

**UNIVERSITY OF TARTU
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**PRE-EMPTING ATTENTION LOSS: EXPLORING METHODS
TO STAY FOCUSED IN THE EFL CLASSROOM
MA thesis**

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ABSTRACT

To pre-empt attention loss in English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom many methods are advised by different researchers. Due to the widespread use of unallowed information and communications technology (ICT) devices during the lessons a comparative study could be made with two different attention-improving methods.

The aim of this thesis is to explore two methods to pre-empt attention loss in the EFL classroom. The methods explore whether it is more beneficial to collect phones from the students before the lesson or plan lessons using attention-improving aspects.

The thesis consists of an introduction, two main chapters, a conclusion, a list of references and five appendices. The introduction explains the need for the research and provides quick overview of the topic.

Chapter 1 consists of literature review on attention; distractions caused internally, externally and by ICT devices; and attention loss prevention.

Chapter 2 contains an overview of a study conducted among the students of 6th and 11th grades in a secondary school in Estonia. The aim of this study was to explore two methods- collecting phones before the lesson and planning lessons according to suggestions which should be attention-improving. The chapter involves sections about participants, method, and results.

The thesis ends with a summary explaining the more crucial findings of the study at hand, followed by a list of the literature used. There are three questionnaires, two groups of lesson plans and a teacher's diary in the appendices.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFL English as a foreign language

ICT information and communications technology

INTRODUCTION

Estonian school systems primarily practise 45-minute lessons, if not longer. Students, however, tend to lose their focus during the lessons and it is up to the teacher to decide what methods work best to prevent attention loss. This research aims to explore different methods of pre-empting attention loss in English as a foreign language (EFL) classes.

To understand how attention works it is necessary to look at how it is formed and how it influences each individual. The brain starts to develop functions for attention in infancy; the networks improve during childhood and are influenced by each person's pathology making it difficult to make generalisations about attention development and further growth (Posner et al 2016). Lindsay (2020) describes attention as the overall level of alertness or ability to engage with surroundings. Other researchers - such as Styles (2005) argue that a single clear explanation for attention is not only impossible but also inappropriate due to many variables. Due to different authors' research aims and findings, it is difficult to agree on one specific definition of attention. The concept of attention has been a field of interest due to its complexity and needs to be further researched to expand human knowledge about its functions and role in the information repository. For the sake of clarity, disregarding the limitations on defining attention, this research will define attention as "taking possession by the mind, in clear and vivid form, of one out of what seems several simultaneously possible objects or trains of thought" (Lindsay, 2020).

People can influence and direct their attention towards specific objects. Knudsen (2007) found that attention is constantly competing among several information processors about what gets access to the working memory. To direct attention towards needed objects we have to minimise external attention-seeking distractors.

Attention in class can stray for several reasons, be those personal or dependent on the teacher or the surroundings such as a classroom. Research conducted in 1981 by Behnke et al. found primary school students generate most distractions themselves such as verbally

interrupting the teacher, students not concentrating, students' physical location, student-student interactions, and general student noise. Nowadays, undoubtedly most teachers would blame phones as the main reason why students' attention strays. Goundar (2014) found that ICT devices interfere with tertiary school students' abilities to pay attention, and not only do ICT devices distract the user but also those around them. Kuznekoff and Titsworth (2013) reported better note-taking abilities, improved recall of information, and 13% better test results for students who were not using their phones during the lecture. Interestingly enough, Goundar (2014), Goundar et al (2012), Jalil et al (2019), Attia et al (2017), and McCoy (2016) all carry out research among ICT-related topics yet they have one thing in common- all of the research is done with higher education students, which means it might not give the most accurate insight to lower- and upper-secondary school students. Thus, there is a need for lower-secondary and upper-secondary students' input. This research takes a better look at general and ICT-related pre-emptive attention loss methods.

As for non-ICT distractions, Allison (2020) found that most students noted lack of sleep as the main factor for losing attention; since these surveys were often completed several hours after the lectures, the author suggests these findings to be no more than just student perceptions or feelings. The majority of the studies concerning attention rely on neurological and viewable aspects. Regardless of reliability factors, student and teacher opinions and experiences are valuable resources which should be investigated thoroughly.

Hlas et al (2019) found that students' attention suffers a downfall at least twice throughout a 50-minute lesson. This timeline is similar to the standard Estonian 45-minute lesson; hence, a generalisation could be made that during that time a student will lose focus at least two times. Wilson and Korn (2007) reviewed a study, where students who listened to a lesson for 15 minutes retained 41% of the material, while students who listened to a 40-minute lesson retained only 20%. Students definitely do a lot more than only listen during lessons, however, listening to long periods of time is a difficult task. If these statistics apply throughout

the whole school year, a student will only retain 20% on average per year. This seems like a waste and information retention should be improved drastically.

Avoiding attention loss can be difficult for both the student and the teacher. Whereas no definite conclusion can be made about the number and duration of attention lapses, there are plenty of suggestions on how to avoid attention loss. Hlas et al (2019) suggest shorter exercises or adding an exciting activity now and then. Both Hlas et al (2019) and Allison (2020) concluded that student attention could be improved when the class activities are student-centred such as answering questions verbally, small group work, and walking up to the whiteboard; as opposed to teacher-centred activities such as lectures, monologues, and PowerPoint presentations. Considering everything above, it is important to keep in mind that attention requires work from both parties: teachers and students. It is up to the teacher to change the learning process, allow breaks and provide the necessary support, all of which contribute towards a more attentive group of students (Cicekci and Sadik 2019).

The aim of this study is to explore methods for increased student attentiveness and engagement in class. In order to pre-empt attention loss in English as a foreign language classes, the study will focus on two methods: collecting mobile phones and planning lessons with activities proven to improve attention in class such as a variety of exercises, optimal task length, and student-centred activities. Revising the current classroom unwritten policy and collecting mobile phones for the duration of the lesson is a quick passive pre-emptive method to increase student attention as suggested by Goundar (2014) and Goundar et al (2012). On the other hand, altering task durations allows the brain to take the needed break, in addition, various and student-centred activities take longer preparation for the teacher, yet improve attention span in the classroom (Hlas et al 2019). This research will focus on pre-empting attention loss in English as a foreign language class with two different methods. The methods allow us to look at how students behave, adapt, whether they think those are useful by evaluating their own attentiveness, and whether they would be open to using the methods in the future.

1. ATTENTION AND FACTORS INFLUENCING IT

Attention is a key element when it comes to restoring information. Before trying to pre-empt attention loss, it is important to understand what takes attention away from the target. Distractions reduce attentiveness. A regular classroom environment poses different distractions by other students, teachers, classroom layout/physical objects, or by students themselves. To make conclusive decisions regarding pre-empting attention loss, the core structure of attention and influencing factors must be considered.

1.1 Attention

Attention is a combination of various brain networks such as orienting, alerting, and executive control; where orienting happens in the superior parietal, temporal parietal junction, frontal eye fields, and superior colliculus; alerting in locus coeruleus, right frontal, and parietal cortex; executive attention in anterior cingulate, lateral ventral, prefrontal and basal ganglia (Posner et al 2007, Posner et al 2016). Attention-causing neurological parts start developing as early as infancy and specific connections start forming at about age four (Posner et al 2016). Previous studies indicate that self-regulation increases until late childhood and can be trained even in later stages of life with repetition and brain state change exercises such as meditation, memory training, and juggling (Posner et al 2016). This means self-regulation development needs external attention from parents, teachers, guardians etc., yet no state of self-regulation is final and can be trained under certain circumstances. However, genetics can influence self-regulation and therefore no exact conclusion about brain connectivity from infancy to adulthood can be made (Posner et al 2016). Since so many variables such as genetics can distort the results of self-regulation from infancy to adulthood then it is not clear exactly how much the ability to self-regulate decreases. We could theorise that younger students find it harder to self-regulate because their abilities have not yet fully developed, but then again, older students'

lack of self-regulation could become an impenetrable wall which needs constant and more sophisticated work.

Lindsay (2020) describes attention as merely an overall level of alertness or ability to engage with surroundings. The attention mechanism can be divided into two categories: external and internal. External stimuli affect people with sound, smell, touch, visuals and taste. Attention is given to a factor which overrides the others, such as a loud noise. Internal attention is called focused attention, where a person can consciously steer attention towards a chosen object (Niu et al 2021). Knudsen (2007) claims attention is an ongoing competition between different processing hierarchies all trying to get access to working memory, which is responsible for information evaluation and decision-making. Therefore, attention finds an object to focus on which then gets access to working memory. The classroom environment hosts all sorts of attention-grabbing aspects which are mostly external, the students need to put all their effort into focused attention which can be both exhausting and demanding. In order for information to get into working memory and the lesson to be a success, a student must be able to use focused attention and the teacher's job is to reduce external factors to a minimum.

1.2 Distractors

Classroom distractors can be defined as events which withdraw students or teachers from the intended instructional tasks (Behnke et al 1981). Distractions in the classroom can originate from various sources ranging from student-generated distractions to completely out-of-hand distractors such as the nature of the classroom.

The research at hand discusses distractions which occur during EFL lessons. This research divided attention loss factors into three sub-categories: distractors from the learning environment, self-inflicted distractors, and ICT factors.

1.2.1 Distractors from the learning environment

Attia et al (2017) divided distractions into external and internal, where external factors were dominated by other students' behaviour. Seidman (2005) concluded that disruptive student behaviour not only hinders others' learning but also impacts information retention. Hence, it is vital to recognize the effect students' behaviour has on each other. Behnke et al (1981) found 89.2% of the distractions are student-generated among primary school students. Their observation among primary school students found the most frequent disrupting behaviour being students verbally interrupting the teacher, student-student interactions, and general student noise. Despite the fact that during the time of Behnke et al research there was no ICT distractors, this is still an indicator that in a standard learning environment, the biggest distractors may be student-generated, which needs to be the main focus of this research.

Classroom design has long been discussed in the education field, and studies support that the classroom has a direct link to students' learning outcomes. Barrett et al (2015) conducted an investigation where new findings were compared with existing evidence from the literature. The research found correlations between classroom conditions and primary school students' learning outcomes. The most significant factors were found to be light, temperature, and air quality, where light must be natural but not create a distracting glare, temperature must be consistent so students can adapt to the thermal environment, and air quality where the amount of fresh air must be sufficient.

The teachers' behaviour influences students' motivation and learning outcomes depending on whether the teacher practises autonomy or control, claims Hein (2012). Controlling teachers leave little room for student-centred learning and guide the learning process from the start till the end. Coelho et al (2012) claim cramming too much information into a lecture with giving no clear explanations hinders the attention of a student while a positive attitude encourages. Frisby et al (2018) found similar results where incompetence was rated as the highest distracting behaviour by an instructor. Incompetence involves talking too

fast, bringing in irrelevant information, repetition and negativity, which all can be both confusing and distracting to a language learner.

1.2.2 Self-inflicted distractors

The biggest impact of classroom learning distractions originates from the students themselves, which are similar to the external distractions they could be causing. For example, a phone ringing distracts both the phone owner and the students around it. For every other student-related distraction there must be a student who also inflicts it on themselves. However, the severity of the distraction changes as a student who is distracted by peers chatting may be able to be more attentive than the peers who are actively causing the distraction. Self-inflicted distractions vary from student to student depending on their habits and home environment. Aligolbandi et al (2015) conducted a study among university students and found most typical self-produced distractors are sleeping, drinking/eating in class, fantasising, anxiety/stress and talking to others. It can be argued whether anxiety and stress are self-inflicted or caused by some other aspects like unfriendly classmates or an upcoming test. Younger students are influenced by their home environment and the amount of sleep may be different depending on the rules at home. As male and female students both rated sleep as their most influencing distraction, it shows how much the student can sabotage their attention at school. Frisby et al (2018) discuss how student-inflicted distraction can cause distress among peers and lead to lessening connections between classmates. As simple distractions from other students such as tapping fingers on a desk are enough to cause peer loss of focus on course content, some students' constant distractions may have a snowball effect which creates more and more distractions to gain peers' likability back.

1.2.3 ICT factors

The abbreviation ICT in this research is defined as “information and communication technology” which means computers and other electronic equipment and systems to collect, store, use, and send data electronically” (Cambridge Dictionary). As this research focuses on general ICT caused distractions on attention in EFL classes then the specific type of ICT devices used, be it phones or smartwatches, is not the focus in this study. The most popular device is the mobile phone. In 2021, Estonia had 1.79 million mobile connections, which means 135.3% of the Estonian population owns mobile phones with current connections (Arvutimaailm, 2021). The statistics reveal that every person in Estonia averages 1.3 phones and the number is expected to increase. Nowadays it is vital for many children to own phones as it offers necessary connections to their parents or other services. Therefore, it is not surprising that most students in schools own one as well. McCoy’s (2016) research indicates that ICT-related distractions increase throughout the advancement of technology and the use of continually developing ICT devices is inevitable.

ICT devices in the classroom are both intentional by schools and casually brought in by the students. Goundar (2012) questioned and found 78% of tertiary students own laptops and 100% own mobile phones; the questionnaire revealed 76% of the students saying they are rarely or never distracted by using their phones in class, whereas 49% of the students report being distracted by other students using their phones in class. Similar results were found in Jalil et al’s (2019) research where 51.9% acknowledged phones reducing attention while 70% of respondents believed using phones caused little to no distraction. Goundar et al (2014) concluded that students who are struggling in class are more likely to bring and use ICT devices in the classroom, which in turn decreases attention and retention. Therefore, it is evident that students know about ICT-related dangers but cannot associate them with themselves and even work against their betterment.

In contrast, ICT devices have their upsides such as communication between the student and a parent, easy access to emergency services, and also student engagement in class. McCoy (2012) and Godwin-Jones (2018) both agree schools should use ICT to their advantage as ICT devices can supply better access to second language input than is normally available in traditional instruction.

1.3 Preventing attention loss

Preventing attention loss in the classroom can be complex because there are so many distractors to consider. Due to students' inability to fully self-regulate, the teacher is responsible for reducing externally caused distractors. Research conducted by Behnke et al (1981) among primary school students coded 3062 distractions during their 72 observations. That makes 42.5 distractions on average per observed lesson. One can only imagine how many times a student gets distracted during a 45-minute lesson. Wilson and Korn (2007) noticed a significant information retention loss among students who listened to a 50-minute lesson compared to the students who listened to a 15-minute lesson. This suggests that the students cannot focus attention on a specific task for such a long time. In order to reduce attention loss, the planned activities in lessons are advised not to exceed 15 minutes (Wilson and Korn 2007).

Dörnyei (2007) describes how to create and maintain a motivating classroom environment. He lists six areas which should be considered to maintain motivation such as making learning enjoyable, presenting tasks in a motivating way, setting specific goals, protecting and increasing self-confidence, creating learner autonomy, and promoting self-motivating strategies. As the textbooks and workbooks are often very old, sometimes even older than the students themselves, it is important to make the topics relevant and motivating. When students find the topic more relevant, they are more likely to be eager to study because they recognize the need for taught skills in real life.

Liu et al's (2008) study found that post-learning memory stimulation enhances gist recall abilities. Stimulant could be anything - either a quick game, discussion individually or

in groups. In order to avoid information loss, it is recommended for teachers to do a quick conclusion or recall about the topic recently acquired.

Physical activity has been proven to improve mental health. Erickson et al (2019) found greatest evidence of physical activity on cognitive outcomes among preadolescents aged 6 to 13. Erickson et al (2019) also emphasize that not only long-term physical activity works, but bouts of physical activity have demonstrated a small improvement in cognition. This means that besides physical education lessons recess and bouts of movements during regular lessons matter as well. Estonian schools are encouraged to join a program “Liikuma kutsuv kool” which translates to “Schools in Motion” where schools should incorporate active learning and rest as much as possible. During lessons the physical bout could be incorporated into the lesson’s learning activity or performed independently such as stretching for a minute. Although many schools have not joined the program, it does not mean the methods cannot be used.

Adams (2018) suggests teachers using communicative tasks as they help the students to bring the language skills together, making it a great way to start a lesson and get the students on the same level. A Communicative task is useful be it teacher-led or only between peers. Adams (2018) highlights that learners have more control over the interaction when working together. Besides students’ enjoyment of working together and not having the whole class’s attention on them, lowering language anxiety, they also get the chance to practice the recently acquired knowledge and learn from each other.

In addition to communication, Philps (2017) concludes all successful students need a balance of experiences with the target language such as input, output and structure. These forms of language learning allow the students to get input beyond their current comprehension, output allows the students to try and experiment with the language, and lastly, sometimes it is needed to focus on specific unfamiliar language features. Philps (2017) also discusses fluency as a necessary part which is developed through the first three elements.

As attention loss prevention can be very time-consuming and exhausting, Dörnyei (2007) suggests that while many strategies are useful, to avoid potential teacher burnout a thorough selection must be done.

2. PRE-EMPTING ATTENTION LOSS - AN EXPLORATION OF TWO APPROACHES

The aim of this research is to explore two methods to pre-empt attention loss in the EFL classroom. The study involves participants from an Estonian secondary school, and an EFL teacher. The students were chosen to be of grades 6 and 11 to find out the methods' effect on their age group and to get a chance to compare the results between the groups. The methods involve two approaches, one being less time-consuming - simply collecting phones before the lesson, and the other more time-consuming - lesson planning. Based on these methods results are discussed.

2.1 Participants

The participants are students at a secondary school offering education from grade 1 to grade 12 mainly for Russian as the first language students as the school offers language immersion courses. The school was renovated in the year 2020 to improve the building's structure and also the learning environment for students. The participants were chosen to be from 6th grade and 11th grade mainly because current research lacks focus on these two target groups and the comparison between the two age groups could be looked at.

Both study groups are of similar size - the 6th grade entails 17 students and the 11th grade 16 students. Both groups study under the same teacher and in the same classroom, hence the environmental distractors are expected to stay constant.

Pre-emptive attention loss methods were experimented at a secondary school with grades 6 (N1=17) and 11 (N2=16), where participation was on a volunteer basis. The younger students' parents were verbally informed about the research and asked permission regarding both experiment phases. As the 11th graders are already legally adults, no parental permission was needed, but all the students were informed about the research and participation was on a volunteer basis. All participants were assigned a code at the very beginning which they used throughout the experiment to keep the answers anonymous and trustworthy.

2.2 Method and procedure

In order to establish the usual distractors during EFL class, the students filled out a starter questionnaire that included questions about distractors from the learning environment, self-inflicted distractors, and ICT distractors.

In this study, two methods were used to pre-empt attention loss in EFL classes. These were collecting phones at the start of the lesson and planning lessons with attention-improving activities. The experiment was divided into two two-week phases. The first phase included collecting students' phones at the start of the lesson, which lasted from 28.11.2022 until 16.12.2022. The second phase was focused on attention-improving activities and lasted from 16.01.2023 until 03.02.2023. At the end of both phases, the students filled out a questionnaire expressing their understanding, view and attitudes towards the method, where the first phase questionnaire was focused on collecting the phones, and the second phase questionnaire hosted both attention-improving lesson plan experience along with a comparison of the two phases.

All distractors mentioned in the starter questionnaire (see Appendix 1) are based on Attia et al (2012), Goundar et al (2014) and Jalil et al's (2019) studies. The research at hand divided distractions into two subsections: general distractions and ICT-related distractions, where general distractions were divided into four categories: other student-related, classroom-based, teacher-related, and self-inflicted distractions. General distractions recognized other student-related factors as follows:

- phone ringing
- actions not related to the lesson
- chatting
- asking irrelevant questions or making unnecessary comments
- physical distractors

- illness
- being late
- leaving early
- walking in and out of the classroom
- eating
- sleeping
- doing other subjects' homework
- playing with a toy

In addition, the category also included other students, not from the lesson looking in from the window and other distractions such as knocking on the window.

Teacher-related distracting factors were listed as:

- difficulty of understanding the teacher
- the teacher's excessive movements
- the teacher's verbal repetition
- not giving a clear lesson layout
- the teacher not letting students talk or answer
- the teacher not letting students talk in their mother tongue
- the teacher forcing teamwork with students who do not get along
- the teacher getting agitated when a wrong answer is presented
- the exercises being too similar or boring

Classroom-based distractions were listed as follows:

- classroom odours
- lack of fresh air

- uncomfortable classroom conditions
- visual distractors
- classroom size
- the possibility to look into the hallway

Lastly, self-inflicted distractions were registered as:

- phone ringing
- actions not related to the lesson
- chatting
- illness
- being late
- leaving early
- walking in and out of the classroom
- eating
- drinking
- sleeping
- doing other subjects' homework
- playing with a toy
- looking out of the window

The second subsection included ICT-related topics such as the possession of ICT devices, the average use of a phone in class, the aim of using a phone during EFL lessons, and the reason for using a phone. Furthermore, the questionnaire included students' own beliefs about using phones in the lesson such as rating whether using phones distracts their focus, rating how much using phones distracts thinking along, and the consequences of using phones.

Every questionnaire included an open suggestions area, where students could express their additional thoughts and feelings. The questionnaires were composed in Estonian due to the 6th graders' lack of English language skills. As the students' mother tongue is Russian, the questionnaires were simplified and included examples when found necessary. The teacher's help was available for any language issues throughout the feedback process.

The first phase entailed the use of smartphone-sized individual plastic baskets with students' names on them. At the start of the lesson, the teacher reminded the students to place their phones in the assigned basket. During the lesson, all baskets stayed on the teacher's table. When the lesson concluded, the students were free to collect their phones.

The second phase of the research experiments with pre-empting attention loss by making a detailed lesson plan with several aspects proven to improve attention. The lesson plans are based on the authors' own educational knowledge about teaching, their personal experience in the field along with supported research by Wilson and Korn (2007), Dörnyei (2007), Philps (2017), and Adams (2018):

- the lesson starts with a communicative task;
- the exercise length is a of a maximum of 15 minutes;
- there is at least one activity where the students could stand up and move;
- there is at least one pair or teamwork activity;
- at least three language focuses: input, output and language structure;
- exercise explanation to the students- why are we doing this?
- at least one student-centred aspect (that they really enjoy or relate to);
- lesson conclusion.

The lesson plans (Appendix 4 and Appendix 5) used in the experiment were planned based on the teacher's knowledge about teaching and heavily based on the textbooks which the students used. The lessons before the experiment usually started with a short greeting and sometimes,

not always, an introductory activity which was frequently about the topic discussed in the previous lesson. The exercises were not limited to 15 minutes and physical activity pauses were not considered as a priority. Teamwork or pair work often happened by default but was not specifically planned for every lesson, the same generalisation could be made about the three language focuses which were mostly present but not intentionally included. Student-centred activities have always been present due to the age of the textbooks used, the students could not relate to the exercises or texts because they were too outdated. Exercise explanations were not a priority since the teacher figured the students understood the necessity by default. Lastly, lesson conclusions were mostly practiced by recalling the things learnt.

2.4 Results

The results were gathered from four sources, three of which are students' input and one being the teacher's diary during both phases of the experiment.

2.4.1 The starter questionnaire

The starter questionnaire (see Appendix 1) asked general questions about students' views and understanding of EFL classroom distractions, such as general distractions and ICT-related distractions. The questionnaire was completed by 31 students out of a total of 33 students giving a survey response rate of 94%.

Other student-related distractions showed similarities between both of the groups. Half of both 6th graders and 11th graders agreed illness and other students' distractions such as knocking on the window to be the most distracting factors. In contrast, the 6th graders by a third were distracted by another student playing with a toy and doing other subjects' homework. Whereas the 11th graders were distracted by a phone ringing, which none of the 6th graders chose. One additional answer was submitted by a 6th grader, which was laughing. The graph

below (Figure 1) omits options which were not chosen or options which were chosen by fewer than three students such as being late, leaving early, drinking, sleeping, and laughing.

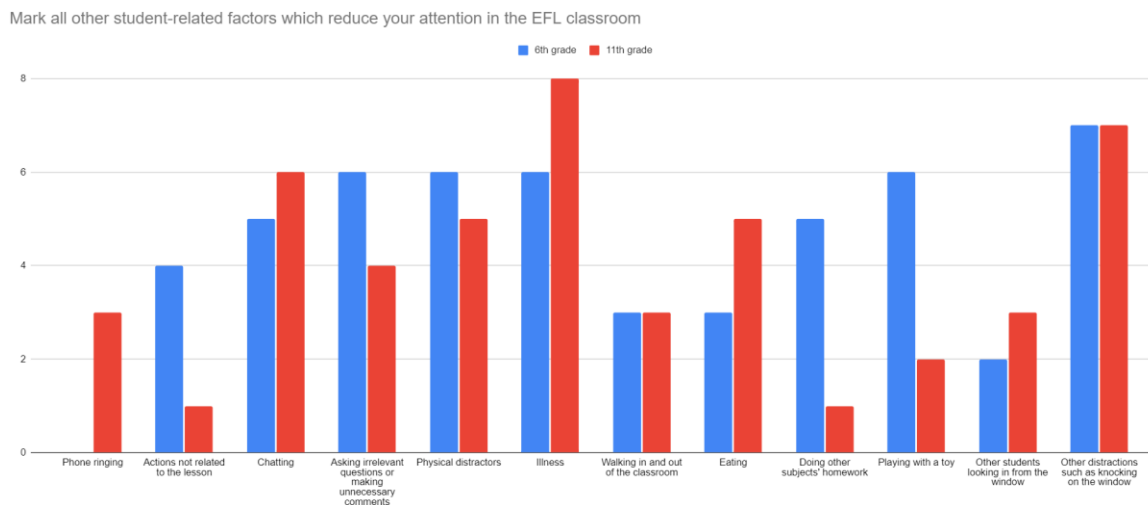


Figure 1: Mark all other student-related factors which reduce your attention in the EFL classroom

Learning environment distractions were mostly similar between the two groups as at least a third of all students were unsatisfied with the odour in the classroom or the lack of fresh air. The answers also posed three exceptions such as the 6th graders choosing “the possibility to look into the hallway” by eight students and also noting the classroom size by five students. Five of the 11th graders, however, expressed that the classroom poses no distractions.

Teacher-related distractions differed between the two groups where the 6th graders mostly agreed the most distracting factor is the teacher not letting students talk in their mother tongue, which was chosen by over half of the students. On the contrary, the 11th graders noted no distractions as the most popular answer. The graph below (Figure 2) omits options which were chosen by fewer than three students such as the teacher not giving a clear lesson layout, not letting students talk or answer, and trying to get an answer even when the student does not know it, the last one being an additional answer a student wrote.

Mark all teacher-related distractions which reduce your attention in the EFL classroom

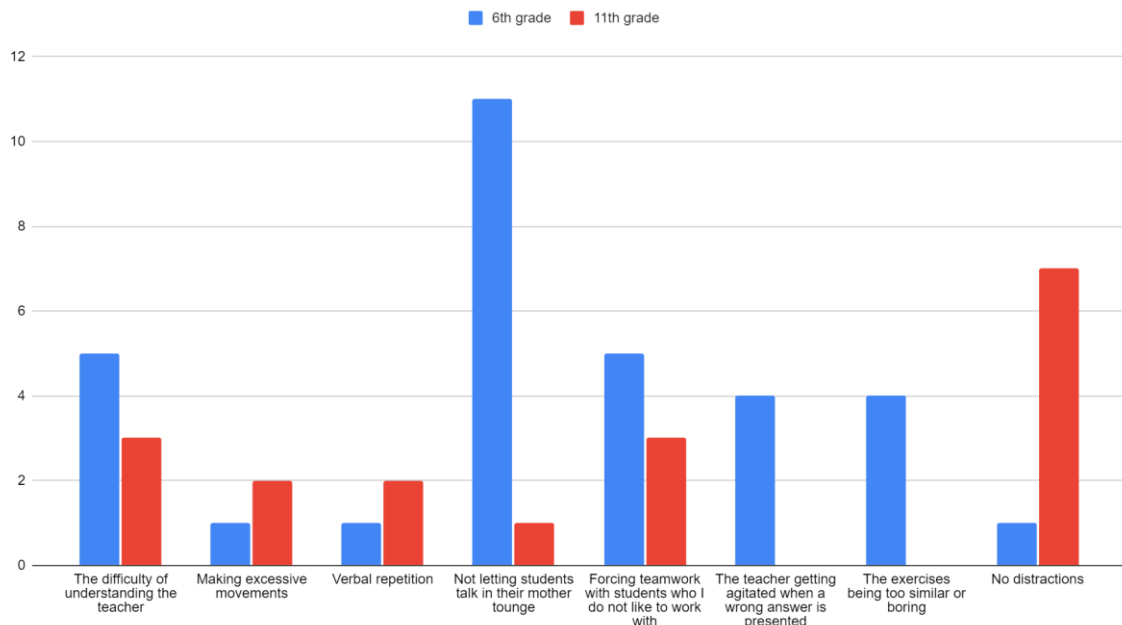


Figure 2: Mark all teacher-related distractions which reduce your attention in the EFL classroom

The results of **self-inflicted distractions** spread quite evenly in both groups with the exception of two trends - looking out of the window and illness. Chatting, actions not related to the lesson and phone ringing came in second with around a third of the students agreeing with the option. Being late and sleeping seem to be relatively mild distractions only chosen by four and five students overall. The graph below (Figure 3) omits options which were chosen by fewer than three students such as leaving early, walking in and out of the classroom, eating, drinking, doing other subjects' homework, playing with a toy, no distractions, and drawing; the last two options were submitted by students, respectively by two and one students.

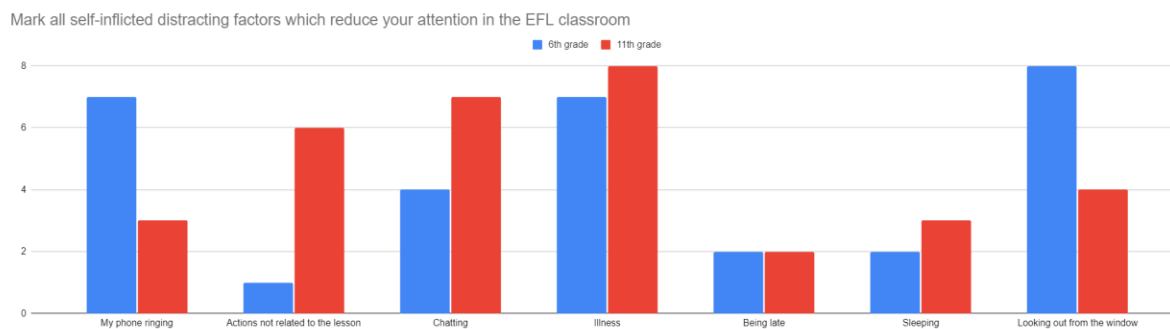


Figure 3: Mark all self-inflicted distracting factors which reduce your attention in the EFL classroom

The majority of the students answered “yes” to having **ICT devices** at school and three students answered “no”. The frequency of using phones during the EFL classes showed two trends. Ten of the 6th graders responded not using phones for unrelated activities during the lessons, whereas over half of the 11th grades admitted using phones 2-3 times per lesson. The aim of using a phone during the lesson (Figure 4) varied between the two groups. Seven students from the 6th grade answered that they do not use their phones for unrelated activities, and equally seven chose the option “to check eKool”; the last being the highest also among the 11th graders out of whom eleven chose the option. However, the groups’ answers display some differences such as the 11th graders by almost half use their phones to check notifications and to text, while the 6th graders agree by only a quarter. Both groups supplemented the question by adding the option “to translate”. The graph below (Figure 4) omits all options which were chosen by fewer than three students such as to play games, and to check the time, the last being written additionally by two students.

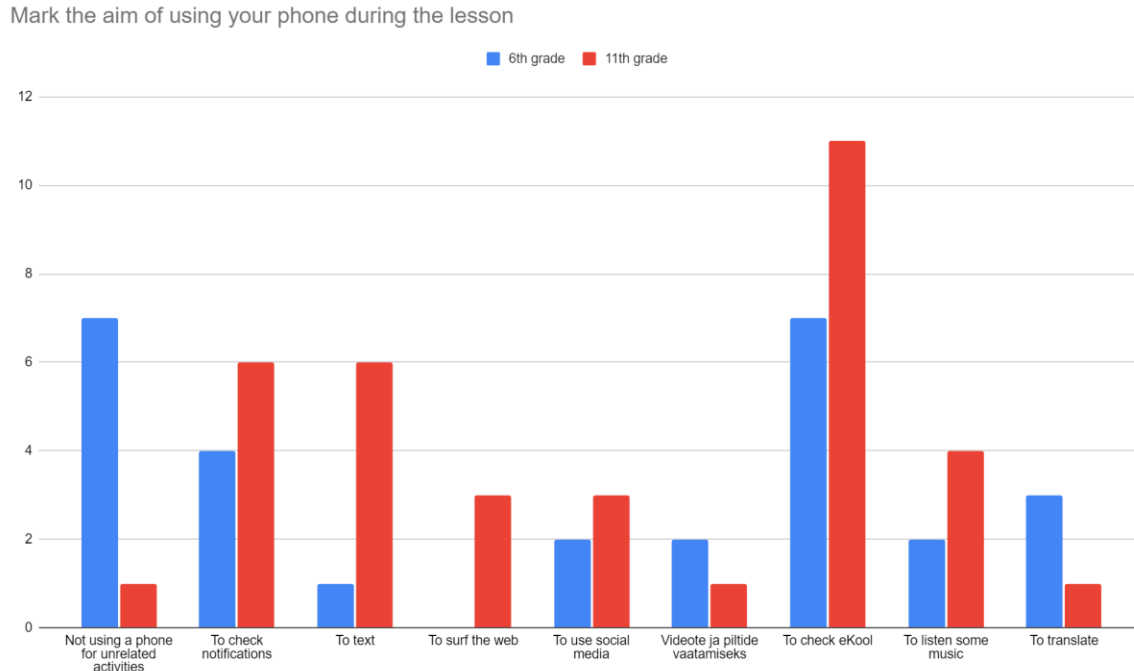


Figure 4: Mark the aim of using your phone during the lesson

The reason for using phones is mostly to stay in touch with friends, boredom, and necessary actions only. Two students added the reason they use phones is when their class work is done and there is time to spare. When asked about their beliefs regarding attention loss while using a phone 12 students reported that using phones posed no distractions to themselves, which correlates to the next question where 15 students agreed they can follow the lesson well while using phones. Both questions' responses indicate the majority of the students do not believe phones to be a distraction, and a few students who agree otherwise. The consequences of using phones were chosen by half of the students to be "the teacher confiscating the phone till the end of the lesson". However, the 6th graders next most popular response by eight students is writing a negative remark to eKool.

Regarding recommendations, the students proposed three actions such as writing more negative remarks, collecting phones, and putting the phones away for the lesson. Only one

student had an additional comment, “We are already in grade 11. This topic is more useful and current for children.”

2.4.2 Phase 1 questionnaire

Phase 1 questionnaire (see Appendix 2) asked questions about students’ understanding, views and likability of the method used, which was collecting the phones before the start of the lesson. The questionnaire was completed by 33 students out of a total of 33 students giving a survey response rate of 100%.

The **first phase personal feedback** showed the majority of the 6th graders rated their attention during the lessons as an average three out of five points. Two students thought their attention towards learning was bad. On the contrary, half of the students in the 11th grade rated their attention with a “4” and six students rated it with a “5”. When asked to compare their attention before the experiment (Figure 5) then the two groups disagreed. The most chosen options were at the complete ends for both groups, where the 6th graders did not recognize any changes while the 11th graders agreed with the statement that their attention towards learning in the EFL classroom improved.

My attention towards learning in the EFL classroom was better than before

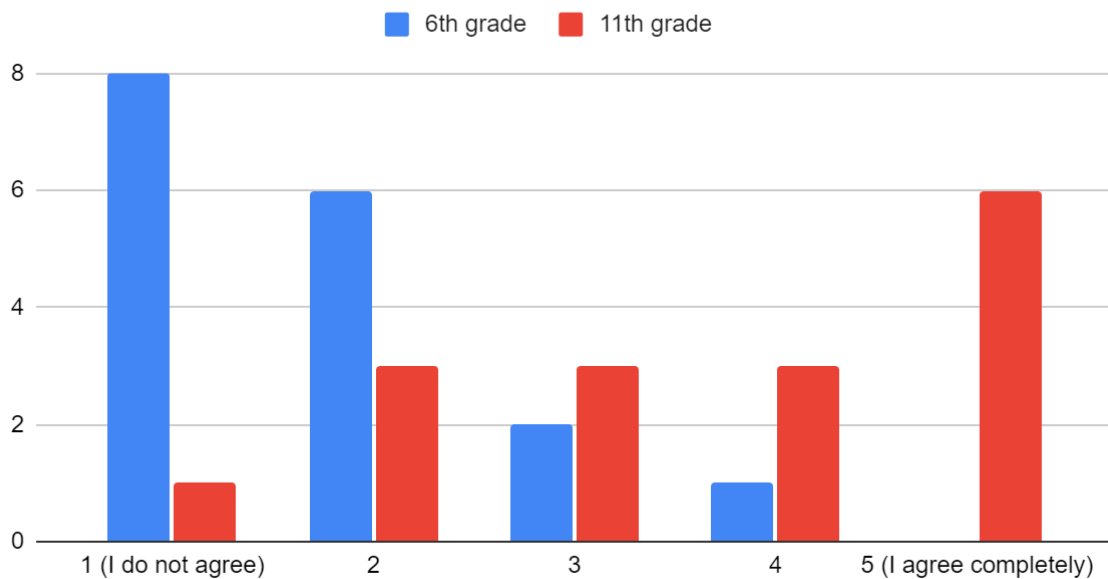


Figure 5: My attention towards learning in the EFL classroom was better than before

Regarding being comfortable without their phones the students' answers represented all options, however the overall consensus leans toward being rather comfortable. When asked about the teacher's negative attention changes, the 6th graders noticed either no difference or average difference. The 11th graders chose all options without any one of these options having majority. The activities students missed throughout the first phase of the experiment showed both similarities and differences (Figure 6). Half of the students missed checking eKool and overall 13 students admitted not missing anything. Checking notifications and texting is missed by around a third of the students, and lastly, a few students also marked that they miss listening to music. The graph below (Figure 6) omits options which were chosen by fewer than three students such as surfing the web, using social media, and playing games.

Mark all phone-related activities you missed throughout the EFL lessons

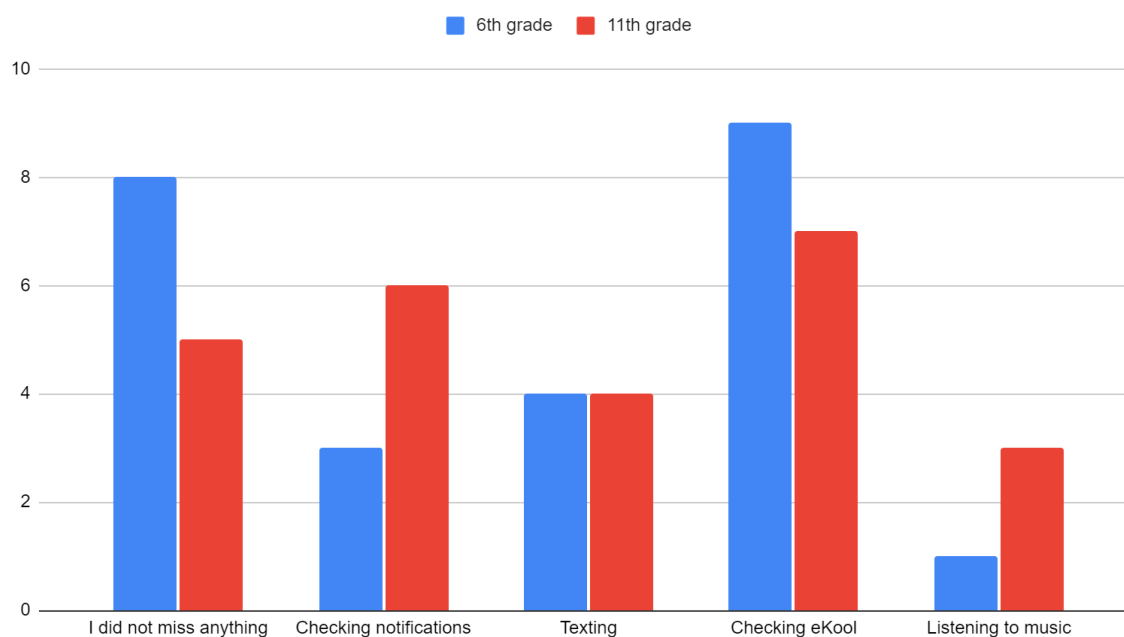


Figure 6: Mark all phone-related activities you missed throughout the EFL lessons

The students thought their peers' attention towards learning either stayed the same or improved, the last one being noticed more by the 11th graders.

The overall effect of the absence of phones was seen as average or slightly positive, where again the 11th graders chose the positive marks (4 and 5) more often. The general consensus among both groups about the teacher collecting phones before the EFL lessons was negative, where 21 students disagreed with the statement that they support collecting phones before the start of the lesson and nine agreed. Two 6th graders reported having no opinion about the topic and one 11th grader noted to agree only during tests. Additionally, a student from the 11th grade commented that they found other activities to do during the lesson when their work was completed such as drawing and knitting.

2.4.3 Phase 2 questionnaire

Phase 2 questionnaire (see Appendix 3) asked questions about students' understanding, views and likability of the method used and overall feedback from the entire process of two

experiments. The questionnaire was completed by 32 students out of a total of 33 students giving a survey response rate of 97%.

With regard to **attention towards learning** in the EFL classroom during the second phase of the experiment roughly half of the students rated their attention decent with a “4” out of five points. The 11th graders agreed with the majority that their attention was good, while the 6th graders second most picked option was average “3”.

The second phase involved different **aspects of pre-empting attention loss**. The structure of the lessons such as the length of exercises were noticed more by 11th graders, out of whom over a third noticed changes. However, the 6th graders acknowledged some changes or a few changes. The difference in exercise topics was again noticed more by 11th graders, who additionally commented on noticing more vocabulary quizzes, having clarity what exercises to do and why, watching more videos and generally liking the EFL lessons more; while the 6th graders agreed either noticing average or little changes. The students’ beliefs about the benefits of physical activity pauses (Figure 7) varied among the two groups. The students either do not believe they could pay more attention, they believe some improvement happens, or they believe it improves their ability to pay more attention. The 11th graders deem physical activity pauses to be very beneficial to their attention abilities, while the 6th graders rather see average improvements.

I am able to pay more attention during the lesson when I can have a physical activity pause

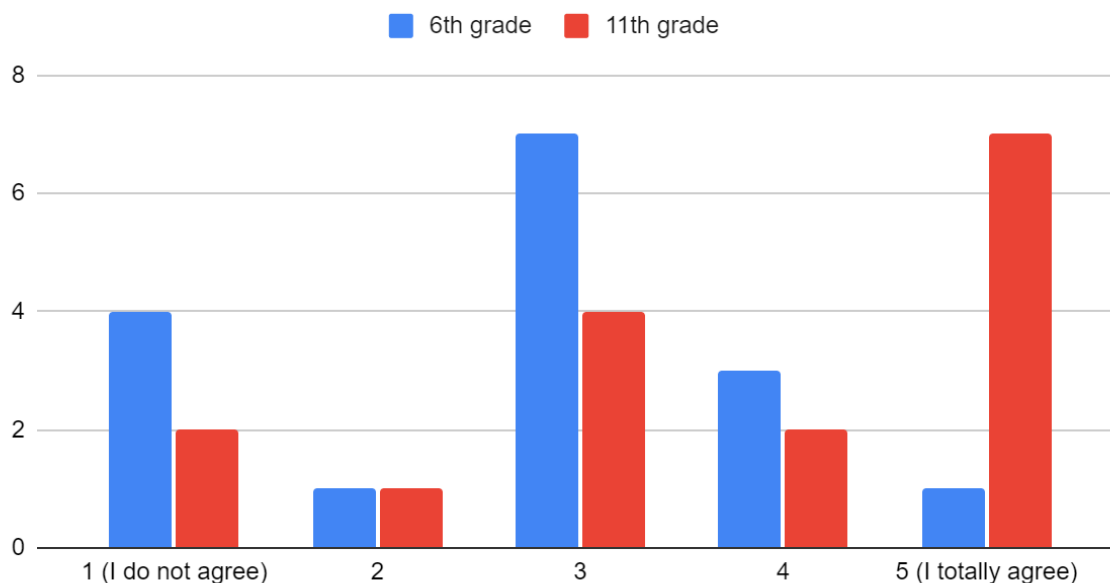


Figure 7: I am able to pay more attention during the lesson when I can have a physical activity pause

The students noticed activities' relatability or student-centredness either moderately, as half of the 6th graders chose "3", or frequently, as half of the 11th graders chose "5". No student-centred activities were reported by one 6th grader or a few activities by three 6th graders. Views about the benefits of pair and teamwork to practice language ranged rather equally between "2" and "5" as no students chose the option "1" which represented total disagreement. The 11th graders saw more value in pair and teamwork as most students (13) opted for options "4" and "5". The 6th graders recognized some value, choosing the options "3" and "4" most frequently.

When asked about students' preferences about exercise lengths a third of all students did not have a definite preference, and the rest mostly preferred or totally preferred shorter exercises. Only one student from each group preferred longer exercises. The lesson conclusion question demonstrated differences between the two groups. The 11th graders chose fairly equally all options while the 6th graders did not have a specific preference or rather saw benefits in conclusions.

Comparing the two phases the 11th graders noticed better attention abilities during the second phase while the majority of the 6th graders observed no changes or being less attentive. Considering all students' answers, the general consensus indicates better attention abilities in the second phase. Additionally, one 11th grader praised the EFL lessons as being interesting and useful.

2.4.4 Teacher's diary

The teacher kept a digital diary (Appendix 6) throughout both phases of the experiment to see whether any changes were noticed in the students or whether the students' views and answers correlate with the teacher's opinions.

The **first phase** showed promising results to begin with. The 6th graders started the experiment slightly reluctantly and as time went by, they seemingly became more used to the idea of giving their phones away during EFL lessons. As the younger students do not demonstrate a lot of phone-related bad habits during the lessons, their attention improvement was not noticed a lot. The 11th graders started to ask significantly more questions such as translations or meanings and seemingly were more attentive throughout the first phase.

The **second phase** diary pointed out several aspects which differed from phase one. The first difference is the old habit of using phones, the students very apparently used their phones and did not seem to concentrate on the lesson. The 6th graders' attentiveness was evaluated better than 11th graders', however when a difficult task such as writing down grammar rules was presented, the students got visibly distracted and they started looking for other activities. The feedback from the diary expresses teacher satisfaction many times with both groups when an exercise went well and the students seemed to enjoy it.

2.5 Discussion

The first questionnaire that hosted questions about general and ICT-related distractions, presented similarities with other research findings. Attia et al (2017) claimed that most external distracting factors were caused by other students, which correlates to this study's findings, where all students reported 101 distractions by other students, whereas classroom only received 57 responses and teacher-related distractions 50 responses. However, the results disagreed with Behnke et al's (1981) findings, that 89.2% of all distractions are student-generated. Out of all responses about external and internal distracting factors only 23.4% of distractions were reported to be internal. Of course, both Behnke et al's and the research at hand have limitations, because a viewer in a classroom mostly notices what the student is doing, not how they are feeling, while the students in this study could under-rate distractions caused by themselves.

Aligolbandi et al (2015) claimed most typical self-produced distractors to be sleeping, eating, fantasising, and chatting. The results in this study both contradict and agree with the findings because the students' most chosen options were either illness or fantasising. Since Aligolbandi et al (2015) study was conducted among university students, the differences show the need for research done on younger students as well as the findings are not the same. The study's findings also correspond with Barrett et al's (2015) findings among which air quality was found to be one of the most significant distracting factors. Regarding teacher-related distractors the most reported statement was the teacher not letting students talk in their mother tongue, which could mean the students see the teacher as too controlling which according to Hein (2012) influences motivation, but not attention.

Additionally, general distractions showed an interesting difference between the two groups of 6th graders and 11th graders, mainly the absence of distractions. Around half of 11th graders noted having no distractions by both the classroom and the teacher. However, this occurrence could be explained by the lack of such an option in the questionnaire, which is why the 6th graders might have not come up with such an answer.

Regarding ICT devices in the EFL classroom, the 11th graders responses indicated more frequent use of phones as 9 students responded using their phones 2-3 times during the lesson, and 2 students using it more than 4 times. Goundar (2012) questioned tertiary students out of whom 76% responded not being distracted by their own phones. Similar results were found as 70.9% of both groups' students reported phones having a distracting effect on their attention with "1" or "2". The group of 6th graders also had some inconsistencies with their answers as ten students claimed not to use phones in class yet in the next question the number dropped to seven. Due to the fact that the 11th graders use their phones more during the lessons, it led to them to have more varied responses regarding the type of use and the reason of use. Both groups had students who answered that the consequence of using a phone in class results in the teacher writing a negative remark. However, the teacher has not written any negative remarks, hence the question arises whether the students started answering the questions based on all subjects or they answered what the teacher should do.

The second phase's results point out that 2/3 of the 6th graders do not see the need for short bouts of physical activity, whereas half of the 11th graders feel more attentive if they get to move for a moment. Adams (2018) suggests using communicative tasks to practice language skills. This research confirms that students feel the same as 59.3% students agreed with the statement that pair and teamwork help them practice language skills more, and only 15.6% of the students disagreed slightly. Regarding the length of the activities during the lesson, Wilson and Korn (2007) suggested an activity not to exceed 15 minutes. Both groups of students mostly agreed as 53.1% preferred shorter activities and 15.6% disagreed, preferring longer activities instead. That means not all students are the same and a method may not work on everyone. However, these results only show students' preferences not actual educational benefit as feelings and facts could differ.

Comparing the two phases the first phase received feedback on attention 3.5 out of 5, while the second phase received 4.0 out of 5. It is important to note that the first period received

a score of 2.8 from the 6th graders and 4.3 from the 11th graders, however, the second phase feedback scored 3.9 from the 6th graders and 4.2 from the 11th graders. The results between the two groups confirm the theory that the 6th graders benefit more from lesson activities and the 11th graders benefit from the lack of phones. Interestingly the 11th graders rated all attention related questions more positively in the second phase which leaves room for questions such as did the 6th graders not recognise any changes or were they uncomfortable with the changes?

The teacher diary hints the process of collecting phones before the lesson may be protested at first but settles down later on and the students start approaching it naturally and hand over their phones without the teacher asking. The diary refers multiple times to 11th graders' sudden increase regarding meaning, structure and translation. As the students were unable to use their phones, they turned towards the teacher which is beneficial because the answer might not only be useful to the student who asked but also to others. During the second phase, creating lesson plans was reported to be time-consuming for the teacher. Of course, the reason behind it could be that the teacher is still a novice in the profession and needs more time for research and planning. However, the activities can be used later as well hence making the effort a one-time thing.

The inconsistencies throughout the responses may have been caused by the questionnaire's language. The students are mostly children with Russian as their first language while the questionnaire was translated into simplified Estonian with examples if deemed needed. The students all show promising Estonian language skills, take part in language immersion, and the help of the teacher was available all throughout the process of filling the questionnaires, nevertheless the answers refer there being misunderstandings which may have been caused by the language barrier. The author suggests an extra lesson or cooperation with the questionnaire's target language teacher to revise and go over the vocabulary of the questionnaire before students do the survey.

The author concludes the results for both groups to be different. The 11th graders responses suggest them acknowledging the distraction their phones pose to them and seem to benefit from the lack of it more. However, the 6th graders are not invested in their phones as much yet and seem to benefit more from thorough lesson planning. The author proposes further research to find out when phones start to take over as the main distraction factor among students.

CONCLUSION

Attention consists of many factors, and it is hard to pinpoint exactly what influences students the most. In a standard learning environment, a student may get distracted by several reasons be it caused by other students, themselves, the teacher, the classroom or ICT devices. Therefore, the teacher must experiment with different methods which work with different students depending on their surroundings, capabilities and age.

This research focused on two pre-emptive attention loss methods - collecting phones before the lesson, and planning lessons based on recommended attention-improving aspects. The experiment was carried out on two groups of students, one in grade 6 and the other in grade 11. The target groups were chosen based on the lack of research among these age groups.

The results showed both similarities and differences between the groups, the latter being the most apparent. The consequences for having used phones during the lesson were perceived to be the same, as well as the activities they missed throughout the second phase. However, the groups often gave different feedback, for example what usually distracts them during the lesson, the frequency of using their phones, or phones' effect on their attention.

The feedback from students and the diary entries from the teacher reveal that the 6th graders seem to benefit more from the attention-improving aspects in lessons than simply collecting phones. However, the 11th graders feedback with teacher's diary suggests their attention to be enhanced by the teacher collecting their phones before the lesson. Undoubtedly not all students get distracted by the same factors and not all students benefit from the same methods, therefore it is up to the teacher to decide whether any exceptions or improvements should be made.

Due to the limitations of this research, where the exact moment when phones start becoming the main distraction is not known, the author suggests teachers experiment with both methods, preferably collecting phones among older students, and thorough lesson planning with younger students who visibly do not seem to be using their phones during the lessons. As

time goes by the age where students get more distracted by their phones changes, it is important for the teachers to be flexible and adjust their methods accordingly.

The author proposes and will implement the same changes, that the teacher should collect phones before the lesson with older students from the upper-secondary level, and the younger students' lessons be planned based on the aspects mentioned in this research. Nevertheless, following Dörnyei (2007) advice about avoiding potential teacher burnout, the aspects should be more of guidelines than rules, as such planning might be too time- and energy-consuming for novice teachers.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Starter questionnaire

Segavad tegurid inglise keele tunnis

Käesolev küsimustik käsitleb magistritöö uurimisteemat: "tähelepanu hoidmine inglise keele tunnis". Küsimustikus palun vastata küsimustele seoses üldiste segavate tegurite ja telefoni kasutamisest tekkinud segavate tegurite osas.

Aitäh, et osaled uuringus!

Milvi Rist

1. Siia palun kirjuta oma vastajakood

2. Sugu

Mees

Naine

Muu

Ei soovi avaldada

3. Vali oma klass

6. klass

11. klass

4. Märki kõik teistest õpilastest tulenenud tegurid, mis vähendavad sinu tähelepanu inglise keele tunnis

Kaasõpilase telefoni helisemine

Kaasõpilane tegeleb telefonis tunniväliste tegevustega (saadab sõnumeid, mängib, vaatab videosid jne.)

Kaasõpilaste omavaheline jutustamine

Kaasõpilased küsivad ebavajalikke küsimusi või teevad kommentaare

Kaasõpilaste füüsilised segamised (nt. pastaka klõpsutamine või jalaga toksimine)

Kaasõpilane on haige ja köhib / aevastab / nuuskab

Kaasõpilane jääb tundi hiljaks

Kaasõpilane lahkub tunnist varem

Kaasõpilane käib tunni ajal klassist sisse-välja (nt. läheb tualetti)

Kaasõpilane sööb tunni ajal

Kaasõpilane joob tunni ajal (vett, mahla, limonaadi)

Kaasõpilane magab tunni ajal

Kaasõpilane teeb tunni ajal teise õppeaine tööd

Kaasõpilane mängib mänguasjaga

Teised õpilased vaatavad läbi akna klassis toimuvat

Teised õpilased segavad klassiväliselt (nt. koputavad aknale)

Muu:

5. Märki kõik klassiruumist tulenenud tegurid, mis vähendavad sinu tähelepanu inglise keele tunnis

Klassis on häiriv lõhn

Klassis on umbne

Klassis on ebamugav (liiga pime, tool on halb, laud ei sobi jne.)

Klassis on visuaalselt segavad faktorid (pildid, plakatid, valgustid jne.)

Klass on liiga suur / väike

Klassist näeb välja koridori

Muu:

6. Märki kõik õpetajapoolsed tegurid, mis vähendavad sinu tähelepanu inglise keele tunnis

Õpetajast on raske aru saada (liiga keeruline keelekasutus, kiire rääkimine jne.)

Õpetaja liigutab liiga palju

Õpetaja räägib liiga palju (kordab öeldut)

Õpetaja ei selgita tunnikava (mis tunnis toimuma hakkab)

Õpetaja ei lase õpilastel rääkida / vastata

Õpetaja ei luba emakeeles tunnis rääkida

Õpetaja sunnib koos töötama kaasõpilasega kellega ma ei taha koos töötada

Õpetaja pahandab, kui teen tunnis vea

Harjutused tunnis on igavad või liiga samasugused

Muu:

7. Märki kõik sinust endast tulenevad tegevused, mis vähendavad sinu tähelepanu inglise keele tunnis

Minu telefon heliseb

Tegelen telefonis tunniväliste tegevustega (saadan sõnumeid, mängin, vaatan videosid jne.)

Jutustan teiste õpilastega

Mul on halb olla (olen haige)

Hilinen tundi Lahkun tunnist varem

Käin tunni ajal klassist väljas

Söön tunnis

Joon tunnis (vett, mahla, limonaadi)

Magan tunnis

Teen teise õppeaine tööd

Mängin mänguasjadega

Vaatan aknast välja õue / koridori

Muu:

Siin algavad küsimused seoses telefoni kasutusega inglise keele tunni ajal

8. Kannan koolis nutivahendeid* kaasas

*Nutivahendid: telefon, nutikell, Nintendo switch, iPod, tahvelarvuti, laptop

Jah

Ei

Pole nutivahendeid

9. Märgi sagedus, kui tihti kasutad inglise keele tunni ajal tunniväliste tegevuste jaoks telefoni

Ei kasuta tunni ajal nutivahendeid tunniväliseks tegevusteks

1 kord tunni jooksul

2-3 korda tunni jooksul

Rohkem kui 4 korda tunni jooksul

10. Märgi, mis eesmärgil tunnis telefoni kasutad

Ei kasuta telefoni tunniväliseks tegevusteks

Teavituste kontrollimine (kas keegi on kirjutanud)

Sõnumite saatmiseks

Veebis surfamiseks

Sotsiaalmeedia kasutamiseks (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter jne.)

Mängimiseks

Videote ja piltide vaatamiseks

eKooli vaatamiseks

Muusika kuulamiseks

Muu:

11. Märki, mis põhjustel sa telefoni tunnivälisteks tegevusteks kasutad

Ei kasuta telefoni tunnivälisteks tegevusteks

Et olla sõpradega / perega ühenduses

Meelelahutuseks

Tunnis on igav

Hädavajalikeks tegevusteks (nt. helistamine emale)

Aitab keskenduda (muusika, teavituste vaatamine)

Muu:

12. Kui kasutan tunnis telefoni, segab see minu keskendumist tunnitööle

Ei nõustu üldse 1 2 3 4 5 Nõustun täielikult

13. Märki, kuidas segab telefoni kasutamine tunnis kaasa mõtlemist

Ei suuda tunnis tähele panna (kuulata õpetajat või tegeleda tunnitegevustega)

Suudan osaliselt tähele panna (50/50)

Suudan väga hästi tunnis tähele panna ka telefoni kasutamise ajal

Muu:

14. Märki, mis on telefoni kasutamise tagajärjed inglise keele tunnis

Õpetaja kirjutab märkuse

Õpetaja paneb halva hinde eKooli

Õpetaja võtab telefoni tunni ajaks enda kätte

Õpetaja ütleb mulle halvasti

Õpetaja paneb mind mujale istuma

Õpetaja räägib telefoni kasutamisest lastevanematega

Õpetaja võtab järgmine kord enne inglise keele tundi telefoni ära

Õpetaja viib mu peale tundi / tunni ajal õppealajuhataja või direktori juurde

15. Pane kirja soovitused, kuidas inglise keele tunnis telefoni kasutamist vähendada.

16. Kas on midagi endal lisada?

Appendix 2 – Phase 1 questionnaire

Käesolev küsimustik käsitleb magistritöö uurimisteemat: "tähelepanu hoidmine inglise keele tunnis". Küsimustikus palun vastata küsimustele seoses telefonide ära korjamisega inglise keele tunniks perioodil 28.11-15.12.

Aitäh, et osaled uuringus!

Milvi Rist

1. Siia palun kirjuta oma vastajakood

2. Sugu

Mees

Naine

Muu

Ei soovi avaldada

3. Vali oma klass

6. klass

11. klass

4. Minu enda õppimisele suunatud tähelepanu inglise keele tunnis perioodil, mil telefonid tunni ajaks ära korjati

Halb (ei suutnud õppimisele tähelepanu suunata) 1 2 3 4 5 Hea
(suutsin hästi õppimisele keskenduda)

5. Minu enda õppimisele suunatud tähelepanu inglise keele tunnis oli parem, kui enne

Ei nõustu üldse 1 2 3 4 5 Nõustun täielikult

6. Tundsin end ilma telefonita inglise keele tunnis

Ebamugavalt (tahtsin pidevalt telefoni tagasi) 1 2 3 4 5 Kindlalt (ei tundnud telefonist puudust)

7. Õpetaja negatiivne tähelepanu seoses telefoni kasutamisega tunnivälisteks tegevusteks vähenes (mujale istuma panek, märkuse kirjutamine, telefoni konfiskeerimine jne.)

Ei nõustu üldse 1 2 3 4 5 Nõustun täielikult

8. Märgi tunnivälised telefoniga seonduvad tegevused inglise keele tunnis millest tundsid puudust

Ei tundnud puudust millestki

Teavituste kontrollimisest

Sõnumite saatmisest

Veebis surfamisest

Sotsiaalmeedia kasutamisest

Mängimisest

eKooli vaatamisest

Muusika kuulamisest

9. Kaasõpilaste õppimisele suunatud tähelepanu ilma telefonita inglise keele tunnis

Oli segav (leiti teisi tegevusi) 1 2 3 4 5 Oli toetav (keskenduti tunnis rohkem)

10. Üldine mõju telefoni puudumisel inglise keele tunnis

Oli negatiivne 1 2 3 4 5 Oli positiivne

11. Toetan inglise keele tunnis telefonide ära korjamist enne tunni algust

Jah

Ei

Muu:

12. Kas on midagi endal lisada?

Appendix 3 – Phase 2 questionnaire

Käesolev küsimustik käsitleb magistritöö uurimisteemat: "tähelepanu hoidmine inglise keele tunnis". Küsimustikus palun vastata küsimustele seoses telefonide ära korjamisega inglise keele tunniks perioodil 16.01-03.02.2023.

Aitäh, et osaled uuringus!

Milvi Rist

1. Siia palun kirjuta oma vastajakood

2. Sugu

Mees

Naine

Muu

Ei soovi avaldada

3. Vali oma klass

6. klass

11. klass

4. Minu enda õppimisele suunatud tähelepanu inglise keele tunnis viimase kolme nädala jooksul

Halb (ei suutnud õppimisele tähelepanu suunata) 1 2 3 4 5 Hea
(suutsin hästi õppimisele keskenduda)

5. Tajusin tundide struktuuris erinevust (harjutuste pikkused)

Ei tajunud 1 2 3 4 5 Tajusin küll

6. Märkasid tunnikavas muutust tavapärasest (harjutused, mida tunnis tegime)

Ei märganud 1 2 3 4 5 Märkasid

7. Kui vastasid eelmisele küsimusele 4-5 palli skaalal, palun täpsusta mida märkasid teisiti olevat?

8. Olen tunnis keskendunud, kui saan vahepeal korra liigutada (liikumispaus)

Ei nõustu üldse 1 2 3 4 5 Nõustun täielikult

9. Tunnis käsitleti kaasaegseid teemasid

Ei nõustu üldse 1 2 3 4 5 Nõustun täielikult

10. Tunnis toimuvad paaristööd ja rühmatööd aitavad mul rohkem keelt praktiseerida

Ei nõustu üldse 1 2 3 4 5 Nõustun täielikult

11. Eelistan lühikesi harjutusi pikkadele (15min vs 30min)

Ei nõustu üldse 1 2 3 4 5 Nõustun täielikult

12. Tunni lõpus tehtud kokkuvõte on minu jaoks kasulik (jätan paremini meelde)

Ei nõustu üldse 1 2 3 4 5 Nõustun täielikult

13. Tean, miks ma inglise keelt õpi

Ei nõustu üldse 1 2 3 4 5 Nõustun täielikult

14. Õppimisele suunatud tähelepanu oli parem nüüd, kui telefone ei korjatud ära

Ei nõustu üldse 1 2 3 4 5 Nõustun täielikult

15. Sii saad lisada muid mõtteid mis tekkisid küsimustikku täites

Appendix 4 – 6th grade lesson plans

16.01.2023

Tell your deskmate what you think the weather will be like tomorrow. (2min)

Checking future simple homework (5min)

Kahoot on past, present, and future simple (10min)

Quiz on simple tenses with keywords- fill the gaps (5min)

All students grab a quiz sheet from the teacher's table

Arctica VS Antarctica video, discussion (5+2min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z5VRoGTF60s>

Vocabulary slideshow on Canva (5min)

Reading the text from TB p.79 (10min)

Recap: say one word you memorized in this lesson (1min)

Homework: learn the vocabulary and do WB p.62 ex.110

18.01.2023

With your deskmate, revise the vocabulary, quiz (2+5min)

Checking homework (3min)

Count to eight and find your partner. Make a list of clothing and items you would need to survive 24 h in Antarctica (8min)

Present your ideas to class (5min)

Into NB: past continuous rules and examples (10min)

Kahoot on past continuous (verbs and word order) (10min)

Recap: when and how do we use the past continuous? (2min)

Homework: memorize how to use past continuous

19.01.2023

Brief verbal recall: "What did we do last time?" (2min)

Quick revision of past continuous with Kahoot (5min)

WB p.66 ex.1, check (5+2min)

Quiz on past continuous (5min)

Past continuous vs past simple learning video (8min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QJ2x20GmUTs>

Recalling winter-related verbs and acting them out (5min)

Make sentences and then colour WB p.66 ex.2(11min)

Recap: what is the difference between past simple and past continuous? (2min)

Homework: finish ex.2 if necessary

24.01.2023

Show the students a picture of a dictionary, and discuss with your deskmate what you think the lesson will be about (2min)

What is a dictionary and how can we use those to our advantage? Modern-day dictionary? (2min)

Reading TB p.90 (10min) discussing vocabulary on the go
Comprehension WB p.5 ex.126, check (10+2min)

Revising the alphabet with a funny video (5min)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uw_o_eSCwmM

Let's put ourselves in alphabetical order by first names and if needed, last names (5min)

Alphabetical order WB p.5 ex.124, check (3+1min)

Teaching ABC song (3min)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F-WwjTxvo_U

Recap: revision of newly learnt vocabulary (2min)

Homework: alphabetical order TB p.91 ex.7.4

25.01.2023

Revision of past continuous: tell your deskmate what were you doing at 7 in the morning today. (2min)

Past continuous and past simple together, rules and examples into NB (10min)

To practice WB p.5 ex.125, check (5min+3min)

Kahoot on past simple and continuous (5min)

Draw 5 groups with sticks and find your teammates (2min)

Students get 3 vowels and 7 consonants. How many words can you form with different combinations? (10min)

Vowels and consonants into NB (5min)

To practice WB p.7 ex.132 (2min)

Recap: what are vowels and what are consonants? How many of each can we see in these two words “vowel” and “consonant”?

Homework: WB p.10 ex.1

26.01.2023

Open discussion with the class, what languages do we know that use a different letter system/alphabet? (3min)

Students get a worksheet with 20 different languages saying “hello”. In pairs, the students must try and connect the language to the appropriate country (5min)

TB p.92 reading and vocabulary on Canva presentation tool (10min)

Try spelling your name using the Katakana chart in TB (2min). Stand up, move around and introduce yourself to others as such. (3min)

Comprehension WB p.6-7 ex.129-130 (10min)

Compose a story about your morning (min 5 sentences) and translate it into symbols or pictures. In the next class, all students must re-tell their story using only the symbols or pictures. (10min)

Recap: What vocabulary did we learn today? Everyone says one word which was new to them (2min)

Homework: finish the story about your morning.

31.01.2023

A picture of a typewriter - do you know what it is and what can be done with it? Discuss with your partner (2min)

Modern-day typewriter: a computer + printer

Reading TB p.95 (10min)

Sometimes we don't need all the letters or correct order. Trying to read a scrambled text (on screen) (2min)

Answer the questions into your NB from p.96 ex. 7.10 (8min)

Typing test: how fast can you type? All students come up to the teacher's table and grab a laptop (7min)

<https://www.typing.com/student/tests>

Revision of prepositions: Canva + quick guessing round with a pen and a penholder (where is it?) (5min)

Underline all prepositions TB p.97 ex.2 (3min)

Discuss expressions meaning (2min)

Prepositions from WB p.8 ex.136 (3min)

Recap: what is a typewriter and name an expression with a preposition we learnt today (3min)

Homework: memorize the prepositions in the phrases

01.02.2023

What have we learnt in Unit 7? (2min)

Pair work (draw pairs with sticks): work with an online dictionary: Cambridge Dictionary
Find the definitions and pronunciation of the words in the list (15min)

Past vs present verbs game in the hallway (5min)

Revision of past continuous and simple together - worksheet (10min)

Revision of Unit 7 prepositions- Kahoot (10min)

Recap: what online dictionary can we use? Name one word and its meaning you remember from the word list (3min)

Homework: past continuous and past simple, prepositions, vowels and consonants, alphabet

02.02.2023

Filling out the questionnaires (15min)

Unit 7 test (30min) (with a break in the middle to stretch for 2 minutes)

Past continuous and past simple (combine the sentences)

Prepositions (fill the sentences with the correct prepositions)

Vowels and consonants (write out which ones can you see in the word)

Alphabetical order (list the words alphabetically)

Appendix 5 – 11th grade lesson plans

17.01.2023

Short revision and quiz on vocabulary. Using a ball I will ask everyone a word in English. (5min)

Discussing the commentary on page 8 in pairs (question 1). (2min)
Questions 2-4 open discussion. (3min)

How to perform a monologue? (5min)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9b0mzm7jDEs&t=14s>

Monologues preparation with the whole class (15min)

- introduction
- main body
- conclusion
- Phrases
 - (Personally,) I believe / think that... OPINION
 - To begin with... POSITIVES
 - Additionally I would like to say that...
 - It could be argued that... NEGATIVES
 - Finally, I would like to highlight that...IF ANYTHING ADDITIONAL
 - To sum up... CONCLUSION

Monologue p.8 (mind map on the whiteboard) (5min) monologues in pairs (2min for each) with thinking time (8min)

Conclusion (2min)

Homework: match the synonyms in ex.2

18.01.2023

Introductory questions: (5min)

- does anyone make art?
- what art can we make?
- what do we use to make art?

Making art with brief discussion (7min)

https://www.ted.com/talks/jordana_moore_saggese_the_chaotic_brilliance_of_artist_jean_michel_basquiat

Reading the text out loud on p.9 (10min)

Vocabulary task independently (5min)

Lithography video and discussion: (10min)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G0So4M7Tbis>

TB p.10 discussion in groups of 3 assigned by the teacher (students get up and find their teammates) - achieving balance in your everyday life (5min)

Recap: What did we learn today? (3min)

Homework: memorize the synonyms in ex.2

20.01.2023

Verbal revision and quiz on vocab (2+5 min)

BBC 1-minute news and oral discussion (7min)

Discuss vocabulary (10min)

Anguish - pain / piin

Identifying - recognize / tuvastamine

Remark - comment / märkus

Effect - result / mõju

Lasting - enduring / püsiv

Depicted - represent on a picture / kujutatud

Invested - fund or put into / investeeritud

Decide - determine / otsustama

Moves - advance / liigutused

Evidence - proof / tõend

Portray - describe / kehastama

Appreciate - value / hindama

Stages - phases / etapid

Informed - knowledgeable / teadlik

Analysing - examine / analüüsimine

Elements - components / elemendid või loodusjõud

Wondering - think about / mõtlema

Perform - carry out / täitma

Adaptations - modification / kohandused

Contribute - play a part in / kaasa aitama

Historians - archivist / ajaloolane

1 minute stretching pause (1 min)

Reading task p.10 fill the gaps with the vocabulary above (15min)

Check your answers with your deskmate and find the middle ground (3min)

Recap: what did we learn today? (2min)

Homework: learn the vocabulary

24.01.2023

Verbal revision and quiz on vocab (2+5 min)

(Let students practice in pairs asking each other for the synonyms)

Reading the task out loud p.10 and checking answers (8min)

Finding adjectives (synonyms for “good”- which do we know and how strong/weak are they)
(5min)

Song on regular vs extreme adjectives, discussion (5+2min)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uLWQCL26kEY>

Students come to the teacher’s table to collect worksheets (1min)

Pairing adjectives with their stronger equivalents- independently (10min)

Checking the pairs (5min)

Recap: everyone says one adjective pair that was new to them (2min)

Homework: memorize 10 adjective pairs you found most useful

25.02.2023

Verbal revision and quiz on vocab (2+5 min)

Everyone says 3 pairs to revise

Who is Vincent van Gogh? What do we know about him? open discussion (4min)

TB p.13 read the three paragraphs (13min)

Students come and take a slip of paper with statements and answer T/F/NI statements in pairs
(5min)

Check answers, why so? (5min)

Short history of Gogh, discussion (5+2min)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hHDwU_h5IyE

Sunflowers being vandalized, discussion (2min)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BN-C5N60u_M

Recap: what did we learn today? (2min)

Homework: revise Unit 1

31.01.2023

Test on Unit 1 (45min)

01.02.2023

Commentary about the test- what went well? what not? (1min)

Speak to your deskmate and discuss what you think the lesson will be about? (2min)

Show the students the picture:



Speaking strategies for picture description, comparison, and contrast into NB (15min)

Students must propose ideas and phrases

Looking at the same picture we saw before, how could we describe it? Every student uses a phrase and says something about it (5min)

Dividing students into random pairs and each will choose a picture card (backwards); instructions for the activity (5min)

Preparation time: 3 minutes (what are you going to say?) emphasize: IN REALITY 1 MIN!

Both students time each other and speak for 2 minutes (3+4min)

Draw new random pairs and choose another card, this time only 1 minute of preparation time! (4+4min)

Recap: was it difficult? What was the most difficult thing about it? (2min)

Homework: memorize at least 5 phrases we can use describing a picture

03.02.2023

Fill the questionnaire (15min)

With your deskmate speak about the picture card for 2 minutes as practiced in the last lesson (2+2min)

Warm-up listening and open discussion (5min)

Count to four and make groups. Discuss pre-reading questions about gap years (on the screen) (5min)

Gap year video, opinions (5+2min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tABllcI9GSQ>

Discuss vocabulary from the text (5min)

Recap: each student expresses their opinion of a gap year, with 1 sentence (4min)

Homework: learn the vocabulary

Appendix 6 – teacher’s diary

Experiment phase 1

28.11.2022 6th grade- were quite against giving their phones away but still all did so. They were very chatty and it didn’t seem to help the study process. Perhaps it was just a Monday thing or they were excited about the project.

30.11.2022 6th grade- were normal to handle, it was either my own calm state or students were positively affected by the process.

30.11.2022 11th grade- had to finish their essays without phones to rely on translations. They asked for many translations regarding the vocabulary, which is good because it makes them think. The first day for them was quite successful and beneficial. They missed their phones dearly.

01.12.2022 6th grade- as they walked into the classroom they already wanted to give away their phones, yet I wanted to play Kahoot first. This time I didn't hear any complaints about the matter and the process seemed to work fine. Of course, this time I had a spectator in my class, so it is logical that the students behave as well as possible.

02.12.2022 11th grade- Older students per usual ask a lot more questions about vocabulary and meanings. This is actually nice because they might remember such instances better and actually learn the vocabulary.

05.12.2022 6th grade- It was a test day for the students. Honestly, I think using mobile phones is one of the most popular cheating methods and since the students don't have that option they might study more beforehand. The results were better than some of the other tests we have had.

06.12.2022 11th grade- We only had five students this time and I cannot gather accurate results from that because the students are much more attentive when there are less people.

07.12.2022 6th grade- This time I had a University observer in my class and the students behaved better than regular anyways. Of course, the downside this time was that when we discuss a new topic and I would like to do an online poll, it takes so much more time because the students have to get their phones first and after the activity comes and give them back. So again time plays against collecting phones, but is it worse than all the benefits I've seen?

07.12.2022 11th grade- Upper secondary school students are very attached to their phones and still mention and try to slither their way out of it, which is not surprising because using phones is like an addiction. Yet I still see some improvement in their development.

08.12.2022 6th grade- It is unquestionable that the teacher and lesson activities influence students' ability to concentrate yet I would argue that collecting phones is also efficient. The lesson flowed nicely and I think the students are slowly accepting their fate and don't mind the

09.12.2022 11th grade- Yet again I am tormented with the non-stop amount of questions. Sometimes I even get stuck and need to figure out how to explain the words because some words you cannot translate and some need more complicated explanations. I am also learning and developing in English as I am a human dictionary for them.

12.12.2022 6th grade- The lesson was quite a chaos because we had so many things to discuss like canceled lessons and free time activities, hence it didn't even matter if they had their phones or not. Only I realized that another benefit is that they would learn to live without their phones as well (during off time I can see how they sit in their phones between all lessons).

13.12.2022 11th grade- It was once again quiz time and it showed immensely how the students who attended classes performed 50% better than those who didn't. Furthermore, it is harder for them to cheat on the tests which is also to their own benefit, since they actually need to learn the topic in order to have a passing grade.

14.12.2022 6th grade- Collecting phones didn't give any results regarding manners, yet I think the students are more able to concentrate during my lessons. Of course it might also be sort of a placebo effect where I think they study better but actually the topics suit them better.

14.12.2022 11th grade- During movie lessons there are always those students who would rather sit on their phones than watch the actual movie. This time they all watched it and actually tried to pay attention since they cannot do anything else. This shows how even during fun lessons collecting phones is beneficial.

16.12.2022 11th grade- We continued with the movie, since most of the students were away it was only five of them and all watched the movie quietly. I think they would've been in their phones if not for my project/experiment

20.12.2022 11th grade- During the last lesson of the period we finished the movie and fixed some undone work and negative grades. As I previously mentioned the students actually paid attention to the movie because they didn't have the distracting factors as they usually would have had. Fixing the grades went per usual since I don't allow phones on the table during quizzes or tests.

Experiment phase 2

17.01.2023 11th grade- The lesson had a good flow overall and the students seemed to be engaged. However, I noticed some students here and there peek into their phones. Developing different skills in the same lesson offers a nice change and doesn't tire the students.

16.01.2023 6th grade- the lesson was quite hectic at the beginning since students seemed to be tired. Overall the lesson was fine but no significant changes were seen.

18.01.2023 6th grade- the pace for the lesson was quite quick so the students couldn't interrupt much and had to pay attention, which they did, and it was great! Although as soon as we get down to difficult subjects such as writing down grammar, they get bored and start doing other things.

18 .01.2023 11th grade- the students obviously do not care that much for art and it shows. They tend to lean into their phones again and again. Otherwise, the videos were supportive and I, myself, found the lesson multifunctional.

19.01.2023 6th grade- We didn't manage the whole plan I had made for the lesson and didn't get to coloring at all. Otherwise, it was a hectic lesson because the students were too hungry to function (their words).

20.01.2023 11th grade- A year ago I quit BBC 1-minute news due to the awful scenes (Ukrainian war) they showed which seemed a bit too much for even upper secondary school students. Now the news pieces have been more varied and I decided to try watching the news again. The students were engaged with the lesson and I didn't notice a problem with students' attention.

24.01.2023 11th grade- the song was funny and a hit among the students but the topic seemed a bit boring for them. Although the students have been in contact with some of the extreme adjectives, they don't regularly use them so the topic is important. I noticed they were attentive overall with some exceptions.

24.01.2023 6th grade- students loved the videos and they kept them engaged with the lesson. Physical activity caused a commotion and it took us a bit more time than I expected. Overall the lesson went great.

25.01.2023 11th grade- the lesson was nice, and the students seemed to be attentive. During the reading task and videos, I noticed some students being on their phones, even though I found the videos educational and interesting. I think some students are just used to being in their phones all the time, regardless of the lesson.

25.01.2023 6th grade- students seemed to enjoy the game, they liked to make words and tried to pass me words which aren't even in the dictionary. Overall, a good lesson.

26.01.2023 6th grade- the students really enjoyed the Japanese familiarization as they could practice their names in Japanese. Although, it was a bit difficult to get the excitement down and do the comprehension exercises. It seemed the students enjoyed making their own language but due to the next task being re-telling the story most of the students opted for pictures. Overall the students were engaged and no big distractions could be noticed.

31.01.2023 11th grade- during the tests I do not allow phones and since the students are being graded they try their hardest. No difference.

31.01.2023 6th grade- a typewriter isn't something the students can really relate to and that is the reason why they weren't really excited about the topic. When we reached the typing test the students got a little rowdy and couldn't concentrate as much, also they whined a bit that it was in English not Russian, which is understandable because even the keyboard is different. However, I think since the handicap was for most students then it still is accurate. Prepositions they remembered and it wasn't really that hard just a dull topic. The students weren't very relaxed and were quite talkative throughout the lesson.

01.02.2023 6th grade- online dictionary task was interesting to them and since it was a pair work it was a bit chatty now and then, no one used their phone and were on the laptops instead. The other tasks went quite smoothly as well, and the students seemed to be attentive, probably because of their fear about the upcoming test.

01.02.2023 11th grade- I believe writing up phrases and sentences for the students to use is very beneficial. The students, besides some being absent all the time, were engaged and eagerly wrote them down and even offered different solutions. The students definitely know the importance of the examination and prepare for it. The enthusiasm was encouraging for me, a teacher, as well.

02.02.2023 6th grade- questionnaires always take different amounts of time for each student and the quicker ones get bored and start disrupting others, the test itself went nicely and no disruptions there.

03.02.2023 11th grade- this time again I had to remind the students to not focus on their phones. It seems the phone problem is very evident after the first testing period. The group is divided into three: those who don't use phones, those who do it all the time, and those who can still sort of concentrate while occasionally using their phones.

RESÜMEE

TARTU ÜLIKOOL
ANGLISTIKA OSAKOND

Milvi Marle Rist

Pre-empting Attention Loss: Exploring Methods to Stay Focused in the EFL Classroom

Tähelepanu kaotamise ennetamine: keskendumise meetodite uurimine EFL tunnis

Magistritöö

2023

Lehekülgede arv: 71

Magistritöös uuritakse tähelepanukaotuse ennetamiseks kahte võimalikku kasutatavat meetodit.

Magistritöö koosneb sissejuhatusest, kahest peatükist, kokkuvõttest, kirjanduse loetelust ja kuuest lisast. Sissejuhatuses antakse ülesaaide selle kohta, miks valiti uurimistöö teemaks tähelepanu kaotamise ennetamine läbi kahe erineva meetodi.

Tänapäevases arenenud maailmas on üha enam probleemiks õpilaste IKT vahendite kasutamine ajal, mil nad seda tegema ei peaks. Uurimistöö eesmärgiks on kasutada kahte erinevat meetodit

Esimeses peatükis antakse lugejale ülevaade tähelepanu alustest - kuidas ja millal need inimeses kujunevad ning millised aspektid neid mõjutavad. Tähelepanu viivad sageli õppimisest eemale segavad faktorid mis on nii õpilasest endast sõltuvad, õpilasest sõltumatud kui ka IKT põhjustatud tähelepanu kaotamine. Viimases alapeatükis kirjeldatakse tähelepanu kaotamise ennetamist, miks on seda vaja ning soovitusi õppekeskkonnas kasutamiseks.

Teine peatükk sisaldab uuringus osalejate tutvustust, meetodeid ja tulemusi. Uuringu sihtgrupiks võeti 6. klass ja 11. klass, kus mõlema grupi suurus on sarnane (vastavalt 17 ja 16 õpilast), kuna varasemalt tehtud uuringud tugenevad suurel mahul kõrgkooliõpilastele ning põhikooli- ja gümnaasiumiastme õpilaste kohta tulemused jäävad vajaka. Seetõttu on hea võrrelda mõlema grupi sarnasusi ja erinevusi. Meetod hõlmasid endas kahte erinevat varianti-telefonide ära korjamine enne tundi ja tundide planeerimine tegevustega, mis toetavad tähelepanu säilitamist. Mõlema grupi õpilased vastasid nii enne kui ka peale mõlemat eksperimenti küsimustiku, mis käsitlesid küsimusi nii õpilaste vaadete ja kogemuste kohta.

Uuringu tulemusel selgus, et nii õpetaja kui ka õpilased nõustusid, et 6. klass saab rohkem kasu tähelepanu soodustavate tundide arvelt ja 11. klass telefonide ära korjamisest.

Märksõnad: inglise keel, tähelepanu, segavad faktorid, IKT vahendite mõju tähelepanule, tundide planeerimine.

Lihtlitsents lõputöö reprodutseerimiseks ja üldsusele kättesaadavaks tegemiseks

Mina, Milvi Marle Rist,

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