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**STUDENTS' WRITTEN REFLECTIONS TO FOSTER SELF-  
DIRECTED LEARNING IN ENGLISH LESSONS IN FORM 11**

**DIPLOMA PAPER**

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## **DECLARATION OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

I declare that this study is my own and does not contain any unacknowledged work from any source.

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29 May, 2017

## ABSTRACT

Students self-directedness is determined by several factors, such as students' ability to think critically, willingness to learn independently and habit of self-reflection. Self-directed learning assumes that learners are motivated to learn by desire to achieve new heights, the necessity to grow, the personal satisfaction of accomplishment and curiosity.

When students start questioning their learning process, habits of learning and purpose, they become more goal oriented and therefore, more involved in the process of reflection. Reflection aims to provide support to students in becoming aware of their strong and weak points in learning and, thus, be more self-directed learners.

Therefore, the author of the Paper considers students' reflection as something which brings a valuable input in students' engagement in the learning process.

Therefore, the **aim** of the Diploma Paper is to examine whether students' written reflections help foster self-directed learning in English lessons in Form 11. The research has been conducted on the basis of case study carried out in Secondary School № 53 in Riga, period from February till April, 2017.

The sample of research included students from Form 11 consisting of twenty-four students, eighteen boys and six girls, whose language proficiency level varied from beginners level till upper-intermediate.

The author of Diploma Paper studied literature about the issues related to learning reflections and its principles, also self-directed learning opposite to teacher-directed learning method. The author of the Paper designed and analysed questionnaire in order to examine students' opinions about self-directed learning and their learning habits, designed and implemented students' written reflective journals into English lessons in Form 11 and also planned and analysed students' written reflective essays in English lessons in order to examine attitudes towards the experience with reflective journals.

As a result, the author of Diploma Paper concluded that Students' written reflections can foster self-directed learning in English lessons, nonetheless, there are other factors that need to be considered. For some individuals, the experience with reflective journals worked as a motivation to become more involved in self-development and, thus, in their self-directedness. Nonetheless, some learners found external motivation to learn English more powerful than reflective journals as students preferred to track their progress with the help of home assignments, praise and marks.

## ANOTĀCIJA

Studentu pašvirzība tiek noteikta pēc tādiem faktiem, kā studentu spēja domāt kritiski, vēlme mācīties patstāvīgi un viņiem piemīt ieradums un tieksme uz pašrefleksiju. Ar pašmācībām tiek pieņemts, ka audzēkņi ir motivēti mācīties un iekarot jaunās virsotnes kāres, izaugsmes nepieciešamības, personīgā gandarījuma no sasniegta un ziņkāres dēļ.

Kad skolnieki sāk uzdot jautājumus par viņu mācību procesu, par ieradumiem un mērķiem tajā, viņi kļūst vairāk orientēti uz mērķu sasniegšanu un tādējādi vairāk iesaistīti refleksijas procesā. Refleksijas mērķis ir nodrošināt vairāk atbalsta studentiem, lai tie labāk zinātu viņu stiprās un vājās puses mācībās un tādējādi būtu vairāk pašvirzīti uz sevi mācību ziņā.

Tādējādi šī diplomdarba autors uzskata skolnieka refleksiju kā kaut ko, kas nes vērtīgu pienesumu skolnieku mācību procesa nodarbošanās.

Tieši tāpēc diplomdarba mērķis ir pārbaudīt, vai studentu rakstiskās refleksijas palīdz veicināt pašmācības procesu angļu valodas priekšmetā 11. klasē. Pētījums tika veikts pamatojoties uz atsevišķa gadījuma metodi, kas tika realizēta Rīgas 53. vidusskolā 2017. gada laika perioda no februāra līdz aprīlim.

Pētījumā tika iekļauti divdesmit četri studenti no 11. klases, astoņpadsmit zēni un sešas meitenes, kuru valodas prasmju līmenis svārstījās no iesācēja līdz augstākam vidējam līmenim.

Diplomdarba autors izpētīja literatūru par jautājumiem, kuri ir saistīti ar mācības refleksiju un to principiem, kā arī ar pašmācības metodi kā pretstatu uz pasniedzēju virzītai metodei. Diplomdarba autors izstrādājis un izanalizējis aptaujas lapas, lai noskaidrotu studentu viedokļus par pašmācību un viņu ieradumiem mācībās, izstrādātu un ievestu skolnieku rakstiskās refleksijas žurnālu angļu valodas stundās 11. klasē, kā arī izplānoto un izanalizētu skolnieku uzrakstītās refleksijas esejas angļu valodas stundās, lai izpētītu attieksmi par pieredzi par rakstiskās refleksijas žurnāliem.

Kā rezultāts, diplomdarba autors secināja, ka skolnieku rakstiskās refleksijas var veicināt pašmācību angļu valodas stundās, tomēr, ir jāņem vērā arī citi faktori. Dažiem indivīdiem pieredze ar refleksijas žurnāliem nostrādāja kā motivācija, lai vairāk iesaistīties pašattīstības procesā un, tādējādi arī viņu pašmācībā. Tomēr daži skolnieki atrada papildus motivāciju mācīties angļu valodu intensīvāk nekā aizpildīt refleksijas žurnālus, jo skolnieki deva priekšroku sekot līdzi savam progresam ar mājas darbu, prakses un atzīmju palīdzību.

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## INTRODUCTION

Students self-directed learning has increasingly become a topic for discussions in the field of modern education. For many students the process of learning is a challenging experience especially when it concerns the ability to think critically and therefore reflectively. Nowadays, more students have problems with concentration at school while learning, furthermore, learners are not asked to reflect on their learning experience which makes it more difficult to follow one's learning process. When the lesson is over, the majority of students do not remember the things they learned from the lesson, moreover, students do not connect this learning experience with themselves. There are still teachers who believe that students' reflections have a valuable impact on one's education as it aims to help students become aware of their learning achievements and, thus, become more self-directed. Teachers believe that reflection if implemented into the lessons is a useful source for those students, who sometimes lack the ability to learn progressively. Students have their own way of learning, it happens that each individual reflects differently on the learning experience as they have different thoughts, different weak and strong points. Despite the possible benefits of learning reflection, literature reveals that even though students believe in the importance of reflection and self-directed learning, they either lack the motivation to start the process of reflection or find outside motivators such as home assignments and marks more powerful than self-development (Knowles,1975).

Therefore, the author of Diploma Paper questions the necessity for students to have the possibility to use reflection strategies in their learning in order to improve their language skills and knowledge and therefore become more self-directed learners.

Self-directed learning assumes that learners are moved and desire to learn for their personal goals and needs.

The author of the Paper would like to underline that students motivation to learn independently concentrates on the idea that the learners take responsibility into their hands which can be achieved with the help of learning reflection.

Therefore, the **aim** of Diploma Paper is to examine whether students' written reflections help foster self-directed learning in English lessons in Form 11.

In order to achieve the aim the following **objectives** have been set:

To study theoretical literature on the issues related to learning reflections and self-directed learning opposite to teacher-directed learning principles.

To design and analyse Questionnaire with the aim to examine students' opinions about self-directed learning and students learning habits.

To design and implement students' written reflections in the framework of reflective journals into English lessons in Form 11.

To plan and analyse students' written reflective essays in English with the aim to study students' attitudes towards the experience with reflective journals.

To reach the aim of the Diploma Paper the author concentrated on the following **research** questions:

1. What reflective learning is;
2. How written reflections influence students' self-directed learning;
3. What motivates learners to engage in their self-directed learning;
4. What principles self-directed learning includes.

The **hypothesis** of the Diploma Paper is the following: if students' written reflections are used in English lessons, students' self-directed learning in English is fostered.

The present research has been conducted on the basis of case study which was chosen as the most suitable **research method** to achieve the aim of Diploma Paper. The case study was carried out in Secondary School 53 in Riga in the period from February till April, 2017.

As one of **the data collection method** questionnaire was used. The questionnaire was designed with the aim to establish students' attitudes and opinions about self-directed learning and students learning habits. Another **data collection method** students' written reflective journals in order to find out whether students are fostered to be self-directed in their learning when reflective journal is implemented in English lessons in Form 11. Third **data collection method** was students' written reflective essays in order to draw a general conclusion on the students' attitudes towards the experience with reflective journals.

**The Chapter 1** of the Diploma Paper presents the general concepts of reflective learning, also

points out discussions between authors whether reflective learning is important and needs to be implemented into the learning process. Also it includes the description of ways of documenting learners' reflections to establish a successful frame for each individual to use.

**The Chapter 2** discusses what self-directed learning principles consist of and what benefits they bring to students' learning experience. Also it includes students' possible motivation factors to learn and draws the opposites between teacher-directed and self-directed learning principles.

**The Chapter 3** of the Diploma Paper presents the analysis and the account on findings of the present research, i.e. analysis of Questionnaire made at the beginning of the research, analysis of students' written reflective journals and analysis of students' written reflective essays.

## 1. LEARNING THROUGH REFLECTION

It is normally assumed that every activity at school should somehow be assessed. Many teachers and tutors evaluate students' efforts either by praising them or giving mark for their work. Although it may not be common practice, there are still some teachers who believe that time spent on learning should always bring personal and social input into one's education, therefore teachers dedicate lessons to students individual and group reflections.

There is, however, speculations and discussions about the importance of this learning approach. Many believe it to be important as it helps students to think about themselves as learners, other on the contrary suggest avoiding reflections as they are too time consuming. Therefore, in this chapter the author of Diploma Paper examines how learning through reflection can help students in their learning.

Spiller (2009) in her work has discovered that learners benefit more when asked to reflect on their personal learning, she describes this new way of student engagement as something which brings a valuable input and involves learners in individual and collaborative work. This learning model is inspired by changing conceptions of teaching and learning, underlining the importance of student self-directedness. The author of the Diploma Paper thus, points out that learning should always bring personal input into one's education, this however cannot be achieved by asking whether the learner understood the material of the lesson or not, student should reflect on his own learning process. The author of Diploma Paper believes that by using written reflections students will benefit more from the lesson they participate in.

Even though the word 'reflection' is quite common in the field of education, many researchers provide different definitions to the word. Seibert and Daudelin (1999) describe reflection as a cognitive examination of one's own experience, which means that people reflect by taking material from outside themselves and bring it into their minds to examine it. While Fade (s.d.: 4) insists that reflection involves: "describing, analysing and evaluating our thoughts, assumptions, beliefs, theory base and actions." When students start questioning their learning process, habits of learning and purpose, they become more goal oriented and therefore, more involved in the process of reflection. Reflection aims to help students become aware of their strong and weak points in learning and consequently become more self-directed learners.

Reynolds and Vince (2016) propose different definition of the word 'reflection', they see it as a tool which serves as critical evaluation of experience, reflection highlights

and makes an account of learning by digging deeper into the nature of learning experience. Through reflection process, learning becomes more clearly social process which forms the cycle of learning, it continues to generate new experience and consequently builds progressive and long term knowledge.

There is a current speculation whether modern school requires establishment of reflective learning environment. High number of teachers believe reflection to be a useful source for those students, who lack the ability to learn progressively, nonetheless, teachers assume that not every student possesses the ability to think reflectively and therefore, benefit from it.

Gackowski (2003) declares that reflection cannot be seen as positive input into one's learning process unless it is not followed by the experience of disappointment and failure. Fade (s.d.) argues that despite the majority of students tend to dedicate more time to reflection when having difficulties in learning or are on the edge of failure, they still have the same willingness and ability to reflect deeply when being successful and effective. This experience however, does not come naturally to students, it acquires deep personal input, willingness to become more independent and open minded.

The author of Diploma Paper believes that skill and ability of learner to give himself and to his actions an evaluation may foster student towards self-directness in the future. Dewey (1910) in Seibert and Daudelin (1999) describes that individuals who will benefit most from reflection possess three characteristics such as: open-mindedness, welcoming to new experience, ideas, or queries, devoutness, since when a person is dedicated to the subject questions occur naturally, proposals and responsibility, and the need to consider the values of a probable step. In addition, Dewey (1910) in Seibert and Daudelin (1999) states that three situations will stimulate reflection: practical needs, curiosity, and intellectual problems.

There are different types of learners in every classroom, which means that everyone learns differently. Students have their own ways of processing the information and applying it. It is possible that each individual reflects differently on the learning experience if compared to other students, they have different strategies for reflecting, different activation points which may trigger their thinking and which students find particularly important for themselves. Fade (s.d) reports that while working with young learners she managed to understand why reflection session is so important. She discovered that reflection helps student capture and understand practical learning experiences, which makes students almost touch and connect the learning experience with themselves.

Fade (s.d) in her research established 4 ways of documenting learners' reflections, she believes that by using discussions, interviews, questioning and logs and journal writing, each individual will find the most comfortable and suitable way of establishing a successful frame to express his feelings, thoughts and goals.

This diversity of reflection strategies can help not only for learner to be able to make learning meaningful, it may be as well beneficial to the teacher since reflection can provide teacher with the information about student current learning situation.

Using reflective discussions, teacher encourages students to share their thought upon the learning topic or theme in a friendly and open way, these types of reflections may be organised in small group or simply in pairs. During these kinds of rich discussions, students learn how to listen to and discover the implications of each other's reflection strategies.

Another way of reflecting on one's learning process is by expressing thoughts about the experience in the interviews. Fade (s.d) proposes an unthreatening way of conducting the reflective interviews by asking students firstly to share among classmates and afterwards with the teacher. Brookfield (1987) in Seibert and Daudelin (1999) indicates that in order to create the right interview session for students, teacher should take the role of facilitator who provides students with reflective questions of learners own choice finding students as the ones who learn not the teacher. He insists however that the questions should be related to actions, should be formed from particular to the general and most importantly should express something of the personality of the individual. This type of activity will help students to discuss common issues, share their experience in that particular moment and help to plan future strategies for reflection. Many researchers, however, disagree with the statement that students should create their own questions themselves, believing that reflection should have a structural background in order for teacher to assist students successfully. Seibert and Daudelin (1999) believe that without the structure, teacher will not have the opportunity to indicate weak and strong points of his students.

Several researchers use questions in a chronological way during the reflection session. Glenn and Nelsen (2000) have created their own conception of reflection questions, which they believe may help learners to reflect on their learning process successfully, the questions should start from what happened at the lesson, what students saw during the lesson, what their feeling were at that moment and most importantly what the most significant thing was for that particular student. Students may also answer the questions which will impact the future self-directed learning. Fade (s.d.) believes that in

order to help students develop these skills of reflective thinking, it is important that teachers are able to ask students powerful and constructive questions every time when students are reflecting upon their learning experience. This questioning should allow students to identify their strengths and weaknesses and develop an active plan to guarantee good progress. Unfortunately, many educators prefer to use general questions instead of proposed above in fear of students' failure to answer them. The author of Diploma Paper however, believes that questions of this type of generalization do not seem to bring any positive results in helping students to reflection deeply on their learning and consequently analyse their weak and strong points.

Knowles (1975) believes that there are ways by using which students can become self-directed learners, one of his proposed methods is using students' written reflections in a form of logs of reflective journals. Castley (2005) states that Log and Journal writing provide students with unique possibility to reflect independently on their studies. The individual becomes aware of his own learning difficulties and is able to feel himself comfortably enough to write everything in detail, moreover, student is not influenced by other classmates reflections as it may happen in the interview reflective sessions. In journal and log writing student places self as the centre point reference for the problem or task. According Beckett and Miller (2006) journal writing provide a portrait of what learners know and what they can do, journal offers a deep perspective of students' progress over time, encourages participation and self-reflection, as well as builds instruction. Journal writing as a way of reflecting is a good way of giving students a chance to make a difference for themselves not relying on any support from the teacher and consequently make students more independent as learners.

Library Services Academic skills centre (2015) states that by keeping a reflective journal or other types of written reflections allows learners to demonstrate their critical thinking about their own skills and knowledge, moreover, when writing, students decide what they believe is important for their personal development. Therefore, keeping reflective journal helps students to establish personal interests in learning the language and, therefore, make this whole experience meaningful. Learning and Information Services (2012) believes that written reflection can help students make links between past, presents and future, this type of reflection helps students to store information and learning experience without making repetitions and therefore, avoid acting automatically without thoughts.

Beckett and Miller (2006) describe 2 ways how students' written reflections may affect students progressive learning. Firstly, written reflections such as journals and logs

help students to archive everything which happens over the course, which mirrors the new insights and understandings students gain in the process. Secondly, since students are constantly reflecting on their learning, they become more self-directed in their education over time. There are however, obstacles in written reflections as the learners must be highly observant and able to describe objectively, in detail the events of the experience. Keeping a log, diary or journal, or simple notes taken during or after the experience should help develop both the powers of observation, and self-directness.

There is another important aspect in log and journal writing, the role of the teacher. In order for reflection to become students' priority in learning, they need to be properly guided and helped when facing challenges in their learning. Furthermore, significant amount of time should be dedicated to student' journal writing reflections as to students see the opportunity to reflect in the way they want. It is therefore important that the teacher is willing to apply this concept of students' activity, be able to assist his students and more importantly wish to see his students as independent learners rather than dependent.

White and Guthrie ( s.d.) in their research had discovered that many students found lack of time the most discouraging aspect of the whole experience with reflective journals, despite the fact that learners acknowledged that they believed reflection was important for their autonomous learning. It is therefore important that teachers value students' efforts in completing journal and give them the time they require to complete it. Knowing that teachers will not simply skip lesson reflections, challenges students to be more mindful during the lessons and thus find value in learning.

White and Guthrie(s.d.) believe lack of time to be a significant barrier to successful reflection, it is therefore suggested that educators should provide time in class for individual or group reflection. By carving out time during classes for reflection, teachers demonstrate their willingness to assist students in their learning. By engaging in reflections with students, teachers contribute to the learning environment and invite authenticity in students' reflections.

## 2. SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING PRINCIPLES

Different methods have been used in attempt to provide a precise description and explanation of the term of self-directed learning. Knowles (1975: 18) defines self-directed learning as “a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and materials resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies and evaluating learning outcomes.” Many educators as well as trainers of education, state that Knowles gives the most specific description of self-directed learning. Meanwhile Hiemstra (1994: 1) claims that self-directed learning should be seen “as any study form in which individuals have primary responsibility for planning, implementing, and even evaluating the effort.”

One must understand that the term self-directed learning has been developed and discussed in the last three decades and is still seen as something new and unique. Grow (1996,5p) declares that “only few people have ever defined self-directed learning with precision; nonetheless, self-directed learning is an immensely useful concept for orienting oneself to education at all levels.” At this point self-directed learning is seen as a process which may be used by the student at any stage of his learning, which shows this concept to be useful for learners in their education. Straka(s.d.: 2) at the same time sees self-directed learning as a process which unites learner and his personal intention for learning, he defines self-directed learning as ‘ a process which takes place when the relationship between the learner and the subject matter is one of interest, the learner determines his need to learn on the basis of interest, employs strategies to help him assimilate the content, controls these strategies and assesses his success in learning.’”

There have been many terms used as synonyms to self-direct learning such as: autonomous learning, isolated learning and others. In the meantime, Knowles (1975) argues that such terms as: self-planned learning, inquiry method, self-study and independent learning see the learner in isolation while self-directed learning takes place in alliance with different kinds of facilitators, such as: tutors, mentors, teachers and classmates.

To make self-directed learning definition even clearer, Knowles (1975) compares it with its opposite teacher-directed learning. At this point the author of the Diploma Paper wants to stress that self-directed learning should be seen as personal and unique experience which in not in any way connected with teacher’s goals, school’s or institutional demands. However, it is not easy to direct students’ attention towards

analysing of their learning. The majority of students are still motivated not in gaining knowledge and skills but rather in gaining good subject marks and degrees.

Hiemstra (1994) in her research states that self-directed learning has become a huge research area and is still discussed by the researchers in the field of education. In the recent years, a major contribution in the ground of self-directed learning was made by the observations which took place at University of Chicago, Illinois by Cyril Houle's, he interviewed 22 adult learners and categorised them into three groups grounded on motives for their participation in learning. Hiemstra (1994: 2) describes these groups as " goal-oriented, who participate mainly to achieve some end goal, activity-oriented, who participate for social or fellowship reasons and learning-oriented, who perceive learning as an end in itself." This experiment has opened new horizons in the field of self-directed learning. It made a statement and gave a broader understanding of the motives and students' personal needs. Nevertheless, the majority of students at school are still motivated to learn by gaining good mark for their knowledge, students do not see the process of learning as something which is highly personal and self-directed. Students find self-directed learning as unknown, problematic, and independent way of learning, therefore, they are afraid of being isolated and left alone.

In the meantime, Prabjandee and Inthachot (2013: 1) declare that "self-directed learning is an innate, basic, and natural characteristic of human beings when encountering challenges, and this characteristic varies on the continuum, depending on situations." The Author of the Paper finds Prabjandee and Inthachot definition controversial, believing that even though one may have the ability to react in a certain way towards new situations and challenges, find the possible solution to them by using his natural birth instincts, yet in order to possess these natural characteristics, they should be introduced in the early stage of life. To make it clear, the Author of Diploma Paper believes that the teacher or other person who takes the role of facilitator in the learning process of a learner, should not give everything in detail to his subjects, but rather introduce them into it so that they could use their abilities to think critically in the future. Knowles (1975) as well argues that in order to self-directed learning become successful, the teacher must establish himself as a facilitator of pupils learning, not as authority figure.

It is believed that the learner is always reliable on his tutor or teacher, student refers to his teacher as the premier source of knowledge, the problem is that students are too much dependable and therefore cannot adapt the conception of self-directed learning. Some students do not wish to overload themselves with extra studies, some see this

concept as difficult and challenging, which in all the aspects makes them feel stressed. In these conditions, student's self-directness disappears and dependency starts to develop.

Knowles (1975) points out that for learner to become self-directed in every aspect of his self-education a certain concept should be established.

A starting point for the learner to become the road towards self-directness would be a clear picture of what it means to be self-directed, to imagine how he would feel, what he would do if he was completely independent in his studies. It should be therefore, completely learner's responsibility and willingness to become one whole self-directed person.

According to Guglielmino (1977) in Prabjandee and Inthachot (2013) self-directed students' learning readiness consisted of eight dimensions. These dimensions include: openness to learning, self-concept as an effective learner, initiative and independence in learning, informed acceptance of responsibility, love of learning, creativity, positive orientation to the future, and the ability to use basic study and problem-solving skills. These eight dimensions became widely used as a theoretical framework to examine self-directed learning readiness.

Grow (1996) however, believes that being a dependent learner should not in any circumstances be seen as a defect or digression of the learner, yet it can bring great limitation for student's personal development. In other words, Grow does not want to establish the conception of not being a self-directed learner and therefore, not being able to think critically, on the contrary, he underlines the possible benefits which self-directed learning can bring to student's in their education. Grow (1996: 5) believes that 'Just as dependency and helplessness can be learned, self-direction can be learned and it can be taught.'

It is therefore important that this process starts at an early stage of student's education, unfortunately, this conception of self-directness, self-evaluation and self-assessment is often neglected and abandoned by students and teachers.

## **2.1. SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING OPPOSITE TO TEACHER-DIRECTED LEARNING**

There is a current debate whether self-directed learning is something beneficial for the learner or teacher-directed learning should be the right way for student to learn progressively. Knowles (1975) claims that are learning situations in which students indeed are dependent on their teachers, situations where students' experience is limited, in which willingness to learn is really determined by the level of maturity, teachers and authorities still need to understand that self-directness can and should be taught to students.

Grow (1996: 14) states that "good teaching does two things: It matches the student's stage of self-direction, and it empowers the student to progress toward greater self-direction." It is often believed that teacher's task is to provide students with the information they need to study, learn this information and then test students' knowledge, Grow (1996) argues that in order to become a good teacher it is not enough to be the source of students' knowledge, the teacher should encourage students to become self-directed and consequently find their own progressive ways of learning.

In this subchapter, the Author of the Diploma Paper wants to focus the attention and compare the possible strategies of learning such as self-directed learning and teacher-directed learning.

Grow (1996: 20) strongly believes that for any student "it is possible to learn how to learn, to learn how to see, to learn how to be, in ways that make one more self-directing in many areas of life." The problem is that teachers do not always provide students with the choice of doing something for their personal needs in learning and gaining new knowledge which a unique not the same for everyone process. According to Knowles (1996) the problem is that teachers do not feel comfortable with the idea of letting their students go for the swim into the "open ocean", they believe that their students may drown in the water. This way of teaching is typical to the authoritarian type of teachers, as they see teaching as the "one way" perspective in which teacher gives the information to students, students take this information and process it and present.

Knowles (1975) calls this method of learning as "teacher-directed" which means that students are only moved to learn as much as it is required by the authorities such as school and teacher. In this way of teaching students are motivated to learn by the external rewards and punishments such as diplomas, degrees, competitions, and comparative

failures. Nevertheless, there are some teachers, who are open to their students' personal development and see the possible benefits of it. Teachers, however, haven't been familiarised with any possible implement for making this achievable. Grow(1996: 13) in his research states that "some teachers say that they have no pedagogical method for helping students move from dependency to self-direction. Which brings the idea of self-directedness almost impossible without the cooperation from the teacher's behalf. "Self-directed learning assumes "that learners are motivated by internal incentives, such as the need for esteem (especially self-esteem), the desire to achieve, the urge to grow, the satisfaction of accomplishment, the need to know something specific, and curiosity." (Knowles 1975: 21).

It is perfectly understandable that in the classroom where there are approximately 30 to 35 learners, it is difficult to pay attention to every learner's needs. Not without a reason learners are different in their character, abilities to learn and even learning style. One approach can easily work with one learner nonetheless, it may be a total tragedy with another.

Knowles (1975) wrote in his research that while working at school, he decided to contribute to his learners self-directed process development by giving them a chance to self-reflect, to become more responsible and more interested in their learning progress. His idea was to simply encourage his students to become self-directed by planning creative tasks for them and preparing outside the class reading. Knowles believed that students will be able to perform well and become more in charge for their learning, this however, did not happen. The reason this did not work with students was that Knowles wanted to change his students, he wanted them to become self-directed learners but he did not expect that he needed to change his teaching policy as well. Knowles (1975) states that it took him some time to become not just a teacher but a facilitator in the classroom, the focus was on what was happening in the learner rather than what was the teacher doing. Knowles research has shown the diversity of teacher-directed learning and self-directed learning.

*Table 2.1. Processes of Teacher-Directed Learning and Self-Directed Learning. (Knowles 1975)*

| PROCESS ELEMENTS          |   |   |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| Elements                  | Teacher-directed learning   | Self-directed learning  |
| Climate                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal</li> <li>• Authority-oriented</li> <li>• Competitive</li> <li>• Judgmental</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informal</li> <li>• Mutually respectful</li> <li>• Consensual Collaborative</li> <li>• Supportive</li> </ul> |
| Planning                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primarily by teacher</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By participative decision-making</li> </ul>  |
| Diagnosis of needs        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primarily by teacher</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By mutual assessment</li> </ul>  |
| Setting goals             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primarily by teacher</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By mutual negotiation</li> </ul>   |
| Designing a learning plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content units</li> <li>• Course Syllabus</li> <li>• Logical sequence</li> </ul>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning projects</li> <li>• Learning contracts</li> <li>• Sequenced in terms of readiness</li> </ul>        |
| Learning activities       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transmittal techniques</li> <li>• Assigned reading</li> </ul>                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inquiry projects</li> <li>• Independent study</li> <li>• Experiential techniques</li> </ul>                  |
| Evaluation                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primarily by teacher</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By mutual assessment of self-collected evidence</li> </ul>   |

There are major differences in the formation of teacher-directed learning and self-directed learning processes. Table 2.1. above represents Knowles (1975) vision of the distribution of the elements which form both teacher-directed learning and self-directed learning. Each element (climate, planning, diagnosis of needs, setting goals, designing a learning plan, learning activities and evaluation) represents the variation in the learning arrangement for the lesson. In this table, Knowles (1975) underlines the main differences in these two conceptions of teacher-directed learning and self-directed learning. It is evident that planning, diagnosis of needs, evaluation and even setting goals in the teacher-

directed learning are made by teacher who is a formal and authoritarian person, whereas, self-directed learning represents student-learner as a main participant in his learning process, who collaborates with the teacher in planning, diagnosing needs and even setting his personal learning goals. Nunan and Lamb (1996: 10) also state that in self-directed learning “ learners are consulted on what they want to learn and how they want to go about learning, learners are involved in setting, monitoring, and modifying the goals and objectives of the programs being designed for them.” Additionally, Nunan and Lamb (1996) claim that self-directed learning may take place in the classroom only if learners monitor and assess their own progress, they are active and involved in the evaluation of their own learning process.

Although this may sound unrealistic and sceptical, the Author of the Paper believes that in order to become a successful learner one should gain skills which then will help him to be autonomous after the learning has ended. It is evident that no learner will stay at school, university, college or other institutions forever, these establishments provide learners with knowledge which they will need in their future life, therefore self-directness is a vital skill which makes no secluded boundaries for the learner. Nonetheless, it makes unclear, whether it is mandatory to establish the self-directed learning in every classroom and with every learner and if so, how can the teacher introduce his learners to the benefits of being self-directed.

Grow (1996) believes that teaching and learning should be in balance as it is with everything in life. He claims that the learner must not be fully put to one of the learning categories as self-directed or teacher-directed learning. Learners of whatever state of knowledge whether they are beginners or advanced students are time to time dependable on their teachers, it is teacher’s task to help their students overcome that barrier of dependency in general. According to Grow(1996: 14) “good teaching is situational, yet it promotes the long-term development of the student.” In his research Grow managed to create a model to describe teacher’s and learner’s role in the educational environment. He claims that he has created this conception of self-directed learning basing his own experience and knowledge of learning and teaching. In his own words, this conception offers a way in which teachers can be strongly influential while encouraging students towards greater autonomy.

*Table 2.2. The Staged Self-Directed Learning Model. (Grow 1996)*

| <b>Stage</b> | <b>Student</b> | <b>Teacher</b>           | <b>Examples</b>   |
|--------------|----------------|--------------------------|---|
| Stage 1      | Dependent      | Authority<br>Coach       | Coaching with immediate feedback. Drill. Informational lecture. Overcoming deficiencies and resistance. |
| Stage 2      | Interested     | Motivator,<br>guide      | Inspiring lecture plus guided discussion. Goal-setting and learning strategies.                         |
| Stage 3      | Involved       | Facilitator              | Discussion facilitated by teacher who participates as equal. Seminar. Group projects.                   |
| Stage 4      | Self-directed  | Consultant,<br>delegator | Internship, dissertation, individual work or self-directed study-group.                                 |

Table 2.2. above represents Grow’s vision of stages of self-directed Learning. It represents a model which suggests how teachers can actively equip students to become more self-directed in their learning. Grow proposed four learner styles (dependent, interested, involved, self-directed) and four matching teacher styles (authority and coach, motivator and guide, facilitator, consultant and delegator). Teacher can only move the learner to the next level if he understands where the learner current position is and match the learner first. In this way teacher can analyse his student’s current stage starting from stage 1 dependent student while representing an authority figure. Simultaneously, Stage 1 represents a starting point for a student who is at the preliminary point of his learning, at this point student is highly dependable. This type of student will benefit best from clearly-organised, straight and aim oriented learning environment. By observing this model’s examples, teacher can monitor his own behaviour and change his teaching approach. It is essential for the teacher to understand that the learner of whatever stage of self-directed learning model may become temporarily dependent in the face of new topics.

In comparison to other theories of self-directed and teacher-directed learning, Lerkkanena, et al. (2015) propose their own view on teacher-directed and self-directed

(Child-centred) learning conception. They see self-directed learning as one in which all learners are active constructors of knowledge and the teachers' role is primarily in facilitating students' learning in the classroom. Teacher tasks in self-directed learning are to guide and help students, while the teacher-directed approach is believed to be more traditional learning which holds that basic academic skills are learnt through direct instruction and practice.

In their research Lerkkanena, et al. (2015) found out the main compounds of the self-directed learning. They believe that the focus should be held on the environment of the (child-centered) classrooms, in which teachers' contribution is generally in the support of the children's learning efforts, social skills, learner's needs and interests. When teachers are responsive to children's needs, consider children's interests, and promote children's autonomy in the classroom, they foster children's motivation to learn, thereby resulting in better learning outcomes.

Pintrich and De Groot (1990) claim that "the value component of student motivation involves students' goals for the task and their beliefs about the importance and interest of the task, although this component has been conceptualized in a variety of ways (e.g., learning vs. performance goals, intrinsic vs. extrinsic orientation, task value, and intrinsic interest), this motivational component essentially concerns students' reasons for doing a task." In other words, what students' individual answers to the question are and why they are learning and what for. It is not teacher's teaching goals that matter, it is essential that the learner has his own curiosity in learning and doing something for himself. The learner must constantly ask himself about his learning process by reflecting on the experience he had in the process of getting the new knowledge.

In comparison with self-directed learning, teacher-directed practices "are typically characterized by emphasis on the provision of information, and the employment of structured group lessons (relying on oral recitation and worksheets), teaching discrete skills in small steps (c.f., drill and practice), and giving praise to children when predetermined goals are reached." Lerkkanena, et al. (2015: 2). In teacher-directed learning, little importance is devoted to children's own interests and ideas. In addition, children's communication development or the use of peer interactions are not highlighted as much as the systematic teaching and acquisition of the content and basic skills.

*Table 2.3. Match and Mismatch between Learner Stages and Teacher Styles. (Grow 1996)*

|   |   |  |                            |  |
|---|---|--|----------------------------|--|
| <b>S4:<br/>Self-<br/>Directed<br/>Learner</b> | Severe<br>Mismatch<br>Students resent<br>authoritarian<br>teacher | Mismatch                                 | Near<br>Match              | <b>Match</b>   |
| <b>S3:<br/>Involved<br/>Learner</b>           | Mismatch  | Near<br>Match                            | <b>Match</b>               | Near<br>Match  |
| <b>S2:<br/>Interested<br/>Learner</b>         | Near<br>Match   | <b>Match</b>                             | Near<br>Match              | Mismatch   |
| <b>S1:<br/>Dependent<br/>Learner</b>          | <b>Match</b>  | Near<br>Match                            | Mismatch                   | Severe<br>Mismatch<br>Students<br>resent<br>Freedom they<br>are not ready<br>for |
|   | <b>T1:<br/>Authority,<br/>Expert</b>                              | <b>T2:<br/>Salesperson<br/>Motivator</b> | <b>T3:<br/>Facilitator</b> | <b>T4:<br/>Delegator</b>   |

Another important issue in self-directed teaching is how not to make a mismatch between learner's stage of development and teacher's role in the educational process. Difficulties rise when the teaching style of an educator is not matched to the learner's degree of self-direction. Grow (1996, p11) believes that "teaching style should be governed not by subject matter but by the balance between teacher defectiveness and student control, usually set by the student's ability to participate as a self-directed, self-motivated, responsible learner-though sometimes negotiated between teacher and student".

Table 2.3. above demonstrates Grow's model of match and mismatch between learner stages and teacher styles in self-directed learning. Grow proposes four learner types (dependent learner, interested learner, involved learner, self-directed learner) and

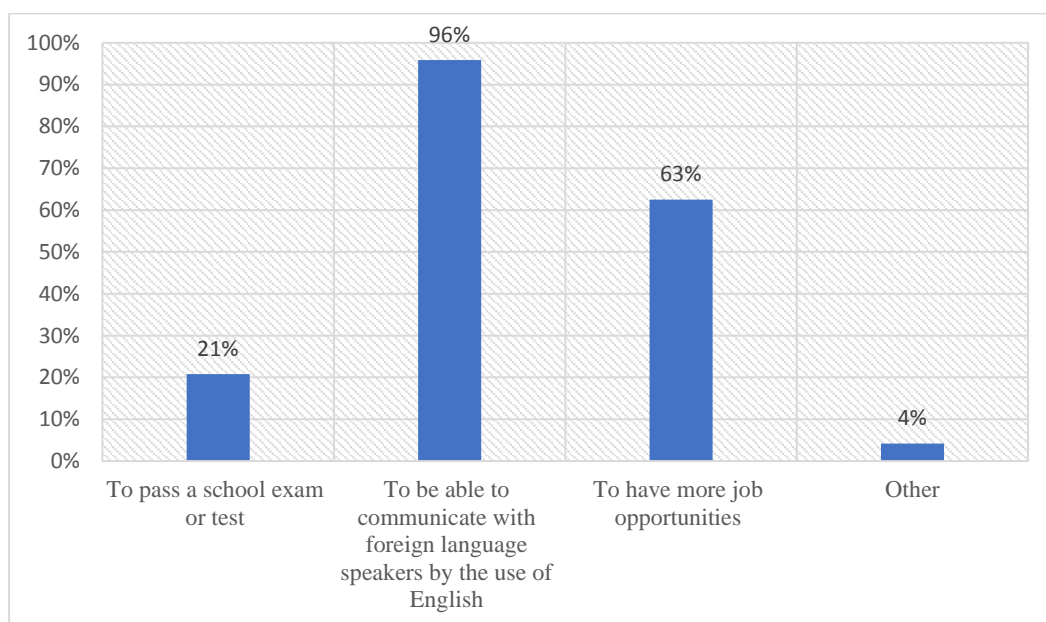
four teacher styles to match (authority expert, salesperson motivator, facilitator, delegator). Teachers accustom their teaching styles to match the student's degree of self-direction. Yet there are problems that occur when S1: dependent learners are mismatched with non-directive teachers and when S4: self-directed learners are mismatched with highly directive teachers. If the learner gets mismatched with unsuitable teacher style for his stage of development, it may consequently culminate refusal to learn, rebellious behavior or total retreat into boredom. Those students who are mismatched begin passively alienate and eventually stay in this state till the end of the learning process.

### **3. THE PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION OF STUDENTS' WRITTEN REFLECTIONS IN ENGLISH LESSONS IN FORM 11**

During the year 2017 the author of the Diploma had her teaching practice at Riga Secondary School 53. In order to examine students' attitudes and habits of self-reflective learning and to find out students' motivation to learn English, the author of the Diploma Paper designed a questionnaire (See Appendix 1). Before creating this questionnaire, the author of Diploma Paper spoke to students about their habits of learning, their interest in self-development, importance of self-directed learning as well about students' interest in analysing their strong and weak points in English. Some of the student's answers were taken into account while creating the questionnaire. Before filling in the questionnaire it was declared that questionnaire is anonymous, that all the data collected will be used in the Diploma Paper and that the information will be analysed in order to create the reflective journal which will then be used by students in their self-directed learning. Due to the fact that Form 11 included 24 students whose level of English language proficiency varied from A1 to B1. The Author of Diploma Paper designed both questionnaires in English language and in students' native language with the aim to make it possible to be understood by all the participant. Moreover, the questionnaire was simplified and written in less academic style to facilitate students' filling in the questionnaire. The Questionnaire consisted of fourteen questions, both multiple choice questions and statement questions.

First question was dedicated to students' motivation for learning English. The aim of this question was to find out which aspects of the offered ones are the most motivating for students to learn English. Students were not constrained in this question and could choose multiple options in order to answer this question. According to the results, the majority of the respondents (96%) answered that their key motivation for learning English is to be able to communicate with foreign language speakers by the use of English, it means that almost everyone finds English as the common language when encountered with foreign language speakers. Meanwhile, 63% of the participants found their motivation in learning English by having more job opportunities, it may be connected with the fact that all the participants are currently studying in Form 11 which means that they have only one year till school graduation, therefore students find English as an extra positive point in their future jobs and professions. Less than a half (21%) of the respondents indicated passing school exams or test as their main motivation for learning English, to pass a school exam or test was not seen as the core motivation for learning

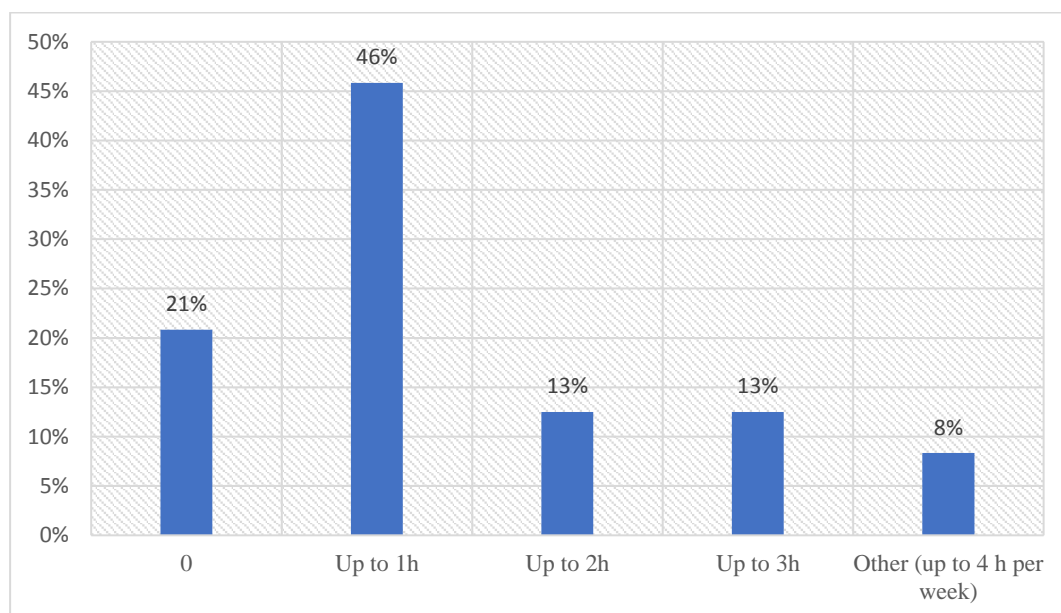
English by the majority of the participants due to the possible fact that students relate English more to the ‘self’ as to their personal development and are encouraged to learn English not by home assignments, test or exam, they are rather moved to learn the language with the purpose of self-interest and inner criteria. Even though the possible options were provided by the author of Diploma Paper, 1 person decided upon his own interpretation. One person indicated that his motivation for learning English was to enter and study at University, this answer is possibly indicated due to the fact that it is the year before graduating from school and this particular respondent is already thinking about his future profession and education, therefore, probable options to enter University.



**Figure 3.1. Students' motivation for learning English**

Next question was designed in order to learn how much time students usually spend learning English out of the class. The author of Diploma Paper indicated time reference which was one week, students in this school had 4 lessons in English language per week. This year the whole class of students, 24 people if speaking precisely did not have any compulsory home assignments due to their participation in the project which proposed schools not to use any home assignments for students. This means, that students do not have to and are not obliged to do any extra work outside schools English lessons. Therefore, this particular question was chosen by the author of the Diploma paper as a valuable indicator of students' willingness and interest to dedicate their time for self-directed independent learning. For this particular question, students could choose the most suitable option for them or indicate their own variant suitable for them. The largest

proportion of respondents (46%) indicated that they spend up to 1 hour each week in order to learn English out of the class. This might be due to the fact that this particular class of students have tests or essays to write almost every week, which might be the reason why the majority of students spend time to revise school materials to get prepared for the tests and other lesson activities. Significant minority (21%) answered that they spend no time to learn English out of the class. The author of Diploma Paper assumes that this substantial proportion of learners provided this answer due to the fact that students are not expected to hand in any home tasks from the beginning of this year, since the questionnaire took place in February 2017 it is possible that students have already developed habit of not doing what is not asked from them or not expected. The option of spending up to 2 hours each week to learn English and spending up to 3 hours were equally divided by 13% for both options. It may be possible to suggest that this students who chose these two options are more self-directed in the process of learning English. Moreover, during free talk with students the Author of diploma Paper discovered that there is a large proportion of students who attend extra English language lessons, English courses or learn English with private teachers. According to students, they wish to know English better but for some it is either difficult to learn English in the class when there are so many students, some students said that they are afraid to openly express themselves at the lessons due to the large numbers of students in the class. Therefore, the Author of Diploma Paper believes that the time of 2 to 3 hours is spend out of the class by those students who either attend and do extra learning out of the school or are learning independently for themselves. Even though the options were provided by the Author, 2 respondents provided their own answers about the amount of time they spend on learning English each week, which formed 8 %. After summarizing students' answers, it could be concluded that students are not do not spend time on their self-directed independent learning when they are not evaluated or are not obliged to hand in evidences of their learning progress.



**Figure 3.2. Students' time spent learning English out of the class each week**

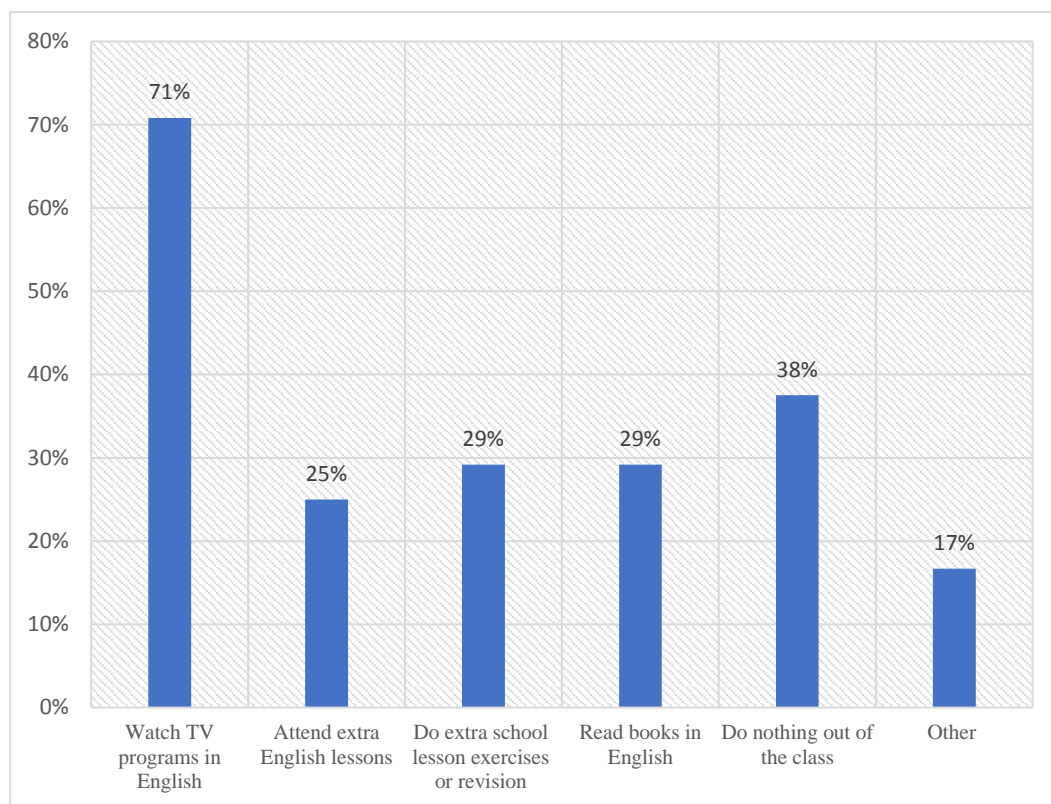
As to the third question, the respondents were asked to answer about their experience of using opportunities to use English outside the classroom, which means using English independently and for personal reasons and interests. Respondents were given two options to choose from: 1) yes, 2) no. All the students provided answers for this question, which made it possible to fully analyse the results. This question was specifically developed by the Author of Diploma paper and its form is constructed in this particular way in order to see whether students seek any opportunities to use their knowledge of English in real life outside the frames of lessons. From 24 questionnaire respondents, the majority, 19 learners answered that they take any possible opportunities to use English outside the classroom. It means that high number of students are motivated and seek opportunities to use their knowledge, their skills and abilities to use English independently to benefit from it in subjects of their own interest. The author of Diploma Paper managed to have a non-formal conversation with students before creating this questionnaire, students were asked about their interest in learning English, the situations in which they used English. Some students mentioned some situations from everyday life in which they used English. Some mentioned that they went abroad and spoke to people by the use of English language, others even mentioned playing computer games for the purpose of meeting new people with whom they could speak in English. The Author assumes that students are willing to apply their skills and knowledge in English and do so by finding their own stimulus and situations where they can apply the current

knowledge of English and therefore improve and increase it. Nevertheless, approximately 20 % or 5 people answered that they do not seek any opportunity to use English, which may indicate the lack of interest in English as subject, the inability to use English on the level which this person wished to know English and possibly, the fear of failure.

The next question was a multiple choice question with aim to find out what students do to learn English out of the class. This question was of particular interest to the Author of Diploma Paper since the Author of Diploma Paper wanted to identify whether students are involved in their self-education in English language or not. It was mentioned before, that students of Form 11 have no home assignments, moreover students do not reflect on their learning during or after the lessons. Therefore, this question was of high interest since it shows students involvement in extra learning and if they are involved in the process of self-directed learning what they are doing to learn English. The large proportion (71%) of respondents answered that they watch TV programs in English. It could be possibly explained that students are more keen on watching TV programs in English than reading books because watching television does not require reflection or analyse as it could possibly be from completing exercise books or reading. Significant minority (38%) of participants declared that they do nothing to out of the class in order to learn English. The Author of Diploma Paper assumes that this answer could possibly be chosen in such relatively large amount due to the absence of students compulsory home assignments which is not required in this particular class and students inability or other possible obstacle such as lack of time, lack of willingness, lack of subject interest and other. The option of doing extra school lesson exercises or revision and reading books in English were equally divided by 29% for each option. This tendency might be linked with the fact that previous year students were reading short versions of English books which might woken their interest in reading books. Moreover, students had both student's book and student's work book which they used at school lessons, therefore some students preferred to use it for their independent self-directed learning by choosing those issues, questions and topics they were personally interested in.

The 25% of total 24 respondents answered that they attend extra English lessons or private lessons to learn English out of the class. The 17% of students provided their additional option to this question. Students mentioned listening music in English language, reading posts on social medias, communicating in English while playing online games and reading information on the internet. The author of the Diploma Paper assumes that students chose these particular types of activities to learn English as they represent their personalised way of learning, which means that while doing something pleasant and

meaningful for them, students want to add extra knowledge of English language. Author of Diploma Paper believes that this way students are making their leisure time more meaningful and beneficial for their lifelong learning of English and self-directedness.

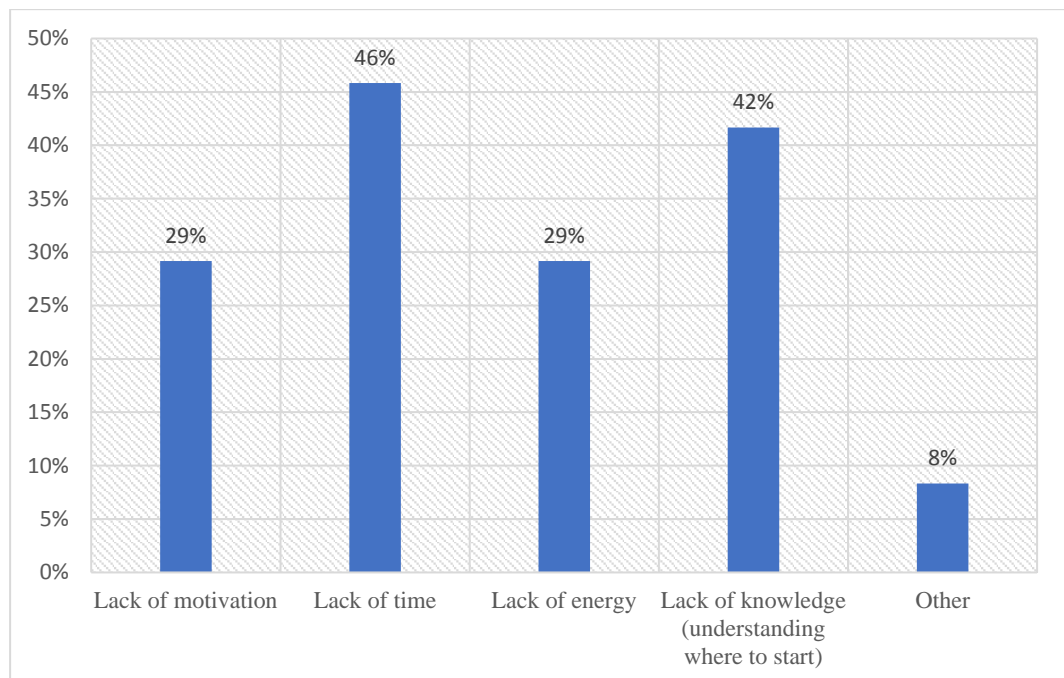


**Figure 3.3. Students' actions to learn English out of the class**

The next question was a multiple choice question with the aim to find out what may prevent students from being engaged in their self-education. The author of Diploma Paper wanted to discover possible obstacles in students self-education as well as in autonomy and the things which might cause students inability to become more oriented and independent in their English language learning. The Author of Diploma Paper made the most important discovery which was that even though the question was created in the form of whether there is anything which prevents students from being engaged in their self-education, there was no negative response as ‘no there is nothing which prevents me from being engaged in my self- education’. Which means that every respondent believes that there definitely is an impediment which makes it difficult for them to be engaged in their self-education.

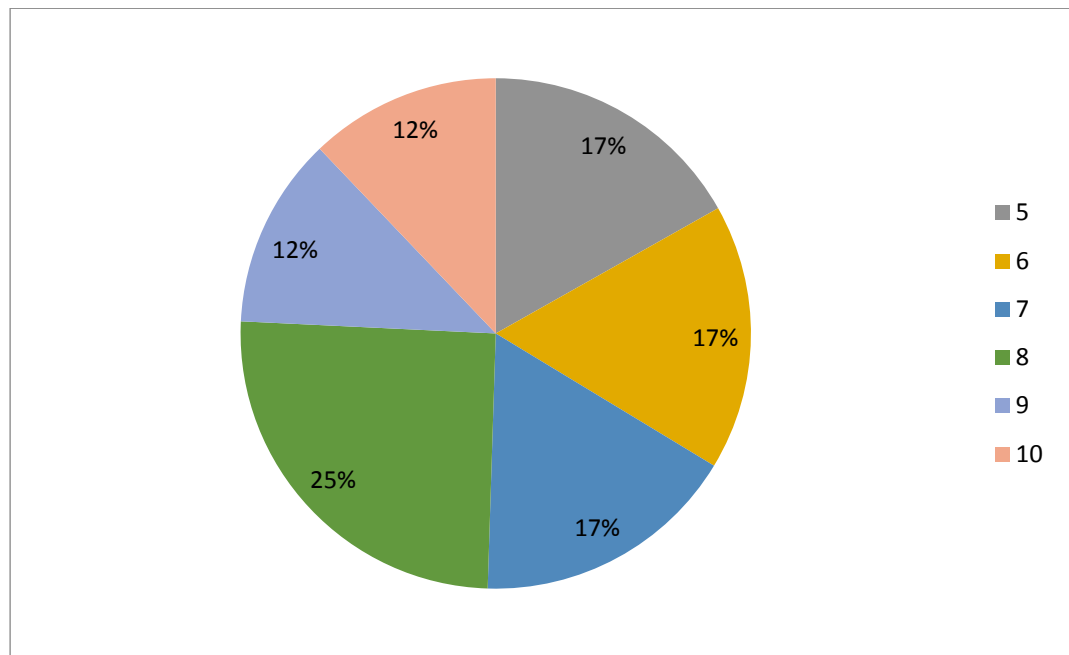
The greatest part of respondents (46%) indicated lack of time as the biggest issue which prevents them from being engaged in their self-education and consequently being self-directed learners. The second significant majority (42%) of learners stated that lack of knowledge, understanding where to start is the main obstacle in preventing them of

being engaged in the matter of self-education. The author of Diploma paper assumed this option could have such tendency due to the fact that learners are not engaged in their learning analysis. During Author's teaching practice in school 53, it was discovered that learners do not reflect on what they learn, learners do not use any adjuvant tools such as journals, hot reflection sessions, or other strategies which might help students to understand and simplify ways how they could possibly become engaged in their self-education both in class and at home. Such options as lack of motivation and lack of energy were equally divided by 29% for each option. It may be possible to suggest that this tendency is caused by students learning load. Students in Form 11 had 8 lessons of different school subjects every day, 5 times a week. Which means that not only learners have to do their home assignments in those subjects, they need to pay attention and work during those lessons. The Author of Diploma Paper therefore assumes that students get tired after a long day at school and therefore lack the energy needed to be engaged in extra learning. As in the previous question, students could provide their own variant to answer the question. Two persons answered that for them lack of self-esteem, fear of defeat and laziness are the things which prevent them from being engaged in the process of self-education.



**Figure 3.4. Aspects which prevents students from being engaged their your self-education**

The next question dealt with students' beliefs about self-directed learning. The participants were asked to rate self-directed learning in the matter of its importance. The author of Diploma Paper provided respondents with options where students needed to indicate number from 0 till 10. To simplify this question, the Author of Diploma Paper provided students with a short definition of the term self-directed learning. To answer this question, students needed to rate how they find self-directed learning important by rating it according to the system which was similar to one they had at school. The Author of Diploma Paper chose this rating scale as to make it efficient and meaningful for students since they are rated for their success in the same way. One student could provide only one number and rate self-directed learning only once. The 25% of total 24 respondents indicated that they find self-directed learning important by rating it with number 8. If one can compare this question to the previous one where students needed to indicate possible obstacles of being engaged in their self-education, the high number of people answered that for them lack of motivation was the key element of not being interested in their self-education. The author of Diploma Paper did not expect the majority of student to rate the importance of self-directed learning highly. This, however, suggests that even though students lack motivation to be self-directed and engaged in self-education, they believe self-directed learning to be an important element of one's learning process. The options of 5,6,7 were equally divided by 13 % for each option. Three respondents rated self-directed learning by evaluating its importance with 9 and 10. The possible numbers as 0,1,2,3,4 were not chosen by any of 24 respondents, therefore the Author of Diploma Paper assumes that participants of this questionnaire rate and find self-directed learning as an important element of learning and do not believe it to be useless. This tendency may also coincide with the fact that participants are in Form 11, which means that next year they will graduate school and become more self-directed in their future professions and life.



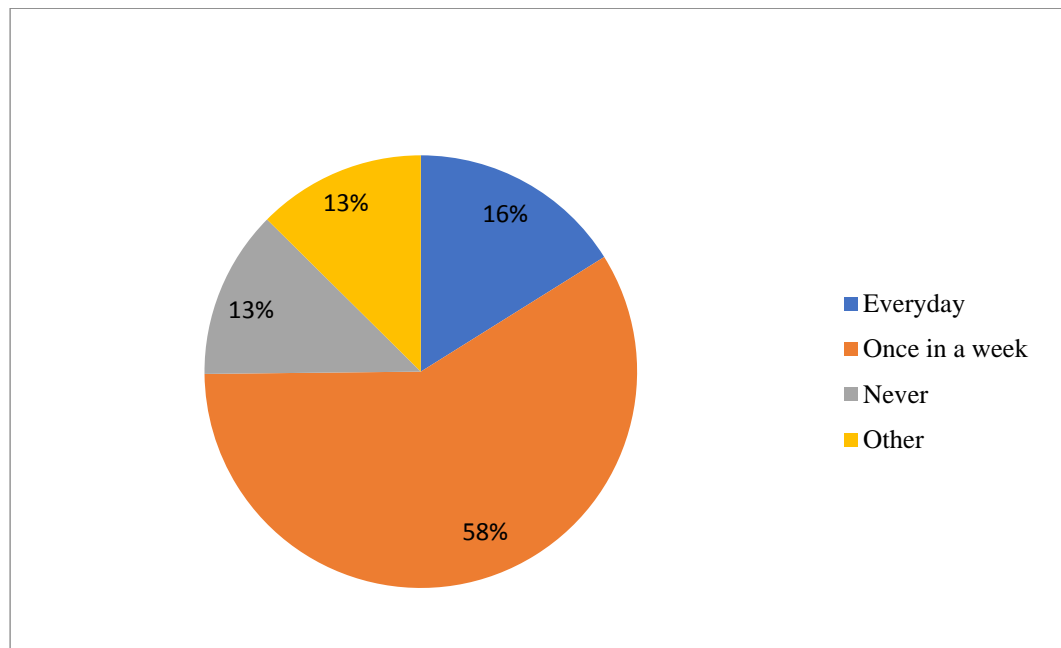
*Figure 3.5. Students' finding self-directed learning important on the scale from 0 till*

**10**

Next question that followed was based upon students belief of who is responsible for their knowledge of English language. Respondents were provided with possible answers whom which they could chose the most suitable answer for them. The question was the following: “Who do you believe is responsible for your knowledge of English?” Since this year students do not have any home assignments due to the educational project, the Author of Diploma Paper had high interest in this issue. The largest proportion of students, 13 to be precise, answered that they are responsible for their knowledge of English, meaning that they put all the results from the tests, exams and other assessments as their own responsibility. Before designing this question, the author of Diploma Paper spoke in non-formal arranged lesson with students, they had group discussions as well as individual work in which they exchange their opinion upon the importance of learning, about communication with other people and lifelong learning. From this discussion, the Author of Diploma paper managed to elicit some facts about students experience with not having any home assignments, it was mentioned by the majority of students that they lack that possibility of working with materials at home, they believed that their knowledge of English weakened at the same time, those students blamed themselves not the teacher for their knowledge of English mentioning that they are already grown-ups and should be more responsible. As Knowles (1975) mentioned in his research that in order to become self-directed learner, one should possess self-reflective thinking skills and should take the responsibility for his own learning. Meaning that the learner takes his steps to become

more independent and at the same time takes all the responsibility for his progress of decrease in learning English. The second part of students, 11 respondents indicated teacher to be the one show they believe is responsible for their knowledge of English. Although the amount of respondents was not vast, one can see that approximately every second student considers teacher to be the one who is responsible for students knowledge of English. The Author of Diploma Paper assumes that this high number in believing that teacher is responsible for students knowledge of English is due to the fact that students do not have any home work, and due to the fact that class includes 24 students with level of language proficiency which varies from A1 till B1, it is not possible for teacher and students to manage a lot of learning during these lessons.

The author of the Diploma Paper designed the next question to examine how often students look through things such as topics, activities, notes, materials and other that they as students have studied in English lessons. By this question the Author of Diploma Paper wanted to discover whether students have any habits of reflecting on their learning and the most importantly how frequently it happens. Students were given four options to choose, one from which was in which students could write their own variant if needed. The largest proportion of respondents (58%) stated that they look through topics, activities, notes and materials studied at lessons one in a week. This option might be chosen by students in such numbers due to the fact that every week students of this class have tests and essays to write, therefore it is possible that students have the habit of working with lesson studied materials to get ready for the tests and essays. The small minority (16%) answered that they work with topics, materials and other thing studied at school every day. The Author of Diploma paper assumes that these 4 students are highly self-directed in their learning of English language and therefore have the interest in going back and dedicate their time and efforts towards progressing in English, which makes them habit of reflective thinking. Even though the options were provided by the Author, 3 respondents stated that they look through topics, activities, notes and materials not often than once in a month and moreover, only when students have tests on the whole unit. Three students indicated that they do not look through or study the materials from the lessons. This is possible due to the fact that students do not have any home assignments or they believe that they do not need to do this work since it is not required by the teacher and school.



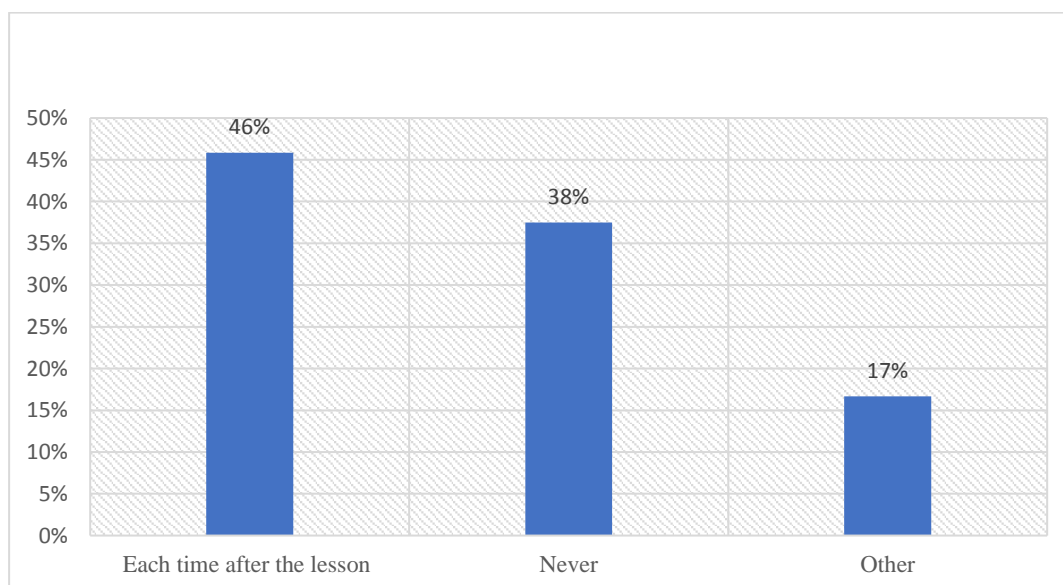
*Figure 3.6. Frequency of students' looking through topics, activities, notes, materials*

As to the ninth question, the respondents were asked to tell if they keep a record of what they usually do in English lessons. In this question students needed to select one of two options. The Author of Diploma Paper designed this question specifically to examine students' tendency in recording the process of learning, which could help students to become self-directed in their learning and be able to reflect on it. The majority of students (54%) answered that they keep a record of what they do in English lessons, whereas (45%) stated that they keep no record of the things they do in English lessons. The Author of Diploma Paper assumes that those students who keep the records of what happens during lessons are keener on learning new information and therefore gain new knowledge and skills. According to Knowles (1975) students who keep a record of what happens during the lessons, are more likely to reflect and personalize their learning for themselves more if compared to those students who do not do that. This process may as well be beneficial for students to become self-directed and therefore independent.

The next question that followed was based upon the matter which emerged during the non-formal discussion with students during Author's teaching practice. The Author of Diploma Paper discovered that students in Form 11 had problems with analysing their own progress in learning, some students mentioned that they are keen on making analysis of the lessons or their classmates performance rather than their own learning. As it was mentioned in the fifth question of the questionnaire, students have obstacles which prevent them from being engaged in their self-education, one of which was the fact that

students lack of knowledge and understanding where to start and lack of time. Therefore, The Author of Diploma Paper assumes that it is possible that the high number of students do not reflect on things they study during English lessons finding this process time consuming and difficult to understand. The Author of Diploma Paper proposed students 3 options to choose from. The majority (46%) of learners stated that they are involved in the process of reflection every time after the lesson, whereas a significant minority (38%) of respondents answered that they never reflect on things they study during English lessons. The Author of Diploma Paper draws parallel between students inability of being engaged in their self-education with those students who answered that they never reflect on things studied at English lessons. It is more likely that those who lack knowledge and understanding of self-education are the same people who had never reflected on things studied during English lessons.

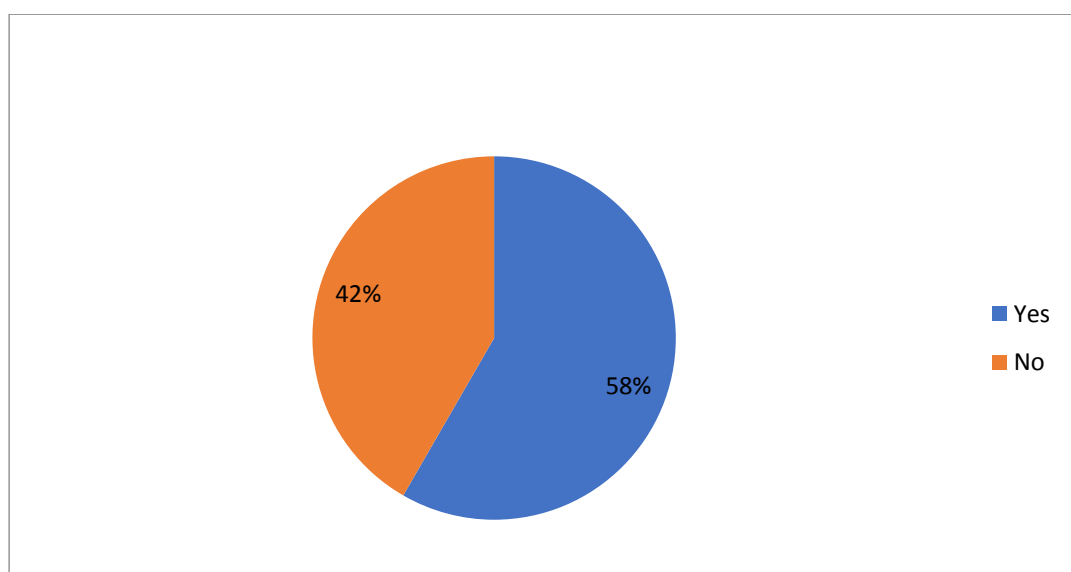
The minority (17%) of students stated that they do not reflect upon every English language lesson choosing to reflect in general and once a month. It is possible to suggest such students choose to be defined by the lack of tools such as learning diary, portfolio or journal which could help students to highlight their weak and strong points in English. The Author of Diploma Paper believes that by creating meaningful frame for students to reflect, they could benefit from this experience and become more independent and self-oriented.



*Figure 3.7. Frequency of students' reflection habit in English lessons*

The next question was designed with the aim to clarify whether students of Form 11 know how to identify their weak and strong points in English language. The majority

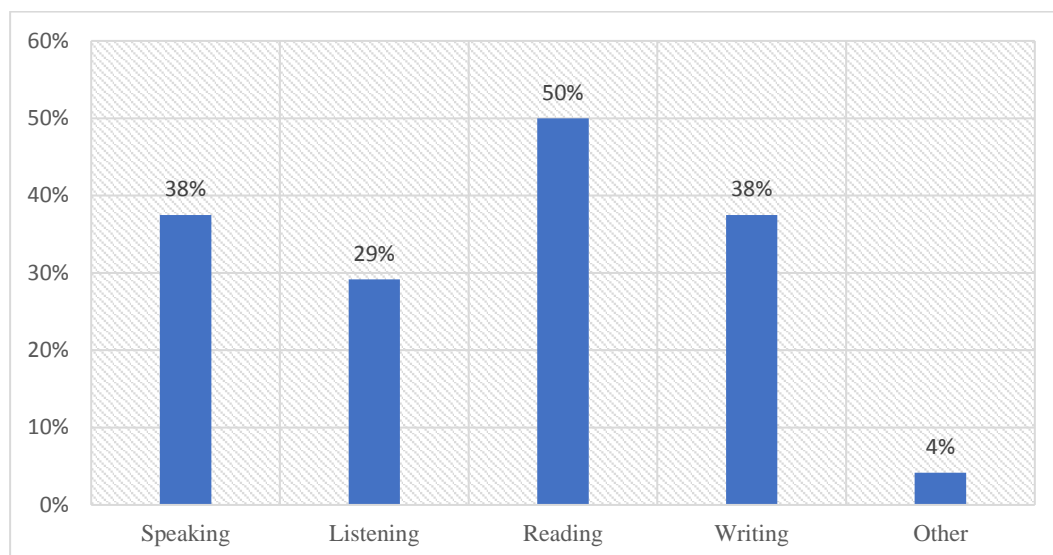
(58%) of students gave a negative answer to this question, which means that they do not know how to identify their weaknesses in English. Less than a half (42%) of the respondents indicated that they know how to identify their weak points in English. Although the amount of respondents was not vast, one can see that approximately 2 in 3 students do not know how to identify their weak points in English. The Author of Diploma Paper assumes that this choice is defined by students' lack of either reflective tools such as journals, diaries and other helpful materials or the lack of home assignment which could benefit as a revision for those students who need extra revision of the new material.



*Figure 3.8. The amount of students identifying their weak points in English*

For further examination of respondents' habits and abilities in English. The Author of Diploma Paper designed question basing it upon the informal discussion session with learners of Form 11. Before creating this questionnaire, the Author of Diploma Paper had a discussion with students about their habits, attitudes of learning English, their personal strong and weak points and other. There was a high number of students who stated that they wish they were able to speak better in English, at the same time there were some students who mentioned that they are very bad at writing and wish they could improve their writing skills. The author of Diploma Paper therefore designed this question for students to think reflectively and identify their strong points in English. The question was a multiple-choice question in which students could choose any answer which they believed was suitable for them. The half of the respondents believed their strength in English to be reading. It may be possible to suggest that students in this class feel themselves more confident in doing exercises on reading. The option of speaking and

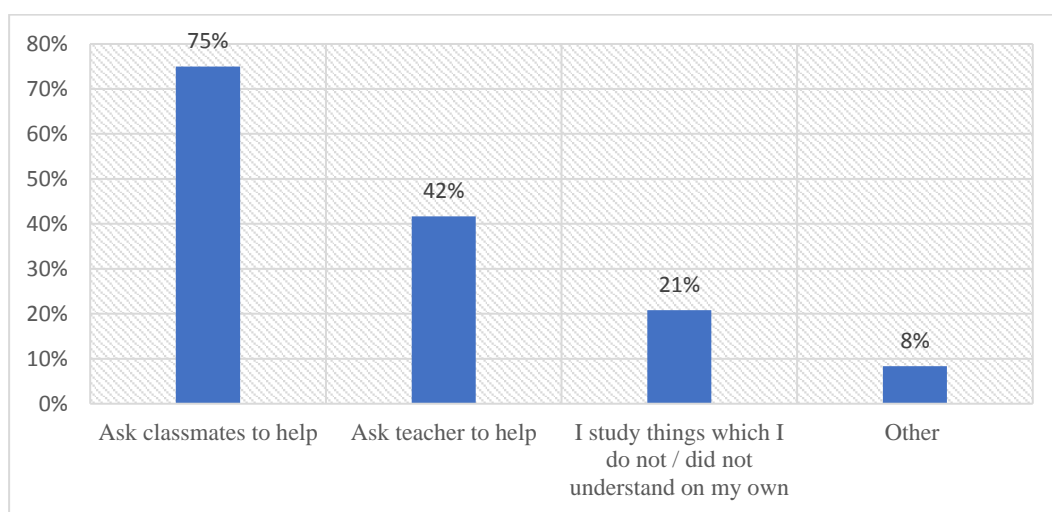
writing was equally divided by 38% for each option. The minority (29%) of students indicated listening to be their strongest point in English language. Even though the options were provided by the Author of Diploma Paper, one person stated his strongest point in English to be grammar. There is no option which would have include more than 50 % of students' responses.



**Figure 3.9. Division of students opinion about their strength points in English**

The last question concentrated upon what students do if they do not or did not understand something during English lesson. The aim of the question was to understand what students usually do to when faced with problem in language learning. The participants were asked to choose the answers provided by the author or add their own additional versions, moreover they could choose several options if they thought them to be relevant. The largest proportion (75%) of participants answered that they asked their classmates to help them when they do not or did not understand something from the lesson. The Author of Diploma Paper suggests this high number of students who chose their classmates as the source of help in English as they are very close to one another. It was said by the mentor of school 53, that students of Form 11 are very friendly and open to help one another, they have no communication problems when asked to work either in groups or in pairs. The Author of Diploma Paper suggests that this tendency is due to the fact that learners feel themselves comfortably learning with one another which suggests that they feel themselves free to ask for help from their classmates. The second minority (42%) of the respondents answered that they refer to their teacher to seek help when they did not or do not understand the something from the lesson. The 21% of total respondents stated that they do not seek help from other people preferring studying things which they

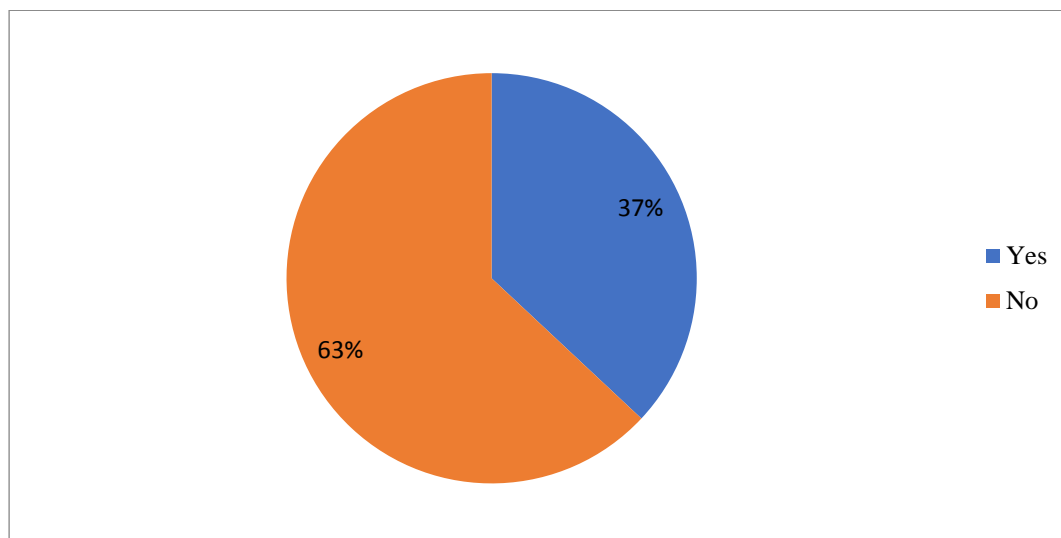
do not or did not understand on their own. Two respondents from 24 participants stated that they usually ask their private teacher for assistance when having difficulties in understanding the content of the lesson. It can be seen from the students answers that they prefer to ask for help classmates in order to understand the materials from the lesson. The Author of Diploma Paper suggests that in order to help students benefit more from one another's help, teacher could introduce reflective lesson discussions, learning diary or journal as a way of making students feel comfortably either by giving them the opportunity to exchange thought with one another or work with this tool individually. It is also possible to use journals, diaries or other reflective tools for group discussions since these students feel comfortably when working together.



**Figure 3.10. Division of students' referring to other sources of knowledge**

In the last question, the participants were asked to indicate whether they find themselves to be effective learners of English. To answer this question, students were provided with two options to choose from. The majority (63%) of respondents stated that they find themselves ineffective learners, whereas 37% of students answered that they believe themselves to be effective learners of English. The Author of Diploma Paper suggests that the majority of students believe themselves to be more ineffective learners than effective due to the fact that they are probably referring to their marks, written tests and exam system of evaluating one's progress. Students tend to judge themselves according to the system provided both by the school and teacher, therefore the Author of Diploma Paper assumes that students evaluated themselves more from the mark perspective. It is also possible that the variation in students' level of language proficiency might also play a key role in students answers, students tend to compare themselves with

others, therefore they might evaluate themselves by comparing their efforts in learning English with their classmates.



*Figure 3.11. The amount of students finding themselves effective learners*

At this point the Author of Diploma Paper concludes that students are eager to learn English when they gain something personal rather than superficial. It is important that they feel the impact English brings to their personality. Even though the level of student's language proficiency varied, students were willing to use any opportunity to use English outside the class. Moreover, students were keen on combining their leisure time with learning English despite lacking energy and time to do that. By watching television in English, reading news and books, students are making English more enjoyable and meaningful for them. Students are moved to learn English for their personal reasons such as communicating with other people or finding a well payed job. The reason why students do not dedicate time to reflect on their learning experience is that they lack understanding and framework. Even though lack of knowledge was the key reason why students were unable to start the process of self-education, students evaluated self-directed learning to be highly valuable to one's learning for the reason that it helps one to become more confident and independent. For the majority of students seeking help from their classmates was the way of improving their knowledge of English, therefore teacher can facilitate students learning process by adding to his lessons elements of group reflections or pair discussions. Using this method, teacher can make students feel comfortably by working together and discussing their weak and strong points with their classmates.

### **3.1 ANALYSIS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF STUDENTS' WRITTEN REFLECTIONS IN ENGLISH LESSONS IN FORM 11**

In order to clarify whether students' written reflections foster self-directed learning in English lessons, the author of Diploma Paper implemented some of reflection strategies in the lesson. As it was stated by Knowles (1975) there are ways by using which students can become self-directed learners, one of his proposed methods is using students' written reflections. According to Grow (1996) reflection aims to help students become aware of their strong and weak points in learning and therefore become more self-directed learners.

Fade (s.d) in her research established 4 ways of documenting learners' reflections such as discussions, interviews, questioning, logs and journal writing by using which each individual can find the most comfortable and suitable way of establishing a successful frame for expressing his feelings, thoughts and goals.

Also, Castley (2005) describes log and journal writing as the way which provides students with possibility to reflect independently on their studies. An individual becomes aware of his own learning difficulties and is able to feel himself comfortably enough to write everything in detail, moreover, student is not influenced by other classmates' reflections as it may happen in the interview reflective sessions.

Beckett and Miller (2006) in their research found 2 ways how journal writing may affect students progressive learning. Firstly, portfolio or journal helped students to archive everything which happened over the course, which reflected the new insights and understandings they gained in the process. Also, keeping a log, diary or journal, or simple notes taken during or after the experience help develop both the powers of observation, and self-directness.

Also Fade (s.d) in her research dedicated to applications of reflection strategies, used reflective discussions which encouraged students to share their thought upon the learning topics in a friendly and open way, she also mentioned reflective discussions to be flexible in all ways as it may be organised in small group or in pairs.

Therefore, the author of the Diploma Paper used students written reflections in a frame of reflective journals to foster students self-directed learning in lessons in Form 11. The Author of Diploma Paper used small-group reflective discussions in which students shared their thoughts once in a week. It was the first time students of Form 11 experienced self-reflection as a part of their learning process.

Initially students were asked to describe what they believed learning reflection was. The Author of Diploma Paper asked students to work in groups and answer what reflection should look like and what characteristics should learner possess to become a reflective learner. After discussing and considering students' possible ideas about reflections, students began to understand what learning reflection means and what benefits it may bring.

Starting from this lesson, students began to use reflective journal in every upcoming lesson. The reflective journal was developed by the Author of Diploma Paper and consisted of two sections first to be called hot self-reflection section, which students were filling in every English lesson (See Appendix 2). Fade (s.d) in her research used hot reflections immediately after the conducted lesson believing it to be the most beneficial way of reflecting on one's experience. Author of Diploma Paper used hot reflections at the end of each lesson, students spent 7 to 10 minutes in order to complete the section which included seven questions that students needed to answer to reflect on their lesson experience.

After one month, students' reflective journals were gathered, summed up and analysed by the Author of Diploma Paper. The Author of Diploma Paper focused attention on the question whether filling in reflective journal fosters students self-directed learning. From 24 student reflective journals, the Author of Diploma Paper received 21 works which were analysed by the Author of Diploma Paper. The Author of Diploma Paper wants to highlight that the level of students' language proficiency strongly varied. The Author of Diploma Paper saw this diversity in levels while overgoing teaching practice in Riga Secondary school 53. The more lessons were conducted the more it started to occur that there are students who need constant teacher's attention and help while both filling in the portfolio and during the lesson. As it was stated by Grow (1996) students may be dependable on their teachers, this however should not be seen as student's weakness and inability to learn independently. He claims that every student can and will be dependent on his teacher, it is teacher's task to help student overcome that barrier of dependency and put the student on the next step towards independency.

First question focused students' attention on lesson's achievements, what they believed was successful in their learning. By implementing this question, the Author of the Diploma Paper wanted to help students consider their strong points in learning rather than weak and problematic. The common answers for the question dedicated to students lesson's achievements and successes in learning were: "Today I learned new words", "I understood the main part of the topic", "I did nothing", "I have revised present and

past tenses, multi-part verbs and result linkers’’, ‘‘Today, I have no achievement , ‘‘ I managed to prepare myself for the upcoming test, in the lesson we took part and repeated present and past tenses.’’

In the second question students were asked to write things which were new or unknown for them that day if there were any. This section concentrated on the issues with which student came across at the lesson. As Knowles (1975) stated in his research, every self-directed learning process starts with learner’s ability to highlight new knowledge, this may be achieved by students critical analysis. Therefore, The Author of Diploma Paper asked students this question with the aim to help students think critically on their learning. The largest proportion of students indicated that for them the new or unknown things were words from the texts, new vocabulary items connected to the topic and grammar units.

As to the third question students were asked to indicate what they did not understand or found difficulties on the lesson. Students needed to provide an example of a word, phrase, explanation, exercise, or other things which they find relevant to be seen as an example. As it was stated by Grow (1996) not all students become self-directed learners, many will not be able to make use of the independence to learn since they lack critical thinking, goal-setting skill, self-evaluation, learning strategies which make a self-directed learning possible. Therefore, The Author of Diploma Paper added this question with the aim of clarifying whether students in Form 11 possess the abilities required for student to be self-directed in his learning. After analyzing students written reflection for this question, the Author of Diploma Paper illuminated that the biggest part of students indicated that they had difficulties in completing grammar tasks, there were those however, who indicated that the biggest difficulty for them is working in group or pair were as they said: ‘‘students are showing disinterest in learning English and disturb others who want to know English.’’

In the next question students were asked to indicate the possible causes which prevented them from learning successfully during the lesson. Students were asked to write comments for the statement: ‘‘I could have done better at this lesson, If I had done the following things.’’ The Majority of students indicated that they could possibly have done better at the lesson if They were not lazy, not sleepy and if they were not disturbed by their classmates. As it was mentioned before, the quantity of learners in Form 11 class was 24, 18 from which are boys and 6 girls. As it was mentioned by the teacher of students of Form 11, it is difficult to deal with such number of people in the class, especially when

the majority of class are boys. Every student has his own personality, manner of learning and abilities.

In the fifth question students needed to indicate the amount of time they plan to devote for the lesson's extra content learning. It is of students' free will to do the extra learning since they are not obliged to do home assignments since learners participate in the project which implies no home assignments throughout the whole year. The Author of Diploma Paper, therefore, added this question in order to discover whether students will or will not consider self-directed learning as their priority in learning English. From the gathered information, it may be stated that they majority of students planned to spend approximately 20 to 30 minutes for the lesson's extra learning.

Next question concentrated students' attention on their plans about the issue, more precisely, what students planned to do with their issues after the lesson. Students needed to write what they will do to work on the matter to understand it and gain new knowledge. One student stated that she planned to ask her classmates for help in those areas she had problems and was interested in. Another student mentioned that she planned to work with grammar book and do those grammar exercises which she considered important for her. As it was mentioned above, the self-directed learner is someone who plans his learning in advance, thinks upon the possible solutions and ways of solving the questions. Therefore, the Author of Diploma Paper believes this question to help students plan their independent learning more precisely and make guidelines to be able to work independently.

The last question of the hot reflection section was dedicated to students notes to themselves. As Fade (s.d) stated in her research, every individual reflects differently on learning experience, learners have different strategies for reflecting and different key points which they find important. Therefore, the Author of Diploma Paper agrees with Fade (s.d) believing that by adding extra option such as "notes to myself" will help students add their own ideas which will help them personalize the experience with reflective journal.

The Author of Diploma Paper wants to highlight that not only students used the reflective journal for one month, during that period, once in a week students were divided into groups and pairs to share their thought and feelings about their learning experience with the new tool reflective journal. As Fade (s.d) mentioned, reflective discussions allow students to share their thoughts about the learning experience in a friendly and open way, during such rich discussions, students learn how to listen to and engage the implications of each other's reflection strategies.

### **3.2. ANALYSIS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF STUDENTS' WRITTEN REFLECTIONS IN ENGLISH LESSONS IN FORM 11**

After completing hot-reflection section, students continued their work independently after the lessons. It was not however compulsory for students to fulfil the reflective journal self-directed section due to class participation in the project in which students are free from any types of assessment outside the school. Nevertheless, the whole class of students showed willingness to do the extra learning for the wish to try themselves in the role of self-directed learners.

The first aspect of self-directed learning section concentrated on the question which was as well included in the hot reflection section. Students were asked to describe what they did not understand during the lesson or found difficulties in. They were asked to reflect on the last lesson. As it was stated by Grow (1996) being self-directed means to think critically. Those who think critically on their learning, experience the feeling of a constant impulse to learn and therefore progress. The author of Diploma Paper believes that by asking students to describe what they did not manage to understand from the previous lesson or found difficulties in, will make students to think critically and use problem-solving skills. The Author of Diploma Paper wanted to see whether learner has an inner stimulus to solve the problem which he is faced with. Even though students' answers were diverse, the majority of students found difficulties in understanding grammar units, words and vocabulary. There were students who indicated that they found difficulties in speaking activities as the Author of Diploma Paper made frequent discussions and role play sessions for students.

In order to help students to work on their personal issue or subject of their interest, the Author of Diploma Paper designed reflective journal option in which students were asked to describe materials or sources they were using to work on this issue. Additionally, students were asked to name those sources and materials they were using for self-directed learning purposes. As Abubakar and Arshad (2015) mentioned, self-directed learning students plan and search learning activities on their own. They choose their own resources to learn the target language such as internet, books, materials and journals writing. This encourages students to formulate their learning goals, select learning strategies, assess their learning needs. The Author of Diploma Paper, therefore, believes that by providing examples of used sources and materials in their reflective journals, students can track their own learning progress, formulate their learning goals better and become selective. The

majority of students preferred to use internet sources such as Wikipedia. One student indicated that in order to find more information upon the lesson topic which was campaigns, she read information from the internet source Wikipedia about campaigns in the UK. One student in particular mentioned using Lingua Leo mobile source as it provided not only word translations but its implementations.

Third question of the self-directed learning section was dedicated to students implementation of the newly studied materials. Students were asked to show their learning progress by providing examples. If it was a new word they were asked to provide a sentence in which they used this word so that its meaning is understandable. The largest proportion of students provided examples of the new words or grammar units they learnt. One student wrote that she did not know words such as: poverty, nuclear power, tension and contagious. After working on these words meaning, she decided to show how these words may be used in the sentences. A small proportion of students indicated just the translations of the words. It should not be seen as defect as Grow (1996) stated in his research, it rather means that the learner possess lower level of the self-directness, which means that with the assistance from the teacher's part, this student can become more self-directed and lift up his level of self-directness.

In the fourth question students were asked to answer whether after working on the issue independently, it became clear to them what the problem was. This question was designed in order to understand whether the process of self-directness goes in the right direction. If it happens that after working on the issue it became unclear and the learning did not happen, the teacher can facilitate this process.

As Grow (1996) mentioned in his research, that the teacher should establish himself as a facilitator and coach, he should not in any circumstances provide students with the answer to their questions, it is believed that it may discourage students in their further learning. The Author of Diploma Paper expected this issue to occur while conducting the research and therefore established reflective discussion sessions once in a week. According to Grow (1996) the best way to facilitate students work with reflective journal is to help them share their thoughts with their classmates. This is possible by using discussion sessions. The Author of diploma Paper proposed the same conception to the students. Students worked in groups and pairs, they create situations, ask questions, help one another, which at the same time helps students to develop interpersonal skills while communicating with classmates. Teacher at the same time takes role of facilitator and advisor, by monitoring and helping those who are in need of guidance, teacher establishes personal relationships with each student.

In the next question, students were asked to rate their efforts in completing the self-directed learning section. Students were asked to give themselves a mark from 0 to 10 to evaluate their work. In the beginning of the research the Author of Diploma Paper spoke to students about their habits of learning, about their motivation to learn, one question occurred during this non-formal discussion, which system of evaluation of student's progress students preferred most. Students stated that they prefer to be evaluated by marks not by comments, as they believed mark to be much stronger reflection for them. As Knowles (1975) mentioned in his research there are differences between teacher-directed learning and self-directed learning conception, the key element in self-directed learning conception is that the planning happens by mutual participative decision-making. Therefore, The Author of Diploma Paper considered the option of giving evaluation to one's efforts in completing portfolio to be beneficial to students, as they indicated that they preferred this method of assessment. The majority of students evaluated their efforts by 7.

The sixth question was designed to clarify how much time students dedicated to completing their self-directed learning section in reflective journal. Each lesson students were asked to indicate the amount of time they plan to spend on leaning their questions or issue which occurred from the lesson. The Author of Diploma Paper wanted to clarify the amount of time students spent to complete their journals. The largest proportion of students spent 40 to 50 minutes in average to complete one learning self-directed section, which may be seen as an indicator of students' willingness to dedicate their free time to study English independently. The Author of Diploma Paper wants to highlight that students who participated in this research had no obligatory home assignment due to the project in which Form 11 students were liberated from any type of home assignments in English throughout the whole year of their learning. Therefore, it is evident that students are willing to spend time on lesson reflections in the matter of self-directness.

The aim of the seventh question was to examine difficulties which occurred while students were completing the self-directed learning section. By adding this question to the reflective journal, the Author of Diploma Paper wanted to provide students with the possibility of sharing their feelings and personal thoughts. As Knowles (1975) mentioned, the aim of self-directed learning is not always about the success, it should possess a gap for students' obstacles and struggles as it highlights an account of learning by digging deeper into the nature of learning experience. The largest proportion of students indicated that they there were no difficulties which occurred while completing the self-directed learning section. The Author of Diploma Paper did not expect that the majority of student

will not have any difficulties while completing such diversity of self-directed learning sections, nevertheless, the Author of Diploma Paper believes this question to be of high value to students learning as it helps teacher to track students weaknesses and assist student in his learning if needed.

The last question of the self-directed learning section was dedicated to students notes to themselves. As it was mentioned before, learners have different strategies for reflecting. Therefore, the Author of Diploma Paper added this section in order to help students add their possible plans for further studies, remarks or praise to oneself. The aim of the reflective journal is to provide students with the opportunity to make learning a personal experience. The majority of students used ‘’notes to myself’’ section for reminding themselves what they want to focus on in their future learning. One person mentioned that he plans to find some grammar units in the book he likes in order to find examples of the rule.

### **3.3. ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' WRITTEN REFLECTIVE ESSAYS IN ENGLISH LESSONS IN FORM 11**

After one month of experience with reflective journal, students were asked to write an essay expressing their views, feelings, and thoughts about the process. Students were asked to write the essay in a brief form since every learner is individual and therefore reflects on his experience in the way of his abilities and level of English language proficiency. Nevertheless, the Author of Diploma Paper designed four questions to be answered by students to facilitate students writing. The Author of Diploma Paper then summarized key statements made by students about their experience. The Author of Diploma paper when asked student such questions as: "Describe your experience with reflective journal, what your achievements were, in what way this portfolio encouraged you or did not encourage you to become more independent in your learning. Twenty-two reflective essays then were gathered and analysed by the Author of Diploma Paper."

Students made comments such as: "For me being self-directed in my learning means becoming an adult and starting my adult life", "My reflective journal has helped me to open doors to a lot of opportunities such as independency and self-control, like habit and making effort to fulfil the journal", "Journal writing helped me to put down important things for future tests as a revision". Some students stated that even though this filling in the journal and discussing it with classmates was time consuming they would like to continue doing it since it helped them to understand that other students have problems in learning as well and therefore feel themselves as they mentioned not alone. As it was mentioned before, the Author of Diploma Paper conducted reflective discussions once a week in order to facilitate process of filling in reflective journal.

As Costa and Kallick (2008) mentioned, discussion is a good way of reflecting on one's learning since it helps students to hear an external voice of reflection in other students' suggestions, explanations, feelings, evaluations, and even feedback. Outside sharing of reflections is vital as it provides students with the possibility of sharing opinions in unthreatening comfortable way.

One learner emphasised the importance of self-directness in learning English language. He stated that: "Self-directed learning should be included in lessons as it helps to reflect on my personality not just grammar and rules and I like this idea that I can express my feelings and thoughts in it." As it was stated by Straka (s.d.) self-directed learning is a process in which both the learner and his personal intention for learning

unites, this becomes possible when the relationship between the learner and the subject matter is one of interest, the student controls his needs to learn on the basis of his own interests and goals.

There were however students who appeared to be against the learning journal as they found it inefficient in comparison with their habitual home assignment. The Author of Diploma Paper assumes this to be possible due to the fact that learners had no home assignments during this year. It is possible that students miss the habit of reflecting on learned class materials in a way of compulsory assessments. One learner commented that: "I would rather do homework than do the learning journal even though I enjoyed it, there is no problem in journal it is in me I am a lazy person." Few learners stated that journal writing helps them to show to the teacher their progress and problems they have, as they believe the teacher to be the expert who can provide them with advice.

Some of the students were in favour of using reflective journal and stated that they want to continue the process of reflecting on their learning. Students consider to use reflective journal in order to track their progress. One student mentioned that: "Journal is a good thing, because you can check what you need to improve, what was successful in your learning and your achievements, I will use this journal in the summer for self-education."

It happened to be evident that some students did not enjoy reflective journal as they believed it to be time consuming. Students mentioned that for them it is easier to ask their private teachers for help rather than engage themselves in filling in reflective journals as this one. The Author of Diploma Paper did not expect this answer to occur. This attitude towards self-directedness shows student's limitations in student's personal development as well in his ability to learn independently and therefore progress in the future education. As it was mentioned by Grow (1996) those students who neglect any possibilities to become self-directed in their learning will have less benefits to think critically on the learning process itself.

Some students established their own habits of filling in the reflective journal, students had set their own goals for each lesson. One learner said: "I had my own goal for every lesson, to discover at least 3 new words for me and then use them in sentences." The Author of Diploma Paper believes this way of goal setting to be beneficial as it helps students to establish their own reasons and aims in learning the language. From few of the essays the Author of Diploma Paper concluded that students had never reflected on their learning, which was not expected by the Author as in Form 11 students should reflect on their learning since this process is essential for student's critical thinking.

## CONCLUSION

The diversity of reflection strategies such as discussions, interviews and reflective journals establish a successful frame to students both collaborative and individual work.

Reflective journal writing provides a portrait of what learners know it offers a deep perspective of student's progress over time as well as encouragement.

The results of the present research confirm that students' written reflections foster self-directed learning in English lessons, this, however, this does not apply on every learner since each learner has different needs, goals and motivation to learn independently. There are other factors that need to be considered. For some students, the practice with reflective journals worked as a motivation to become more involved in self-development and, thus, in their self-directness. Nonetheless, there were students who found external motivation to learn English more influential than reflective journals as students preferred to track their development with the help of home assignments, praise and marks. The diversity of reflection strategies such as discussions, interviews and reflective journals establish a frame for students collaborative and individual work.

Reflective journal writing provides a portrait of learners learning achievements, it offers a deep perspective of student's progress over time as well as encouragement. The author of Diploma Paper believes that there are other factors that need to be considered when applying reflective journals.

. The Author of Diploma Paper was interested in establishing students' personal learning interrelation, which learners believed was important for them. As it was stated before, every self-directed learning process is unique in its kind, students have their own thoughts, opinions and beliefs in the question of how the learning should be.

The analysis of the students' written reflective essays shows that reflective journal helps foster students self-directed learning in English lesson, moreover, it helps students to get personal and meaningful sense of the learning process. Also reflective journal rises students' ability to think critically on the knowledge and supports students to comprehend where they are at that moment in their learning and in what direction they need to go to improve their skills and knowledge. Students also pointed out the necessity of using reflective journal at the end of the lesson as they believed it to help work on students mistakes at home.

For some students as it was answered in the questionnaire, the purpose for learning language was to be able to communicate with people, for others the ability to attain well paid job. Therefore, the author of Diploma Paper underlines the necessity to establish

more students' oriented learning environment to make learning meaningful for the students.

The findings also reveal that in the question of students beliefs about the importance of self-directed learning, participants highly rated self-directed learning believing it to be important for one's learning achievements. Students indicated that the possible obstacle for them not being able to be engaged in their self-education were both the lack of time and the lack of understanding where to start and how. The author of Diploma Paper believes this situation to change slightly as the large amount of students in the reflective essays indicated that now they know what reflection is and how it should and can be done and therefore The author of Diploma Paper, therefore, believes the aim of Diploma Paper

To be achieved since a lot of students were interested and moved to use reflective journal both in and out of class, the reflection in the form of discussion and reflective journal could be used as a tool to follow students learning progress.

Thus, the conclusion can be drawn that the hypothesis of the present research has been proved, i.e. students' written reflections used in English lessons foster self-directed learning in English lessons.

## **THESES**

1. Reflection aims to help students become aware of their strong and weak points in learning and, therefore, be more self-directed learners.
2. There are four different ways of documenting learners' reflections such as: discussions, interviews, questioning and log and written journals which are a successful frame to express students' feelings, thoughts and goals.
3. Keeping a log, journal or simple notes taken during or after the experience helps develop both the powers of observation and self-directness.
4. Knowing that teachers will not simply skip lesson reflections, challenges students to be more mindful during the lessons thus find value in learning.
5. There are three groups grounded on motives for their participation in learning: goal-oriented, activity- oriented and learning-oriented.
6. While students find self-directed learning important, many are still motivated to learn by gaining good marks and praise.
7. In order to self-directed learning become successful, teacher must establish himself as a facilitator of students' learning not as authority figure.
8. Self-directed learning readiness includes: openness to learning, initiative and independency in learning, self-concept as an effective learner, informed acceptance of responsibility, love of learning, positive orientation to the future, creativity, problem-solving skills.
9. Learners of whatever state of knowledge whether they are beginners or advanced students are time to time dependable on their teachers, it is teacher's task to help their students overcome that barrier of dependency in general.
10. When teachers are responsive to children's needs, consider children's interests, and promote children's autonomy in the classroom, they foster children's motivation to learn, thereby resulting in better learning outcomes.

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### Questionnaire

Dear student!

The purpose of this questionnaire is to summarize students' opinion about self-directed learning and their learning habits.

This questionnaire is 100% anonymous and all data collected will be used in the Diploma Paper

You are kindly asked to answer these questions by choosing the most suitable answer for you (X) or answer the questions with your own words (where it is necessary).

The questionnaire will take up to 10-15 minutes.

Thank you for your time!

1. What is your motivation for learning English?

|   |   |
|---|---|
| To pass a school exam   |   |
| To be able to communicate with foreign language speakers by using English | X |
| To have more job opportunities  | X |
| Other   |   |

2. How much time do you spend learning English out of the class each week?

|        |                             |
|--------|-----------------------------|
| 0      |                             |
| 30 min |                             |
| 1h30   |                             |
| Other  | 1 hour with private teacher |

3. Do you take any opportunities to use English outside the classroom?

|     |   |
|-----|---|
| Yes | X |
| No  |   |

4. What do you do to learn English out of the class?

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Watch TV programs in English | X |
| Attend extra English lessons | X |
| Learn English by myself      |   |
| Read books in English        |   |

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Do nothing out of the class |  |
| Other                       |  |

5. Is there anything which prevents you from being engaged in your self-education?

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Lack of motivation                               | X |
| Lack of time                                     |   |
| Lack of energy                                   |   |
| Lack of knowledge (understanding where to start) |   |
| Other  |   |

6. On the scale from 0 till 10 how do you find self-directed learning (taking the initiative to learn on your own) important?

.....7.....

7. Who do you believe is responsible for your knowledge of English?

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| You     | X |
| Teacher |   |
| Other   |   |

8. How often do you look through things such as topics, activities, notes, materials etc. that you have studied in English lessons?

|                |              |
|----------------|--------------|
| Everyday       |              |
| Once in a week | X            |
| Never          | <del>X</del> |
| Other          |              |

9. Do you keep a record of what you do in English lessons?

|     |   |
|-----|---|
| yes | X |
| no  |   |

10. How often do you reflect (make analysis) on things you have studied during English lessons?

|                                 |                   |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| Every time after English lesson |                   |
| Never                           |                   |
| Other                           | X, once in a week |

11. Do you know how to identify your weak points in English?

|     |   |
|-----|---|
| Yes |   |
| No  | X |

12. What are your strengths in English?

|           |                                     |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|
| Speaking  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Listening |                                     |
| Reading   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Writing   |                                     |
| Other     |                                     |

13. What do you do if you do not/did not understand something during English lesson?

|  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Ask classmates to help                                       |                                     |
| Ask teacher to help  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| I study things which I do not / did not understand on my own |                                     |
| Other  |                                     |

14. Do you find yourself an effective learner?

|     |                                     |
|-----|-------------------------------------|
| Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| No  |                                     |

## Questionnaire

Dear student!

The purpose of this questionnaire is to summarize students' opinion about self-directed learning and their learning habits.

This questionnaire is 100% anonymous and all data collected will be used in the Diploma Paper

You are kindly asked to answer these questions by choosing the most suitable answer for you (X) or answer the questions with your own words (where it is necessary).

The questionnaire will take up to 10-15 minutes.

Thank you for your time!

1. What is your motivation for learning English?

|   |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| To pass a school exam   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| To be able to communicate with foreign language speakers by using English | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| To have more job opportunities  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Other   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

2. How much time do you spend learning English out of the class each week?

|                    |                                     |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 0                  | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 30 min             | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 1h30               | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Other <i>a lot</i> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

3. Do you take any opportunities to use English outside the classroom?

|     |                                     |
|-----|-------------------------------------|
| Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| No  | <input type="checkbox"/>            |

4. What do you do to learn English out of the class?

|                              |                                     |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Watch TV programs in English | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Attend extra English lessons | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Learn English by myself      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Read books in English        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| nothing out of the class |   |
| Other                    | X |

5. Is there anything which prevents you from being engaged in your self-education?

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Lack of motivation                               |   |
| Lack of time                                     | X |
| Lack of energy                                   | X |
| Lack of knowledge (understanding where to start) | X |
| Other  |   |

6. On the scale from 0 till 10 how do you find self-directed learning (taking the initiative to learn on your own) important?  
 .....9.....

7. Who do you believe is responsible for your knowledge of English?

|         |          |
|---------|----------|
| You     | X X more |
| Teacher | X        |
| Other   |          |

8. How often do you look through things such as topics, activities, notes, materials etc. that you have studied in English lessons?

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| Everyday       | X |
| Once in a week |   |
| Never          |   |
| Other          |   |

9. Do you keep a record of what you do in English lessons?

|     |   |
|-----|---|
| yes | X |
| no  |   |

10. How often do you reflect (make analysis) on things you have studied during English lessons?

|                                 |        |
|---------------------------------|--------|
| Every time after English lesson | almost |
| Never                           |        |
| Other                           |        |

11. Do you know how to identify your weak points in English?

|     |   |
|-----|---|
| Yes | X |
| No  |   |

12. What are your strengths in English?

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| Speaking  |   |
| Listening |   |
| Reading   | X |
| Writing   |   |
| Other     |   |

13. What do you do if you do not/did not understand something during English lesson?

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Ask classmates to help                                       | X |
| Ask teacher to help  | X |
| I study things which I do not / did not understand on my own | X |
| Other  |   |

14. Do you find yourself an effective learner?

|     |   |
|-----|---|
| Yes |   |
| No  | X |

Self-reflection section:

My today's personal achievements, what was successful in my learning:

..... *i did understand everything, except few words.* .....

Things which were new or unknown for me today:

..... *conservation* .....

*social campaign*

*protest*

I did not understand or found difficulties in today's lesson (provide an example): a word, a phrase, an explanation, an exercise etc.

..... *conservation - компания* ..... *result - результат* .....

*social campaign - митинг*

*nuclear - атомный*

*allergy - аллергия*

I could have done better at this lesson, if I had done these things:

..... *If i had learnt these words before the lesson* .....

I plan to dedicate (amount of time) *40 min* for this lesson's contents extra learning

My plans about this issue (the thing which I did not understand or found difficulties in) are:

..... *to learn unknown words* .....

*to read about campaign*

Notes to myself:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Self-directed learning (autonomous learning) section:

Describe what you did not understand or found difficulties during the last lesson:

it wasn't sure in my knowledge about social  
competences, for instance, motivation, meetings etc.

Describe materials or sources you are using to work on this issue: (for example: Internet, grammar book, video etc., give a description of the source)

- [www.wikipedia.co.uk](http://www.wikipedia.co.uk) (list of protests in the United Kingdom)
- [www.BBC.co.uk/news/uk-38300397](http://www.BBC.co.uk/news/uk-38300397)
- google translate

Prove what you have learnt by providing an example of usage: (for example: if it is a new word, provide a sentence in which this word is used:

"Thousands of people have joined protest in London and in cities  
around UK against a controversial travel ban on seven mainly Muslim  
countries imposed by US President."

After working on my issue autonomously it became clear to me what my problem was (circle your answer)

Yes  No

Rate your effort from 0 to 10 in completing this work:

8

The amount of time you spent to complete this self-directed learning (autonomous learning) section:

≈ 3 min

The difficulties which occurred while completing this self-directed learning section:

In the text, what I have read, were few unknown words,  
but I have managed to deal with it by translating in  
Google translate.

Notes to yourself:

Self-reflection section:

My today's personal achievements, what was successful in my learning:

I was good in each task, which we had done today.  
I was good at talking and grammar.

Things which were new or unknown for me today:

Today, wasn't anything unknown for me today, because I have prepared at home and had done few exercises about past perfect and past perfect continuous.

I did not understand or found difficulties in today's lesson (provide an example): a word, a phrase, an explanation, an exercise etc.

Contagious - *gubagubawau*.

I could have done better at this lesson, if I had done these things:

I plan to dedicate (amount of time) *1 hour* for this lesson's contents extra learning

My plans about this issue (the thing which I did not understand or found difficulties in) are:

I didn't had any issue, but still I'm going to get done few tasks about past perfect and past perfect continuous.

Notes to myself:

Contagious!!!

Self-directed learning (autonomous learning) section:

Describe what you did not understand or found difficulties during the last lesson:

I did understand everything, but still I want to practice in my Past Perfect and Past Perfect Continuous skills.

Describe materials or sources you are using to work on this issue: (for example: Internet, grammar book, video etc., give a description of the source)

I did exercises from the book "Choices" - student's book p. 14-15  
+ WWW.ESL.FIS.EDU/GRAMMAR/SINGLE/PASTPERFECT.htm  
+ Language choice (small book) p. 6. ex. 7, 8.

Prove what you have learnt by providing an example of **usage**: (for example: if it is a new word, provide a sentence in which this word is used:

Her hands were dirty. She <sup>in the past</sup> had been working in the garden all morning. (past & past)  
It had been raining all morning. (long action)  
I didn't know what my brother had been saving for. (the action is ended)

After working on my issue autonomously it became clear to me what my problem was (circle your answer)

Yes  No

Rate your effort from 0 to 10 in completing this work:

8

The amount of time you spent to complete this self-directed learning (autonomous learning) section:

≈ 15 min.

The difficulties which occurred while completing this self-directed learning section:

Notes to yourself:

Self-reflection section:

My today's personal achievements, what was successful in my learning:

I was successful full field ex number 1 ex page  
102 for first text.

Things which were new or unknown for me today:

new words : inspired-  
bought-  
bought-  
segregation

I did not understand or found difficulties in today's lesson (provide an example): a word, a phrase, an explanation, an exercise etc.

I did not understand second text about end of F. square

I could have done better at this lesson, if I had done these things:

Amount help for teacher

I plan to dedicate (amount of time) ..... 10 ..... for this lesson's contents extra learning

My plans about this issue (the thing which I did not understand or found difficulties in) are:

translate new words

Notes to myself:

Date:

**Self-directed learning (autonomous learning) section:**

Describe what you did not understand or found difficulties during the last lesson:

I did not understand one text about end of empire) and new word in this

Describe materials or sources you are using to work on this issue: (for example: Internet, grammar book, video etc., give a description of the source)

I use Internet

Provide what you have learnt by providing an example of **usage**: (for example: if it is a new word, provide a sentence in which this word is used:

I translate new words for me  
inspired - *вдохновение*  
fought - *сражение*  
outlawed - *запрещенный*  
segregation - *разделение*

After working on my issue autonomously it became clear to me what my problem was (circle your answer)

No

Rate your effort from 0 to 10 in completing this work:

5

How much time did you spend to complete this self-directed learning (autonomous learning) section:

10 - 20

Describe the difficulties which occurred while completing this self-directed learning section:

Write to yourself:

Self-reflection section

My today's personal achievements, what was successful in my learning:

Today I learnt about some <sup>campaigns</sup> ~~companies~~ which were help poor people and disabled people, <sup>for saving nature,</sup> ~~freedom~~ (of speech) e.t.c.

Things which were new or unknown for me today:

For me was new the campaign which is called 'be somebody', I learnt that this company really exist and help poor people in Africa.

I did not understand or found difficulties in today's lesson (provide an example): a word, a phrase, an explanation, an exercise etc.

I understood everything during this lesson.

I could have done better at this lesson, if I had done these things:

If I read sth. about many campaigns.

I plan to dedicate (amount of time) ... 30 min for this lesson's contents extra learning

My plans about this issue (the thing which I did not understand or found difficulties in) are:

I will read some information about campaigns, <sup>will</sup> make notes, also will write some new words and phrases.

Notes to myself:

Self-directed learning (autonomous learning) section:

Describe what you did not understand or found difficulties during the last lesson:

I didn't have difficulties during the last lesson but I didn't understand the meaning of some words from the text about kidneys.

Describe materials or sources you are using to work on this issue: (for example: Internet, grammar book, video etc., give a description of the source)

For words translation I used the apps Lingua Leo and Google translate. For working with grammar tenses I used the website: [www.uxdawn.net](http://www.uxdawn.net) (revising Past Perfect and Past Perfect Continuous)

Prove what you have learnt by providing an example of usage: (for example: if it is a new word, provide a sentence in which this word is used:

queing - морщина бровей  
contagious - заразные, заразные  
empathy - сопереживание

After working on my issue autonomously it became clear to me what my problem was (circle your answer)

Yes /  No

Rate your effort from 0 to 10 in completing this work:

9

The amount of time you spent to complete this self-directed learning (autonomous learning) section:

1 hour

The difficulties which occurred while completing this self-directed learning section:

Completing listening tasks (on Past Perfect and Past Perfect Continuous tenses) took a long time.

Notes to yourself: