Article

Teachers' Insights into the Efficacy of the 'Reading Circle' Project Using English Language Teaching Graded Readers

Inga Linde and Linda Daniela *

Faculty of Education Sciences and Psychology, University of Latvia, LV-1083 Riga, Latvia; inga.linde@lu.lv
* Correspondence: linda.daniela@lu.lv

Abstract: The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024, published by the United Nations, highlights quality education as a priority goal, emphasising its essential role in facilitating the achievement of other goals. Although there has been modest progress since 2019, several areas require further advancement, including the development of reading skills. Extensive reading plays an important role in foreign language acquisition, as it not only significantly enhances students' vocabulary, text comprehension, reading, speaking, and writing skills, but also fosters the development of sustainable learning and self-regulated learning skills. In order to substantially increase students' reading opportunities, the 'Reading Circle' (RC) project was initiated, allowing teachers and their students to read five to eight graded readers during English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes throughout the school year. During the school year 2023/2024, 45 teachers and 1328 students of Grades 3–11 participated in the 9-month project. The aim of this study was to analyse teachers' perceptions on the efficacy of the 'Reading Circle' project and the most common teaching techniques. The data indicate that the most commonly used teaching techniques across all levels of language learning were the text discussions and the completion of ready-made exercises, while a significant difference across the levels emerged in the techniques of students reading aloud versus reading silently. The findings of this study reveal that teachers highly evaluated the benefits of the project and observed positive improvements in students' reading motivation, text comprehension, and advancements in their reading and speaking skills, and the outcomes imply that the 'Reading Circle' project is an effective method of enhancing sustainable learning and self-regulated learning skills.

Keywords: extensive reading; reading motivation; language skills; graded readers; self-regulated learning; sustainable teaching and learning

1. Introduction

Quality education is one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outlined at the United Nations (UN) forum in 2015, highlighting the necessity to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" (UN, 2015, Goal 4). The SDG Report 2024 pointed out that, despite some progress, the global advancement in education had been insufficient, and thus particular attention should be paid to addressing critical issues such as teacher shortages, limited professional development opportunities for educators, and the improvement of students' reading skills. Furthermore, the advancement of quality education (SDG4) was prioritised, as quality education serves as a focal point in achieving many other Sustainable Development Goals (UN, 2024).

The OECD PISA 2022 Results on students' performance reveal that fifteen-year-olds in Latvia achieved an average reading score of 475 points, slightly below the OECD country average of 476 points (OECD, 2023). There was also an observable gender gap in Latvia, with girls outperforming boys in reading by 28 points. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that there is a significant negative trend, as the scores of 2018 and 2022 decreased in comparison to the scores of 2012 or 2015 (OECD, 2023), which means that there is space for improvement and more attention should be paid to the advancement of reading skills.

These results show a decline in students' reading literacy. Although the above-mentioned results relate to students' performance in their native language (L1), and it might seem that there is no direct correlation with the acquisition of a second/foreign language (L2), numerous studies prove that not only is literacy in L1 greatly related to the acquisition of various other areas of knowledge, as reading and understanding a text is like a code for acquiring other knowledge, but there is also a possibility of transferring skills among languages (Kim et al., 2021; Mikulec & Vuić, 2019), and thus it is vitally important to encourage students' reading motivation and reading engagement through exposure to extensive reading. The focus of this study is on promoting reading in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning.

In the education system in Latvia, all students acquire general foreign language skills up to Grade 9, while in Grades 10–12, a foreign language can be acquired at three levels: (a) the general level of learning; (b) the optimal level of learning; and (c) the highest level of learning (Cabinet of Ministers, 2019). The development of foreign language skills at both general and optimal levels is primarily grounded in general language acquisition. However, the study content offered in the model curriculum for the highest course in EFL in general secondary education (Skola2030, 2019a) includes ER and focuses mostly on tasks related to the analysis of different types of texts, which underlines the key role of both extensive and intensive reading skills in the acquisition of EFL at the upper secondary level. Therefore, it is crucially important to develop students' reading skills, sustainable learning, and self-regulated learning skills from a young age so that students can achieve these aims during schooling, which would also significantly influence and benefit their future career, lifelong learning, and well-being.

Nevertheless, there is a significant gap between the above-mentioned education policy regulations and recommendations (Cabinet of Ministers, 2019; OECD, 2023; UN, 2015, 2024) on the one hand, and the real situation in the education system in Latvia related to EFL teaching on the other hand, such as (a) the current shortage of teachers in the education system, which leads to a high teacher workload; (b) the low number of EFL lessons in some levels of education; (c) the fact that, in some schools, students in EFL lessons are not divided into groups, so teachers have to work with two groups of students (up to 32 students) together; and (d) the lack of available sets of EFL graded readers in school libraries.

The necessity of developing students' reading skills and the habit of reading on a regular basis on the one hand, and the current situation in the education system in Latvia on the other hand, provided a solid foundation for initiating the 'Reading Circle' (RC) project, which was subsequently launched with the aim of fostering students' reading motivation and promoting students' reading skills.

The RC project represents an innovative initiative, implemented for the first time in Latvia, aimed at addressing the gap between the aforementioned education policy aims and the real situation within the education system. This project offers a remarkable opportunity to enhance not only students' reading skills but also a broad range of related competences, including reading habits, reading motivation, EFL skills, self-regulated learning, and sustainable learning skills. Furthermore, as a long-term project, it provides

valuable insights not only from teachers who have participated in the RC project for a single year but also from those involved since its inception.

2. Literature Review

The reforms implemented in the education system in Latvia through the introduction of a competence-based curriculum emphasise not only the revised curriculum, but also the enhancement of students' transversal skills, with self-regulated learning (SRL) being one of the six key transversal skills (Skola2030, 2019b). SRL is an expansive concept, encompassing learners who proactively engage in their own learning process and can initiate and employ a wide range of cognitive, metacognitive, motivational, and behavioural processes to set and reach their personal goals (Pintrich, 2004; Zimmerman, 2002, 2015).

Researchers acknowledge that SRL is a cyclical process driven by a continuous feedback loop comprising three phases: (a) the forethought phase, (b) the performance phase, and (c) the self-reflection phase; throughout these phases, learners strategically plan their learning, implement suitable strategies, monitor their progress, and engage in self-reflection to support their ongoing personal development and further academic achievement (Cousins et al., 2022; Linde et al., 2023, 2024b; Panadero, 2017; Zimmerman & Moylan, 2009; Zimmerman et al., 2015, 2017).

Scholars recognise extensive reading (ER) as an essential approach to teaching reading that involves engaging with large amounts of simple texts to understand the general meaning, acquire information, and derive pleasure and enjoyment (Day, 2011, 2015; Grabe, 2008; Grabe & Stoller, 2019; Grabe & Yamashita, 2022). Scientists world-wide have researched the advantages of incorporating ER in EFL learning and have recognised its valuable contributions to the increase in (a) reading rate (Bell, 2001; Iwahori, 2008; Taguchi et al., 2004), (b) general language proficiency (Bell, 2001; Iwahori, 2008; Sheu, 2003), (c) reading proficiency (Jeon & Day, 2016; Nakanishi, 2015), (d) writing proficiency (Mason & Krashen, 1997), (e) reading comprehension and vocabulary (Grabe & Yamashita, 2022), (f) attitude (Asraf & Ahmad, 2003), and (g) motivation (Nishino, 2007; Takase, 2007).

It is important to acknowledge that the 'reading circle' or 'literature circle', and the 'Reading Circle (RC) project' discussed in this article, represent fundamentally different concepts. The 'literature circle' concept was initially introduced in the 1980s as a novel approach to teaching literature and reading to native English-speaking (L1) students in Language Arts classes. This approach was rooted in the established framework of adult literacy structures developed by voluntary reading groups and adapted for integration into public school settings (Daniels, 2006). Only later, after the 2000s, was it adapted to be applied to and used in 'reading circles' in an EFL or second language (L2) learning context (Furr, 2011). Although some of the principles of the 'reading or literature circles' used in L1 or L2 contexts may differ, they were based on students working in small, peer-led groups that met regularly to discuss a shared literary text with each participant sharing their interpretations, and this process was primarily facilitated by assigning specific roles or targeted tasks to each student to complete while reading (Daniels, 2001, 2006; Furr, 2004, 2011).

The RC project did not request the assigning of specific roles to each student, and teachers had the autonomy to use any methods they considered the most appropriate. However, in order to reach the aims of the launched RC project and foster students' reading motivation, it was recommended that greater emphasis should be placed on employing ER. Consequently, the RC project fully involved seven out of the ten ER principles suggested by Day and Bamford (2002, pp. 137–139):

1. The reading material is easy.
2. A variety of reading material on a wide range of topics must be available.

3. Learners read as much as possible.
4. The purpose of reading is usually related to pleasure, information, and general understanding.
5. Reading speed is usually faster rather than slower.
6. Teachers orient and guide their students.
7. The teacher is a role model of a reader.

The following three out of the ten ER principles suggested by Day and Bamford (2002, pp. 137–139) were partly involved in this research:

8. Learners choose what they want to read.
9. Reading is its own reward.
10. Reading is individual and silent.

The principle 'learners choose what they want to read' was partly implemented. While teachers at each stage of the RC received a designated book, there were numerous cases where they were able to foster students' autonomy in selecting the reading material. For example, if the book consisted of several separate stories, teachers could provide students the choice to read a definite number of them according to students' abilities and interests, or organise the work in groups.

Secondly, while in most cases 'reading was its own reward', at the same time, teachers' professionalism was entrusted and teachers could choose and design a project or group work, or assign a task based on the material they had read and provide an assessment. Finally, the principle 'reading is individual and silent' was partly applied, as this is not always the most suitable strategy, particularly at the primary level, as at the initial language development stage of language learning it is important to develop appropriate pronunciation skills, and it is necessary to provide ongoing support for students with weaker language skills, lower self-confidence, or insufficient SRL skills in order to develop sustainable learning skills.

Sustainable learning holds significant importance in contemporary education and can be attained through the implementation of effective and sustainable teaching practices (Graham et al., 2015). Ben-Eliyahu (2021) claims that sustainable learning in education (SLE) encompasses a set of strategies and competencies that empower learners to continuously adapt, innovate, reuse resources, engage in critical inquiry, maintain openness to diverse perspectives, and effectively cope with complex and challenging situations that necessitate ongoing learning and relearning, and identified four key dimensions of SLE: (a) continuous renewal and relearning, (b) fostering both independent and collaborative learning, (c) promoting active engagement in the learning process, and (d) enhancing the SRL ability to transfer knowledge and skills across different contexts. All of these four dimensions are embedded in SRL (Ben-Eliyahu, 2021) in the implementation of the phases of the cyclical continuous feedback loop (Panadero, 2017; Zimmerman & Moylan, 2009; Zimmerman et al., 2015, 2017), and are present also in the RC project as key components.

Consequently, the RC project was conceptualised and implemented based on a thorough review of prior research highlighting the pivotal role and benefits of ER (Day, 2011, 2015; Grabe, 2008; Grabe & Stoller, 2019; Grabe & Yamashita, 2022), the foundational principles of ER (Day & Bamford, 2002), SRL (Cousins et al., 2022; Linde et al., 2023, 2024b; Panadero, 2017; Zimmerman & Moylan, 2009; Zimmerman et al., 2015, 2017), and sustainable learning (Graham et al., 2015; Ben-Eliyahu, 2021). The primary aim of the RC project was to foster students' reading motivation and language skills, but as the RC project was designed as a year-long initiative, it not only promoted students' reading habits but also concurrently incorporated the development of students' SRL and sustainable learning skills.

2.1. Project Context

The first author of this article is the president of the Latvian Association of Teachers of English, and in 2019, after attending the 53rd International IATEFL Conference in Liverpool and being inspired by the Pearson English speaker's Philip Warwick's outstanding speech 'Don't refresh the page, refresh yourself—reading in digital worlds', the idea of the Reading Circle (RC) project was proposed by the author of the article and was supported by the Pearson Regional Manager for the Baltics, and the RC project was launched by the Latvian Association of Teachers of English (LATE) in cooperation with Pearson. The project was advertised during the LATE Annual Conference 2019 and any EFL teacher volunteering to participate in the project could apply. The main inclusion criteria were the teachers' motivations for taking part in the project, which they outlined in the application form, as well as ensuring that the project would involve as many schools as possible and would cover all regions of Latvia. However, due to the great interest in the project, priority was given to the members of LATE.

The RC project provided the opportunity for teachers and students involved in the project to read 5–8 graded readers (GRs) in EFL lessons during the school year. In most schools in Latvia, in EFL lessons, students are divided into two groups with up to 16 students per group. Thus, the project was structured in a way that each teacher received a set of 16 + 1 books, read them over a designated period, and then forwarded the set of books to the next teacher in the RC, while receiving a new set of books in exchange.

Throughout the RC project, class readers were used, which allowed all students in the class to engage with the same graded reader simultaneously. Class readers are regarded as particularly beneficial in the early stages of ER because they (a) allow the teacher to organise and manage the reading process for the entire group, thereby supporting students with weaker language abilities or less-developed SRL skills to actively participate; (b) are effective for developing ER skills, such as grasping key content and predicting events, inferring vocabulary from context without translating every single word; and (c) enable the provision of uniform homework, exit tasks, and assessments for all students, which enhances reliability since everyone is evaluated based on their ability to handle the same reading material (Parminter & Bowler, 2011).

While working in the RC project, teachers' professionalism and ability to determine the most suitable teaching techniques was highly valued, as teachers have the most comprehensive knowledge of their audience, and thus they were empowered and provided autonomy to use any teaching techniques they considered to be the most appropriate for their students' age group, language proficiency, language learning needs, and objectives to meet the aims of the project. Teachers shared and analysed their experience and discussed good practice examples of using different teaching techniques with their students during the projects' Zoom meetings held four times a year.

2.2. Development of the RC Project

In the first year (school year 2019/2020), one RC was launched for Grade 6 students (see Table 1). After its successful completion, in 2020/2021, a RC for Grade 7 was added. In the following year, a RC for Grade 8 was added, and a Young Learners RC was launched for Grade 3. In the fourth year, the Young Learners' RC was extended to Grade 4, and RCs for secondary school students of Grades 10 and 11 were added. In 2023/2024, the Young Learners' RC was extended to Grade 5.

In future, there will be no more RCs added, as in Grades 1 and 2 it is suggested that students should not be overloaded with extra tasks and would need to master the fluency and accuracy of reading skills in their own native language first; besides that, the number of foreign language lessons in these grades is very low (1–2 lessons per week), which would

cause strain for teachers and students trying to cope with additional reading tasks. Grades 9 and 12 will not be involved either to allow teachers and students more time for getting ready for the final school graduation examinations.

Table 1. The development of the 'Reading Circle' project.

Year	School Year	Primary School	Lower Secondary School	Secondary School
Year 1	2019/2020		Grade 6	
Year 2	2020/2021		Grade 6, Grade 7	
Year 3	2021/2022	Grade 3	Grade 6, Grade 7, Grade 8	
Year 4	2022/2023	Grade 3, Grade 4	Grade 6, Grade 7, Grade 8	Grade 10, Grade 11
Year 5	2023/2024	Grade 3, Grade 4, Grade 5	Grade 6, Grade 7, Grade 8	Grade 10, Grade 11

2.3. Research Context

As the school year 2023/2024 was the fifth anniversary of the project, it was important to conduct research analysing the results of the project. After the implementation of the RC project over a nine-month period from September 2023 till May 2024, teacher and student questionnaires were administered at the end of the school year in May. This article analyses the results of the teachers' questionnaires, and the results of students' questionnaires will be analysed in future publications.

The aim of the current paper was to analyse teachers' opinions on the efficacy of the RC project, its impact on the development of students' reading motivation and language skills, and the teaching techniques used while working in the project. Therefore, the objectives of this study were to analyse:

(a) The teachers' perceptions of the development of students' reading motivation, text comprehension, reading, speaking, and writing skills;
(b) The teaching techniques used throughout the project;
(c) The overall evaluation of the RC project.

3. Methodology

As the RC project had been implemented over a period of five years (2019–2024), it was necessary to analyse the impact and the efficacy of these interventions. Therefore, a mixed-methods research design was utilised and semi-structured questionnaires were administered using Google Forms. Although the term 'semi-structured' is most commonly associated with interviews, it was applied analogously to the questionnaires used in this study as the questionnaires combined closed-ended and open-ended questions, enabling respondents to elaborate on their answers. Additionally, an optional final follow-up prompt at the end of the questionnaire, 'Please let us know if there is anything you would like to add', offered participants the opportunity to provide additional insights, elaborate on their answers, or address any other project-related issues. The integration of both quantitative and qualitative data enabled the acquisition of comprehensive and in-depth insights, thereby ensuring both the depth and quality of the research findings and more detailed answers to the research questions (Creswell, 2021; Dawadi et al., 2021; Vebrianto et al., 2020).

3.1. Sample

The sample group of the current research comprised 45 in-service English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers (*n* = 45 female, 100%) from 36 general education schools from all the regions of Latvia voluntarily participating in the RC project during the school year

2023/2024. More than one-third of the teachers (37.78%, *n* = 17) were participating in the project for the first time, 26.67% of teachers (*n* = 12) for the second time, and more than one-third had already participated in the project for several years: 13.99% (*n* = 6) for 3 years, 11.11% (*n* = 5) for 4 years, and 11.11% (*n* = 5) for even 5 years.

Altogether, 45 teachers and 1328 students participated in the RC project. It was the teachers' decision how many students they were ready to involve in the project, and the teacher could use their set of books in several parallel classes. On average, teachers chose to work with 30 students or two groups, with the lowest number of students involved being 5 students and the highest number being 77.

3.2. Data Collection

At the final stage of the project, teachers were asked to evaluate a number of statements, providing their opinion on whether their students' reading motivation, text comprehension, reading, speaking, and writing skills had improved using a 6-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 2 (largely disagree), 3 (more disagree than agree), 4 (more agree than disagree), 5 (largely agree) and 6 (strongly agree), as well as to provide comments, justifications, and observations. Teachers were also asked whether they would or would not like to participate in the RC project in 2024/2025 and to provide an overall rating of the project using a 10-point Likert scale from 1 (very, very poor) to 2 (very poor), 3 (poor), 4 (almost average), 5 (average), 6 (almost good), 7 (good), 8 (very good), 9 (excellent), and 10 (outstanding), as it is a common form of evaluation in Latvia.

Furthermore, teachers evaluated how often various teaching techniques were employed while implementing the RC project using a 6-point Likert scale from 1 (never (0%)) to 2 (rarely (~20%)), 3 (sometimes (~40%)), 4 (often (~60%)), 5 (usually (~80%)), and 6 (always (~100%)). Finally, teachers provided answers to open-ended questions mentioning if they experienced any difficulties while participating in the RC project and what the positive aspects of the RC project were. Teachers were also provided with an optional open-ended follow-up question, allowing them to offer additional insights on any project-related issues or expand on topics not covered in the questionnaire. In the questionnaire, the educators also analysed the satisfaction with the offered books, but the analysis of this issue will be included in future articles.

3.3. Data Analysis

The quantitative data were analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics and the graphs were produced with the help of Excel, whereas content analysis was employed to analyse the qualitative data. An inductive approach was employed for analysing the qualitative data, where codes were generated from the data and subsequently grouped into categories (Bingham, 2023). The researchers collaborated to review the codes and refine the categories, during which the category of 'skills development for weaker students' emerged for primary-level students and 'metacognition' for upper secondary-level students. The process concluded with consensus among the researchers, with no significant disagreements arising. To refer to respondents' answers, primary school teachers were assigned the codes T1–T15, lower secondary school teachers with T16–T35, and upper secondary school teachers with T36–T45.

3.4. Structure of the Project

In the RC project, at the beginning of the school year, the teachers received the information about the books, the structure of the RC (See Figure 1), the time frame, and a set of 16 + 1 books, read them for a set period of time, and then sent them to the next teacher in the Reading Circle via self-service parcel machines as they allow the 24/7 dispatch and collection of parcels. Unfortunately, in most cases this was at the teachers' expense, as the

schools only rarely reimbursed these expenses, which proves that teachers were highly motivated in their participation in the project and were even ready to invest their own personal finances. When receiving or sending out the set of books, the teacher had to record it in the online register.
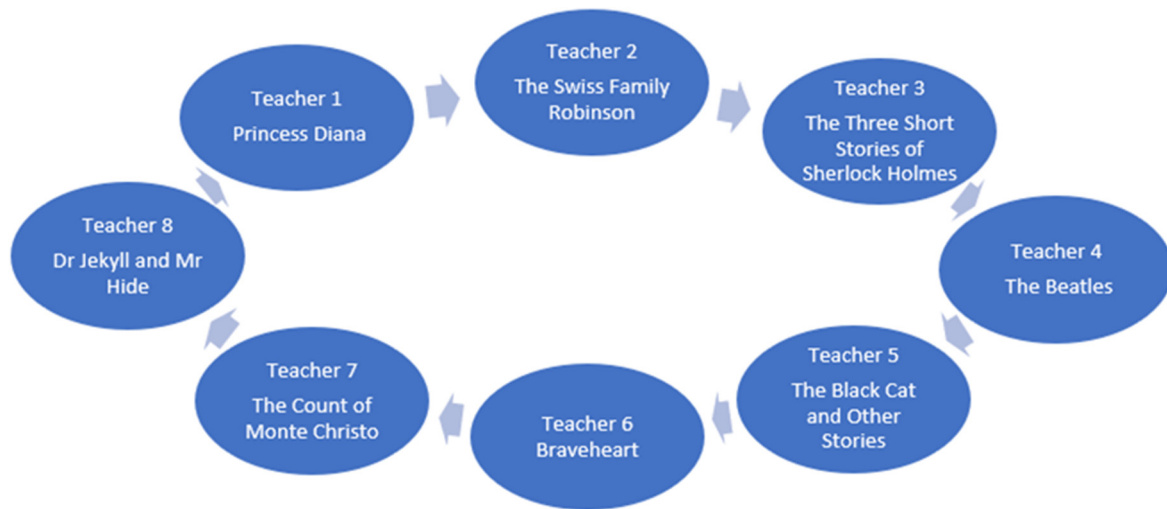

Figure 1. An example of a Grade 6 reading circle.

In this study, a participatory action research (Cornish et al., 2023; De Oliveira, 2023; Jacobs, 2016) approach was used, as teachers were active participants in the project and throughout the school year met at the introductory in-person meeting during the LATE Conference; at three Zoom meetings where organisational issues were discussed, suggestions for project work improvement were proposed and teachers could ask for help on any project-related issues. During the Zoom meetings, teachers were encouraged to self-reflect on their work in the RC project, share examples of good practice, discuss any challenges, and receive support from their project leader and colleagues, which fostered a positive environment and a culture of self-reflection, self-development, and professional growth. Both the researcher and the participants considered that these project meetings were valuable as the exchange of experiences provided practically applicable teaching techniques and supported the development of sustainable practices.

3.5. Graded Readers

For the implementation of the project, Pearson English graded readers were used, which were carefully selected to suit the age group in terms of vocabulary, language structures, and interests, as well as the national requirements for the EFL acquisition level, and to match the appropriate level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and the Global Scale of English (GSE). The national requirements for first foreign language acquisition specify target proficiency levels: A1 by the end of Grade 3, A2 by Grade 6, and B1 by Grade 9 (Cabinet of Ministers, 2018). In upper secondary school, the optimal level aims for B2, while the highest-level language learning course targets C1 proficiency (Cabinet of Ministers, 2019).

For primary schools (Grades 3, 4, and 5), the Pearson English Disney Kids Readers of levels 3–5 (CEFR levels A1–A2+) were used, and teachers also received a workbook containing ready-made photocopiable tasks and questions for discussions that could be used at pre-, while-, or post-reading stages. The tasks included not only vocabulary-, content-, and pronunciation-related issues, but also quizzes, games, and thought-provoking questions for developing students' transversal skills, such as SRL, critical thinking, and

global citizenship, and elaborated on definite values that were related to the stories, such as positivity, respect, honesty, humility, sincerity, and teamwork.

To promote the enjoyment of extensive reading and meet the diverse needs and interests of students, graded readers of a wide variety of reading genres were selected for secondary school classes, ranging from real-world readers to classic and contemporary fiction, TV and film readers, and biographies. Although Grade 6 in the education system in Latvia would be more related to primary school, in this study it was placed in the lower secondary school-level group due to the chosen reading material, as for lower secondary students (Grades 6–8), Pearson English Readers of Levels 2–4 related to CEFR levels A2+–B1+ were chosen, and for upper secondary school students (Grades 10–11), Pearson English Readers of Levels 5–6 related to CEFR levels B2–C1 reading books were used. Some sets of books also included a CD with audio that could be used during the lesson.

The number of books read each year may vary slightly depending on the number of books offered for each level and the number of applications received for the project. For Grades 3–5, a maximum of six Pearson English Disney Kids Readers titles were offered with a six-week reading period per title, firstly as this is the maximum number of books available for each level, and secondly, students' reading skills and speed is taken into account, as well as the fact that teachers in some schools may only have two EFL lessons per week. For Grades 6–8, the project started by offering eight books per school year with a four-and-a-half-week reading period. However, the most optimal number of books read at this level would be between six and seven, as the teachers from the first project years suggested the need to extend the reading period. For grades 10–11, only five books were offered, with a seven-week reading period for each book, as the reading material is more extensive and requires more time for additional follow-up activities or assignments.

3.6. Code of Ethics

At the end of the RC project 2023/2024, teachers were asked to complete a questionnaire. By completing the questionnaire, teachers gave their consent to the data being processed and used in this research and in scientific publications in an anonymous and aggregated form without identifying any individuals. Thus, the General Data Protection Regulation and ethical considerations were respected, and the study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of Social Sciences and Humanities of the University of Latvia (13 May 2024; No. 71-43/67).

4. Results and Discussion

The participants of the RC project 2023/2024 were 45 EFL teachers, with the youngest respondent aged 24 and the oldest aged 72 (see Table 2). The average age of the teachers (mean = 49.31) corresponds to the general data in the country, indicating a significant problem of teacher ageing, which is in line with the findings of previous research (Linde et al., 2024a, 2024b). Similarly, teachers' work experience ranged from 4 years (min.) to 51 years (max.) with an average work experience of 24.20 years.

Table 2. Descriptives of teachers' age and work experience.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age	45	24	72	49.31	10.700
Work experience	45	4	51	24.20	11.772

What is more, the findings of the current study are consistent with the findings of previous research (Hačatrjana & Linde, 2023) indicating that teachers' age and long professional work experience (average age of 49.31 years and work experience of 24.20 years)

were not obstacles to their willingness to participate in the project and enhance their teaching through the adoption of new practices, and they were open to experimenting and implementing new materials aimed at developing students' reading motivation and language skills.

The RC participants were from 36 schools of different types, from primary schools ($n = 3$) to elementary schools (Grades 1–9) ($n = 16$), secondary schools ($n = 17$), gymnasiums ($n = 3$), and state gymnasiums ($n = 6$). The majority of teachers worked at public schools ($n = 42$), but the project did not exclude motivated participants from distance learning schools ($n = 2$) and private schools ($n = 1$).

In total, 37.78% of the applicants were teachers ($n = 17$) from Riga, the capital of Latvia, and the remaining 62.22% of participants ($n = 28$) were from all regions of Latvia. What is more, the project was also accessible for teachers working in remote areas of Latvia, as most of the project meetings were organised via the Zoom platform and the books were sent via self-service parcel machines, thus allowing any teacher even from remote areas to participate in the project.

4.1. Development of Students' Reading Motivation and Language Skills

Figure 2 shows teachers' perceptions of the development of students' reading motivation and language skills. Teachers considered that participation in the project made a significant contribution to developing students' text comprehension (mean = 5.18), reading skills (mean = 5.11), and reading motivation (mean = 4.89), followed by slightly lower but still very positive results for the development of students' speaking (mean = 4.69) and writing skills (mean = 4.44).
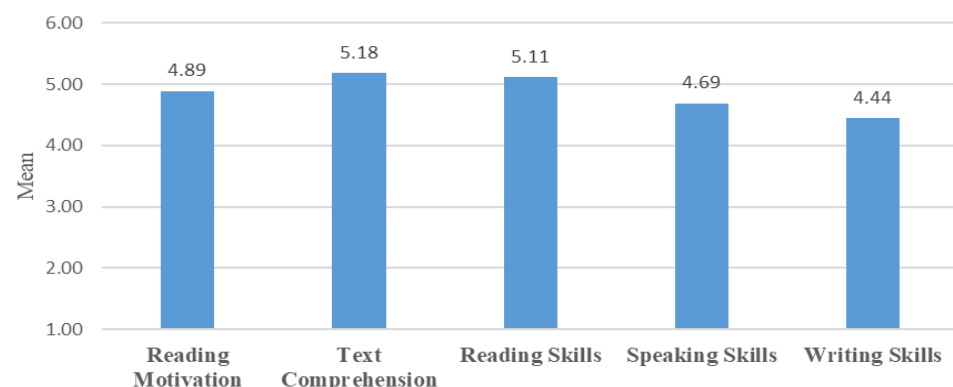

Figure 2. Teachers' evaluation of the development of students' reading motivation and language aspects (Likert scale 1–6).

The one-way ANOVA test indicated that there were statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$) between teachers' opinions on the development of two pairs of students' skills. A significant difference was found between students' reading and writing skills ($p = 0.011$), as well as between their text comprehension and writing skills ($p = 0.004$), and there were no significant differences found between the other skills.

In the questionnaire, the teachers explained that the students' writing skills must have improved the least, as the main goal of the project was to enhance students' reading motivation and foster reading skills, but the ratings indicated that the project still had a positive impact on the development of their writing skills as well. This is in line with previous findings stating that the advantages of extensive reading (ER) occur indirectly, and even though students do not engage in direct writing instruction, their writing skills still improve (Day, 2011).

Figure 3 provides a more detailed analysis and presents teachers' evaluations on the development of students' reading motivation and language skills across different levels. Teachers' (*n* = 45) responses were analysed according to the number of teachers involved at each level: (a) primary school (*n* = 15), (b) lower secondary school (*n* = 20), and (c) secondary school (*n* = 10). Teachers were also asked to answer open-ended questions and provide observations and justifications for their evaluations.
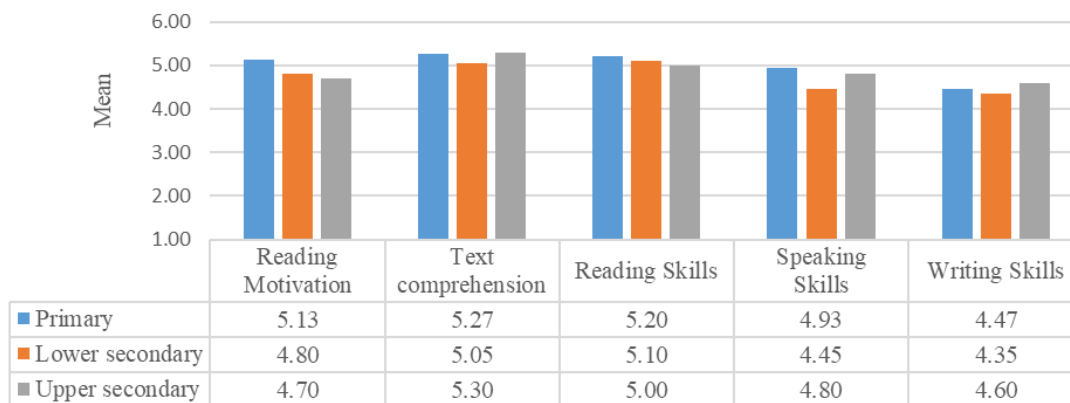

	Reading Motivation	Text comprehension	Reading Skills	Speaking Skills	Writing Skills
■ Primary	5.13	5.27	5.20	4.93	4.47
■ Lower secondary	4.80	5.05	5.10	4.45	4.35
■ Upper secondary	4.70	5.30	5.00	4.80	4.60

Figure 3. Teachers' evaluation of the development of students' reading motivation and language aspects (according to the levels (Likert scale 1–6)).

4.2. Primary School Level

The data show (see Figure 3) that according to primary school teachers' (*n* = 15) observations, primary school students presented the highest results in all categories apart from writing skills, as at this level writing skills are expected to be at the initial stage of development and a teacher (T1) mentioned that "writing was not a priority" and several teachers (*n* = 4) explained that they did not manage to devote a lot of time to it.

Nevertheless, teachers observed that students' reading comprehension improved and they became more fluent readers. Besides that, 40% of participants (*n* = 6) mentioned that students enjoyed reading aloud and although "sometimes it was difficult to read longer words" (T2), "students' confidence, reading motivation, reading skills (fluency, pronunciation, reading comprehension) improved" (T1). Some teachers (*n* = 4) pointed out that this was particularly observable for students with weaker language skills, as it provided a great space for improvement and a teacher (T1) wrote that "Even those who were rather shy at the beginning of the project and not confident enough to read aloud at the beginning of the school year were actively raising their hands to be able to read aloud in turns at the end of the school year".

In total, 93.33% of primary school EFL teachers (*n* = 14) mentioned that their students enjoyed reading, were immensely motivated and interested to read, they "loved the colourful books and wanted to understand the text" (T2), and they "were waiting for the next RC lesson" (T5). The high positive results for the increases in students' motivation and language skills imply that it is essential to cultivate students' reading motivation and enhance their language skills from a young age, and the data prove that this can be achieved with the use of suitable literary texts and teaching techniques.

At the primary school level, there was only one teacher (T14) who mentioned that "students were not very motivated". One factor contributing to the students' relatively low motivation in this class could be the use of Grade 5 books with Grade 4 students, as this raises the difficulty level by introducing too much new vocabulary and unfamiliar grammar structures, diminishing students' enjoyment of reading at the same time.

There were two exceptional cases in the project when teachers were allowed to participate in the project with lower-grade students at the corresponding RC due to last-minute unforeseen changes introduced by their school administrations related to the grades the teachers were supposed to teach. The teacher (T4) that used Grade 3 class readers for Grade 2 students observed that the majority of her students "found those books too complicated to read, but they listened with interest and were engaged in conversation about the stories", and the teacher had to adjust the tasks according to the students' language proficiency level. Both cases confirm the findings of the theoretical literature stating that the level of ER materials is essential in order to gain the most value, and that the texts should be simple enough to understand the general meaning to allow students to enjoy the reading process (Day, 2011, 2015; Grabe, 2008; Grabe & Stoller, 2019; Grabe & Yamashita, 2022).

Another reason why one of the teachers (T14) mentioned that her students were not very motivated might be related to the teacher's limited professional experience (age—24 years; work experience—5 years) in selecting and applying the most effective teaching strategies to enhance students' motivation. One of the teachers (T11) noted an increase in students' motivation when "they had the opportunity to watch a movie related to the book, which highly motivated some students to improve their reading skills and become more eager to read aloud in the classroom" and another teacher (T8) mentioned that "having watched the films made them feel comfortable when reading". This is in line with previous research, recognising that the teacher's role and professionalism in choosing the most relevant teaching strategies, methods, and level of support are the most important key factors in a successful teaching and learning process (Linde et al., 2023, 2024a, 2024b).

4.3. Lower Secondary School Level

Compared to observations by primary school teachers, lower secondary school teachers observed a slightly lower increase in students' skills. Although the scores remained positive and high among all the indicators, slightly less improvement was observed by the lower secondary school teachers ($n = 20$) in students' productive skills: (a) speaking (mean = 4.45) and (b) writing (mean = 4.35). Teachers considered that students had made the most significant progress in developing their reading skills (mean = 5.10), supporting the idea that reading proficiency can be effectively enhanced through reading practice, particularly with the implementation of extensive reading (Day, 2011). Along with reading skills, text comprehension skills (mean = 5.05) also improved and a teacher (T23) pointed out that "text comprehension skills definitely improved because most of the tasks I asked them to do were about text comprehension", mentioning that "practice makes perfect".

However, teachers' observations in the lower secondary school classes differed a lot. A teacher (T27) who was in her fifth year of working in the project, this time participating with Grade 7, concluded, "This was the most difficult year in the RC project for me—in terms of getting students interested in reading. Some of the students enjoyed reading a lot, but it was the struggle with the majority. Until this year it has never been a problem for the majority".

This suggests that maintaining students' interest and reading motivation at the lower secondary school level is particularly challenging, as significant differences in their cognitive abilities, interests, language proficiency, and reading fluency greatly impact their motivation. Consequently, teachers must demonstrate a high level of professionalism by employing a diverse range of techniques and strategies. One of the teachers (T22) concluded that if she "tried to vary the reading process, the students liked it", and another teacher (T33) noticed that "girls were more motivated than boys", which is consistent with the observed gender differences in Latvia, where girls outperform boys in reading (OECD, 2023), which, in turn, affects their reading motivation.

Besides this, a teacher (T16) observed that "some students, who did not like reading in general, liked listening to the audio", another teacher (T17) mentioned that "students who didn't like to read a book by themselves really liked to read out loud with the class", and two teachers (T23, T28) pointed out that "students were not too motivated to read, but they respected the rules". Teachers concluded that "although students might not admit, their reading skills improved" (T27) and "it should be done on a regular basis" (T25), which is in line with previous research claiming that reading ability develops gradually due to continuous and abundant exposure to extensive reading (Grabe & Stoller, 2019; Grabe & Yamashita, 2022).

To conclude, teachers' observations on the development of students' reading motivation and language skills depict a much greater polarisation than at the primary school level, as it was mentioned 18 times that students were motivated and enjoyed the RC classes, while 6 participants reflected that some of the students were not too willing to read. Despite numerous positive observations, such as "many of the students started to read more even out of classes and asked advice about the books to read independently" (T18), at the same time, it must be concluded that in order to enhance students' reading motivation, development of language skills, and sustainable learning and SRL skills at the lower secondary level, a high degree of teacher professionalism is required.

4.4. Upper Secondary School Level

Figure 3 shows that the upper secondary school teachers (*n* = 10) considered that the highest increase was in the development of students' text comprehension (mean = 5.30) and reading skills (mean = 5.00), which might be due to exposure to more extended texts and the tasks that demand a deeper text analysis in order to facilitate the skills required by the curriculum of the highest-level course in EFL in general secondary education (Skola2030, 2019a). Furthermore, teachers also mentioned the significance of metacognitive skills (*n* = 3), and one teacher (T43) observed that "higher-level skills like making inferences, understanding themes, and analysing characters were more challenging for some students" and "students sometimes struggled to critically evaluate the text, such as identifying bias or underlying assumption", which is in line with previous research stating that some students lack metacognitive and deep thinking skills (Dignath & Büttner, 2018; Hačatrjana & Linde, 2023; Linde et al., 2024a).

One teacher (T44) concluded that "Regular reading classes helped very much and reading and speaking skills improved the most, and the discussions about the content and text analyses helped to develop critical thinking skills, how to structure the speech and writing tasks". The findings of the current study highlight the need to enhance students' metacognitive skills, a goal that can be effectively achieved through consistent, long-term practice. This conclusion aligns with the results of previous research (Hačatrjana & Linde, 2023; Karlen et al., 2023; Linde et al., 2024a).

Although all the teachers mentioned that students had interest and motivation to read and that this might be due to the extrinsic motivation of it being necessary for completing school graduation tasks, two teachers mentioned that initially, at the beginning of the school year, students' motivation was very low and it slowly increased during the school year. What is more, 60% of teachers pointed out that at the upper secondary school level, students' interest played an important role in reading motivation, and if the book was interesting, they actively engaged in reading and discussing it. In addition, a teacher (T45) observed that "only a few students were willing and ready to devote their out-of-classroom time to reading", which indicates that using class readers in the classroom is a good solution as it provides exposure to extensive reading for students who are not ready to engage in extensive reading outside the classroom themselves. However, in order to maintain

students' motivation at the upper secondary school level, it would be advisable to provide students with a greater level of autonomy in choosing the reading material.

Finally, teachers observed that "All skills improved, as at the beginning of the school year it was difficult for students to talk about the literary text, but at the end of the year we had smooth discussions about the book". (T39) and "Text comprehension doesn't always depend solely on the language, as quite often historic/social/emotional, etc., background knowledge is required and missing, and that's where the teacher's role emerges". (T45). One teacher (T44) concluded that "Regular reading classes helped very much and reading and speaking skills improved the most, and the discussions about the content and text analyses helped to develop critical thinking skills, how to structure the speech and writing tasks".

4.5. Frequency of the Teaching Techniques Used

As teachers were provided autonomy to choose any teaching techniques they considered the most useful for their audience while working on the RC project, it was essential to study which were the most and least commonly used techniques and if there were any differences between the teaching techniques used across the primary school, lower secondary school, and upper secondary school levels.

Teachers rated the frequency of the teaching techniques they used from 1 (never (0%)) to 6 (always (~100%)), and the findings were categorised into two groups: (a) techniques that showed no or minimal variation across levels, and (b) techniques that differed significantly across levels. Figure 4 depicts the teaching techniques where the data showed minimal or no difference in the results across the different levels. The data indicate that the most frequently used techniques that were employed by all groups were 'discussing the texts', rated between '5—usually' and '6—always', followed by 'completing Pearson exercises', between '4—often' and '5—usually', and 'completing teacher's worked out exercises', rated between '3—sometimes' and '4—often' (see Figure 4). This is in line with the previous findings claiming that although teachers are ready to create their own materials, Supplementary Materials are considered a useful source in the teaching process, particularly due to the high workload of teachers (Hačatrjana & Linde, 2023; Linde et al., 2024a). The least employed technique was 'listening to the CD', and it was rated between '1—never' and '2—rarely'. This could be due to the fact that not all sets of books provided audio materials, and another reason could be that teachers chose to work more on developing reading rather than listening skills, as this was one of the main objectives of the RC project.
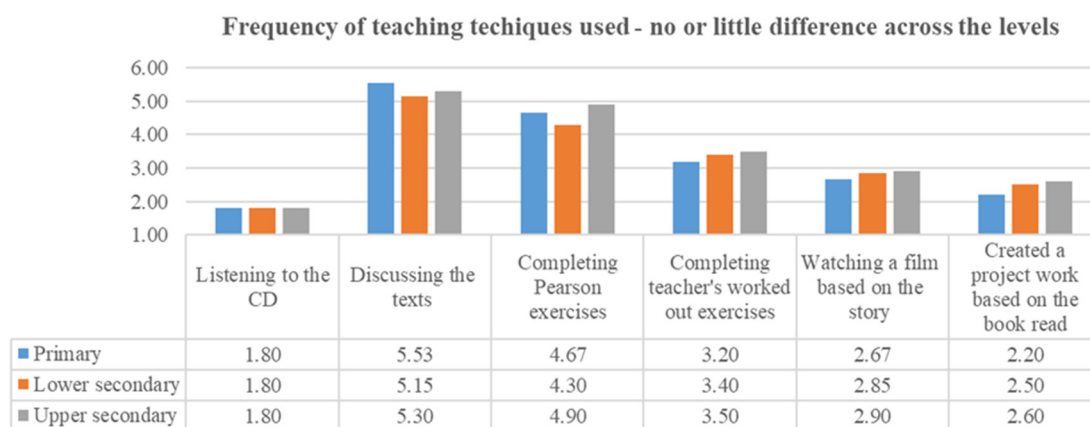

Figure 4. Teachers' evaluation of the frequency of teaching techniques used (no or little difference across levels (Likert scale 1–6)).

In Figure 5, the teaching techniques revealing the differences across the levels are summarised. Data show that 'teacher reading aloud' was more frequently used in primary schools, rated between '2—rarely' and '3—sometimes', and it was used much less at higher levels. The next two bars show completely opposite frequency scales for 'students reading aloud' and 'students reading silently', which is consistent with the teaching techniques used according to age group differences, as at the primary school level it is more important to elaborate on the development of appropriate pronunciation, intonation, and rhythm patterns, which becomes relatively less important in the following levels as students have acquired basic skills in doing so. At the secondary level, when students have already learnt some SRL skills and are able to organise their learning more independently, more autonomy is advisable and silent reading can be applied much more.

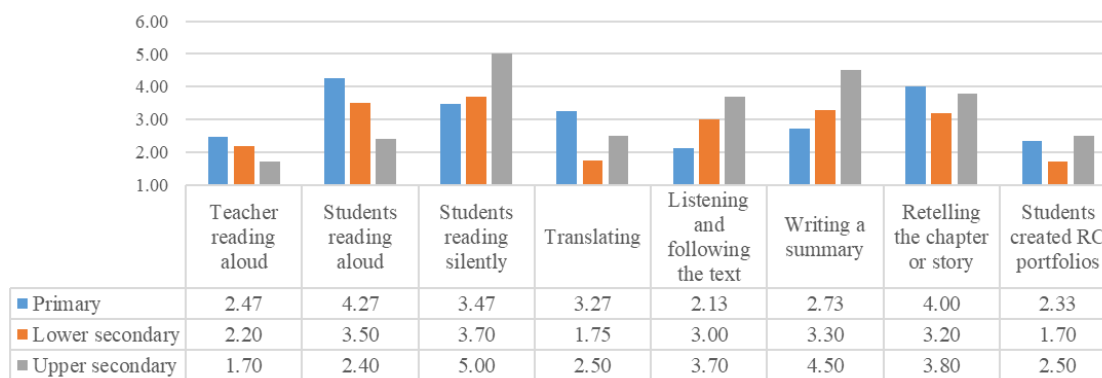Frequency of teaching techiques used - differences across the levels

	Teacher reading aloud	Students reading aloud	Students reading silently	Translating	Listening and following the text	Writing a summary	Retelling the chapter or story	Students created RC portfolios
Primary	2.47	4.27	3.47	3.27	2.13	2.73	4.00	2.33
Lower secondary	2.20	3.50	3.70	1.75	3.00	3.30	3.20	1.70
Upper secondary	1.70	2.40	5.00	2.50	3.70	4.50	3.80	2.50

Figure 5. Teachers' evaluation of the frequency of teaching techniques used (differences across the levels (Likert scale 1–6)).

A similar upward trend can be observed for 'listening and following the text' and 'writing a summary' after reading, showing that the frequency grows with each level, indicating that these skills were developed progressively (see Figure 5). Interestingly, there were two techniques that were used the least with lower secondary students: 'translating' and 'creating RC portfolios'. The low usage of translating might mean that the reading material did not contain that many complicated or unknown words and teachers at this level paid more attention to ER and less to the details of the text, while creating portfolios might not be that captivating for this age group and the interests of students. In addition, teacher workload and the small number of EFL lessons a week (usually 2–3) do not allow additional teaching techniques to be included.

In addition, the one-way ANOVA Tukey HSD post hoc test results proved the above-mentioned observations and revealed statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$) when comparing the frequency of teaching techniques used by teachers at different levels of education. Significant differences were observed for 'students reading aloud', 'students reading silently', 'translating', and 'writing a summary' between various educational levels.

Statistically significant differences were observed for 'students reading aloud' between the primary and upper secondary levels ($p = 0.013$), with a mean difference of 1.867, indicating that teachers read aloud more often at the primary level. One more significant difference was noted for 'students reading silently' between the primary and upper secondary levels ($p = 0.017$), with a mean difference of -1.533, and between the lower secondary and upper secondary levels ($p = 0.037$), with a mean difference of -1.300.

The next significant difference was found for "translating" between the primary and lower secondary levels ($p = 0.002$), and the mean difference was 1.517. Finally, there was a

statistically significant difference for 'writing a summary' between the primary and upper secondary levels ($p = 0.023$), with a mean difference of -1.767.

4.6. Overall Evaluation of the Project

At the final phase of the RC project, teachers were asked to provide an overall evaluation of the RC project, and it was rated with an immensely high average score of 9.09, signifying an excellent outcome. The skewed distribution of the results in Figure 6 depicts teachers' overall evaluation of the project, showing that the overwhelming majority of teachers had high opinions on the benefits of the project by evaluating it as '10—outstanding' ($n = 23$), '9—excellent' ($n = 9$), '8—very good' ($n = 8$), '7—good' ($n = 4$), and '6—almost good' ($n = 1$). Scores of '1' to '5' are not depicted in Figure 6 as there were no lower evaluations than '6—almost good'.

	6	7	8	9	10
■ Number of teachers	1	4	8	9	23
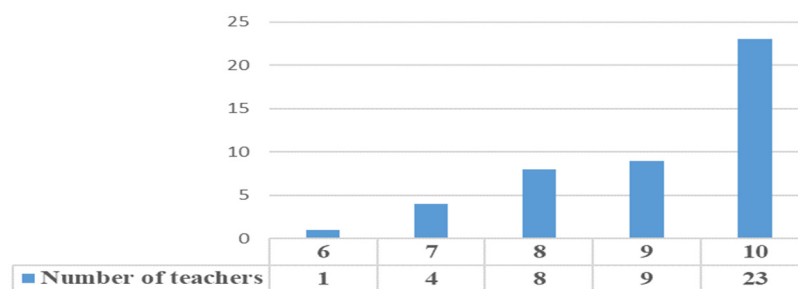
Figure 6. Teachers' overall evaluation of the RC project (Likert scale 1–10).

Teachers were also asked if they would like to participate in the project in the following year and why, and 84.44% of teachers ($n = 38$) answered positively. A lower secondary school teacher (T19) mentioned that she would like to participate in the project in the following year "because she would like to try this project with the other students as well, as there were lots of questions from the other classes about this project and students expressed their willingness to participate in it" and an upper secondary school teacher (T38) emphasised teachers' role, saying that "teachers are responsible for encouraging students' reading".

Overall, 15.56% of teachers ($n = 7$) mentioned that they would not like to participate for the following reasons: (a) they had already participated in the project for several years and would like to give the opportunity for other teachers to join ($n = 3$); (b) one teacher was going to change schools; (c) one teacher (T6) did not know which classes she was going to teach and wrote that she "would like to continue the participation in the RC project with 4th graders, but she was a little afraid, because in Grade 4, there would be only 2 English lessons per week"; (d) one teacher would be participating in another project; and (e) one teacher mentioned that she was not going to work at school in the following year.

Teachers were also asked open-ended questions: (a) if they experienced any difficulties and (b) what the positive aspects of the project were. Overall, 53.33% of primary school teachers (Grades 3–5) confirmed that they did not experience any difficulties. Some teachers mentioned some minor problems they encountered, such as "lack of time" (T5, T8), "difficulty in finding the audios" (T2, T7), "that it was difficult if all the students weren't at school when we read books and did tasks" (T10) or "student's different reading skills and speed of reading" (T15).

Nonetheless, there was much more positive feedback, mentioning that there was "a lot of joy during the lessons" (T1), "for many students there was the sense of accomplishment after having read the set of books throughout the school year" (T3), "all students liked the lessons" (T7), "participation in the RC raised all language learning skills" (T10), "students worked together to read and discuss the book, promoting collaboration and teamwork,

which promoted social-emotional development and a positive attitude towards reading and learning among students" (T15), and that "students were eagerly waiting for the next set of books to be sent and they didn't know what they would receive, thus each time there was a surprise" (T8). This proves that professionally implemented teaching techniques and a positive and encouraging learning environment can significantly foster students' SRL skills, including interest, motivation, and social–emotional learning skills, which is in line with previous research (Linde et al., 2023, 2024b).

A total of 30% of lower secondary school teachers pointed out that they did not experience any difficulties, while time constraints ($n = 7$) and teenagers' motivation ($n = 2$) were considered to be two of the greatest problems. Nevertheless, a lot of positive aspects were mentioned by all the teachers and 50% of teachers indicated that the participation in the RC project increased students' involvement and interest and reading motivation, pointing out that "some students started to read books" (T19) and "students wanted to read to my surprise" (T21). Besides this, 55% of teachers provided praise that the offered graded readers were of different genres, written by well-known authors and provided opportunities for the differentiation and development of language skills, pointing out that they "could discuss themes they would have never come across" (T27), "students could immerse themselves deeper into English literature and culture" (T23), and "lots of great books helped to improve students reading skills" (T26). In addition, teachers positively evaluated the opportunity to develop students' SRL skills as there was "a possibility to work in groups and develop collaborative skills and creativity" and "working together as one team, develop students' creativity and critical thinkin" (T24).

As for upper secondary school teachers ($n = 10$) of Grades 10 and 11, 2 teachers did not experience any difficulties, while 80% of teachers ($n = 8$) mentioned a lack of time as their greatest problem, as in Grade 10 they had only three lessons a week where they tried to integrate ER and work with the RC books in their lessons alongside the curriculum. Teachers also mentioned the problem of having a big number of students in their EFL classes, and a teacher wrote that "I've got 27 students in my class, there were not enough books" (T44), which made it difficult to organise the work during the lessons as there was only a set of 16 + 1 books available.

As a positive aspect, respondents mentioned that "it was a pleasure to see that the 'secondary school students started to read literary works which is essential for the exam" (T39) and one teacher (T36) explained that they enjoyed reading real paper books in the lessons and the teacher could see her students reading, as before that it was difficult to know what happened when students were provided a link and assigned to read at home. Teachers acknowledged that "students felt motivated and saw the result at the end of the school yea"' (T42) and for some of the books there was also "an opportunity to read and watch the story" (T41) after which the differences between the book and film were analysed. Teachers noted that "students developed a deeper understanding of the texts through focused reading activities and discussions, improving their ability to interpret and analyse the written material" (T44). This observation suggests that students' metacognitive skills can be effectively developed through systematic and intentional instruction, aligning with findings from previous research (Hačatrjana & Linde, 2023; Karlen et al., 2023; Linde et al., 2024a).

The research findings underscore a number of teaching implications, highlighting the need to tailor teaching approaches to different educational levels in order to maximise the effectiveness of ER. Primary school students demonstrate high reading motivation and are eager to read aloud, though teacher support is particularly important at this stage. In lower secondary school, it is advisable to employ a range of different techniques to maintain motivation and engagement. At the upper secondary level, it is essential to address increasing individual differences, foster autonomy, and promote critical thinking

and metacognitive skills. Consequently, enhancing teachers' professional development is essential in order to empower them in identifying the most appropriate techniques and strategies for developing students' SRL skills, and thus laying the foundations for sustainable teaching and learning.

Since the teachers highly rated the RC project and its positive impact on students' reading motivation and language skills, it is essential to conduct a more in-depth analysis of the data collected through students' questionnaires. This would provide a valuable opportunity for data triangulation, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the project's outcomes.

5. Conclusions

The findings show that the RC project was highly rated by the teachers. The large number of teachers who would like to participate in the project repeatedly indicates that teachers greatly value the benefits of participation in the project. The project serves as a great long-term commitment providing an opportunity to enhance reading motivation and develop language skills and sustainable learning skills.

Although statistically significant differences were found between students' reading, text comprehension, and writing skills, teachers observed positive advancements in the development of all students' language skills. The highest results were obtained in developing reading skills, text comprehension, and reading motivation.

The data reveal that the most commonly used teaching techniques among primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary levels of language learning were discussing the texts and completing the ready-made exercises. The two teaching techniques that revealed a significant difference between all the levels were students reading aloud and students reading silently, which is in line with the EFL methodology, as more guidance in developing reading skills and reading aloud is necessary at the primary level and becomes gradually less significant with each level of language development.

Extensive reading has a positive impact at all the schooling levels, but EFL teachers' teaching techniques should differ accordingly. Teacher guidance is more important for primary school students, whereas for lower secondary school students, a change to different teaching techniques is essential to maintain students' engagement in the project. For upper secondary school students, their interests and higher level of autonomy play an important role in their motivation and active involvement. This is where teachers' professionalism plays an essential role in order to find the most appropriate techniques and deal with students' growing individual differences, interests, and needs.

Regardless of the fact that this study did not explicitly include questions on the development of transversal skills, the respondents' viewpoints, expressed through open-ended answers on students' progress and the difficulties experienced, revealed that teachers observed that students sometimes lacked sufficient metacognitive and higher-order thinking skills. Nevertheless, the teachers' responses indicated that teachers' professionalism is essential and that during the long-term RC project, SRL skills such as time management, metacognition, critical thinking, and social–emotional learning skills can be enhanced, providing a basis for the development of sustainable learning skills.

This study offers valuable insights into teachers' perspectives on the effectiveness of the RC project and its impact on students' reading motivation and language skills. However, several limitations suggest potential directions for future research. As this study represents the initial research on the RC project, it focused exclusively on teachers' perceptions. Further longitudinal research would be beneficial for incorporating and analysing not only teachers' perceptions and observations, but also students' perceptions of the benefits of the RC project and their own progress, comparing them with the current research.

Another limitation stems from financial constraints. To obtain more comprehensive data, a future longitudinal study within a structured project framework involving a team of researchers would be advantageous. It would be beneficial to collect more detailed data, including not only students' perceptions, but also the pre- and post-tests of students' reading skills.

Despite these limitations, this study contributes significant insights into the value of the RC project, offers important findings and conclusions, and highlights promising directions for future research.

References

Asraf, R. M., & Ahmad, I. S. (2003). Promoting english language development and the reading habit among students in rural schools through the guided extensive reading program. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, *15*(2), 83–102.

Bell, T. (2001). Extensive reading: Speed and comprehension. *The Reading Matrix*, *1*(1). Available online: http://www.readingmatrix.com/articles/bell/index.html (accessed on 4 September 2024).

Ben-Eliyahu, A. (2021). Sustainable learning in education. *Sustainability*, *13*(8), 4250. [CrossRef]

Bingham, A. J. (2023). From data management to actionable findings: A five-phase process of qualitative data analysis. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *22*, 1–11. [CrossRef]

Cabinet of Ministers (Republic of Latvia). (2018). Regulation No. 747, from 27.11.2018. *Regulations regarding the state basic education standard and model basic education programmes*. Available online: https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/303768 (accessed on 4 September 2024).

Cabinet of Ministers (Republic of Latvia). (2019). Regulation No. 416, from 03.09.2019. *Regulations regarding the state general secondary education standard and model general secondary education programmes*. Available online: https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/309597 (accessed on 4 September 2024).

Cornish, F., Breton, N., Moreno-Tabarez, U., Delgado, J., Rua, M., de-Graft Aikins, A., & Hodgetts, D. (2023). Participatory action research. *Nature Reviews Methods Primers*, *3*(1), 34. [CrossRef]

Cousins, E., Bol, L., & Luo, T. (2022). Exploring long-term impacts of self-regulated learning interventions in K-12 contexts: A systematic review. *Current Issues in Education*, *23*(1), 1–26. [CrossRef]

Creswell, J. W. (2021). *A concise introduction to mixed methods research*. SAGE publications.

Daniels, H. (2001). *Literature circles: Voice and choice in book clubs & reading groups* (2nd ed.). Routledge. [CrossRef]

Daniels, H. (2006). What's the next big thing with literature circles? *Voices from the Middle*, *13*(4), 10–15. [CrossRef]

Dawadi, S., Shrestha, S., & Giri, R. A. (2021). Mixed-methods research: A discussion on its types, challenges, and criticisms. *Journal of Practical Studies in Education*, *2*(2), 25–36. [CrossRef]

Day, R. (2011). Extensive reading: The background. In R. Day, J. Bassett, B. Bowler, S. Parminter, N. Bullard, M. Furr, N. Prentice, M. Mahmood, D. Stewart, & T. Robb (Eds.), *Bringing extensive reading into the classroom* (pp. 10–21). Oxford University Press.

Day, R. R. (2015). Extending extensive reading. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, *27*(2), 294–301.

Day, R. R., & Bamford, J. (2002). Top ten principles for teaching extensive reading. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, *14*(2), 136–141.

De Oliveira, B. (2023). Participatory action research as a research approach: Advantages, limitations and criticisms. *Qualitative Research Journal*, *23*(3), 287–297. [CrossRef]

Dignath, C., & Büttner, G. (2018). Teachers' direct and indirect promotion of self-regulated learning in primary and secondary school mathematics classes–insights from video-based classroom observations and teacher interviews. *Metacognition and Learning*, *13*, 127–157. [CrossRef]

Furr, M. (2011). Reading Circles. In R. Day, J. Bassett, B. Bowler, S. Parminter, N. Bullard, M. Furr, N. Prentice, M. Mahmood, D. Stewart, & T. Robb (Eds.), *Bringing extensive reading into the classroom* (pp. 63–73). Oxford University Press.

Furr, M. (2004, March 12–14). *Literature circles for the EFL classroom*. 2003 TESOL Arabia Conference, Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Grabe, W. (2008). Extensive reading. In *Reading in a second language: Moving from theory to practice* (pp. 311–328). Cambridge University Press. [CrossRef]

Grabe, W., & Stoller, F. L. (2019). *Teaching and researching reading* (3rd ed.). Routledge. [CrossRef]

Grabe, W., & Yamashita, J. (2022). Extensive reading. In *Reading in a second language: Moving from theory to practice* (pp. 419–430). Cambridge University Press. [CrossRef]

Graham, L., Berman, J., & Bellert, A. (2015). *Sustainable learning*. Cambridge University Press.

Hačatrjana, L., & Linde, I. (2023). Piloting supplementary materials aimed at developing students' problem-solving and self-regulated learning skills. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, *22*(6), 475–493. [CrossRef]

Iwahori, Y. (2008). Developing reading fluency: A study of extensive reading in EFL. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, *20*(1), 70–91.

Jacobs, S. (2016). The use of participatory action research within education—Benefits to stakeholders. *World Journal of Education*, *6*(3), 48–55. [CrossRef]

Jeon, E. Y., & Day, R. R. (2016). The effectiveness of ER on reading proficiency: A meta-analysis. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, *28*(2), 246–265.

Karlen, Y., Hirt, C. N., Jud, J., Rosenthal, A., & Eberli, T. D. (2023). Teachers as learners and agents of self-regulated learning: The importance of different teachers competence aspects for promoting metacognition. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *125*, 104055. [CrossRef]

Kim, J. S., Burkhauser, M. A., Mesite, L. M., Asher, C. A., Relyea, J. E., Fitzgerald, J., & Elmore, J. (2021). Improving reading comprehension, science domain knowledge, and reading engagement through a first-grade content literacy intervention. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *113*(1), 3–26. [CrossRef]

Linde, I., Hačatrjana, L., & Daniela, L. (2024a). Teachers' feedback on the use of supplementary materials for developing students' self-regulated learning and problem solving skills. In *Human, technologies and quality of education* (pp. 22–33). [CrossRef]

Linde, I., Sarva, E., & Daniela, L. (2023). The Impact of an online professional development course on teachers' comprehension and self-efficacy in developing students' self-regulated learning skills. *Sustainability*, *15*(12), 9408. [CrossRef]

Linde, I., Sarva, E., & Daniela, L. (2024b, July 1–3). *Online teacher professional development courses on fostering students' self-regulated learning skills: Efficiency prerequisites and outcomes*. EDULEARN24 Proceedings (pp. 6529–6539), Palma, Spain. [CrossRef]

Mason, B., & Krashen, S. (1997). Extensive reading in English as a foreign language. *System*, *25*(1), 91–102. [CrossRef]

Mikulec, A., & Vuić, B. (2019). The relationship between L1 and L2 reading comprehension and language and reading proficiency at the tertiary level. *Journal of Language and Education*, *5*(4), 54–65. [CrossRef]

Nakanishi, T. (2015). A meta-analysis of extensive reading research. *Tesol Quarterly*, *49*(1), 6–37. [CrossRef]

Nishino, T. (2007). Beginning to read extensively: A case study with Mako and Fumi. *Reading in a Foreign Language, 19*(2), 76–105.

OECD. (2023). *PISA 2022 results (Volume I): The state of learning and equity in education*. PISA, OECD Publishing. [CrossRef]

Panadero, E. (2017). A Review of self-regulated learning: Six models and four directions for research. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *8*, 422. [CrossRef] [PubMed]

Parminter, S., & Bowler, B. (2011). Class readers. In R. Day, J. Bassett, B. Bowler, S. Parminter, N. Bullard, M. Furr, N. Prentice, M. Mahmood, D. Stewart, & T. Robb (Eds.), *Bringing extensive reading into the classroom* (pp. 44–55). Oxford University Press.

Pintrich, P. R. (2004). A conceptual framework for assessing motivation and self-regulated learning in college students. *Educational Psychology Review*, *16*, 385–407. [CrossRef]

Sheu, S. P. H. (2003). Extensive reading with EFL learners at beginning level. *TESL Reporter*, *36*(2), 8–26.

Skola2030. (2019a). *Anglu valoda II vidusskolai: Padziļinātā kursa programmas paraugs vispārējai vidējai izglītībai [English II for secondary school: Model curriculum for the highest course in general secondary education]*. Available online: https://mape.gov.lv/catalog/materials/988F5A3B-155D-4A70-B199-8FB686D57760/view (accessed on 2 September 2024).

Skola2030. (2019b). *Caurviju prasmes. [Transversal skills]*. Available online: https://www.skola2030.lv/lv/macibu-saturs/merki-skolenam/caurviju-prasmes (accessed on 4 September 2024).

Taguchi, E., Takayasu-Maass, M., & Gorsuch, G. J. (2004). Developing reading fluency in EFL: How assisted repeated reading and extensive reading affect fluency development. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, *16*(2), 70–96.

Takase, A. (2007). Japanese high school students' motivation for extensive L2 reading. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, *19*(1), 1–18.

United Nations (UN). (2015). *Sustainable development goals*. Available online: https://sdgs.un.org/goals (accessed on 2 September 2024).

United Nations (UN). (2024). *The sustainable development goals report 2024*. Available online: https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2024/ (accessed on 2 September 2024).

Vebrianto, R., Thahir, M., Putriani, Z., Mahartika, I., Ilhami, A., & Diniya. (2020). Mixed methods research: Trends and issues in research methodology. *Bedelau: Journal of Education and Learning*, *1*(2), 63–73. [CrossRef]

Zimmerman, B. J. (2002). Becoming a self-regulated learner: An overview. *Theory Into Practice*, *41*(2), 64–70. [CrossRef]

Zimmerman, B. J. (2015). Self-regulated learning: Theories, measures, and outcomes. In *International encyclopedia of the social & behavioral sciences* (pp. 541–546). Elsevier. [CrossRef]

Zimmerman, B. J., & Moylan, A. R. (2009). Self-regulation: Where metacognition and motivation intersect. In D. J. Hacker, J. Dunlosky, & A. C. Graesser (Eds.), *Handbook of metacognition in education* (pp. 299–315). Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.

Zimmerman, B. J., Schunk, D. H., & DiBenedetto, M. K. (2015). A personal agency view of self-regulated learning: The role of goal setting. In F. Guay, H. Marsh, D. M. McInerney, & R. G. Craven (Eds.), *Self-concept, motivation and identity: Underpinning success with research and practice* (pp. 83–114). IAP Information Age Publishing.

Zimmerman, B. J., Schunk, D. H., & DiBenedetto, M. K. (2017). The role of self-efficacy and related beliefs in self-regulation of learning and performance. In A. J. Elliot, C. S. Dweck, & D. S. Yeager (Eds.), *Handbook of competence and motivation: Theory and application* (2nd ed., pp. 313–333). The Guilford Press.