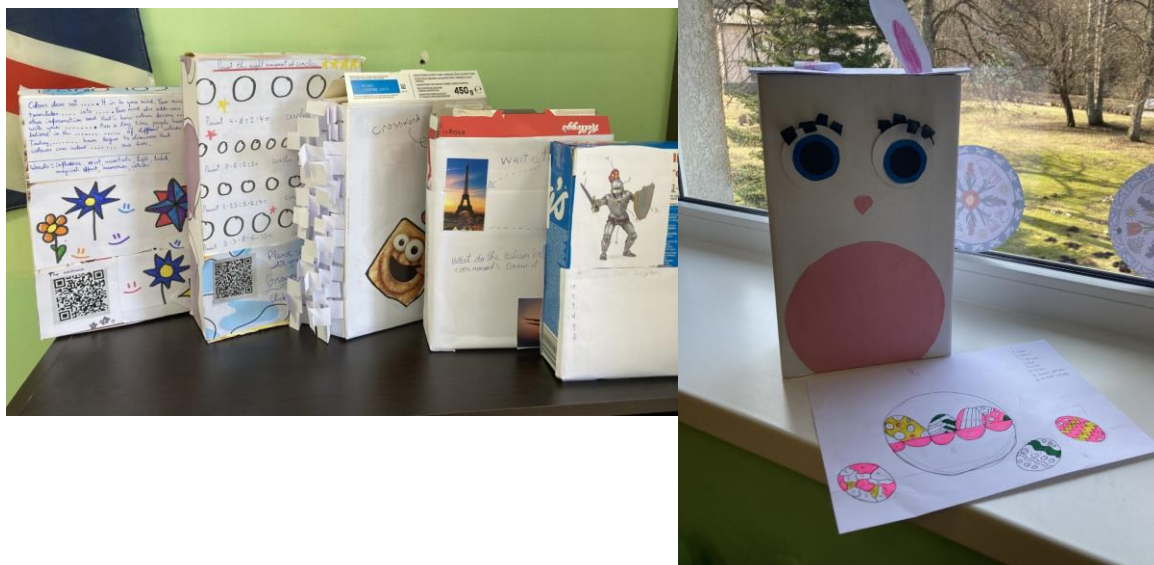
**Suggestions:**

- Allow students to create some small crosswords, word search, puzzle activities that they can use for the cereal box activity
- Take a cereal box with you to the lesson, allow students see the box, notice its components (name, pictures, ingredients, numbers, games, gifts)
- Students can create their activities and glue them on the original cereal box.

**Combine:**

- Crossword, word search activities

**Examples of cereal box designs:**



# Fun-On-The-Box

**THE CAT IN THE HAT**

**Feline Phrases**

Listed are some fun phrases from The Cat in the Hat. They're hidden in the jumbled letters to the right. They can also be spelled diagonally or backwards!

This is Amazing / Catnap / The Fish is Right / Give me Four / Cats Gone Wild

S U J E F C R G W V J D H W T  
 W C T R Y A U S A C A T A B C  
 A K A T M F I K D P W A G S I  
 P K X A T S G Q W E I I C A T  
 S F O F C G W E I D E A Y R B  
 I F X G R O Z J P L A D Y C  
 W A I C A M D I I K I E T H A  
 Y T A N C K V R A T A R T O P  
 K C A T S W I Z M L C I T H O C  
 W I I M C T I G A Y F A R B U  
 J A D Y T L A T A P W E M D  
 C G G A B L A T A Y T T G  
 M I S I E X H A T I  
 I X A A X I A A C K R Y  
 A T H V O T F K E F O U S

**Pitcher This!**

Connect the dots to see what's up.

**Cat Tails**

How many of these words starting with "CAT" can you identify? Put one letter on each blank.

Found on a farm **CAT**      Dozen of **CAT**

Game to play with a ball **CAT**      Found in fresh water **CAT**

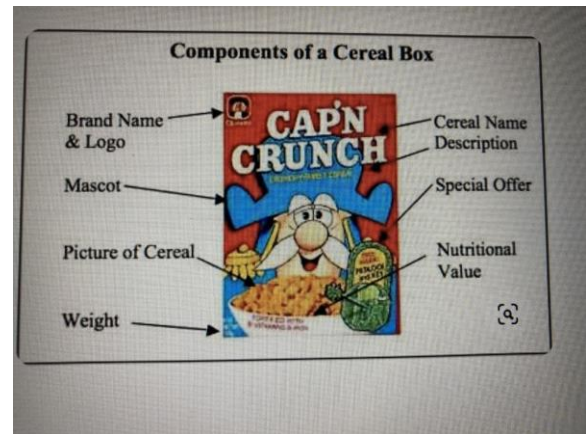
A girl's name **CAT**      Shopping book **CAT**

**Silly Shadows**

The pictures to the right all look nearly alike, but only two are exact matches. Can you pick them out?

**Kellogg's**

www.kellogg.com



## **COSTUME DESIGN (page 34)**

**Keywords:** creativity, relatedness, autonomy, competence, integrated learning, history, culture, public speaking, grammar, vocabulary, cooperative learning

**Online sources:**

- Peppa Pig International Day: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uvSE7XqnJeI>

**Description:** Costume design can be seamlessly integrated into language classes. Learners can develop costume designs based on texts in the textbook, home reading, their hobbies, music, other cultures, animals, etc.

**Alternative methods:**

- Students can create a billboard of their design process by explaining why they chose the design/character in keywords, adding pictures, cut out texts, fabrics, etc.
- Students can take simple things such as a toothbrush, a comb, spoon and demonstrate their everyday routine.

**Audience:** individual work/pair work/group work

**Suggestions:**

- Students can create their own costumes or pieces of elements that represent the specific topic and use it in class to inspire their speech.
- For example famous places in London can be represented by a drawing of Big Ben, self-made crown, drawing of big eyes (London Eye).
- Students can draw prints of animals and talk about them.

**Combine:**

- Video/audio activity
- Crossword activity
- Cereal box activity
- Board game activity

## CROSSWORD (page 34)

**Keywords:** digital competence, creativity, vocabulary, competence

**Online sources:**

- <https://crosswordlabs.com/>
- Word search puzzle: [https://www.puzzle-maker.com/wordsearch\\_Entry.cgi](https://www.puzzle-maker.com/wordsearch_Entry.cgi)
- Crossword puzzle: [https://www.puzzle-maker.com/crossword\\_Entry.cgi](https://www.puzzle-maker.com/crossword_Entry.cgi)

**Description:** Crossword puzzles mix the excitement of learning new vocabulary with learning their meaning through strategy. Crossword puzzles based on a book, unit, theme, topic, or subject can provide valuable vocabulary instruction to learners. Crossword puzzles are also ideal for reviewing previously learnt words and their definitions.

**Alternative methods:**

- Instead of creating the crossword puzzles yourself, introduce students to different types of puzzles and allow them to create crosswords for each other.

**Audience:** individual work

**Suggestions:**

- Introduce students some online pages they can use for creating puzzles.

**Combine:**

- Cereal box activity

## DRAWING (page 34)

**Keywords:** digital competence, autonomy, creativity, integrated learning, vocabulary, drawing, grammar, culture, critical thinking

**Online sources:**

- <https://www.autodraw.com/> Allows students to draw, use pictures and add text. They can generate a link and share it with others.

An example autodraw picture with a text that I created shared via link and a QR code:



<https://www.autodraw.com/share/YA6V4ZL1IL8R>

**Description:**

It is said that a picture is worth 1000 words. In education, drawings also have amazing value. Sketches, doodles, drawings, and pictures allow students to demonstrate their understanding in a creative and artistic format. Learners can draw pictures of vocabulary words or concepts, illustrate what they internally visualize after reading fiction or nonfiction, or create their own artwork inspired by others.

**Alternative methods:**

- Students can draw their pictures in a traditional way, on a paper using crayons, pencils, markers, etc.
- Drawings can be used for group discussions in class in order to interpret other students' ideas.
- **Add and pass activity** — Each student creates a drawing and starts an activity — an illustration, a comic strip, a story ... something. Let students work on it at home. Tell them not to finish it. Then have them switch their work with someone else. Let them work on it for a few minutes in class. And switch with someone else for the last time. The activities get completed at home. It's fun to see what the rest of the class did with what you started off with! In class you can have group discussions based on the drawings.

**Audience:** individual work/pair work

**Suggestions:**

- Introduce students to online drawing links they can use for creating their pictures

**Combine:**

- Blog activity- students can share their drawings as links/QR codes on their posts.
- Audio activity- students can share their ideas/interpretations of their drawings.

## GENIOUS HOUR (page 35)

**Keywords:** creativity, competence, relatedness, integrated learning, public speaking, cooperative learning, hobbies, critical thinking

**Online sources:**

- What is Genius Hour? <https://www.teachthought.com/learning/what-is-genius-hour/>

**Description:**

The format revolves around learners conducting independent research on their topic and then developing a product of their choice to share with the class. The created products can be presentations on specific topics, for example hobbies, travelling, and history. Students can create something and present it to the others. The given activity can be combined with art, handicraft subjects where students present projects they finish there.

**Alternative methods:**

- Students can conduct classes and teach something to the others.

**Audience:** individual work/pair work/group work

**Suggestions:**

- Have students work on the given project and prepare a presentation in December. Excellent for festive lessons before the holidays.
- Students can also present activities from the list above, for example introduce their blog, created board games or cereal boxes.

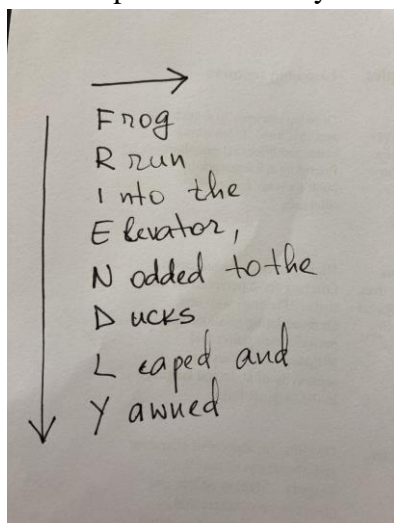
**Combine:**

- Cereal box activity
- Blog activity
- Board game activity
- Costume design activity

## Appendix 2

### Collection of 15 vocabulary learning and teaching suggestions:

1. Let students create **two-sided note cards** for them that they keep in a zip-lock bag. They can add new cards as new words come up. As a homework task, they take the cards out and check their own knowledge.
2. **Vocabulary poems/short stories.** Students choose a word most difficult for them and create a poem/short story out of it. Please see the picture:



3. Allow students to **create crosswords and word searches** for one another.
4. Students choose 10 words from the vocabulary list that they struggled with the most. Write them on a paper, but **leave out some of the letters**. In class, students switch their papers and try to fill in the missing letters.
5. Students choose 5 words from the list and **draw the corresponding pictures**. In class students pair up or work in groups of 3-4, pile up their pictures and play a game of alias or just try to say the correct word. Later you can make a poster out of the words and hang it up on the wall.
6. **Combine grammar with vocabulary.** Let students form sentences at home using the learnt vocabulary. In the next lesson, have some of the keywords on pieces of paper, form groups and let students take turns to present their sentences.
7. Let students use **vocaroo.com** and record their vocabulary + some example sentences. You can make a general comment on the pronunciation in the next lesson.
8. **The answer is...**(watermelon). What is the question? Ask students to come up with the explanations. In the next lesson, you can show a picture or write the answer on the board. The students can present their explanations.

9. **Dice game.** Students roll the dice: 1-define, 2-use it in a sentence, 3-synonym, 4-antonym, 5-draw it, 6-act it out. They can practice it at home and play as a group in class.
10. **Vocabulary basketball-** you need a ball, and a hamper, box, etc. Form teams. Ask students for a translation for a word or ask a question. When they answer correctly, they are granted a chance to throw the ball. When it goes in, the team gets a point.
11. **Build it-** students draw individual letters on pieces of paper. In class they lay out their letters on the desk. The teacher tells them the word and they “write” it using their letters.
12. **Get creative-** students can use everyday things (toothbrushes, spoons, cars) to talk about activities; they can draw maps of prepositions, individual flags for countries, forests, people, etc. Get them involved.
13. **Throw the ball-** after the students have learnt their new words at home, the teacher throws a ball to a student asking for a translation. A student can take the teachers roll and carry on asking.
14. **Wheel of fortune-** Form teams, each team gets “money” they can use to buy letters. The first team to answer correctly gets the point. They can use the leftover money for the next round.
15. **Jeopardy-**create a game for your students on the following link: <https://jeopardylabs.com/>. Form teams and think of a signal your students can use to indicate their wish to answer, e.g., raise their hands, raise a flag, etc. Online buzzer-  
<https://buzzin.live/>

### **Appendix 3**

**5 open-ended feedback questions answered by the students post-project time:**

**Please finish the 5 questions below using your own words.**

**Please consider the finished project and lessons in your own group.**

1. My favorite project was..
  
2. My least favorite project was...
  
3. The homework projects we did were (your opinion) ...
  
4. In the future I would like to have (what kind of homework tasks) ...
  
5. I think that homework is...

**Thank you!**

## Appendix 4

Likert-scale questionnaire consisting of 15 questions filled in by students pre-and post-project time:

Please put a tick (√) in the box to indicate your viewpoint.

0 Never	1 Not often	2 Sometimes	3 Often	4 Always
------------	----------------	----------------	------------	-------------

1. It is important to do homework in English lessons.					
2. Doing homework for English classes is fun.					
3. It is OK for me to copy homework from a friend.					
4. I always do my homework.					
5. Doing homework is a waste of time.					
6. I want to be smart in English.					
7. Learning English is good for my future job, travelling.					
8. I want to learn new things in English classes.					
9. I like small projects as homework tasks.					
10. I like workbook and textbook exercises as homework tasks.					
11. I like to work alone.					
12. I like to work together with my friends.					
13. I like using the computer for my English classes.					
14. I want to choose how to do my homework.					
15. My English teacher helps and supports me.					

## **RESÜMEE**

TARTU ÜLIKOOL

ANGLISTIKA OSAKOND

**Ilona Laur-Pöder**

### **Enhancing Intrinsic Motivation in EFL Classroom: Implementing SDT Concepts on Homework**

**Sisemise Motivatsiooni Tõstmine EFL Klassiruumis: SDT Kontseptsioonide Rakendamine Kodutöodes**

Magistritöö

2023

Lehekülgede arv: 84

Annotatsioon:

Käesoleva uurimistöö eesmärk on analüüsida, kas magistritöö raames koostatud mini-projektide ja sõnavara harjutamise ja õppimise kogumikud mõjutavad positiivselt kahe kooli 6.klasside õpilaste sisemist motivatsiooni. Lisaeesmärgina sai püstitatud välja tuua kogumike eelised ja puudused.

Töö koosneb kolmest põhiosast: kirjanduse ülevaatest, metodoloogiast ja materjalidest, uurimistöö tulemustest. Sissejuhatus annab ülevaate magistritööst ning esitab 2 uurimistöö eesmärgi.

Esimene peatükk annab ülevaate enesemääratlemise teooriast (SDT); kirjeldab kahte tüüpi motivatsiooni, sisemist ning välimist; põhjendab, miks antud magistritöös keskendutakse sisemisele motivatsioonile; annab lühiülevaate kodutööde tegemise rollist hariduses; ning tutvustab 2013. aastal läbi viidud uurimust, millest saadi inspiratsiooni magistritöö uurimistöö kirjutamiseks.

Teises peatükis on antud ülevaate magistritöö raames läbiviidud uurimusest. Peatükk toob kõigepealt välja 2013.aasta ja antud uurimuse erisused; selgitab eesmärgi; kirjeldab uurimuses kasutatud kahe kollektsiooni koostamise põhimõtteid; annab ülevaate uurimuse läbiviimise ajakavast ning eesmärkidest. Edasi tutvustatakse uurimuses kasutatud küsitlusi ning antakse ülevaate enne uurimust läbiviidud küsitluse tulemustest; lähemalt tutvustatakse mõlemat kollektsiooni ning uurimuses osalevaid õpilasi. Õpilased osalesid uurimuses, mille läbiviimise põhimõtted on samuti tutvustatud. Enne ja peale uurimust vastasid õpilased küsimustikele ning andsid oma hinnangu tegevustele. Lisaks küsimustikele, pidasid nii õpilased kui ka kaks õpetajat päevikut paranduste, soovitude ning ülevaate andmise

eesmärgil. Peatükis on välja toodud õpilaste poolt teostatud mini-projektide läbiviimise ja hindamise kriteeriumid ning tagasisidestamise põhimõtted.

Töö tulemuste osas analüüsitakse peale uurimust läbiviidud küsitluste tulemusi; arutletakse uurimuse käigus läbi tehtud tegevustele antud hinnangute üle; ning tuuakse välja õpetajate poolne hinnang tegevustele. Õpilaste ning õpetajate vastustest võib järeldada, et antud uurimuse raames läbi tehtud tegevused mõjusid osalejate sisemisele motivatsioonile toetavalt ning seda tõstvalt. Enim saadi kasu koostöistest projektidest, milles tunti tuge kaasõpilaste ja projekte läbivast tagasisidestamisest. Kahe kollektiooni kasutamine antud uurimuse raames tõestasid, et nende kasutamine ja õpilaste suurem kaasamine õppetöösse motiveerib õpilasi vaatamata nende akadeemilisest võimekusest, vajadustest ning suhtumisest.

Töö kokkuvõte võtab kogu eelnevalt esitatu kokku.

Märksõnad: motivatsioon, huvi, enesemääratlemise teooria (SDT) kodutöö, koostöine õppimine, projektid, hariduslik erivajadus

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Tartus, 16.05.2023

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Ilona Laur-Pöder

Tartus, 16.05.2023

Lõputöö on lubatud kaitsmisele

Katiliina Gielen

Tartus, 16.05.2023