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CRITICAL INCIDENT ANALYSIS TO DEVELOP GRADE 11  
STUDENTS' SELF-REFLECTION SKILLS IN ENGLISH LESSONS

KRITISKU GADĪJUMU ANALĪZE 11. KLASES SKOLĒNU  
PAŠREFLEKSIJAS PRASMU ATTĪSTĪBĀ ANĢĻU VALODAS  
STUNDĀS

MASTER'S THESIS – TEACHER'S PORTFOLIO

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## ABSTRACT

The researcher aimed to explore how critical incident analysis could be adapted for Grade 11 English as a foreign language (EFL) students to improve their critical self-reflection skills. A case study of twenty-two Grade 11 students and one teacher was carried out and has been structured in the format of a teacher's portfolio: the planning, organization, evaluation and dissemination of professional experience of *the development aspects of students' autonomy*. The theoretical justification and practical evidence of *the strategy* have been provided. Data collection methods included a questionnaire, individual and group interviews, student reflection journals, and written student feedback. Critical incident analysis, developed by Flannagan (1954) and Tripp (1993), was adapted to develop Grade 11 students' self-reflection skills as well as their competence in using third and mixed conditional phrases in EFL class. Analysis of students' results or works using the Bain et al. (1999) scale showed that a majority of students' levels of self-reflection decreased or stagnated between their first and final journal entries, and most students did not receive high scores on a summative assessment testing their abilities in using third and mixed conditional phrases following the unit. The professional experience of using the critical incident analysis curriculum was disseminated at level one of the Harmsworth and Turpin scale (2001: 3).

## Anotacija

Darba mērķis ir izpētīt, kā kritisku gadījumu analīze ir izmantojuma 11. klases angļu valodas (kā svešvalodas) stundās, lai veicinātu skolēnu pašrefleksijas prasmes. Pētījumā piedalījās divdesmit divi 11. Klases skolēni un viens skolotājs. Pētījums noformēts kā skolotāja portfolio. Darba praktiskā daļa pamatota ar teorētiskiem pētījumiem. Pētījumā nepieciešamie dati iegūti, veicot skolēnu aptaujas, individuālās un grupu intervijas, skolēnu pašrefleksijas žurnālu un analizējot skolēnu rakstiska atsauksmes. Lai attīstītu skolēnu pašrefleksijas prasmes un nosacījuma palīgteikumu (*conditional phrases*) lietojumu, pētījumā tika izmantota Flanagan (*Flannagan, 1954*) un Tripa (*Tripp, 1993*) attīstītā Kritisku gadījumu analīze (*Critical incident analysis*). Skolēnu darba rezultāts tika vērtēts, izmantojot Baina (*Bain*) et al. Skalu. Tika novērots, ka lielākajai daļai skolēnu pašrefleksijas spēja starp pirmā un pēdējā žurnāla ieraksta veikšanu samazinājās vai nemainījās, kā arī lielākā daļa skolēnu nesaņēma augstu vērtējumu, kad tika pārbaudīta prasme lietot nosacījuma palīgteikumu. Atbilstoš Harmsvora (*Harmsworth*) un Turpina (*Turpin*) izstrādātajai skalai tas vērtējams ar 1. līmeni.

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## Introduction

On 21 May 2013, the Latvian Cabinet of Ministers adopted *Noteikumi par valsts vispārējās vidējās izglītības standartu, mācību priekšmetu standartiem un izglītības programmu paraugiem*, a set of guidelines that establishes overall goals, standards, evaluation procedures, and sample curriculum for state-funded secondary schools (grades ten through twelve, generally ages sixteen through nineteen). Section II, titled, “General Secondary Education Programme Main Objectives and Tasks”, sets out four major “objectives” for Latvian secondary education. Objectives 2.1, 2.2, and 2.4 are worded in the following way:

2.1. to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary for personal growth and development, civic participation, employment, social integration and continuation of education

2.2. to promote the improvement of students’ spiritually, emotionally and physically developed personality and to cultivate healthy lifestyle habits

2.4. to develop students’ ability to learn and improve independently, motivating lifelong learning and the choice of a career (Dombrovskis 2013).

In these three objectives, there are a few key words and phrases that are closely inter-related: “personal growth and development”, “improvement of a student’s... emotionally... developed personality”, and “students’ ability to... improve independently, motivating lifelong learning”. One crucial ability that students must have to succeed in all of these ways is that of self-reflection, by which is meant *serious and careful thought about one’s character and action*. The ability for students to properly reflect on their actions and experiences has been promoted by teacher trainers and education authors, often in the form of “reflection journals” or post-assignment feedback.

It can be difficult for students and adults alike to find the time to properly and deeply reflect on one’s past, present, and potential future. In the exam-based drive to prepare students for the workplace or academia after the completion of secondary school, it is the researcher’s fear that not enough time is spent in class teaching students how to engage in meaningful reflection about their school work, their past experiences, and the future directions of their lives. With so much material for students to learn and retain that is required to pass their final exams and move on to post-secondary education, the skill of self-reflection which is so critical in achieving the Latvian government’s goal of creating “life-long learners” might not be adequately addressed.

There already exist myriad models of self-reflection that can be used in the secondary school foreign language classroom, but one interesting method that to the researcher's knowledge has not yet been adapted to that context is the classic "critical incident analysis" technique first proposed and outlined by Flanagan (1954) and modified for the field of education by Tripp (1993). Although this technique was originally designed as a psychological method to research and analyze issues of organizational failure in distressful situations, it has previously been successfully adapted for personal self-reflection use in teacher and nurse education programs.

### **The Aim:**

This researcher aims to explore how critical incident analysis can be adapted for Grade 11 English as a foreign language (EFL) students to perform critical self-reflection and develop self-reflection skills.

### **Objectives:**

To reach the aim, the following objectives were set:

1. To review existing research concerning self-reflection in secondary schools as well as critical incident analysis;
2. To explore students' experience with self-reflection through questionnaire and group interview;
3. To design and teach a self-reflection unit of English class for Grade 11 students based on critical incident analysis;
4. To assess students' ability to self-reflect using critical incident analysis based on Bain et al.'s (1999) five levels;
5. To analyze students' experience during the self-reflection unit based on their entries in their reflection journals and a group interview;
6. To disseminate the professional experience of using critical incident analysis to others in the research community.

### **Research Questions:**

The following questions will be answered by the research:

1. To what extent self-reflection is currently being taught or practiced in secondary school, and in what ways.
2. How critical incident technique can best be adapted to teach self-reflection skills as well as third and mixed conditional phrases to Grade 11 EFL students.

**Hypothesis:**

Critical incident analysis will be able to be successfully adapted for use in English as a foreign language curriculum as a way to teach students the functional competence of self-reflection as well as teach and practice the usage of third and mixed conditional phrases.

**Research Method:**

The research method was a case study of Grade 11 students carried out at a gymnasium in a city in Latvia.

**Research Sample:**

A class of fourteen Grade 11 students was chosen as a research sample because they had been at the half-way point of their secondary school career, with Grade 10 students still in the process of transitioning from primary school and Grade 12 students preoccupied with upcoming exams and transitioning to post-secondary education or the workforce. The study took place throughout the spring semester.

**Data Collection Methods:**

1. A questionnaire determined students' previous experience with self-reflection both in and outside of school. The questionnaire consisted of eight comprehensive questions, designed to understand the state of student self-reflection inside and outside of the classroom.
2. An Interview with a teacher helped to understand teachers' perspective on students' self-reflection abilities and the importance that it plays in students' development and the teaching practices of other teachers at the research location..
3. Summative assessments tested students' knowledge of third and mixed conditional at the end of the unit as well as the depth with which they are able to self-reflect using critical incident technique.
4. A final written reflection assignment evaluated students' attitudes toward the unit that they were taught and determined whether they found it effective in improving their self-reflection skills.
5. A group interview with students after the completion of the unit provided student feedback regarding their experiences during the self-reflection unit and helped expand on the responses that they gave during the questionnaire about their experiences with and attitudes towards self-reflection in general

**Outline:**

The first chapter discusses the research literature on self-reflection, explores the extent to which self-reflection is already done by students both in school and outside of school through a student questionnaire and teacher interview, and outlines how the unit on self-reflection fits in with a year-long plan of units and lessons.

The second chapter explores the history and development of critical incident analysis, outlines a research plan of action for adapting critical incident analysis as a technique to be used in high school, details a unit plan overview, and gives examples of two lesson plans that were developed for the unit.

The third chapter discusses systems that have been developed in order to objectively analyze self-reflection, explains grading criteria that were used for assignments in the self-reflection unit, and gives samples of and evaluates reflection journals, final reflection assignments, and unit grammar tests on conditional phrases.

The fourth chapter discusses the dissemination of the research findings and provides evidence of the researcher's professional experience.

# 1. Planning the Teaching and Learning Process of Developing Self-Reflection Skills

## 1.1 Theoretical and Practical Grounds on Self-Reflection in the Field of Education

First, the term *self-reflection* must be defined. The Oxford English Dictionary (n.d.) offers, “serious thought about one's character and actions”, while Merriam-Webster's (2015) definition reads, “careful thought about your own behavior and beliefs”. Definitions from academia in connection with the field of education go into greater detail with a bit more variance. Dewey (1910) defined “reflection” as: “...active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusion to which it tends” (Dewey 1910: 9).

Education researchers' understanding of “reflection” in terms of its scope and applications has evolved in the more than 100 years since Dewey, but the overall concept remains more or less the same. Moon (1999) offered a new definition which focused more directly on reflection in the context of what she called the process of “reflecting learning”, a process of knowledge acquisition rooted in the act of self-reflection: “...*a form of mental processing with a purpose and/or anticipated outcome that is applied to relatively complex or unstructured ideas for which there is not an obvious solution*” (Moon 1999: 23).

Common to all definitions is the process of careful thought, and the at least implied subject matter of such thought being complex in some way shape or form and warranting reflection in the first place. For the purpose of this research, the following working definition will be used: *A mental process in which one gives active and careful thought to their past, present, or future actions or situation.*

Pertaining to secondary education, the modern concept of self-reflection can be traced back to John Dewey's work in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Dewey 1910). He saw reflection inextricably connected to the concept of thought itself, and established it as a process that needs to follow an objective framework. “Reflection involves not simply a sequence of ideas, but a consequence—a consecutive ordering in such a way that each determines the next as its proper outcome, while each in turn leans back on its predecessors. (Dewey 1910: 3)

For Dewey (1910), there were good and bad habits of reflective thinking, and it was the teacher's role to train students to use the good ones. Reflective thinking was not easy because it meant suppressing what he saw as the human reflex of jumping to quick conclusions. Dewey (1910) argued that human mind was naturally geared towards spending thought energy and time on the novel and unfamiliar, and that it felt less natural for the mind to spend time on more familiar experiences and subject matter. Throughout the both the original

version and his 1933 re-write of *How We Think*, he spent time extolling the need to present subject matter in a way that stimulates the student's imagination in an active way.

The vast majority of post-Dewey self-reflection research and methodology has been concerned with the narrow goal of "self-assessment", secondary school students' ability to evaluate their performance in regard to schoolwork and the completion of tasks and projects. When it comes to reflection regarding topics not directly related to school, the research becomes far sparser. Perkins (1995), responding to Gardner (1983), proposed three "learnable intelligences" in addition to Gardner's original eight: neural, experiential, and reflective. However, these intelligences never gained anything close to the attention that the original multiple intelligences still receive today, as all three can be regarded as falling under the general umbrella of Gardner's (1985) "intrapersonal intelligence. Moon (2004) expanded upon previous research on experiential and reflective learning (two of Perkins' proposed intelligences). While not as focused on students' assessment of their own work as literature by Hewitt (2005), Brown (1998), or Zawatsky (1994), the Moon's (2004) view on the role of reflective learning dealt almost exclusively with careful thought and analysis of only subject matter from classes' curriculum. She suggested just three major roles for reflection in school: "understand the meaning of new material of learning", "learn from the process of representing (meaningful) learning", and "learn in situations where there is processing of existing ideas (i.e, where there is no new material of learning)". (Moon 2004: 101)

Costa and Kallick (2008) established sixteen attributes that they believed intelligent human beings display. Self-reflection was not explicitly listed among the sixteen, though "thinking flexibly", "thinking about thinking", "questioning and posing problems", "applying past knowledge to new situations", "thinking independently", and "remaining open to continuous learning" cover much of the same concepts and ideas as self-reflection (Costa and Kallick 2008). They noted that "most of us go through life viewing our experiences as isolated, unrelated events", and that "instead we want students to get into the habit of linking and constructing meaning from their experiences" (Costa and Kallick, 2008: 233). Their goal in teaching reflection was more far-reaching than Moon's (2004): "The ultimate intent of teaching reflection is to get students into the habit of reflecting on their own actions and constructing meaning from those experiences. When they develop the Habits of Mind related to reflection, they will hear both an internal and an external voice of reflection" (Costa and Kallick 2008: 233).

Here they identified a goal beyond students merely being able to think critically about the work they do in class. Once again though, the methodology they proposed only focused on students reflecting on the subject material and their learning of it, assuming that by learning

how to reflect on school work that they would naturally make the jump to being able to reflect on other aspects of their lives (Costa and Kallick 2008).

Recently, researchers Lew and Schmidt (2011) found that there was a positive correlation between student self-reflection and academic performance. Their research had students at a polytechnic in Singapore maintain daily learning journals in addition to the assignments required by the curriculum. It showed that students who participated in the pilot journal-writing program had higher average grades than those who did not participate. Although the study looked at post-secondary students and focused only on self-reflection related to classwork, the results show that students' self-reflection abilities are indeed linked to their academic and holistic well-being, and is a subject worth further study (Lew and Schmidt, 2011).

While researchers in the past century have generally agreed upon the importance of students' self-reflection skills, there has been little research into how exactly teachers can develop students' skills. Most peer-reviewed strategies that can be found are intended for higher education (especially teacher education programs), including those developed by Moon (1999), MacNaughton (2003), Raban et al. (2007), Pianta et al. (2008), and Kinsella (2009). Many teaching strategies including, commercially-available lesson plans can be found that claim to improve high school students' self-reflection skills, but few have been tested by peer-reviewed research. King et al (n.d.) summarized six effective approaches to developing students' self-reflection skills found in studies by Crowl et al. (1997).

1. Challenge students' preexisting ideas by presenting complicated situations (paradoxes, dilemmas, ect);
2. Guide students in learning how to do systematic inquiry;
3. Encourage students to reflect on and make sense of new information in their own words and integrate it with previously existing ideas;
4. Encourage students to make hypotheses and speculate on consequences of thinking processes;
5. Monitor students and guide them away from inefficient strategies;
6. Promote continuous reflection of students' beliefs about thinking processes and evaluation of effectiveness (King et al. n.d.).

The strategies were created with the goal of developing students' thinking processes and not their self-reflection skills in general, but still offer a peer-reviewed strategy that had a positive effect on students' self-reflection skills development (King et al. n.d.). Costa and Kallick (2009) also gave examples of checklists, rubrics, and portfolio formats that could be used to develop self-reflection skills but it is unclear whether the strategies were tested or

peer-reviewed. The researcher has found that there is still a significant amount of work that can be done in the development of specific self-reflection development techniques for high school students.

## **1.2 Evidence and Self-Evaluation**

### **1.2.1 Research Design and Data Collection**

As previously mentioned, the research sample consisted of Grade 11 high school students at a gymnasium. Eighteen students took part in the initial phase of questionnaires and interviews, whereas only one group of fourteen Grade 11 students were involved curriculum development and teaching phase. The plan of action for this research project was as follows:

1. Design a questionnaire for students to fill out that gathers information about their previous experience with self-reflection both in school and at home.
2. Develop questions regarding student self-reflection and interview an English teacher at the research location.
3. Based on the results of the questionnaire and interview as well as further review of existing research and methodology, adapt a form of David Tripp's model of critical incident analysis to teach self-reflection and third and mixed conditional phrases. The unit took place during 40-minute class periods and involved speaking and writing tasks.
4. Take field notes and audio observations during the process of teaching to have sufficient data to analyze later.
5. After critical incident curriculum unit is complete, evaluate students' ability to use grammar taught through the unit and review their reflection journals according to predetermined criteria. Final reflection prompts asked students to self-evaluate their abilities regarding self-reflection on school-related and non-school related topics and whether it has improved or they have gained a new appreciation for the process of self-reflection.
6. Analyze all data and report results, drawing conclusions and addressing shortcomings and opportunities for future research. Recommendations were made for how critical incident analysis can be best used as a self-reflection technique in high school ESL class

The research took place throughout Spring of 2016, with data collection taking place in February and methodology implemented in February and March. Analyses and writing were completed throughout Spring of 2016.

### 1.2.2 Student Questionnaire

To gauge students' previous experiences with self-reflection, the researcher designed an initial questionnaire. It was deemed necessary to conduct this initial research, as the areas that students had little experience with self-reflection in would be the ones that should be focused on in the curriculum unit. Eight questions were created for the online survey platform "SurveyMonkey" that students could access from anywhere and take only once after being sent a link over email of Latvia's eklase.lv system (see Appendix no. 3). The questions were piloted with a small group of four Grade 11 students, who helped the researcher determine whether the questions were understandable for non-native speakers at their B1-C1 level. Most of the questions were re-worded in subtle ways to reflect their feedback and make the questionnaire as understandable as possible. Eighteen Grade 11 students from the three Grade 11 groups at Jelgava Spidola Gymnasium filled in the questionnaire.

The initial page of the questionnaire gave a brief background on the theme and showed the Oxford English Dictionary's definitions of "reflection" and "self-reflection" as operating definitions that the students could use to understand exactly what was being asked of them.

The first question asked students which group they were a part of. There are "kom", "v", and "soc" groups for each of the three grade levels (10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup>), so there were nine possible options for the students to pick from a drop-down menu. Although the researcher was only interested in Grade 11 students for this project, the other tenth and twelfth grade options were included in case students from other grades found and filled in the questionnaire, so that their results could be deleted. All students who responded were indeed from Grade 11, with the majority from the business-oriented "kom" program, meaning that no responses needed to be eliminated.

The data of the second question showed a fairly even gender distribution as 38.89% responded "male" and 61.11% responded "female". This was a fairly ideal situation, as the gender balance of the respondents was not significantly skewed compared with the overall makeup of Grade 11.

The third question (see Table 1.1) was created to discover how important the three following things were to students: reflecting on their learning, reflecting on their life experiences, and reflecting on their future life plans. Possible options included "very important", "somewhat important", "neutral", "somewhat unimportant", and "very unimportant". Seven respondents answered that reflecting on their learning was at least somewhat important to them, while ten did so for reflecting on future life plans and life experiences. Only five students said that reflecting on their learning was somewhat or very unimportant,

while four said do for reflecting on life experiences and four said so for reflecting on future life plans. The data showed that students already had a general degree of interest in self-reflection, and it seemed that students generally valued reflecting on their life experiences and life plans more than on their learning. This provided evidence that students might find it useful to spend time doing self-reflection as part of English class and that it was a topic that might interest them.

**Table 3.1: Grade 11 Students' Attitude Towards Reflection**

	Very Unimportant	Somewhat Important	Neutral	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Total	Weighted Average
Reflecting on my learning	6.25% 1	25.00% 4	25.00% 4	31.25% 5	12.50% 2	16	3.19
Reflecting on my life experiences	25.00% 4	0.00% 0	12.50% 2	25.00% 4	37.50% 6	16	3.50
Reflecting on the my future life plans	12.50% 2	12.50% 2	12.50% 2	37.50% 6	25.00% 4	16	3.50

The fourth question (see Table 1.2) explored how strongly students agreed with the following statements: “I can use the English language to reflect on the learning I do in English class”, “I can use the English language to reflect on the learning I do at school in general”, “I can use the English language to reflect on my life experiences”, and “I can use the English language to reflect on my future life plans”. Students chose from a scale of “strongly agree”, “agree”, “neutral”, “disagree”, and “strongly disagree”. None of the students answered “disagree” or “strongly disagree” to any of these questions, with only 6% (one student) answering “neutral” for reflecting on the learning done in class and 13 % (two students) choosing “neutral” for each of the other categories. While 56% (9 students) strongly agreed that they could use English to reflect about future life plans and 69% (11 students) strongly agreed that they could use English to reflecting on life experiences, only 18% strongly agreed that they could use English to reflect on the learning they did in English class and 31% strongly agreed that they could use English to reflect on the learning they did at school in general. This shows that students were generally more confident in their English language abilities in reflecting on their own lives than they were in using English to reflect on their learning. Although the unit that was eventually developed focused more on self-reflection regarding their life experiences rather than their learning, it could be useful in further research to teach self-reflection skills more closely related to their learning experiences. The data also shows that students clearly display a high level of general confidence when it comes to being able to communicate their thoughts and ideas regarding self-reflection using the English language, which allowed the researcher to focus on the more

complicated grammar of the third and mixed conditional phrases when teaching the self-reflection unit.

**Table 1.2: Students’ Self-Reported Ability to Use English to Self-Reflect**

	Stongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total	Weighted Average
I can use the English language to reflect on the learning I do in English class.	31.25% 5	62.50% 10	6.25% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	16	4.25
I can use the English language to reflect on the learning I do at school in general.	18.75% 3	68.75% 11	12.50% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	16	4.06
I can use the English language to reflect on my life experiences.	68.75% 11	18.75% 3	12.50% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	16	4.56
I can use the English language to reflect on the direction my future life plans.	56.25% 9	31.25% 5	12.50% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	16	4.44

The fifth question (see Table 1.3) explored how much time students spent doing the following things: reflecting on their learning while in class, reflecting on their learning outside of class, reflecting on their life experiences in class, reflecting on their life experiences outside of class, reflecting on their future life plans in class, and reflecting on their future life plans outside of class. Students could choose “at least once per day”, “at least once per week”, “a few times per month”, “at least once per month”, or “less than once per month. Answers varied far more in this section. No more than 25% of students (four students) did any of the types of reflection at least once per day, with that many spending time in class at least once per day reflecting on their learning, 19% (three students) spending free time at least once per day reflecting on life experiences and future plans, and 13% (two students) spending free time reflecting on learning or spending time in class reflecting on life experiences or future plans. At least 50% of students (eight students) reported doing each of the types of reflection in each setting at least once per week, except for spending time in class reflecting on life experiences and spending time in class reflecting on future life plans, both of which 38% (six students) reported doing at least once per week. This might indicate that classes do not generally have curriculum that calls for non-learning related self-reflection, especially compared with 56% of students who reported spending time in class

reflecting on their learning. This shows that creating curriculum to better integrate self-reflection on life experiences into students' education experience. Students generally also seemed to spend less time reflecting on their learning during their free time than during class, as 38% (six students) chose "at least once per month" or "less than once per month" when answering how much time they spent reflecting on their learning compared to 23% (four students) who answered the same way about spending time in class reflecting on their learning. While only 19% (3 students) answered "at least once per month" or "less than once per month" for spending free time reflecting on their life experiences or reflecting on future plans and 25% did do regarding spending time in class reflecting on life experiences, 31% (5 students) reported spending at least or less than once per month spending time in class reflecting on future plans. It was inconclusive as to whether the in-class reflection was part of class curriculum in some way or was something the students did on their own, the students are indeed already doing self-reflection inside and outside of class. This was interview that the researcher needed to find from the student group interview and teacher interview..

*Table 1.3: Amount of Time Spent by Students Inside of Class on Self-Reflection*

	At least once per day	At least once per week	A few times per month	At least once per month	Less than once per month	Total	Weighted Average
I spend time in class reflecting on my learning.	25.00% 4	31.25% 5	18.75% 3	18.75% 3	6.25% 1	16	2.50
I spend my free time reflecting on my learning.	12.50% 2	43.75% 7	6.25% 1	37.50% 6	0.00% 0	16	2.69
I spend time in class reflecting on my life experiences.	12.50% 2	25.00% 4	37.50% 6	18.75% 3	6.25% 1	16	2.81
I spend my free time reflecting on my life experiences.	18.75% 3	50.00% 8	12.50% 2	6.25% 1	12.50% 2	16	2.44
I spend time in class reflecting on my future life plans.	12.50% 2	25.00% 4	31.25% 5	31.25% 5	0.00% 0	16	2.81
I spend time outside of class reflecting on my future life plans.	18.75% 3	43.75% 7	18.75% 3	12.50% 2	6.25% 1	16	2.44

The sixth question required students to list the classes in which they spent the most time reflecting on their learning, reflecting on their life experiences, and reflecting on their future life plans in three separate fields that each corresponded with the three categories. Math was

the most common class that students spent time reflecting on schoolwork, whereas for the last two types of reflection there was a wide variance of answers including English, natural science, literature, Latvian language, math, art, French, physics, sport, business, IT, chemistry, biology, economics, “all of them”, and “none”. There was not a particular answer that was more frequent than the others.

The seventh question determined whether students would like to spend more time or less time doing the following activities: “reflecting on my learning”, “reflecting on my life”, and “reflecting on my future plans”. Respondents also had the option to answer “no opinion” as a third option if they did not want to spend more or less time on self-reflecting. As can be seen in Table 1.4, only 44% of respondents indicated that they were interested in spending more time in class reflecting on their learning, while exactly 50% wanted to spend more time reflecting on their life experiences and 63% wanted to spend more time reflecting on their future plans. 31% of students indicated that they wanted to spend less time in class reflecting on life experiences, while only 19% wanted to spend less time reflecting on both their learning and their future plans. The highest percentage of students (38%) felt apathy towards more reflecting on their learning and selected “no opinion” compared to 19% for both life experiences and future plans. These results indicated a general lack of consensus of whether students wanted to spend more time on self-reflection, indicating that around half of the class might be receptive to more curriculum regarding self-reflection and around half of the class might be resistant.

**Table 1.4: Students’ Choices in Spending More or Less Time on Self-Reflection**

	More Time	No Opinion	Less Time	Total
Reflecting on my learning	43.75% 7	37.50% 6	18.75% 3	16
Reflecting on my life experiences	50.00% 8	18.75% 3	31.25% 5	16
Reflecting on my future plans	62.50% 10	18.75% 3	18.75% 3	16

The final question was open-ended, and utilized the following prompt: “In a few words, explain why self-reflection is or isn't important to you in general. (You can choose to leave this blank)”. Only five of the sixteen respondents elected to write an answer here, one of which being an emoticon. The four serious answers included “*It is important, because it makes me think about my future life plans*”, “*there is a need to collect thoughts, to draw conclusions and perhaps also error analysis to the future success of everything even better*”, “*It is important because that’s how one can truly know their progress*”, and “*because it helps*”

*to understand why everything is the way it is... by that I mean that I am responsible for my own actions and self-reflection helps me to see that”.*

From the questionnaire, it was possible to conclude that students already performed some degree of self-reflection both in class and outside of it. A majority of students (58%, ten students) found self-reflection about life experiences and future plans at least somewhat important, and did so at least once per week. There was a higher percentage of students who would like to spend more time in class reflecting on their learning, life experiences, and future plans than those who would like to spend less time reflecting. As a whole, students also had a high level of confidence in their ability to use the English language to perform self-reflection.

It was not possible to make conclusions regarding the extent to which reflection was led in class by instructors as a formal part of curriculum or lessons, or if students were referring to their own self-guided reflection that they might do while working on tasks or listening during lectures. The group interview that was conducted after the conclusion of the self-reflection unit was a better tool in finding out this critical information, as the researcher did not want to overload the respondents with too many questions to complete, especially more complicated ones that would require longer responses to get meaningful data from.

### **1.2.3 English Teacher Interview**

In order to gain a different perspective on the role of self-reflection in high school, an English teacher who is a colleague of the researcher at the research location was interviewed (see Appendix 1). The following five questions were asked during a one-on-one session in the teacher’s office at the research location:

1. What does self-reflection mean to you?
2. How would you evaluate high school students’ ability to do useful self-reflection?
3. How important is self-reflection as a skill for high school students to have?
4. Do you personally include any assignments or activities requiring self-reflection in your teaching?
5. Do you think that self-reflection is a skill that is generally developed among high school students at this school?
6. If you had the power to make changes to the education system, would you make self-reflection more of a priority?

The first question was asked both as an introductory question to prepare the interviewee for the subject matter of the rest of the interview and understand what the interviewee meant self-reflection to be. As discussed previously, there are a wide variety of definitions and

understandings of exactly what self-reflection means. The interviewee acknowledged this in her answers, and said that as there were so many different aspects to self-reflection that she was unable to come up with her own understanding or definition. She asked for the researcher's working definition and the researcher told her the definition used for this research that was discussed earlier in this chapter.

The second question focused on whether or not the teacher believed that high school students had the ability to do useful self-reflection. She responded that not all of them could, and that even those who had self-reflection skills couldn't do so to a very deep extent as they were narrow-minded and focused on daily tasks. She mentioned that students had a class called "Critical Thinking" in which they explored topics and thoughts in great detail as well as psychology in which self-reflection was a required aspect of both. She did, however, say that students did not generally take the subject seriously as they were adolescents and did not take many important things seriously at this point in their lives. The information gained from the teacher's response to this question was important in establishing that students did already have a class that focused on some kind of critical thought processes, and that it would be important to follow up on this information in the group interview later in the research. It also showed that at least one of the teachers in the English department had a dismissive attitude when it came to high school students' ability to do self-reflection as well as the quality of the reflection that they did.

The third question checked to see if she believed that self-reflection was an important skill for high school students to have, which she did. She believed that it would be a great asset for the students to have when they entered adulthood so that they are able to make important decisions based on what they had learned from past experiences. It was important to find out that at least one of the other teachers in the English department valued students' ability to do self-reflection and something that should be developed.

The fourth question was very important in establishing what was already done at the school, particularly the English department, in terms of self-reflection. The teacher immediately responded that she certainly included assignments and activities into her teaching that involved self-reflection, primarily an essay about what students saw for themselves in the future. She said that there were some essays that only answered the question on a superficial level while others answered in great detail and included a high degree of reflective thought. This answer reflected the teacher's previously mentioned attitude that high school students were generally narrow-minded and not capable of deep and meaningful self-reflection. The teacher also went on to describe other examples of assignments which she believed had an element of self-reflection, including writing about

their opinions on street graffiti, recalling information they had heard about the American shopping event “Black Friday”, and participating in a class discussion on the pros and cons of consumerism. Aside from the essay about students intended future, however, the researcher does not believe that any of the other mentioned tasks or activities contained a significant element of self-reflection besides students needing to decide what their opinion about a certain subject was. This could be the result of a wider issue of teachers intending to include elements of student self-reflection in their assignments, but not focusing enough on the student evaluating their own past actions and thoughts; however, more research would need to be done to come to any conclusions on the matter.

The fifth question asked whether or not the teacher believed that self-reflection was a skill that as already generally taught to high school students at the school. The teacher answered in the affirmative, and identified English, Latvian literature, math, history, and critical thinking classes as ones which in particular teach self-reflection skills. She believed that in literature class students had to learn how to connect literature that they read with their own lives and experiences and that students must have a strong understanding of history to do self-reflection as if they did not understand their country’s history they had no “roots”. She also talked about issues in math class that did not seem to the researcher directly related to self-reflection and more related to critical thought in general, which might be more evidence of misunderstanding of what self-reflection exactly was.

The final question asked whether the teacher would make self-reflection a priority for schools if she had the power to enact education reform. She responded that she would want to make self-reflection more integrated into individual classes that already existed and not create a separate subject. She would also want to make sure that this starts already at the elementary school level, as she believed that students at that age could already do some degree of self-reflection and that they were less narrow-minded and open to trying new things such as self-reflection. She also believed that parents needed to be involved at least by talking with students every day after school about how everything was going and encourage them to go through this thought process. One key point that she made was that she did not believe that one could learn how to reflect on one’s own thoughts and ideas if one was alone and that self-reflection should be done with another person. This again revealed a difference in understanding of what self-reflection was between the researcher and the interviewed teacher’s definitions, although the researcher agreed that higher-quality and more meaningful self-reflection might take place when the process was done with another person.

In conclusion, the analysis of the interview proved again that there was a wide range of understandings in terms of what self-reflection exactly meant and entailed, just as the various researchers cited earlier had their own wide range of opinions. Over the course of a few questions, the interviewed teacher expressed that self-reflection was something that was important for high school students to be able to do, and that it was something that should be focused on in school and already is. This reaffirmed the responses to the questionnaire in which students also reported that self-reflection was already occurring in school to some degree.

### **1.2.3 Year-Long Plan**

One duty that all teachers at the research location must fulfil is to create a year-long plan that maps out each unit that will be taught from September until the end of May. The plan must be approved by the vice-director of the school, and must detail the general theme of each lesson that is taught throughout the year. Each unit, or “module”, needed to end with some at least one summative assessment in which the students would receive a grade from “one” to “ten”. The summative assessments outlined in this year-long plan include written tests, oral presentations, group projects, individual projects, and writing assignments. The third conditional was focused on earlier in the year before introducing mixed conditional as the new grammar element of the self-reflection unit, although students were responsible for being able to use all types of conditional phrases by the end of the unit.

High school English classes at the gymnasium use the “New Opportunities” series of English course-books, the “intermediate” (B1-B2) level for tenth and Grade 11 students, and “upper-intermediate” (B2-C1) for eleventh and twelfth grade students. While the researcher did not heavily integrate usage of the textbook into class lessons, the grammar and vocabulary topics of the various chapters of the books were followed and acknowledged in the far-right “notes” section of the year-long plan. It is noted that the unit on self-reflection follows the grammar topic of Chapter 6 of the upper-intermediate level book, although the book itself was not used as this unit entirely relied on materials created by the researcher.

In all, the researcher planned seven main roughly month-long units of grammar and vocabulary topics to cover throughout the year as well as two mini-units at the beginning and end of the year. The second mini-unit consisted mostly of tasks from the twelfth grade exam and was conceived mostly in case there was extra time as it was assumed that various class trips, events, and other unforeseen circumstances had not yet been planned into the school calendar at the time of submission, as well as the general understanding that some

units might require extra lessons and time spent on the grammar and vocabulary concepts before moving on to new ones.

In retrospect, the researcher regrets not having integrated self-reflection more heavily into the year-long plan prior to the self-reflection unit. While students often had to complete homework assignments in which they wrote detailed answers discussing their own personal experiences regarding a specific topic (education, careers, ect.), there were not many assignments given earlier in the year that required them to use higher levels of Bain et al's scale (1999: 60) that will be discussed later in the third chapter. The researcher has modified the original year-long plan by adding assignments in various locations throughout the year that also might have promoted students' self-reflection skills. These changes are marked in the color red and italicized.



## Jelgavas Spīdolas ģimnāzija

### 2015./2016.m.g. tematiskais plans angļu valodā 11.klasei (kom.) (sk. Joseph Jack Horgan)

TOPIC / MODULE	Lessons	SKILLS	GRAMMAR	VOCABULARY	METHODS, TESTING METHODS AND RESOURCES	NOTES
<i>Mini Module: Back to school/Class Rules</i>						
<b>Back to school/ vocab icebreaker</b> <b>Writing “class rules”</b> <b>Choosing class rules and consequences</b> <i>This opening unit would have been a good place to introduce students to critical incident analysis or a different form of reflection journal so that students could regularly write reflections about their experiences throughout the year instead of just over the course of a few weeks.</i>	1. 2. 3-4.	<b>Writing:</b> list of rules <b>Listening:</b> determine whether students are lying or telling the truth about themselves (icebreaker) <b>Function:</b> making an argument in favor of or against something <b>Reading:</b> showing surprise, asking for repetition <b>Speaking:</b> arguing in favor of or against rules	The imperative, modal verbs of obligation (must, have to, should, ect)	Testing of previous vocabulary knowledge through word games, consequence/result vocabulary, school rules	Collected homework assignments	Set the tone of the year by having class generate their own rules and consequences (with some additional ones added by teacher)
<b>Written Assignment – Homework: list of class rules (evaluation in marks i/ni/nv) – Lesson 4</b> <i>Written Assignment – Ten important things that happened the previous year, and what was important about each of these things (evaluation in marks 1-10) This would have been a good way to bridge the gap between the previous and current years, and establish reflective thinking at an early stage in the year.</i>						

TOPIC / MODULE	Lessons	SKILLS	GRAMMAR	VOCABULARY	METHODS, TESTING AND RESOURCES	NOTES
<b>Opportunities Intermediate Module 6 – People</b>						
<b>Warm up (book page 69) and intro to people/speculation</b> <b>Modals of speculation and people vocabulary</b> <b>Speculating about famous celebrities from Maine Everest.</b> <b>Listening to a Bob Dylan song about people (p. 79), into to future project</b> <b>Review of speculation and people vocab/project time</b> <b>Wrap-up and reflection and feedback</b>	6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11.	<b>Listening:</b> dialogues and descriptions, conversation about Korean Muk-Bang <b>Speaking:</b> about the future, guessing who people might be <b>Reading:</b> other people’s speculation about the future, descriptions of people <b>Functions:</b> describing people <b>Writing:</b> a description of a person,	Modals of speculation (might, might have, might not, might have not, may, may not, may have, may have not, could, couldn’t can’t, must, must have, must not)  Emphasis: especially, particularly, such as, for example,	Physical appearance	Current Testing (Score 0-20)	Opportunities Intermediate Pages 69-75
<b>Written Test – Modals of Speculation, Emphasis, Appearance (evaluation in marks 1-10) – Lesson 12</b> <i>Written Assignment – Critical Incident Analysis or Other Journal Entry (evaluation in marks 1-10) This assignment would follow the reflection journal format explained during the first unit of the year and could be related to the topic of speculating about people and the positive or negative experience that students had in learning who someone truly was.</i>						
<b>Non-book Module: Interviews and Research</b>						
<b>Introduction to reported speech</b> <b>Reported speech practice, how to report questions</b> <b>Creating questions and reporting on them</b> <b>Creating and Piloting Interviews</b> <b>Review of Reported Speech using 12 kl exam and critiquing interview questions</b>	12. 13. 14 15- 16. 17.	<b>Speaking:</b> reporting what other people say and ask, conducting proper interviews <b>Reading:</b> Information about conducting proper research/interviews <b>Listening:</b> Transcribing what interview subjects write <b>Writing:</b> Interview questions, reporting what people say <b>Function:</b> Reported Speech	Reported Speech and Reported Speech Questions	Research terms (questionnaire, interview, ect)	Written test Written assignment (Scored 0-10)	The grammar and vocabulary themes of Opportunities Intermediate Chapters 1-2 are being followed, but self-created material is being used in the execution

TOPIC / MODULE	Lessons	SKILLS	GRAMMAR	VOCABULARY	METHODS, TESTING AND RESOURCES	NOTES
<p><b>Written Test - Test. Reported Speech (valuation in marks 1-10) – Lesson 18</b>  <b>Written Assignment – Transcript of Interview using Reported Speech (valuation in marks 1-10) – Collected Lesson 20</b>  <b>Written Assignment – Analysis of Group’s Interviews (valuation in marks 1-10) – Collected Lesson 20</b>  <i>Written Assignment – Critical Incident Analysis or Other Journal Entry (evaluation in marks 1-10) This assignment would follow the reflection journal format explained during the first unit of the year</i></p>						
<b>Opportunities Intermediate Module 7– Learning/Education</b>						
<p><b>Warm-up (pg 81); Education questions, 12 kl questions about education, role-play, 3<sup>rd</sup> conditional wish/should have Grammar practice, education terms introduced, listen program about education issues Guest speaker about education in other country THANKSGIVING Intro to lesson plan project and grammar review Review for test and project time Feedback about lessons, reflections, welcome back from Christmas break</b></p>	<p>20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 30.</p>	<p><b>Listening:</b> interviews and programs about problems in education, guest speaker about education in foreign country  <b>Reading:</b> Information about education throughout the world  <b>Functions:</b> expressing regret  <b>Speaking:</b> effectively giving a lesson, talking about learning experience  <b>Writing:</b> creating a lesson plan, writing about opinions about education in Latvia</p>	<p>Third Conditional, wish/should have</p>	<p>Education Terms, Education around the world, Lesson Planning</p>	<p>Written test Written assignment Spoken presentation (Scored 0-10)</p>	<p>Opportunities Intermediate pages 81-87 (and workbook)</p>
<p><b>Written Test – Test on Third Conditional, Education Vocabulary (valuation in marks 1-10) – Lesson 30</b>  <b>Spoken Presentation – Mini-lessons (valuation in marks 1-10) – Lessons 27-29</b>  <b>Written Project – Lesson Plan (valuation in marks 1-10) – Lesson 27</b>  <i>Written Assignment – Critical Incident Analysis or Other Journal Entry (evaluation in marks 1-10) This assignment would follow the reflection journal format explained during the first unit of the year and could be related to the topic of education and students’ experiences in school or learning about something.</i></p>						

TOPIC / MODULE	Lessons	SKILLS	GRAMMAR	VOCABULARY	METHODS, TESTING AND RESOURCES	NOTES
<b>Opportunities Upper-Intermediate Module 1/2 – “Identity” and “Laughter”</b>						
<b>Introduction to Identity, review of all tenses (p.5)</b> <b>Tense review, Intro to national identity</b> <b>Review of tenses and intro to analytical essay: brainstorming</b> <b>Tense review and essay conferencing (teacher)</b> <b>Test review and essay conferencing (peers)</b>	31.	<b>Reading:</b> about national identity, people’s idea of personal identity	Review of all previous tenses	Word-building nouns from verbs, identity vocabulary, multi-part verbs	Current testing (passed/failed)	Opportunities Upper-Intermediate pages 5-27 (and workbook)
	32.	<b>Speaking:</b> about identity, discussing “what it means to be Latvian, European, ect”				
	33.	<b>Listening:</b> to program about national identity, peoples’ identities				
	34.	<b>Writing:</b> analytical essay, re-visiting the writing process				
	35.					
<b>Written Test – Test on All Tenses (valuation in marks 1-10) Lesson 36</b> <b>Analytical/Persuasive Essay– “What it Means to be Latvian” (valuation in marks 1-10) – Completed by Lesson 37</b> This assignment already required students to reflect on their definition of what it meant to be Latvian and be able to explain it logically, but it could have been modified to require students to write about their own specific experiences in national identity and how it has shaped them as people. <i>Written Assignment – Critical Incident Analysis or Other Journal Entry (evaluation in marks 1-10) This assignment would follow the reflection journal format explained during the first unit of the year</i>						
<b>Non-Book Module: Self-Reflection (Critical Incidents)</b>						
<b>Individual Lessons TBD</b>	37.	<b>Listening:</b> hearing things that have happened to others and understanding	Review of first, second, and third conditionals, mixed conditionals, and unusual conditional forms (had I... Whether... ect)	Individual vocabulary relevant to personal reflection projects	Current testing (passed/failed)	The grammar themes of Opportunities Upper-Intermediate Chapter 6 are being followed, but self-created material is being used in the execution
	38.	<b>Reading:</b> stories about people and their reflection on what happened and what could have been different				
	39.	<b>Speaking:</b> discussing things that have happened and their effect on us, giving feedback on others’ situations and their self-reflection				
	40.					
	41.	<b>Function:</b> reflecting on things that have happened and evaluating how				

TOPIC / MODULE	Lessons	SKILLS	GRAMMAR	VOCABULARY	METHODS, TESTING METHODS AND RESOURCES	NOTES
	42. 43. 44. 47.	what happened affects the present situation <b>Writing:</b> analysis of a piece of modern art, writing about styles and time periods				
<b>Written Project – Self-Reflection Journals (evaluation in marks 1-10) – Lesson 46</b> <b>Written Assignment – Reflection of Self-reflection Project (evaluation in marks 1-10) – Collected Lesson 41</b> <b>Written Test – All Conditionals (Focus on Mixed) (evaluation in marks 1-10) – Lesson 45</b>						
<i>Opportunities Intermediate Module 8 – Careers and Work</i>						
<b>Warm up and intro to work vocabulary, 12 kl exam questions about careers</b> <b>Definite and indefinite articles</b> <b>Definite and indefinite articles and vocabulary</b> <b>Evaluating cover letters and job interviews</b> <b>Wrap-up and reflection and feedback</b> <b>Review of articles usage and work vocabulary</b>	48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53.	<b>Listening:</b> TV program about how to build a career <b>Speaking:</b> discussing various aspects of careers and working, giving and participating in interviews, explaining what went wrong in bad job interviews <b>Reading:</b> identifying correct usage or articles in a piece of text and how to correctly use them, reading cover letters <b>Functions:</b> being an interviewer and an interviewee, discussing one's career and job <b>Writing:</b> using articles in a text, creating an ideal cv and cover letter	Advanced usage of definite, indefinite, and no articles	Advanced job vocabulary, unemployment terms, adjectives describing jobs, words that are confused (salary/wages, ect)	Current testing (passed/failed)	Opportunities Intermediate Pages 93-100 and workbook
<b>Written Test – Future Tenses and Speculation Grammar (evaluation in marks 1-10) – Lesson 54</b> <b>Written Assignment – Ideal CV and Cover Letter evaluation in marks 1-10) – Lesson 55</b> This assignment already required students to reflect upon their future plans and goals by asking them to write the cv and cover letter for the job that they would like to be applying for in 10-20 years, but it could have been modified to ask students what they had already done to make this dream become a reality and what else they would need to do to achieve this.						

TOPIC / MODULE	Lessons	SKILLS	GRAMMAR	VOCABULARY	METHODS, TESTING AND RESOURCES	NOTES
<i>Written Assignment – Critical Incident Analysis or Other Journal Entry (evaluation in marks 1-10) This assignment would follow the reflection journal format explained during the first unit of the year and could be related to the theme of jobs or workplace experience.</i>						
<b>Opportunities Upper-Intermediate Module 6 – Health</b>						
<b>Warm – up: 12<sup>th</sup> kl exam questions and role play about health, medicine</b> <b>Intro to prepositions and word building, discussing exercise, diet</b> <b>Using prepositions and intro to healthy lifestyle project</b> <b>Health throughout the world and health project intro</b> <b>Grammar/Vocab review</b> <b>Feedback and reflection</b>	56.	<b>Listening:</b> TV and radio programs about health and diet, exercise advice, diagnosis of health problems	Prepositions and word building	Parts of the body, medical terms, hospital and doctor, preventative and curative medicine, at the doctor, exercise and diet, medical concerns	Current testing (passed/failed)	Opportunities Upper-Intermediate Pages 63-72 and workbook, Handouts and articles about healthy habits
	57.	<b>Reading:</b> about healthy lifestyles, medicine, exercise, diet, ect				
	58.	<b>Speaking:</b> about health and medicine, speculating about different situations				
	59.	<b>Functions:</b> Speculating with conditionals, expressing regret, imagining different situations				
	60. 62.					
<b>Written Test – Health/Medicine/Body and Conditionals Test (valuation in marks 1-10) – Lesson 61</b> <b>Written and Spoken Project – Healthy Lifestyle Project (valuation in marks 1-10) – Lesson 62</b> <i>Written Assignment – Critical Incident Analysis or Other Journal Entry (evaluation in marks 1-10) This assignment would follow the reflection journal format explained during the first unit of the year and could be specifically related to an incident regarding students' health or their lifestyle choices.</i>						
<b>End of the Year Review Mini-Module</b>						
<b>Feedback from previous unit, discussing summer</b> <b>Reflecting on year, 12 kl exam practice</b> <b>12 kl exam practice and final lesson</b>	63.	<b>Listening:</b> 12 kl exam material	Grammar from throughout the past two years	Functional language needed for role-plays, answering questions, giving opinions, ect	Current testing (passed/failed)	Question Tags (PowerPoint presentation)
	64.	<b>Speaking:</b> 12 kl exam role-plays				
	65.	<b>Reading:</b> 12 kl exam material <b>Writing:</b> 12 kl exam writing				

	Lessons				METHODS, TESTING	
TOPIC / MODULE		SKILLS	GRAMMAR	VOCABULARY	METHODS AND RESOURCES	NOTES
<p><i>Written Assignment – Based on the reflections that students wrote throughout the year in their reflection journals, students could have written a final reflection assignment in which they draw conclusions about themselves during the year based on what they wrote at the different times throughout the year and make plans for how to continue self-improvement in the next year (evaluation in marks 1-10)</i></p>						

## **2. Organizing the Usage of Critical Incident Analysis in English Lessons**

### **2.1 Theoretical and Practical Grounds of the Theory of Critical Incidents**

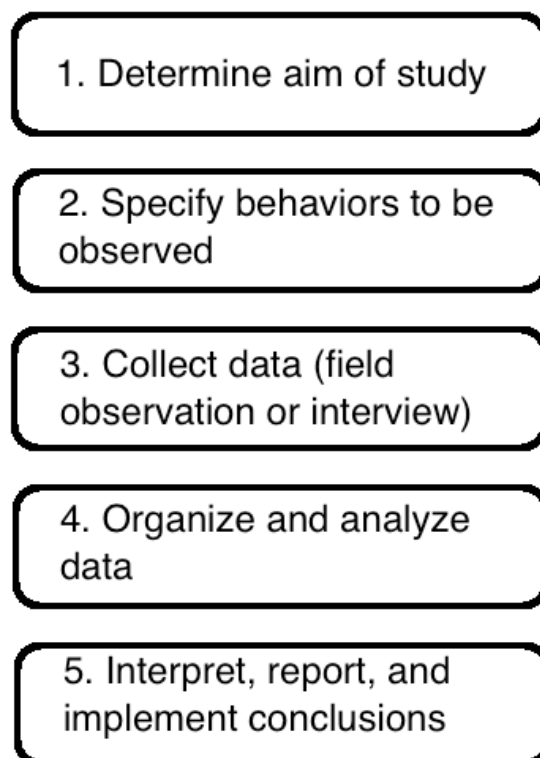
For discussing critical incidents, the following definition will be used: *“Moments in one’s life that have a personally significant and transformative impact in some way shape or form”*.

The idea of critical incidents come from a specific framework and process developed by psychologist John Flanagan (1954) over the course of ten years which he named the “critical incident technique”. In broad terms, he initially described it in the following way:

*“The critical incident technique consists of a set of procedures for collecting direct observations of human behavior in such a way as to facilitate their potential usefulness in solving practical problems and developing broad psychological principles. The critical incident technique outlines procedures for collecting observed incidents having special significance and meeting systematically defined criteria. By an incident is meant any observable human activity that is sufficiently complete in itself to permit inferences and predictions to be made about the person performing the act. To be critical, an incident must occur in a situation where the purpose or intent of the act seems fairly clear to the observer and where its consequences are sufficiently definite to leave little doubt concerning its effects”* (Flanagan 1954: 327).

The goal of Flanagan’s work was to develop a flexible system, adaptable to many different situations, which organizations could use to objectively collect data about the behavior of their members or employees in certain defined situations and use the data to make improvements in some way. Flanagan (1954) laid out five steps for researchers to use the technique to find out about a certain situation (see Figure 2.1). To illustrate these steps, the example of EFL teachers will be used. The first step is to identify the general aim for an activity (Flanagan 1954: 337-338). The researcher would first survey either teachers or school administrators to find out what the general aim of the activity of teaching English was, which would probably be along the lines of “improving students’ English language knowledge and skills”. The researcher’s second step is to plan and specify which behaviors will be observed and who will do the observation (Flanagan 1954: 338-340). The behavior of English teachers while teaching in classrooms might be the behavior for the example, and school administrators could be suitable observers. The third step in the procedure is data collection. This is the area which has the widest variety of methodology, as observers might choose to let those observed know ahead of time the behaviors they are looking for or those observed might report their critical incident experiences from memory through interviews

and questionnaires (Flanagan 1954: 340-345). The fourth step is to analyze the data by creating a frame of reference, formulating categories and sub-categories, and organizing the critical incidents appropriately (Flanagan 1954: 345-347). The fifth step is to interpret and report the findings of the data analysis in a way that is ideally meaningful and informative to future decision making (Flanagan 1954: 347-348). Possible applications that Flanagan suggested were as diverse as determining job responsibilities, designing operating procedures, measuring proficiency or performance, and psychotherapy (Flanagan 1954: 348-355).



*Figure 2.1: Steps of Critical Incident Analysis (Flanagan 1954)*

In Flanagan’s initial form, there’s little conceivable use for critical incident technique as a method to teach self-reflection in the English as a second language classroom. However, the core underlying principles of the technique have been adapted and heavily modified for usage in a number of contexts. Tripp (1993) did the first major work in adapting the technique to the field of education, beginning with redefining exactly what critical incidents are and are not. According to Tripp, “critical incidents are not ‘things’ which exist independently of an observer and are awaiting discovery like gold nuggets or desert islands, but like all data, critical incidents are created. Incidents happen, but critical incidents are produced by the way we look at a situation: a critical incident is an interpretation of the significance of an event” (Tripp 1993: 8).

Tripp (1993) believed that critical incidents need not be dramatic life-turning moments, but ones that upon analysis gain new meaning that is transformative in some way. People “create” critical incidents through the process of analysis of moments that often seem very ordinary to begin with. He saw critical incidents as more than a way to analyze organizational practices, instead creating various frameworks of “critical incident analysis” to take such incidents and derive meaning from them. Various researchers since Tripp have applied critical incident analysis in a variety of situations, such as Kilianska-Przybylo (2009) who wrote about using the process to enhance the inter-cultural competence of students in her teacher training program. Like Kilianska-Przybylo, the wide majority of those who have done field and theory work with critical incident analysis have done so in the context of post-secondary education, especially teacher education programs. While the value of critical incidents for teachers and university students has been recognized for a significant period of time, use of this valuable technique with secondary school students has largely been overlooked.

Although there is no universally agreed upon framework for writing critical incident analyses, most frameworks involve answering certain prompt questions that describe and analyze a critical incident in great detail. A typical example of a framework can be found in Green Lister and Crisp (2007: 48):

#### *Critical Incident Analysis Framework*

##### *1. Account of the incident .*

- *What happened, where and when; who was involved? .*
- *What was your role/involvement in the incident? .*
- *What was the context of this incident, e.g. previous involvement of yourself or other from this agency with this client/client group? .*
- *What was the purpose and focus of your contact/intervention at this point?*

##### *2. Initial responses to the incident .*

- *What were your thoughts and feelings at the time of this incident? .*
- *What were the responses of other key individuals to this incident?*
- *If not known, what do you think these might have been?*

##### *3. Issues and dilemmas highlighted by this incident .*

- *What practice dilemmas were identified as a result of this incident? .*
- *What are the values and ethical issues which are highlighted by this incident? .*
- *Are there implications for inter-disciplinary and/or inter-agency collaborations which you have identified as a result of this incident?*

##### *4. Learning .*

- *What have you learned, e.g. about yourself, relationships with others, the social work task, organisational policies and procedures? .*
- *What theory (or theories) has (or might have) helped develop your understanding about some aspect of this incident?*
- *What research has (or might have) helped develop your understanding about some aspect of this incident? .*

- *How might an understanding of the legislative, organisational and policy contexts explain some aspects associated with this incident? .*
- *What future learning needs have you identified as a result of this incident? How might this be achieved?*

#### 5. Outcomes .

- *What were the outcomes of this incident for the various participants? .*
- *Are there ways in which this incident has led (or might lead to) changes in how you think, feel or act in particular situations? .*
- *What are your thoughts and feelings now about this incident? (Green Lister and Crisp 2007: 49-50)*

The above example was specifically designed for social workers, which is why the prompts reference social work concepts that people outside of the field might be unfamiliar with. This is because critical incident analysis frameworks are usually designed with specific audiences and purposes in mind (Tripp 1993; Green Lister and Crisp 2007; Nygren and Blom 2001). The information for critical incident analyses often comes from reflective journals that are written in on a regular basis (Farrell 2012), but the analyses themselves can also be a part of a regular journal. Priest and Sturgess (2005), Dymont and O’Connell (2003), and Farrah (2012) all argue that reflective journal writing promotes high school students’ critical thinking skills and engages the learner in self-assessment, developing confidence and writing competence.

## 2.2 Evidence and Self-Evaluation

### 2.2.1 Unit Plan

Based on review of the available literature, the researcher decided to create a critical incident framework that was appropriate for the level of Grade 11 EFL students that also practiced the difficult grammar of third and mixed conditional phrases. Each unit that is taught to students at the research location must focus on a specific grammar concept, so third and mixed conditional phrases were chosen due to their ability to be used in describing how alternate scenarios could have happened in a critical incident as well as how the past incident influences the present. Students were asked to keep a reflection journal in which every Friday, Sunday, Monday, and Wednesday, the students would make a list of ten things that they remembered happening since writing the previous entry. In accordance with Tripp’s (1999: 3) definition of critical incidents discussed earlier, the events could be dramatic or mundane, faraway or personal; simply the first ten things that came to their mind that they remembered. After completing the list, students would look over the list of events and pick one that seemed particularly memorable or “stuck out” to them for some reason. Then students would answer the following series of prompts:

1. One good thing about \_\_\_\_\_ is that...
2. One bad thing about \_\_\_\_\_ is that...
3. One interesting thing about \_\_\_\_\_ is that...
4. If I had(n't) \_\_\_\_\_, I would(n't) have \_\_\_\_\_
5. If I had(n't) \_\_\_\_\_, I would(n't) \_\_\_\_\_ (use mixed conditional, first part in the past second part in the present)
6. If \_\_\_\_\_ had \_\_\_\_\_ instead, I would(n't) \_\_\_\_\_ (this is for if something else had happened instead, what would be different?)
7. If I was/did(n't) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ would(n't) have \_\_\_\_\_ (if something about you was different, how would this event have been different, or have affected you differently)

To answer the first three prompts, students responded using the past simple tense and described the incident as it really happened. The final four prompts all regarded hypothetical alternative scenarios. Question #3 required students to use a third conditional phrase, #4 required the mixed conditional, #6 required either the third or mixed conditional to describe what could be (or could have been different) if something else had happened instead, and #7 required a less common form of the mixed conditional in which they had to explain how something else could have happened if they were (or something about the situation was) different in some way. The researcher personally demonstrated the process during two lessons to make sure that students understood how it worked, and had students go through the process once themselves in class before assigning the journal as homework. The researcher also uploaded the following instructions and examples to the class website which had been previously used throughout the year as a means of communication between students and the researcher regarding assignments and other important information:

Hi everyone,

As part of our new unit on mixed conditionals and self-reflection, you will be keeping a journal for the next few weeks where you will be self-reflecting on things that have happened in the days before. You will be writing an entry each Friday, Sunday, Monday, and Wednesday. Each entry will count as a separate homework assignment and will be checked (i/ni/nv). In each entry you will do the following

**1. Write ten things that you remember happening (or not happening) since the last entry.** They don't have to be things that necessarily happened to you, but just the first ten things that you remember. They should be written in the past simple. For example:

- I took the #4 bus to the university.
- I didn't call my family.

- Mitt Romney gave a speech telling people not to vote for Donald Trump.
- I had a migraine headache.
- I started a new Latvian class.
- I went an entire day without drinking coffee.
- I took the train.
- I watched the new episode of *Better Call Saul*.
- My friend and I argued about our favorite Bob Dylan songs.
- Kendrick Lamar released a surprise new album.

2. **Choose one of these then things that happened**, the one that sticks out to you for some reason. It doesn't necessarily have to be the most dramatic one, or the one that "seems the most important", just the one that jumps out for some reason. **You will then complete each of the following prompts for the one thing that you chose:**

- One good thing about \_\_\_\_\_ is that...
- One bad thing about \_\_\_\_\_ is that...
- One interesting thing about \_\_\_\_\_ is that...
- If I had(n't) \_\_\_\_\_, I would(n't) \_\_\_\_\_ (use 3rd conditional, both parts in the past)
- If I had(n't) \_\_\_\_\_, I would(n't) \_\_\_\_\_ (use mixed conditional, first part in the past second part in the present)
- If \_\_\_\_\_ had \_\_\_\_\_ instead, I would(n't) \_\_\_\_\_ (this is for if something else had happened instead, what would be different? This can use either third or mixed conditional)
- If I was/did(n't) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ would(n't) have \_\_\_\_\_ (if something about you was different, how would this event have been different, or have affected you differently? Use mixed conditional here, present first then past)

Here are two examples of the second part of your entry, based on some of my examples from the list:

Example 1:

- One good thing about me taking the train is that I had an hour to relax and and think about my life.
- One bad thing about me taking the train is that I didn't correct the assignments that I should have and had to do them when I got home instead.
- One interesting thing about me taking the train is that a woman gave me her monthly pass that was about to expire and I got to ride one way for free.
- If I hadn't taken the train, I would have probably had to take the mini-bus instead and would not have been as happy or relaxed.
- If I hadn't moved to Latvia, I wouldn't be taking the train nearly as much as I do now as trains are far more expensive in America.
- If I hadn't grown up in a place where taking the train was unusual and special, I would probably not like taking trains as much as I do now.
- If I wasn't the kind of person who loved to take trains every day, I probably wouldn't have chosen to continue teaching at Spīdola after I moved to Rīga.

Example 2:

- One good thing about Kendrick Lamar releasing a surprise new album is that I now have new music to listen to that is probably as high-quality as his other music.
- One bad thing about Kendrick Lamar releasing a new album is that I realized how many other new albums I need to listen to that I haven't made time to listen to yet
- One interesting thing about Kendrick Lamar releasing a new album is that it was unexpected and is continuing a trend for new musicians to release music without any forewarning.
- If I hadn't changed my spending habits after college, I probably would have already bought the album on vinyl record.

- If I had never listened to the song "Gorgeous" by Kanye West, I probably wouldn't be a fan of hip hop music right now and wouldn't care that there is a new Kendrick Lamar album.
- If I had stayed in America and never moved to Latvia, I would probably have already heard the album as all of my friends in America are very big fans of Kendrick Lamar.
- If I organized my time better, I would have already listened to the album and would have already talked to my friends about it.

Again, for EACH Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, you will make one of these entries in your reflection journal that will include BOTH Part 1 (the 10 things that have happened) and Part 2 (the reflection prompts for one of the things that happened). I will be checking each class that you have done the work, and you will be discussing these entries from time to time in class (only the one you chose to write about, not the lists of 10 things). Therefore, I would advise probably not choosing one that is **too** personal that you would not like to discuss with someone else.

Thank you, and see you soon.

-Joe

Students by the end of the unit had to write nine entries altogether, each one counting as a separate homework assignment. The completion or lack of completion of each assignment was recorded into the national "E-klase" system and were graded like any other homework assignment that was given throughout the year.

Hatton and Smith (1995) found that discussion of reflection journals with a partner led to higher levels of self-reflection. Ballantyne and Packer (1995) concurred with this idea, finding that one of the major weaknesses of journal writing is that it is essentially solitary and concluded that sharing or discussing their journals with peers or mentors could enhance the process. Though Bain et al. (1999) pointed out that there is no concrete data to prove that such a link between peer discussion and deeper level of reflection exists, this researcher decided to include discussion as an aspect of the reflective process. In three of the lessons, students would get into pairs and take turns reading their most recent journal entry to their partner. After finishing reading the entry, the partner would ask the following questions:

1. *Why did this incident stand out to you?*
2. *What else was going on at the time?*
3. *Do you think that you have a personal opinion or bias that influenced how you interpreted it?*
4. *Could you have interpreted this incident from a different point of view?*
5. *What did/can you learn from this incident?*

The partner would then give their own opinion or interpretation of the incident that was described, and after a bit of discussion the roles would be reversed and the partner would read about their critical event while the original student would ask the questions and then give their opinion afterwards.

At the end of the unit, students wrote a final reflection on the entire process by answering the following series of seven questions:

1. *What three things did you learn or understand better about yourself from doing this project?*
2. *What was challenging about doing this project?*
3. *What was useful about doing this project?*
4. *What didn't you like about doing this project?*
5. *Compared with before doing this project, do you think that you are better, worse, or just as good at reflecting about yourself?*
6. *Compared with before doing this project, do you think that self-reflection is more important, less important, or just as important as you thought it was?*
7. *What is one thing you will remember from doing this project?*

This final series of reflection questions would serve a variety of purposes. First of all, it would give a more meaningful sense of closure to the unit than a simple grammar test on conditional sentences. Second of all, it would serve as a data collection tool to provide valuable information to the researcher concerning students' experiences with the curriculum unit that could be analyzed. The researcher chose to rely on these questions as opposed to a second questionnaire as previously planned, as he believed that this assignment would gain the same information that a second questionnaire would be designed to do and that another questionnaire might be too much of a bother for students to take seriously and give quality answers in response to. Finally, it would serve as a second summative assessment that would be graded on a scale from 1 to 10 and count towards the students' semester grades. As the questions would be graded on a scale from 1-10 and recorded into the e-Klase system just like every other grade, the researcher thought that the students might have more motivation to contribute detailed and useful responses that could be analyzed as data.

Since the unit had a grammar focus as well (third and mixed conditional phrases), a short grammar test was planned and announced to students as part of the unit. The test followed the same format for grammar tests that the students had taken throughout Grades 10 and 11, and practiced the grammar in the forms of listening tasks as well as writing tasks. The research location required that teachers utilize a traditional test in addition to any project work that an English unit might use as an alternative summative assessment. In total, there were thirteen 40-minute lessons during the unit which lasted from Tuesday, February 23, 2016 until Tuesday, March 22, 2016. A basic overview of the lessons in the unit can be seen in Table 2.1 as follows:

**Table 2.1: Outline of Lessons in Unit Plan**

Date:	Lesson #:	Topic:
February 23 <sup>rd</sup>	1	Introducing Mixed Conditionals
February 25 <sup>th</sup>	2	Introducing Critical Incidents
February 25 <sup>th</sup>	3	Writing Critical Incidents
February 29 <sup>th</sup>	4	Sharing Critical Incidents
March 1 <sup>st</sup>	5	Sharing Critical Incidents and Practicing Conditionals
March 3 <sup>rd</sup>	6	Sharing Critical Incidents
March 3 <sup>rd</sup>	7	Practicing Mixed and Third Conditionals
March 14 <sup>th</sup>	8	Third Conditional Practice Board Game
March 15 <sup>th</sup>	9	Sharing Critical Incidents and Introducing Uncommon Conditional Phrases
March 17 <sup>th</sup>	10	Sharing Critical Incidents and
March 17 <sup>th</sup>	11	Practicing All Conditional Phrases
March 21 <sup>st</sup>	12	Grammar Review of All Conditional Phrases
March 22 <sup>nd</sup>	13	Unit Test on Conditional Phrases
March 24 <sup>th</sup>	14	Writing Final Reflections on Critical Incident Project

The unit was designed so that students should have written a new critical incident before each lesson so that they would be able to share them with classmates using the questions discussed above. If students had not recently written a critical incident and had nothing to discuss, then instead of speaking with a classmate they would use the time allotted to go through the critical incident writing process in class.

## 2.2.2 Individual Lesson Plan



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	Aspect	Modelling
1	Class, level of class and age of learners	English, Grade 11, ages 14-19
2	Date and time	(40 minutes, flexible)
3	Topic and source material	Topic: Introducing Critical Incident Analysis
4	<p>Aims:</p> <p>Language development</p> <p>Intellectual development</p> <p>Personality development</p>	<p>To practice the use of conditional phrases and other previously taught grammar concepts through self-reflection and practice students' writing skills</p> <p>To introduce a new self-reflection technique that students can use to reflect on the events that happen in their day-to-day lives and understand how critical incidents can influence a person's life even if the incident does not seem like a major dramatic event</p> <p>To develop students' appreciation for self-reflection and help make self-reflection a part of students' daily routines after understanding how to use critical incident analysis</p>
5.	Aim for the teacher	To model the correct usage of critical incident analysis so that students understand how to go through the process themselves when doing the journal writing project
6.	Anticipated problems	Students might have had problems with correctly using mixed conditional and third conditional phrases, and some students who are unfamiliar with self-reflection activities might have a hard time knowing what to write during the idea generation step of the class.

No.	Stage, timing, interaction pattern	Objective	Activities, instructions	Teaching aids, organisation form
1.	Warmer 5-10 min S S-S	To check students' understanding of previous learned third conditional and mixed conditional phrase concepts	Students are instructed to take out the homework sheet that they should have completed the night before and to check their results with the students sitting next to them. Teacher checks to see if students have done homework as students discuss their answers with one another, recording the completions or incompletions onto "e-klase system". After students have discussed answers with one another, teacher gives students opportunity to ask questions about individual questions on the homework sheet	Students' homework sheets Students in pairs Students as a class
2.	Lead-in 5-7 min T-Ss S	To introduce the critical incident generation process	Teacher asks students to take out their notebooks and to make a list of ten things that they remember happening in the past few days using the past simple tense. Teacher models this as students are writing, making their own list of ten things that they remember. Teacher tells students that these can be anything that happened, even if the events seem very minor or if these were things that students heard about on the news or radio and did not personally experience.	Students' notebooks Whiteboard Students individually
3.	Presentation 10 min T-Ss	To introduce the process of writing about critical incidents	Teacher asks students if they know what the words "critical" and "incident" mean, writing both words together on the board in a phrase. Teacher then goes through process of writing about one of the ten things that happened in the past few days that teacher wrote in their list on the whiteboard. Critical incident prompts are on class website and shown to the students using projector connected to computer and internet in classroom. Teacher points out carefully that some of the prompts require the use of third conditional phrases while other prompts require the use of mixed conditional phrases. After writing out one of the critical incidents that teacher chose from the list, teacher asks students to choose a second critical incident from the teacher's list. Teacher then again models the critical incident writing process using the new critical incident from the list that students chose.	Students' notebooks Whiteboard Projector Class website Students individually

6.	Guided Practice 5-10 min S S-S	To give students the opportunity to practice writing critical incidents while still in class	Students are then asked to choose one of the events from their own list that stands out to them and to write about the critical incidents using the same prompts and process that teacher used. Students then are told to talk about the critical incident that they wrote about with the person or people sitting next to them as the teacher walks around the room listening for correct usage of third and mixed conditional phrases, making individual remarks and overall remarks at the end of the activity.	Students' English journals Students individually
	Feedback/Closure 5-10 min T-Ss	To introduce critical incident journal assignment	Teacher explains to students that over the next few weeks that they will be required to make a similar list of ten things that happened to them every Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday night and to write a critical incident entry in their English journal for one of the things that they wrote about in their list. Students are explained that each entry will count as a separate homework assignment and that there will be a final reflection assignment as well as a quiz on third and mixed conditional phrases at the end of the unit.	Students' English journals

**Hot Reflection:**

While students understood the process of writing critical incidents by the end of the class, there was still quite a bit of incorrect usage of third and mixed conditional phrases, especially with students confusing when to use each. The activities planned ended before the class' 40 minutes were over, and the teacher needed to do a filler activity with the students practicing third and mixed conditional phrases before the lesson ended.

### 3. Evaluation of Students' Self-Reflection Skills

#### 3.1 Theoretical and Practical Grounds of Measuring Self-Reflection Skills

Over the past few decades, researchers have attempted to develop systems of criteria to objectively measure individuals' self-reflection or "self-awareness", defined by Duval and Wicklund (1972) as the state one experiences when directing attention to oneself. Fenigstein, Scheier, and Buss (1975) developed the Private Self-Consciousness Scale (PrSCS) to measure three "self-consciousness dimensions": private self-consciousness, public self-consciousness, and social anxiety. Respondents answered a series of 23 questions on a five-point scale from "extremely characteristic" (scored zero) to "extremely uncharacteristic" (scored four), with the scale reversed for items 3, 9, and 12. The items and their corresponding social dimensions can be found in Table 3.1 below:

*Table 3.1: Items in the PrSCS (Duval et al. 1975: 15)*

<b>Item:</b>	<b>Social Dimension:</b>
1. I'm always trying to figure myself out.	Private
2. I'm concerned about my style of doing things.	Public
3. Generally, I'm not very aware of myself.	Private
4. It takes me time to overcome my shyness in new situations.	Social anxiety
5. I reflect about myself a lot.	Private
6. I'm concerned about the way I present myself.	Public
7. I'm often the subject of my own fantasies.	Private
8. I have trouble working when someone is watching me.	Social anxiety
9. I never scrutinize myself.	Private
10. I get embarrassed very easily.	Social anxiety
11. I'm self-conscious about the way I look.	Public
12. I don't find it hard to talk to strangers.	Social anxiety
13. I'm generally attentive to my inner feelings	Private
14. I usually worry about making a good impression	Public
15. I'm constantly examining my motives.	Private
16. I feel anxious when I speak in front of a group.	Social anxiety
17. One of the last things I do before I leave my house is look in the mirror.	Public
18. I sometimes have the feeling that I'm off somewhere watching myself.	Private
19. I'm concerned about what other people think of me.	Public
20. I'm alert to changes in my mood.	Private
21. I'm usually aware of my appearance.	Public
22. I'm aware of the way my mind works when I work through a problem.	Private
23. Large groups make me nervous.	Social anxiety

Burnkant and Page (1984) identified several weaknesses in the scale, modifying it by dropping the unreliable items 3, 9, 12, 17, and 21 and replacing the original three social dimensions with four new "factors": internal state awareness, self reflectiveness, public self-consciousness, and social anxiety. Their modifications led to a reportedly greater level of internal consistency within the categories of items (Burnkant et Al, 1984). However, Anderson et al. (1996) argued that the items of the PrSCS do not accurately measure a constructive form of self-reflection, as they found that the scale correlated with the measures of psychopathological rumination and negative or dysfunctional self-absorption. Trapnell

and Campbell (1999) addressed this issue by creating two separate scales, a “reflection” scale which measured philosophically-oriented self-reflection and a “rumination” scale that measured less constructive self-absorption.

Grant (2002) argued that Trapnell and Campbell’s new scale (1999) was an improvement over previous iterations of PrSCS but still did not properly account for metacognitive factors necessary for self-monitoring of performance and overlooked measurement of internal state awareness. He instead proposed a new Self-Reflection and Insight Scale (SRIC) based on a “cycle of self-regulation” in which individuals repeated the following steps (Grant, 2002: 822):

1. *Set a goal;*
2. *Develop an action plan;*
3. *Act on that action plan;*
4. *Self-monitor (requiring self-reflection);*
5. *Self-evaluate (requiring insight);*
6. *Change what is not working or do more of what works, potentially making modifications to steps 1, 2, or 3;*
7. *Achieve the goal;*

Grant (2004: 824) created two subsections of the scale: SRIS-IN which measured insight (or internal state awareness), and SRIS-SR which measured constructive self-reflection. The procedure was similar to those used by Fenigstein et al. (1975) and Trapnell and Campbell (1999), having respondents rate various items on a scale of agreement to disagreement to determine their level of insight and self-reflection. The new questionnaire included ten items for each of the categories of “engagement in self-reflection”, “need for self-reflection”, and “insight” (Grant 2004: 825). Grant (2004: 832-833) found that the new scale had a high level of consistency and could be used as an effective tool by future researchers.

All of the systems of measuring self-reflection discussed thus far are dependent on the analysis of individuals’ self-reports through questionnaire answers. Carroll (2010) took a different approach towards evaluating self-reflection, creating six different “levels” of reflection that an individual might go through when performing self-reflection. Unlike previous systems, these levels can be used by a third party to describe the self-reflection that an individual goes through. Carroll (2010: 25-29) describes the six levels in great detail so that an observer can properly evaluate the level that an individual is at when doing the reflection, and the levels are briefly summarized in Table 3.2 below:

**Table 3.2: Carroll’s (2010: 25) Levels of Reflection**

<b>Level</b>	<b>Stance/attitude</b>	<b>Connection quality</b>
1. Zero	Me	Disconnected
2. Empathic	Observer	Empathic
3. Relational	You and Me = Us	Personal
4. Systemic	You and Me + Others	Contextual
5. Self	Me (Internalized)	Incorporating
6. Transcendental	Other (Universal)	Universal

Though numbered, Carroll (2010: 29) did not intend for the levels to necessarily be hierarchical and argued that reflection at any of the levels gives valuable information, and that there were positive and negative stances that could be taken by the reflecting individual at each level (Carroll 2010: 30). While he described a situation in which an individual might progress through the six levels of reflection in order, he noted that many might skip straight to level five or six and that certain levels are more appropriate than others in various situations.

For the purpose of this research, the most useful rating system was found to be the one developed by Bain et al (1999) to analyze the reflection journals of pre-service teachers. They had developed a five-point hierarchical system of progressively complex forms of written self-reflection which is outlined in the Table 3.2 below:

**Table 3.3: Bain et al’s (1999: 60) Five-Point Level of Reflection Scale**

<b>Reflection Level:</b>	<b>Description:</b>
Level 1 (reporting)	The student describes, reports, or re-tells with minimal transformation, no added observations or insights
Level 2 (responding)	The student uses the source data in some way, but with little transformation or conceptualization The student makes an observation or judgment without making any further inferences or detailing the reasons for the judgment The student asks a “rhetorical” question without attempting to answer it or consider alternatives The student reports a feeling such as relief, anxiety, happiness, ect.
Level 3 (relating)	The student identifies aspects of the data which have personal meaning or which connect with prior or current experience The student seeks a superficial understanding of relationships The student identifies something they are good at, something that they need to improve, a mistake they have made, or an area in which they have learned from their practical experience

	The student gives a superficial explanation of the reason why something has happened or identifies something they need or plan to do or change.
Level 4 (reasoning)	<p>The student integrates the data into an appropriate relationship, e.g. with theoretical concepts, personal experience, involving a high level of transformation and conceptualization</p> <p>The student seeks a deep understanding of why something has happened</p> <p>The student explores or analyzes a concept, event, or experience, asks questions and looks for answers, considers alternatives, speculates or hypothesizes about why something is happening</p> <p>The student attempts to explain their own or others' behavior or feelings using their own insight, inferences, experiences, or previous learning, with some depth of understanding</p> <p>The student explores the relationship between theory and practice in some depth</p>
Level 5 (reconstructing)	<p>The student displays a high level of abstract thinking to generalize and/or apply learning</p> <p>The student draws and original conclusion from their reflections, generalizes from their experience, extracts general principles, formulates a personal theory, or takes a position on an issue</p> <p>The student extracts and internalizes the personal significance of their learning and/or plans their own further learning on the basis of their reflections</p>

Although the five levels were developed for analyzing the reflection journals of students in a graduate-level teaching diploma program, the levels described by Bain et al (1999:60) could be adapted to a wide variety of journal-writing situations. They tracked the “growth” of students writing journal entries over a period of five entries to see if there was a higher number students reaching a level of “4” or “5” in their final entries compared to their first entries. While there was some general average increase in the level of reflection observed from the journal entries, the results were mainly inconclusive (Bain et al 1999: 62-68).

For the purpose of this current research, students were not introduced to the scale created by Bain et al and were only graded using conventional criteria. It was the view of the researcher that awareness of the levels of reflection was unnecessary for the purpose of the unit and that, if students followed the basic guidelines of the assignment that they would already achieve at least a level of “3” on the scale. The researcher did analyze all of the entries using the scale to see if there was any general increase in the level of self-reflection over the course of the multiple entries, the findings of which are discussed in the next chapter.

As the researcher opted not to formally assess the reflection journals and final entries based on Bain et al's (1999) scale, the decision was made to grade each entry individual using the following levels:

*Table 3.4: Journal Entry Grading Scale*

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
Ieskaitīts (i)	The journal entry is fully complete according to the instructions
Neieskaitīts (ni)	The journal entry is incomplete in some way, such as missing an answer to a prompt or answering something different than the given prompts
Nav vērtējuma (nv)	There is no journal entry

The final reflection assignment was graded on a ten-point scale based on a rubric (found on the next page) that the students had been familiar with over the past year and a half. It had been used numerous times to evaluate longer, more important homework assignments as well as minor writing assignments.

## Rubric for English Homework Assignments

Score:	0	1	2	3	4
<b>Content:</b>	Either no homework is turned in or content is completely irrelevant	Assignment has been started but very little relevant content is present	Student's work contains some relevant content but either missed some key points or could have expanded much more on certain ideas	Student's work is completely satisfactory for the assignment and contains all required elements	Student's work is completely satisfactory for the assignment, contains all required elements, and goes above and beyond in thoroughly completing the assignment
<b>Effort:</b>	No homework is turned in	Homework has been turned in but shows very few signs of effort or looks like it was very rushed	Homework shows signs of decent effort, but more work could have been put in for better results	Student obviously put in a great amount of effort into the assignment and could not have worked any harder for better results	N/A
<b>Spelling and Grammar:</b>	Homework is not written in English or is completely incomprehensible	Spelling and grammar are very poor but mostly understandable	There are some spelling and grammar mistakes but not enough to significantly distract from the content	There are very few or no spelling and grammar mistakes and nothing distracts from the content	N/A

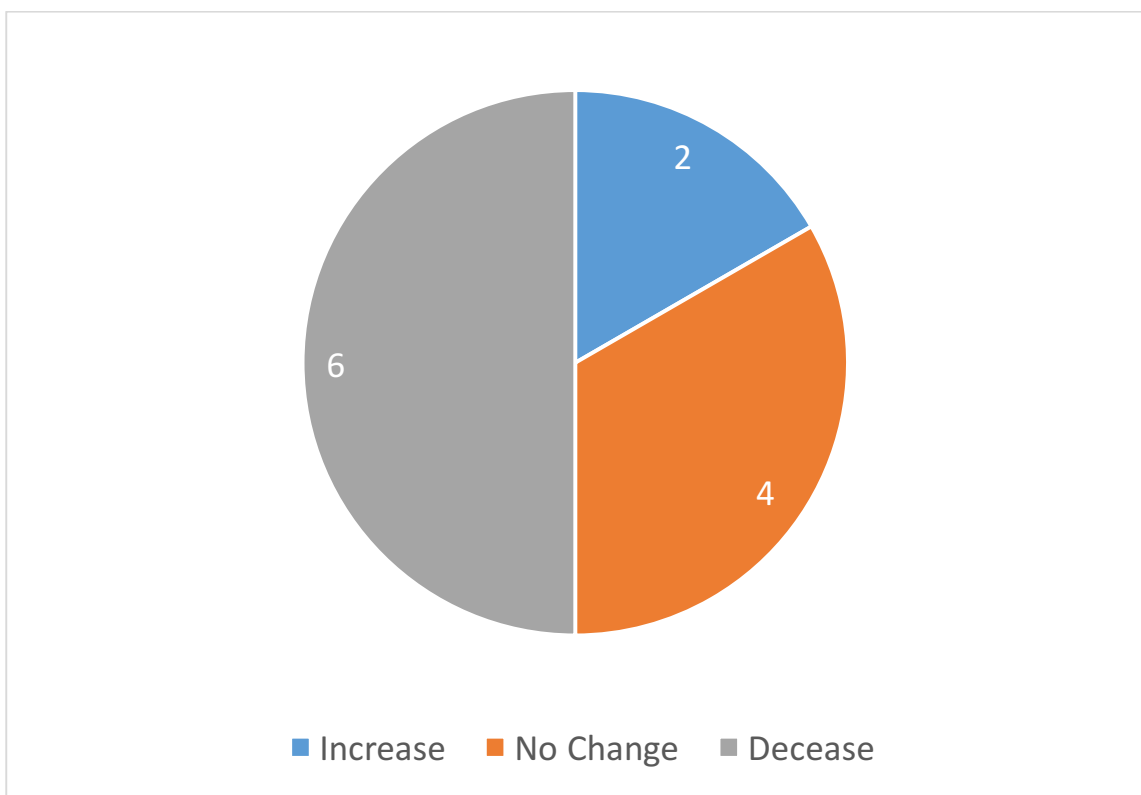
Total Score: Content (0-4) + Effort (0-3) + Spelling and Grammar (0-3) = Overall Score (0-10)

## 3.2 Evidence and Self-Evaluation

### 3.2.1 Reflection Journals

Twelve students participated in the writing of reflection journals four times per week, nine times overall. As described in the previous chapter the students were required to generate a list of ten things that they remembered happening since the last time they had written a journal entry and generate a critical incident analysis based on one of those ten events through a series of prompts that they responded to. As a majority of the journal entries were written over spring holiday break in March, the researcher was only able to provide teacher feedback at the end of the unit to students once most of the entries had already been written.

The researcher evaluated the students' journals by applying the Bain et al (1999: 60) five-point reflection level scale to the first and last journal of each student to see if there was an increase in the level of reflection between the first and last entry. While the researcher predicted that there would be an increase in the students' level of reflection as they would improve their reflection abilities over the course of doing the journal project, the data in Figure 3.1 shows the opposite:



*Figure 3.1: Positive or Negative Change in Students' Reflection Levels*

Only two of the twelve students who did the assignment showed an increase in level on the five-point reflection scale between the first and last entries. Four of the students

showed no increase in level, and six students showed a decrease in their level of reflection. This data shows that the reflection journals did not work as the researcher had intended them, and that there might have been an issue in the design of the unit that could be discovered through the students' responses to their final reflection assignments and their responses to the group interview.

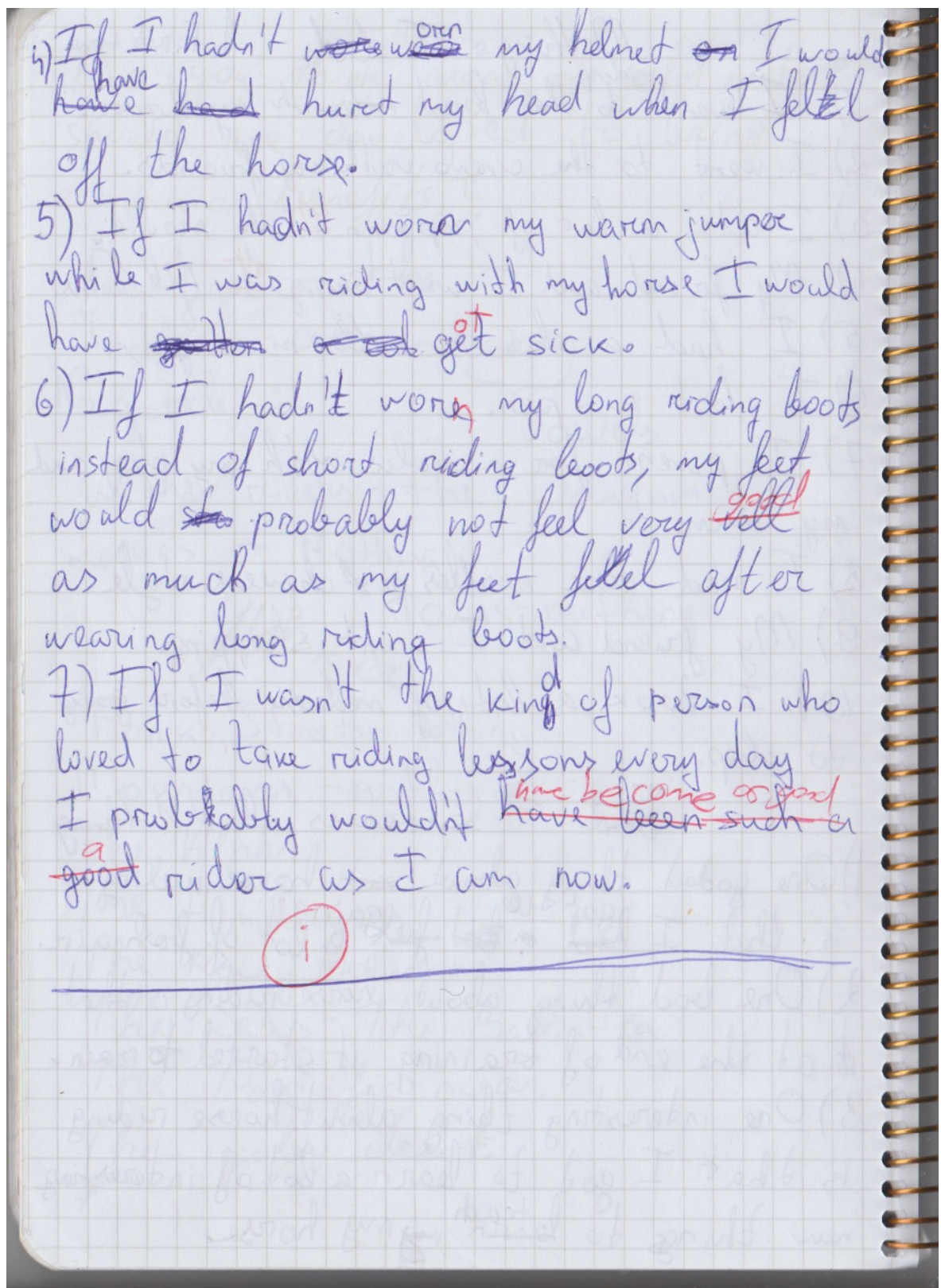
The following four journal entries were all written by the same female student. These entries were chosen because they were some of the best example of all of the students' entries of well thought-out answers and correct use of the conditional grammar. As can be seen in these examples, grammar and spelling issues (including ones not directly related to use of conditionals) were corrected using a red pen so that students could make note of their errors and be aware of them in the future.

## 10 things I did. 1st time

- 1) I went <sup>riding</sup> to the forest ~~with~~ my horse.
- 2) I went to the cinema with my friends.
- 3) I ate a lot of popcorn ~~in~~ <sup>at</sup> the movie.
- 4) My friend and I went ~~to~~ <sup>at</sup> Milzauhn.
- 5) I had a shower in the morning.
- 6) I lost a pen.
- 7) I went for a walk with my dog and my mum.
- 8) I made rice noodles in ~~a~~ Chinese style.
- 9) My friend and I went shopping.
- 10) I took a lot of medicine before going to sleep.

## ~~Ex 2~~ 7 sentences about 1 thing

- 1) One good thing about ~~the~~ horse riding is that I ~~had~~ <sup>got</sup> ~~a lot~~ <sup>to</sup> ~~feel~~ <sup>gain</sup> a lot of fresh air.
- 2) One bad thing about horse riding is that ~~it~~ at the end of training it started to rain.
- 3) One interesting thing about horse riding is that I got to learn a lot of interesting new things to ~~learn~~ <sup>teach</sup> my horse.



This first sample displays a level between 2 and 3 on the Bain et al. (1999) scale, because in answering the last question she identified something that she was good at, gave a superficial explanation of why, and connected current experiences with past experiences which is at Level 3. The other answers to questions only show Level 2, as she used the source data with little transformation or conceptualization.

## 10 things I did. 2<sup>o</sup> Second time.

- 1) In the morning I ate ice cream.
- 2) In the morning I drank a lot of tea.
- 3) Last night I slept very well.
- 4) ~~Last night we~~ At ~~the~~ school last night all girls from the 11th class ~~to~~ ~~were~~ ~~cele~~ ~~we~~ celebrated ~~an~~ international <sup>at</sup> women's day.
- 5) ~~I~~ My friend and I played guitar and piano on Wednesday.
- 6) I baked chocolate muffins on Tuesday.
- 7) I read a lot of magazines on Wednesday.
- 8) Yesterday I drank a lot of coffee.
- 9) My friend and my mum gave me flowers yesterday.
- 10) ~~Before sleep I had a shower last night.~~ (10) Before sleep I had a shower last night.

~~17 things~~ sentences about <sup>1 thing</sup> baking muffins  
1) One good thing about baking muffins is that I get to know a lot of new stuff about baking.

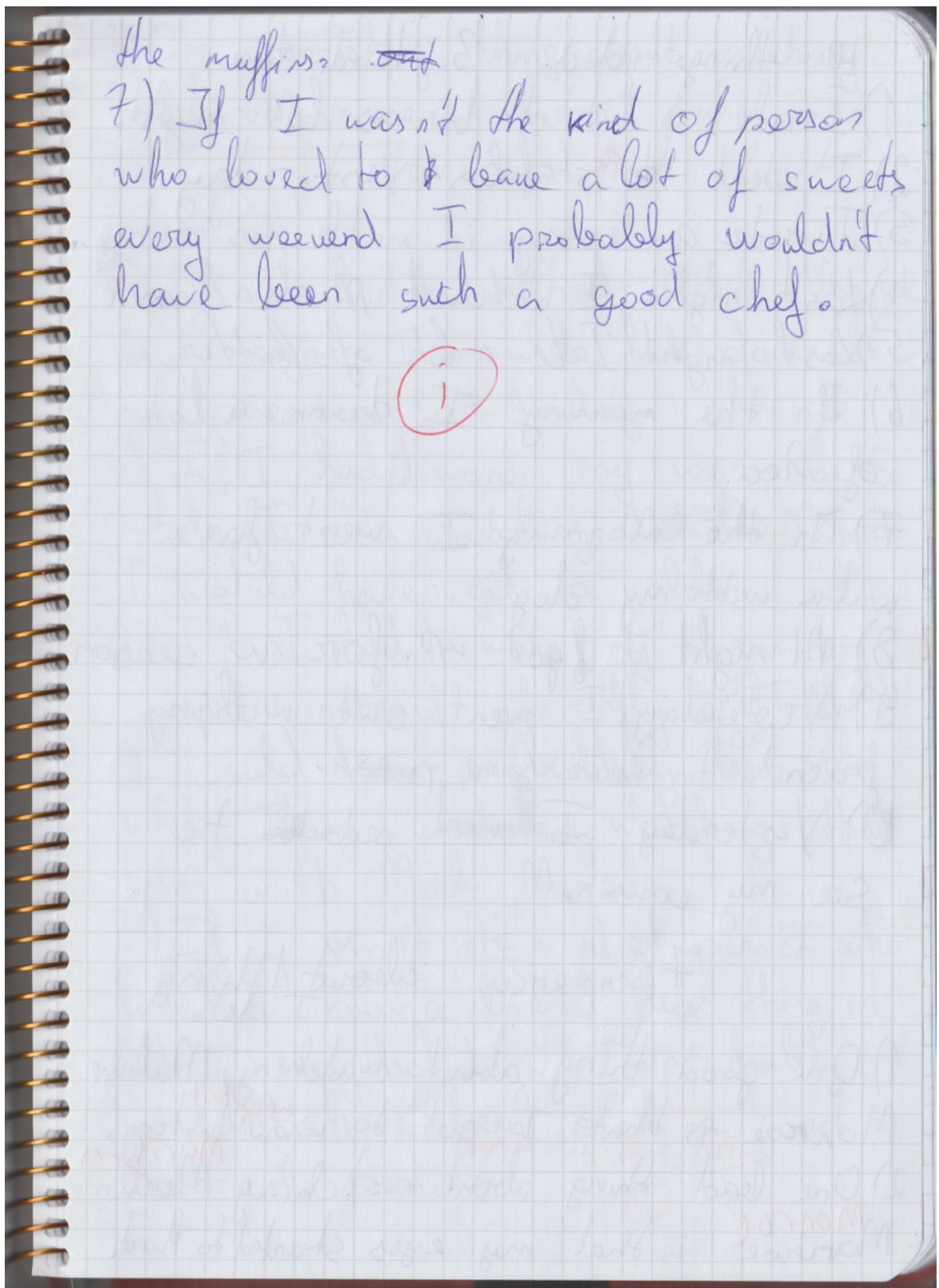
2) One bad thing about baking muffins is that I never know how long I need to bake them.

3) One interesting thing about baking muffins is that ~~if~~ <sup>inside</sup> you ~~can~~ put chocolate flavour the muffins will be brown.

4) If I hadn't put more butter in the muffin mixture I would have baked the muffins too dry.

5) If I hadn't worn ~~to~~ my baking big jumper while I was baking I would have got dirty.

6) If I hadn't worn ~~to~~ my baking gloves instead of only hands, my hands would ~~be~~ probably be burned <sup>from your</sup> ~~while~~ I was baking out



This second sample displays Level 3 on the Bain et al. (1999) scale, because in answering the second and third questions she identified a mistake that she made (overcooking muffins that she was baking), in the fifth and sixth questions she sought a superficial understanding of relationships, and in the last question she identified something that she was good at

(baking), gave a superficial explanation of something that she was good at, and connected current experiences with past experiences.

10 things I did. 3. third time

- 1) I ate a lot of bananas last night.
- 2) I went to <sup>the</sup> stables yesterday.
- 3) I wrote an essay in math yesterday.
- 4) Last night I watched Melba Monroe.
- 5) Last night I ate a lot of butter.
- 6) In the morning I drank a lot of tea.
- 7) In the morning I went for a walk with my dog.
- 8) At night I got up for no reason.
- 9) Yesterday I went out with my friends to have some pizza.
- 10) Yesterday I went outside to see my cousin.

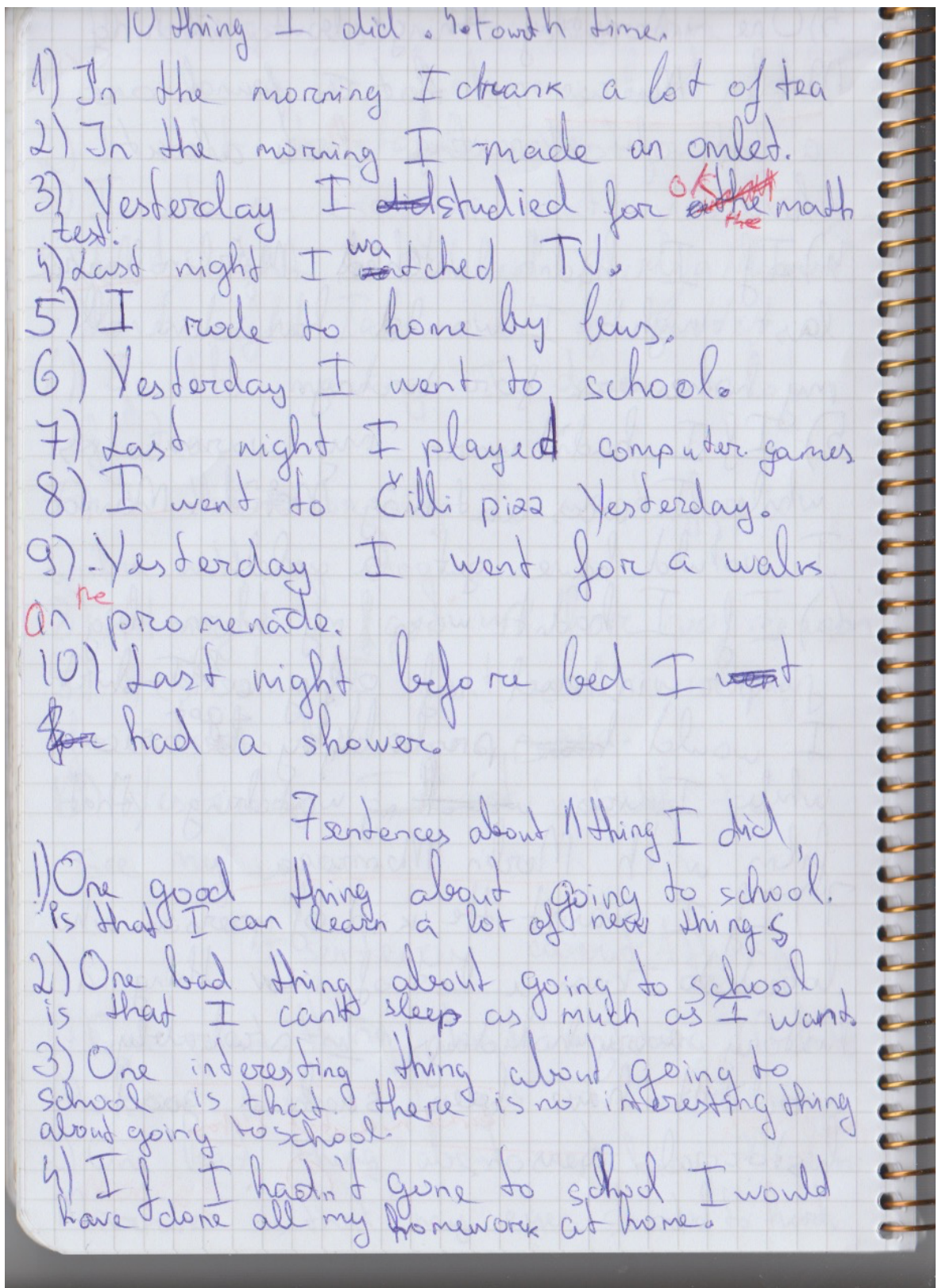
7 sentences about 1 thing I did.

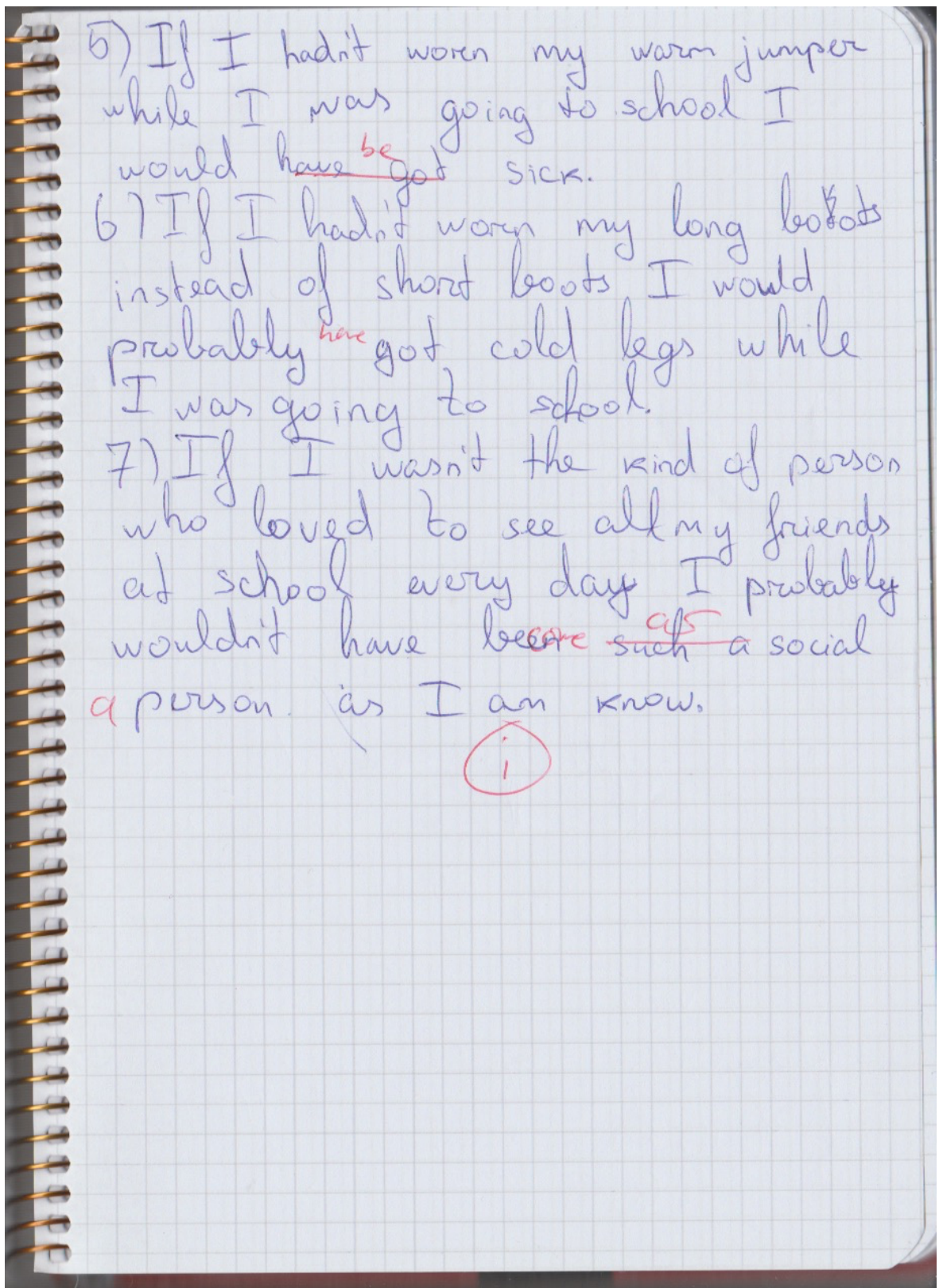
- 1) One good thing about watching Melba Monroe is that I got to know <sup>more about</sup> history.
- 2) One bad thing about watching Melba Monroe is that my eyes started to hurt. <sup>Marion</sup>

- 3) One interesting thing about watching Merlin Monroe is that I found out a lot of interesting facts about here.
- 4) If I hadn't watched Merlin Monroe last night I would have done all my homework for today.
- 5) If I hadn't worn my warm socks while I was watching Merlin Monroe I would have get a cold.
- 6) If I hadn't worn my warm big jumper instead of only a ~~BT~~ T-shirt I would ~~have~~ probably ~~be~~ <sup>got</sup> sick while I was ~~watching~~ watching that film with Merlin Monroe.
- 7) If I wasn't the kind of person who loved to know a lot of new thing in history every holidays I probably wouldn't have been such a good historical person.   
*learned more about history* (i)

This entry displays mostly a level of between 2 and 3, because in answering the last question the student mentioned something that she was good at and in answering the first and third questions she identified an area of history in which she learned something (although it was not specifically from her practical experience) which correspond with Level

3. All of the student's other answers only display Level 2 with minimal observation or transformation.

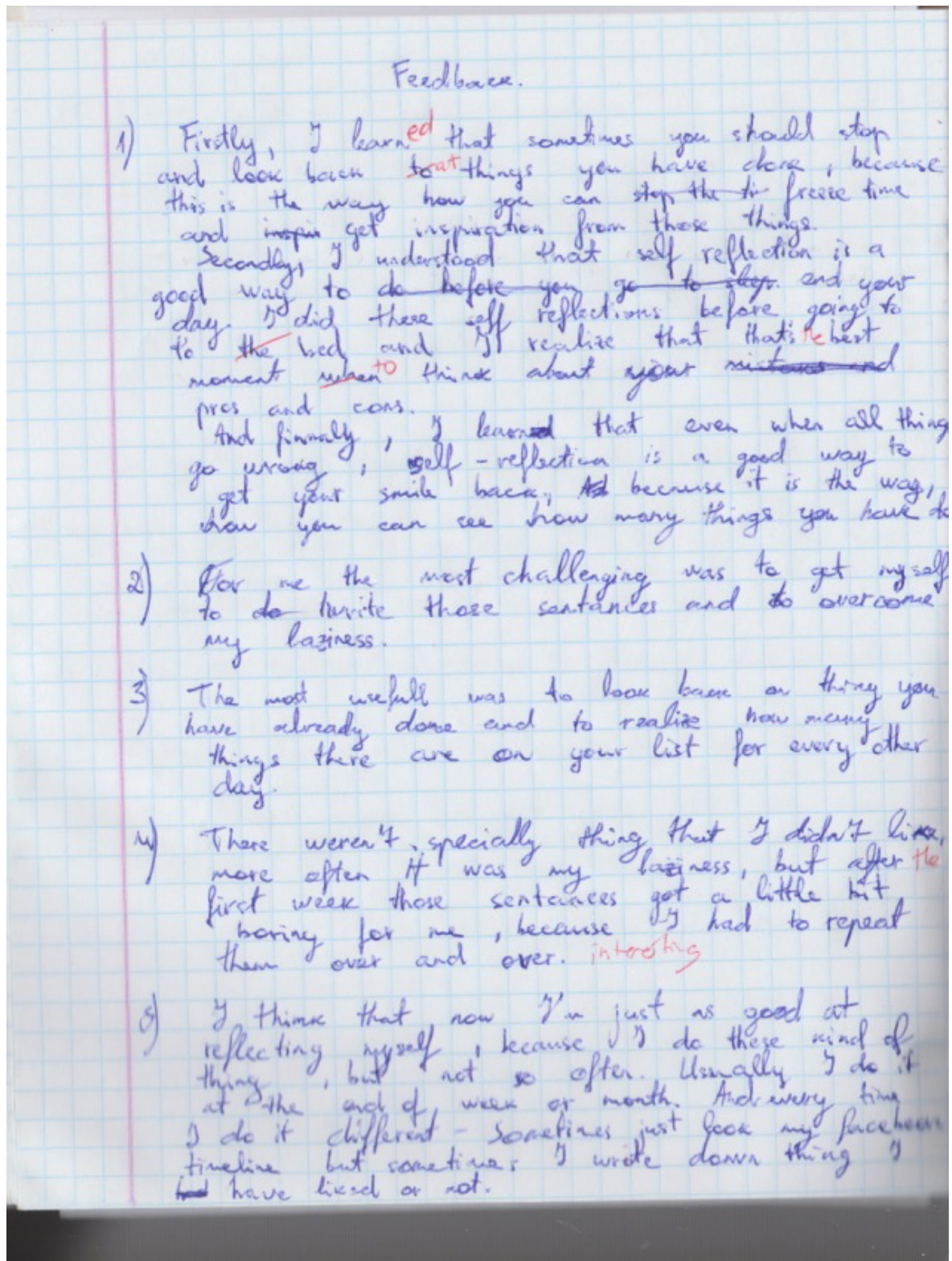




This fourth sample displays a level of 2, because the student did not identify anything that she was good at, mistakes that she had made, or areas in which she had learned, and did not make connections with her previous experiences. She used the source data with little transformations and makes basic observations and judgments without giving analysis.

### 3.2.2 Final Reflection Assignments

As described in the previous chapter, the students were required to write a final reflection assignment based on their experiences in completing the self-reflection unit. The assignments were graded based on the previously mentioned English homework assignment rubric, and served as a summative assessment for the unit along with the grammar test.



6) How I mentioned I ~~have already been~~ <sup>have already been</sup> doing this for last 3 years and I think that means that I think it is important for me. Now it is not changed. I think that self-reflection is very important for personal growth.

7) What one is one thing you will remember from doing this project?

One thing that I'll remember the most is this one morning when four of our group classmates tried to extremely fast write 10 things and sentences right before english class and then we realize that we all have at least one thing in our list of which we can be proud about. But the main thing was that ~~these~~ this project helped to better learn conditional sentences.

Thank you! Your feedback is insightful!

Content: 4

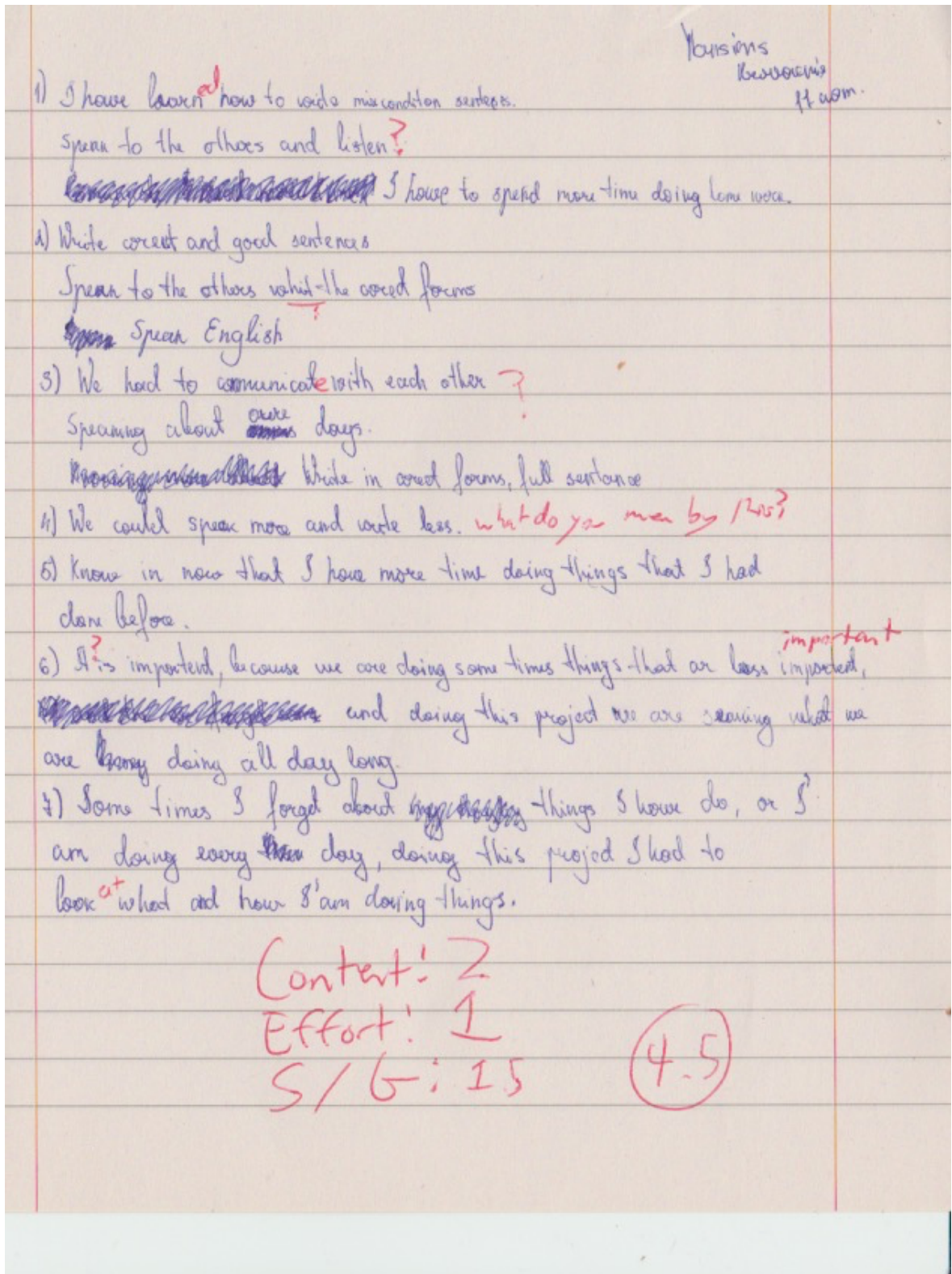
Effort: 3

S/G: 3

Total: 10

The student who wrote the above received a 4/4 for “content” because he answered all of the questions with thoroughly complete ideas that showed evidence of careful thought and reflection. He received a 3/3 for “effort” because he gave more than the required one complete sentence for each prompt, and even the answers that were only one sentence long were full, longer sentences that concisely communicated his thoughts. He received a 3/3 for grammar and spelling because there were only about five mistakes in the entire response,

and all of the mistakes were mostly minor and did not distract the reader from the content. Although the researcher would not endorse this sample as a "perfect" piece of writing and would not say that no response could have potentially been better, it fulfilled all of the requirements of the rubric to receive a "10" and was the most complete and thoughtful assignment that was turned in.

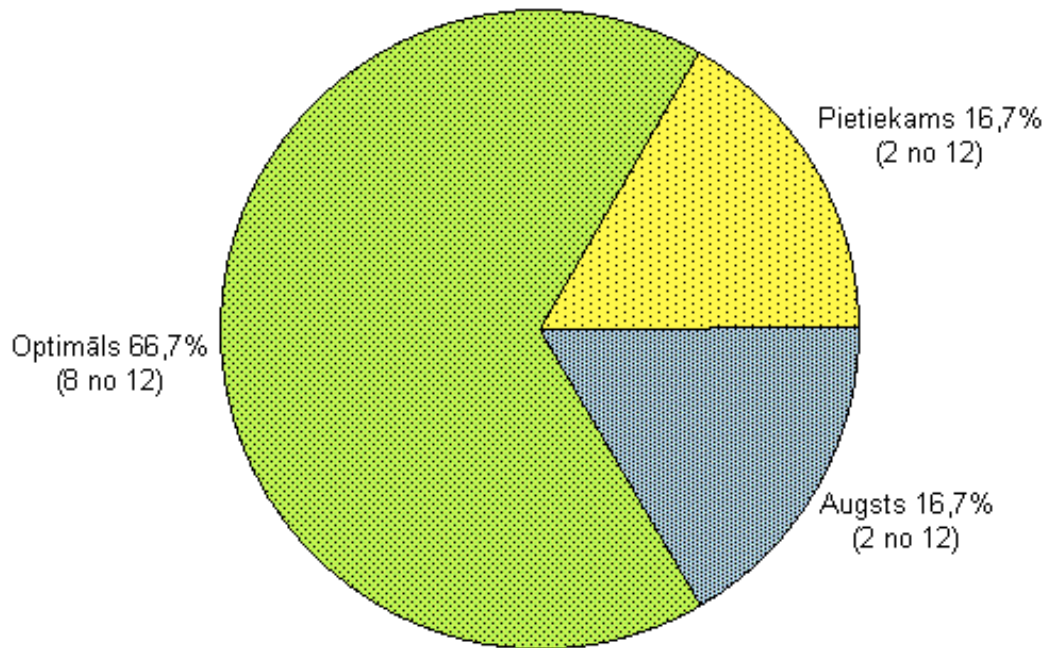


The student who wrote the above reflection received a 2/4 for “content” because the answers were mostly incomplete sentences and did not thoroughly answer the questions from the prompts. He received a 1/3 for “effort” because the assignment seemed very rushed with many minor spelling and grammar mistakes that could have been easily noticed in a second read-through and incomplete thoughts that only half-answered the questions. He received a “1.5” for “spelling and grammar” because there were many small mistakes regarding English topics that had been covered already in his English class. Overall he received a 4.5/10, which is rounded up to a “5.”

Overall, two of the eleven students received a grade considered “augsts” (9-10), seven students received an “optimāls” grade (6-8), and two students received a “pietikams” grade (4-5). At the time of writing, two students still had not turned in this assignment. Since the mean, media, and mode grade was only a “7” it appears that the students could have put more effort into the assignment and did not provide as thorough answers as the researcher had hoped. The students might have been tired about writing about self-reflection at this point in the unit, or they might not have had strong opinions one way or the other regarding the unit and their self-reflection experiences. These results can be seen in Table 3.5 and Figure 3.2 below.

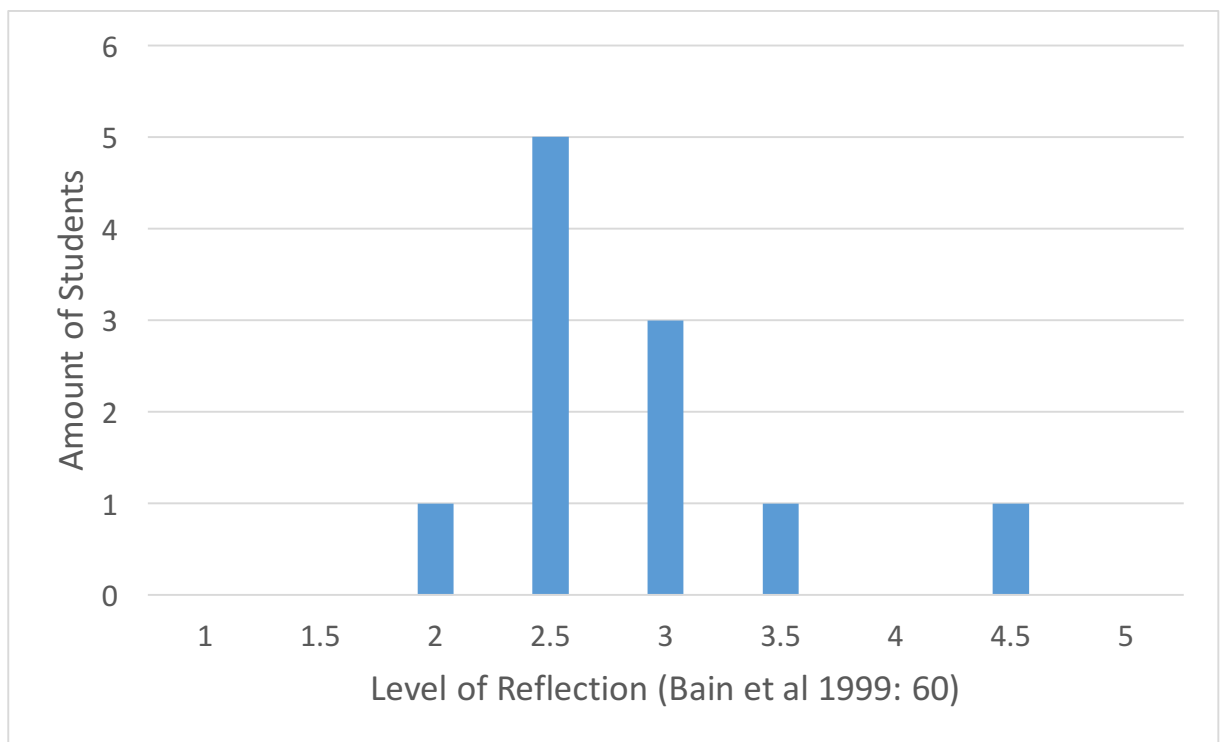
**Table 3.5: Individual Results of Final Reflection Assignment**

Nr.	Uzvārds, vārds	<u>1</u>	Kopā	Izpilde	Vērt.	Varianta nr., piezīmes
		10	10			
4.		6	6	60%	6	
7.		7	7	70%	7	
14.		4,5	4,5	45%	5	
17.		5	5	50%	5	
19.						
20.		7,5	7,5	75%	8	
21.		10	10	100%	10	
22.		8,5	8,5	85%	9	
23.		8	8	80%	8	
24.		7	7	70%	7	
25.		6,5	6,5	65%	7	
26.						
27.		7	7	70%	7	
28.		6,5	6,5	65%	7	
	Vidēji klasē:	6,96	6,96	69,58%	7,17	
	Izpildes koeficienti klasē:	0,7	0,7			



*Figure 3.2: Breakdown of Students' Results in Final Reflection Assignment*

These final reflection assignments were also analyzed using the five-level scale developed by Bain et al (1999). For students whose responses showed certain aspects of one level and certain aspects of another, the researcher assigned a level with a decimal of “5”. For example, a student whose response showed some aspects of Level 2 and some aspects of level three, a level of 2.5 was assigned to their response. As can be seen in Figure 3.3, half of the students' responses displayed a Level of 2.5 or below. Only one student displayed a level of 4.5, as that student reported planning to change specific aspects of their life after completing the assignment which is a sign of Level 5 self-reflection. Although that student displayed more signs of Level 3 self-reflection than level 4, the researcher still decided to label it Level 5 due to the specific plans to carry out action. The fact that half of the students displayed a self-reflection Level of 3 or higher represents some level of success for the research, as those levels are considered high levels of self-reflection by Bain et al. (1999) and the students displayed evidence of being able to do self-reflection at those levels after completing the unit.



**Figure 3.3: Level of Self-Reflection Observed in Final Reflection Assignments**

Since the final reflection assignments asked students to write about their experiences during the self-reflection unit, the researcher utilized their answers to the questions as a data collection tool instead of an originally planned second questionnaire. The first question asked student what three things they had learned about themselves or understood better about themselves after completing the self-reflection unit. Students answers varied significantly from one another. Summarized individual responses and the frequency of such responses can be found in Table 3.6 below. The most frequent responses were that the student did too many unproductive things (four students), and that the students’ ability to use conditional phrases correctly had improved (three students). The responses were also coded as either generally positive (+), negative (-), or neutral (/) observations. 20 of the observations (62.5%) were negative, compared with 9 positive observations (28%) and 3 neutral observations (9.5%). This shows that students overwhelmingly negative attitude when it came to making observations about themselves, and that a future improvement to the assignment might be to ask students to write a mix of positive and negative things that they learned and observed about themselves so as not to create a completely negative association in the students’ minds regarding the act of self-reflection. While there is merit to observing negative attributes about one’s self, at especially high school age it would be better to have a balance of positive, negative, and neutral observations.

**Table 3.6: Students' Responses to Which Three Things They Learned About Themselves or Understood About Themselves Better from the Self-Reflection Unit**

Summarized Student Response	Frequency of Response
Hadn't thought enough about own actions previously -	1
Did too many unproductive things -	4
Tries to do too many things at once -	1
Eats too much -	1
Does too many things just to prove to self that they can -	1
Has a bad memory -	1
Can sleep less and go out more at night -	1
Is gradually getting better at completing tasks on time +	2
Not enough time in the day to do everything they want to -	1
Learned to be more positive +	2
Learned to think with less bias +	1
Improved usage of conditional sentences +	3
Enjoys speaking to others more than writing /	1
Needs to spend more time on school assignments -	2
Has problems with self-motivation -	2
Day is uninteresting -	1
Self-reflection is difficult -	1
Needs to spend more time "stepping back" /	1
Self-reflection is a good way to end the day /	1
Needs to complete homework on time -	1
Needs to become more organized -	1
Has surprisingly good memory +	1
Has problem with procrastination -	1

The second question (see Table 3.7) asked students what the most challenging aspect of the self-reflection unit had been. The most frequent response by far was that it was difficult for students to remember what had happened to them in the previous day, a response that five students gave. The second most frequent response, given by three students, was that the reflections were time consuming and that it was sometimes difficult to find the time to complete the assignment. The response that self-reflection was something unfamiliar and difficult to initially do and the response that it was difficult to correctly use conditional phrases correctly were given by two students each. Responses were grouped this time into internal factors mostly related with the students themselves (coded as IN) and external factors that students mostly had no control over (coded as EX). Some responses were a mix of internal and external factors, and were coded with both signs. 14 of the responses (82%) were mostly internal factors, while 3 responses (18%) were a mix of internal and external factors. These results indicate that the most difficult aspects of the unit did not have to do with the design or the tasks that students had to complete, but instead had to do with internal issues that the students had to work on themselves.

**Table 3.7: Students' Responses to Which Aspect of the Self-Reflection Unit Had Been the Most Difficult**

Summarized Student Response	Frequency of Response
Took a lot of time to complete reflections <b>IN</b>	3
Hadn't previously spent much time doing self-reflection <b>IN</b>	2
Was depressing to think about what had happened in their day <b>EX/IN</b>	1
Was difficult to remember what had happened <b>IN</b>	5
Was challenging to establish a routine which included journal writing <b>IN</b>	1
Some days nothing interesting happened to them <b>EX/IN</b>	1
Was difficult to use conditional sentences correctly <b>IN</b>	2
Was uncomfortable to speak with other students about self-reflection <b>EX/IN</b>	1
Difficult to motivate self to write reflections <b>IN</b>	1

The third question (see Table 3.8) asked students which aspect of the self-reflection unit that they had enjoyed the most. The most frequent response to this question were variations of the theme of being able to look back upon their day and analyze their time management and the activities that they had done, a response that five students gave. The next most frequent responses were that three students enjoyed being able to practice their English language skills and that two students found it interesting to remember what had happened during the day. The results were grouped into responses that focused on the student's self-improvement (coded as **SI**) and ones that focused on other factors (coded as **O**). 12 responses (71%) focused on self-improvement, while 5 responses (29%) focused on other factors. These results show that a majority of the students who took part in the unit were able to make use of the self-reflection that they did and improve themselves in some way either in the short or long term. All of the students were able to identify at least one thing that they enjoyed, meaning that the unit was not overwhelmingly unpleasant for the students to take part in.

**Table 3.8: Students' Responses to Which Aspect of the Self-Reflection Unit They Had Enjoyed the Most**

Summarized Student Response	Frequency of Response
Was interesting to remember what had happened in the day <b>O</b>	2
Learned new things about self <b>SI</b>	1
Will be able to look back in the future at what happened during month <b>O</b>	1
Was useful to be able to analyze day and usage of time <b>SI</b>	5
Found positive things that happened during day <b>O</b>	1
Practiced English skills <b>SI</b>	3
Was able to speak with others about what had happened <b>O</b>	1
Improved memory recall <b>SI</b>	1
Practiced self-reflection skills <b>SI</b>	1
Spent less time doing unproductive activities <b>SI</b>	1

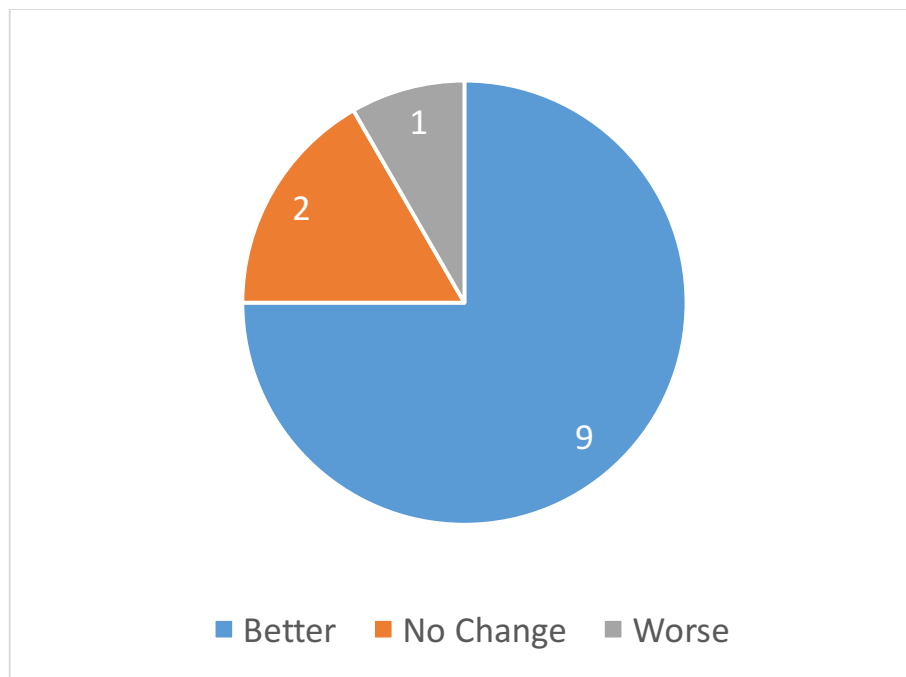
The fourth question (see Table 3.9) asked students which aspect of the self-reflection unit that they had disliked the most. The two most frequent responses to this question were that writing self-reflections had been time consuming and that it had been difficult to think of things to write about. Each of these responses were given by three students. Two students responded that it had been difficult to use the grammar correctly. Only one student mentioned that they did not completely understand exactly how they were supposed to write the reflections, although that student had been absent on one of the days that the project was demonstrated. Responses were grouped into ones that focused on the unit's overall design (coded as **D**) and ones that focused on other factors (coded as **O**). 7 of the responses had to do with elements of the unit's design while 5 had to do with other factors. This meant that a majority of students found some fault with the design of the unit, and that certain elements of the unit's design and execution could be modified and improved.

*Table 3.9: Students' Responses to Which Aspect of the Self-Reflection Unit they had Disliked the Most*

Summarized Student Response	Frequency of Response
Writing self-reflections was too time consuming <b>D</b>	3
Didn't like the unit in general <b>D</b>	1
Correct grammar usage was difficult <b>O</b>	2
Was difficult to think of things to write about <b>O</b>	3
Didn't like writing aspect, wanted to spend more time speaking <b>D</b>	1
Unit became boring towards the end <b>D</b>	1
Instructions were unclear <b>D</b>	1
Didn't dislike any aspects <b>N/A</b>	1

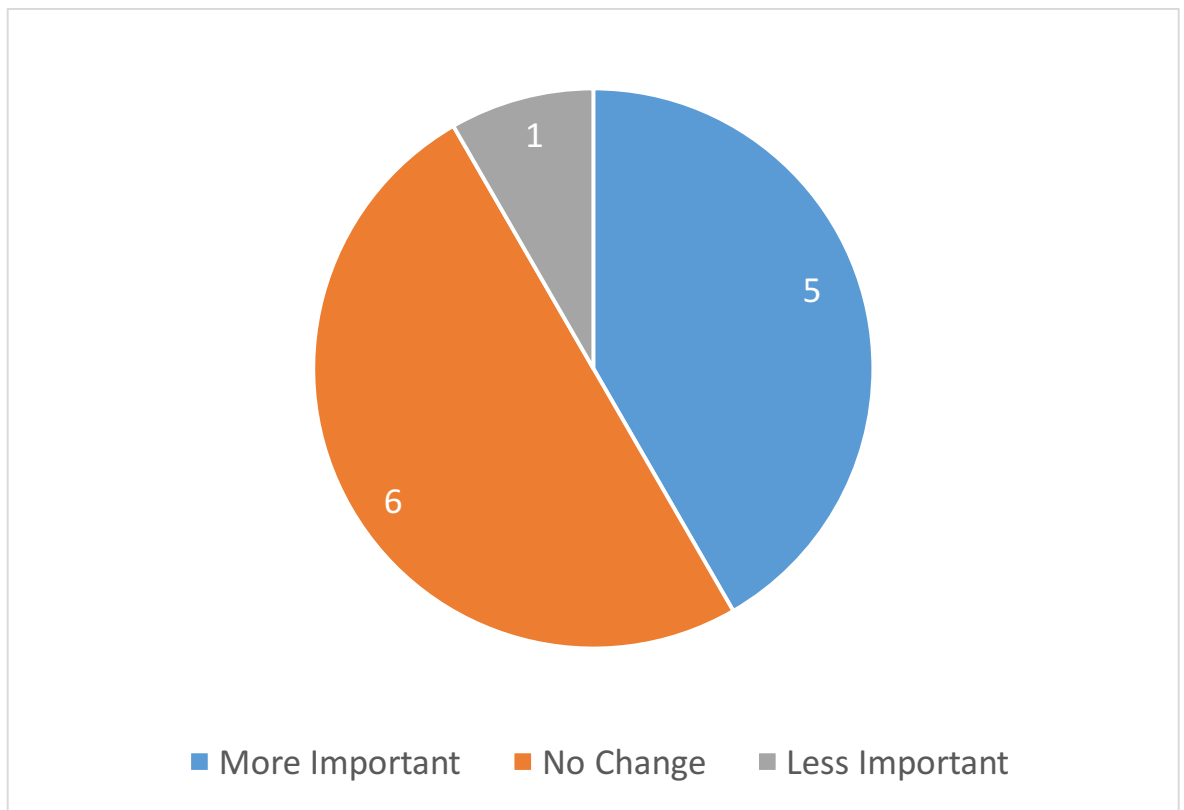
The fifth question asked students whether or not they believed that their self-reflection skills had improved compared with before doing the project. Nine students reported that they believed that their self-reflection skills had improved compared with before the unit. Two students reported that there was no change in their self-reflection abilities, although both of these students reported that they already believed that they were skilled at self-reflection and were proficient beforehand. The one student who reported that she felt that she was worse at self-reflection compared with before the unit explained that she now realized that self-reflection was much harder than she thought that it was and that it she felt low confidence in being able to pick the correct incident to write about and how to write a high-quality response. This is a success, because a goal of this research was to increase students' self-reflection skills and two thirds of the students reported an increase in their abilities to do self-reflection. This result does not correlate with the researchers' evaluation of the student reflection journals on the five-point reflection scale, but shows that students

at least personally felt that their ability to do self-reflection had improved even if this improvement could not be observed in the data from their reflection journals.



**Figure 3.4: Students' Reported Changes in Reflection Skills Compared with Before Completing Self-Reflection Unit**

Students were also asked whether or not they believed that self-reflection was more important, or just as important as they thought it was before the beginning of the self-reflection assignment. While five students reported that they believed that self-reflection was more important to them than they had thought it was, six students reported that there was no change in how important they thought that self-reflection was and one student who reported that they thought that self-reflection was less important than before. Of the students who said that self-reflection was just as important as it was before, one said that he now reflected on the past and not just on his plans for the future, one said that they had disliked doing self-reflection before starting the unit and still disliked doing it, and four said that they had already been doing some self-reflection before the unit and the activities had not changed their mind about its importance. The one student who reported feeling that self-reflection was less important than before said that she thought it was more important to learn new grammar than to do self-reflection and might have felt that the time spent on this unit could have been better spent learning and practicing new grammar concepts. Overall the unit was not successful in promoting the importance of self-reflection as a life-long learning skill but did not at least appear to make the students dislike self-reflection any more than they already had.



**Figure 3.5: Students' Change in Belief Regarding Importance of Self-Reflection Compared with Before Completing Unit**

The final question asked students what they would remember the most from doing the self-reflection unit. Responses varied significantly, but the two most frequent were that they would remember personally significant events that happened during the unit and that they had procrastinated before completing the assignment. Each of these responses were given by two students. Responses were grouped into internal factors (coded as **IN**) and external factors (coded as **EX**). Responses were nearly evenly divided between 7 which mostly had to do with internal factors such as how they felt while doing the unit or they had improved themselves during the unit in some way, and 5 which mostly had to do with external factors such as events that had happened or the things that they had written about.

**Table 3.10: Students' Responses to Which Aspect of the Self-Reflection Unit They Would Remember the Most**

Summarized Student Response	Frequency of Response
Would remember writing about a hobby or personal interest <b>EX</b>	1
Would remember how self-reflection felt healthy <b>IN</b>	1
Would remember personally significant events that they wrote about <b>EX</b>	2
Would remember scheduling time for self-reflection <b>IN</b>	1
Would remember working hard on the project <b>IN</b>	1
Would remember that self-reflection improved memory <b>IN</b>	1
Would remember that they procrastinated before completing assignments <b>IN</b>	2

Would remember trying to do memorable activities to write about <b>EX</b>	1
Would remember that there were positive things to write about <b>EX</b>	1
Would remember general experience of going through process <b>IN</b>	1
Would remember that it was difficult to remember small details <b>IN</b>	1

Overall the researcher can conclude from the student's responses that although the self-reflection unit seemed to be generally useful for them, significant changes should be made to the curriculum to make it more effective. The most significant change should be spending more time during the class developing the students' self-reflection skills during guided practice. The researcher spent too much time throughout the unit focusing on teaching the grammar topics of third and mixed conditional phrases and neglected to focus on how to perform quality self-reflection using the Bain et al. (1999) scale. This also might have led to some students reporting low confidence in their self-reflection skills. Another major change that the researcher would make is collecting the research journals more frequently to check them for grammar mistakes and quality of reflection. Since the journals were only collected at the end of the unit, the researcher was unable to give constant feedback to the students and the students were unsure of whether their usage of grammar was correct. One of the reasons why the journals were only collected at the end of the unit were due to the frequency of the entries that students were required to write. That is why the researcher would also modify the unit to require less entries per week, possibly over a longer period of time so that students would also feel less pressure to think of something interesting to write about as many reported having a difficult time generating ideas.

### 3.2.3 Unit Grammar Test

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the students were required to take a short grammar test that assessed their competence in using conditional phrases. As can be seen in the year-long unit plan in the first chapter, the usage of other types of conditional phrases had been taught to the students previously in the year. During the self-reflection unit, students also practiced the usage of conditional phrases in different activities during class as well as homework assignments that were done at home. The researcher was required by the research location to test the students at the end of each grammar unit using a traditional test format. The researcher designed a test very similar to other grammar and vocabulary tests that had been taken by the students throughout the previous year and a half.

The test included four sections. In the first section students were asked to take current situations and write how things could be different if something else had happened, requiring competence in mixed conditional phrases. Each question in this section was worth one point, with half-points deducted for incorrect grammar not related to conditional phrases but to other concepts that had already been taught (such as singular and plural) Half-points were also deducted if one part of the conditional phrase was correct but the other was incorrect. The second section required students to listen to five sentences that the researcher spoke out loud and to write down the sentences verbatim if they had no grammar errors or to write the sentences with corrections if there were errors. Each question in this section was worth again one point, with half-points deducted for incorrect grammar not related to conditional phrases. The third section was a cloze activity in which students had to fill in the blank spaces with the correct form of a verb in parenthesis, testing their knowledge of first, second, third, and mixed conditional phrase usage. Each question was worth one point. The final section was a different cloze activity which required students to rephrase a sentence using different conditional forms than in the original sentence. Each question was worth one point. Overall the test was worth 25 points which was then converted into a grade on the ten-point scale and recorded into the E-klase system as an assignment grade. The individual results of the test can be seen in Table 3.11 below.

Table 3.11: Individual Results of Unit Grammar Test

Nr.	Uzvārds, vārds	1	Kopā	Izpilde	Vērt.	Varianta nr., plezīmes
		25	25			
4.	[Redacted]	7,5	7,5	30%	3	
7.	[Redacted]	21	21	84%	8	
14.	[Redacted]	11	11	44%	4	
17.	[Redacted]	15	15	60%	6	
19.	[Redacted]					
20.	[Redacted]	24	24	96%	10	
21.	[Redacted]	11	11	44%	4	
22.	[Redacted]	13,5	13,5	54%	5	
23.	[Redacted]	13,5	13,5	54%	5	
24.	[Redacted]	18	18	72%	7	
25.	[Redacted]	16,5	16,5	66%	7	
26.	[Redacted]	3,5	3,5	14%	1	
27.	[Redacted]	19,5	19,5	78%	8	
28.	[Redacted]	15,5	15,5	62%	6	
Vidēji klasē:		14,58	14,58	58,31%	5,69	
Izpildes koeficienti klasē:		0,58	0,58			

The mean grade for the class was 5.69, which rounds up to a grade of “6”. The E-klase system further categorizes the results as “augsts” (9-10), “optimāls” (6-8), “pietiekams” (4-5), and “nepietiekams” (1-3). The grades broken into these categories can be seen in Figure 3.6 below.

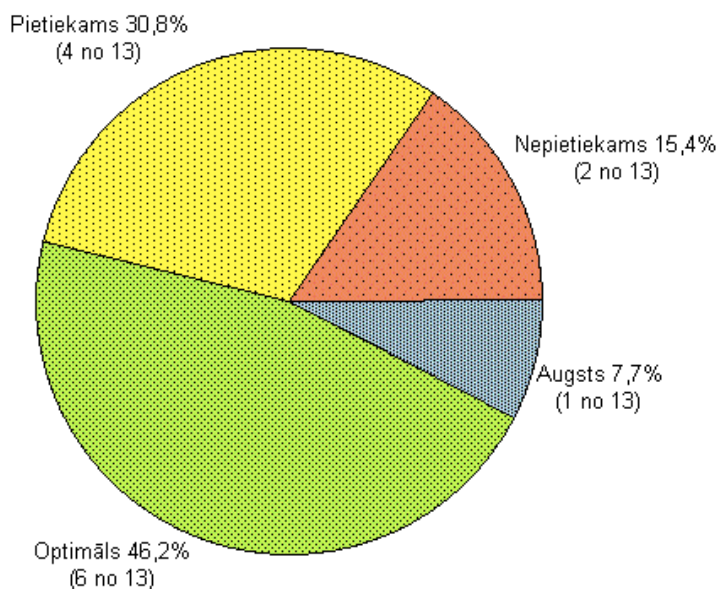


Figure 3.6: Breakdown of Students' Results in Unit Grammar Quiz.

While more than half of the class scored at least “optimāls”, the researcher was disappointed that four students scored “pietiekams” and three students scored “nepietiekams”, almost half of the class altogether. This would indicate that knowledge of the usage of conditional phrases was still fairly inconsistent among the students who took part in the unit. This might indicate that more work should have been done practicing these conditional phrases outside of the self-reflection journal project, or that the researcher should have checked the journal entries more frequently to see that common mistakes were being made and help the students with the mistakes before they became internalized and were made on the final grammar quiz.

The following samples of student work on the unit grammar test were chosen to show the range of results that students’ results on the assessment. The first sample had only one point deducted and received a grade of “10”, while the second sample had seven points deducted and received a grade of “7”, and the final sample had fourteen points deducted and received a grade of “4”.

$\frac{24}{25} = \frac{96}{100} = 100\%$  😊

Unit V Test: Conditionals

Name: [REDACTED] Date: 21.03.2016.

Section I: Please explain how things could be different (now) if something else had happened (before).

- Steve ate too much food and now he feels sick.  
If Steve hadn't eaten too much food he wouldn't feel sick now.
- Ashley didn't work hard in math class all semester and now he is failing.  
If Ashley ~~worked hard~~ had worked hard in math class all semester he would not be failing now.
- Doug won the lottery and now he reads comic books all day.  
If Doug hadn't won the lottery he would not be reading comic books all day.
- Joel told an offensive joke and now everyone is mad at him.  
If Joel hadn't told an offensive joke everyone would not be mad at him.
- Sarah went to college and now she is working at a very good company.  
If Sarah wouldn't be working at a very good company if she hadn't gone to college.
- Mr. Sullivan didn't teach his students about the third conditional and now they are confused.  
If Mr. Sullivan <sup>had</sup> taught his students about the third conditional they would not be confused.
- Rick told me how he's feeling and now I understand.  
If Rick hadn't told me how he's feeling I would not understand.
- Obi-Wan trained Anakin and now he is a dark lord of evil.  
If Obi-Wan hadn't trained Anakin he would not be the dark lord of evil.
- The cat got lost and now he is stuck in a balloon.  
If the cat hadn't got lost he would not be stuck in a balloon.
- The other reindeer made fun of Rudolph's nose, and now he is crying.  
ok If the other reindeer hadn't made fun of Rudolph's nose he would not be crying.

31 = 20 = 20

**Section II: Write down the sentences as you hear them if they are correct or fix them if they are incorrect.**

1. If I didn't <sup>eat</sup> ~~eat~~ pizza, I would feel fine now.
2. If you ~~will~~ study you will succeed.
3. If he hadn't stayed up all night he wouldn't be ~~late~~ <sup>late</sup>.
4. If I had a million dollars I would ~~buy~~ <sup>buy</sup> you a house.
5. If you steal money you will go to jail.

**Section III: Complete the sentences with the correct form of the verbs in parenthesis**

1. If you slept (sleep) more often, you wouldn't get so stressed all of the time.
2. Dinamo Riga won't win a championship unless they work (work) harder.
3. He wouldn't have fired Bob if Bob hadn't stolen (not steal) money from the register.
4. We would be hungry right now if we hadn't eaten (not eat) breakfast before leaving home.
5. You wouldn't owe (not owe) me any money right now if you hadn't borrowed \$5 from me yesterday.

**Section IV: Complete the second sentence so that it means the same as the first.**

1. I'll lend you some money if you pay me back tomorrow.  
Provided you pay me back tomorrow, I'll lend you some money.
2. If you had called me, I would have answered your question.  
Had you called me, I would have answered your question.
3. What would you do if you lost your job?  
Supposing you lost your job, what would you do?
4. Even if they don't like it, I'm giving my students a test today.  
Whether or not they like it, I'm giving my students a test today.
5. They told their children they could watch the movie if they weren't too noisy.  
As long as they weren't too noisy, they said that the children could watch the movie.

*"whether they like it or not" is more common but he now you wrote it is technically correct*

The above sample made only one minor mistake in which they used two “wills” in the same second conditional phrase, a common mistake among EFL students. The test was otherwise grammatically flawless and received a grade of “10.”

18/25 = 72/100 = 72%

Unit V Test: Conditionals

Name: [REDACTED] Date: 24.03.2016.

**Section I: Please explain how things could be different (now) if something else had happened (before).**

1. Steve ate too much food and now he feels sick.  
1/2 If Steve hadn't eaten too much food, he wouldn't feel sick.
2. Ashley didn't work hard in math class all semester and now he is failing.  
If Ashley had worked harder, she wouldn't be failing now.
3. Doug won the lottery and now he reads comic books all day.  
If Doug hadn't won the lottery, he wouldn't read comic books all day.
4. Joel told an offensive joke and now everyone is mad at him.  
If Joel hadn't told an offensive joke, nobody would have <sup>be</sup> got mad at him.
5. Sarah went to college and now she is working at a very good company.  
1/2 If Sarah hadn't ~~gone~~ <sup>gone</sup> to college, she ~~wouldn't~~ <sup>wouldn't</sup> be working in a good company.
6. Mr. Sullivan didn't teach his students about the third conditional and now they are confused.  
1/2 If Mr. Sullivan had ~~taught~~ <sup>taught</sup> 3rd conditional, students wouldn't be confused.
7. Rick told me how he's feeling and now I understand.  
If Rick hadn't told me how he's feeling, I wouldn't understand.
8. Obi-Wan trained Anakin and now he is a dark lord of evil.  
If Obi-Wan hadn't trained Anakin, he ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> now wouldn't be a dark lord of evil.
9. The cat got lost and now he is stuck in a balloon.  
If ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> cat hadn't got lost, he wouldn't be stuck in a balloon.
10. The other reindeer made fun of Rudolph's nose, and now he is crying.  
If reindeer hadn't made fun of Rudolph, he wouldn't be crying now.

15

**Section II: Write down the sentences as you hear them if they are correct or fix them if they are incorrect.**

1. If I didn't ~~eat~~ <sup>eat</sup> pizza, I would feel fine now.
2. If you ~~hadn't~~ <sup>study</sup> study, you ~~wouldn't~~ <sup>would</sup> succeed.
3. If he hadn't stayed up all night, he wouldn't have been late.
4. If I had a million dollars, I would ~~buy~~ <sup>buy</sup> a house.
5. If you steal money, you'll go to jail.

**Section III: Complete the sentences with the correct form of the verbs in parenthesis**

1. If you ~~did~~ <sup>sleep</sup> (sleep) more often, you wouldn't get so stressed all of the time.
2. Dinamo Riga won't win a championship unless they ~~start~~ <sup>work</sup> (work) harder.
3. He wouldn't have fired Bob if Bob ~~hadn't~~ <sup>steal</sup> (not steal) money from the register.
4. We would be hungry right now if we ~~hadn't~~ <sup>eat</sup> (not eat) breakfast before leaving home.
5. You ~~wouldn't~~ <sup>owe</sup> (not owe) me any money right now if you hadn't borrowed \$5 from me yesterday.

**Section IV: Complete the second sentence so that it means the same as the first.**

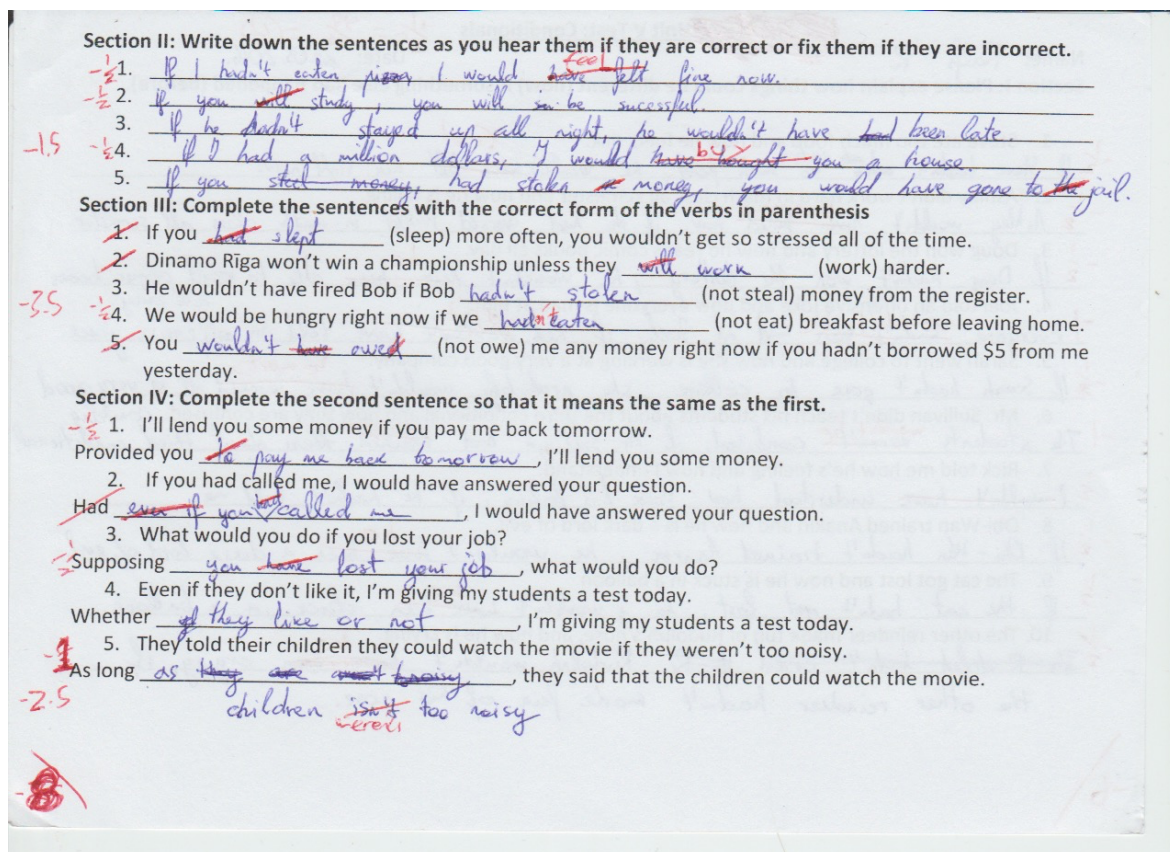
1. I'll lend you some money if you pay me back tomorrow.  
Provided you pay me back tomorrow, I'll lend you some money.
2. If you had called me, I would have answered your question.  
Had you called me, I would have answered your question.
3. What would you do if you lost your job?  
Supposing you lost your job, what would you do?
4. Even if they don't like it, I'm giving my students a test today.  
Whether they like it or not, I'm giving my students a test today.
5. They told their children they could watch the movie if they weren't too noisy.  
As long as they were quiet, they said that the children could watch the movie.

The above sample made only minor mistakes throughout the test, showing a generally strong command of the usage of conditional phrases.

Name: R Unit V Test: Conditionals  $\frac{1}{2} = \frac{94}{100} = 94\%$  Date: 24.03.2016

**Section I: Please explain how things could be different (now) if something else had happened (before).**

1. Steve ate too much food and now he feels sick. feel
2. If Steve hadn't ~~eat~~ <sup>ate</sup> so much food, he ~~wouldn't have felt~~ <sup>wouldn't have felt</sup> sick right now.
3. Ashley didn't work hard in math class all semester and now he is failing. be failing
4. Ashley ~~wouldn't have failed~~ <sup>be failing</sup> now, if she had worked harder in math class all semester.
5. Doug won the lottery and now he reads comic books all day. be
6. Doug ~~wouldn't have been able to read comic books~~ <sup>be</sup> all day, if he hadn't won the lottery.
7. Joel told an offensive joke and now everyone is mad at him. be mad
8. Everyone ~~wouldn't be mad~~ <sup>wouldn't be mad</sup> at Joel, if he ~~wouldn't have told~~ <sup>hadn't told</sup> an offensive joke.
9. Sarah went to college and now she is working at a very good company. be working
10. Sarah ~~wouldn't have worked at a very good~~ <sup>be working</sup> company, if she hadn't gone to college.
11. Mr. Sullivan didn't teach his students about the third conditional and now they are confused. be confused
12. The students ~~wouldn't be confused~~ <sup>wouldn't be confused</sup>, if Mr. Sullivan had ~~taught~~ <sup>taught</sup> them about third conditional.
13. Rick told me how he's feeling and now I understand. be
14. I ~~wouldn't have understood~~ <sup>wouldn't have understood</sup> how Rick is feeling, if he hadn't told me.
15. Obi-Wan trained Anakin and now he is a dark lord of evil. be
16. Obi-Wan ~~wouldn't have been~~ <sup>be</sup> a dark lord of evil, if he hadn't trained Anakin.
17. The cat got lost and now he is stuck in a balloon. be
18. The cat ~~wouldn't have been stuck in a balloon~~ <sup>wouldn't have been stuck in a balloon</sup>.
19. The other reindeer made fun of Rudolph's nose, and now he is crying. be
20. The other reindeer ~~wouldn't have been crying~~ <sup>wouldn't have been crying</sup>, if Rudolph hadn't made fun of his nose.



The above sample made a critical mistake in the first section in which they used the third conditional form in every case when the mixed conditional form should have been used, leading to numerous half-points being deducted from responses to questions in that section. The student made many other errors in other sections of the quiz, leading the researcher to believe that the student needed more practice with conditional phrases before continuing to a different grammar topic. The student eventually retook the test and received a slightly better grade of “5,” but still had many fundamental problems in the usage of conditional phrases even though the student generally does well with grammar on other tests.

### 3.2.4 Student Group Interview

In order to gain more qualitative data regarding students' experiences during the self-reflection unit, the researcher conducted a semi-structured group interview of seven students from the research sample who took part in the self-reflection unit, six of which stayed throughout the duration of the group session. Students were chosen on a volunteer basis, and the group interview took place after classes had ended on a Monday afternoon in which school was in session. The interview took place in the classroom which had been used throughout the year by the researcher to teach the students who were part of the research sample. Questions were developed and piloted ahead of time, but the goal of the group interview to allow spontaneous discussion between different participants. All of the participants were Grade 11 students who had participated in the critical incident analysis unit, and there was a gender mix of four male participants and three female participants that generally reflected the composition of the class (although the true ratio is seven males and seven females, 50-50). The following questions were asked of the seven participants:

1. How often do you spend time reflecting on yourself?
2. How often do you reflect upon yourself while at school?
3. How much do you feel that you are being taught to do self-reflection in your classes?
4. What other general skills do your classes at school focus on besides self-reflection?
5. If you were the principal, how much of a priority would you make teaching self-reflection skills to students?
6. What could the school do to better teach self-reflection skills?
7. What is one thing you felt about writing the reflection journals?
8. How did you feel doing the partner work in class?
9. Would you recommend this self-reflection unit to be used for other English classes? If so, would you make any changes?
10. Do you have any final things to say about the project or self-reflection in general?

In all the group interview lasted for thirty-seven minutes. Participant #7 had to leave after the first question, but the other participants stayed all through the session's duration. Participants #4 and 5 didn't speak quite as much as the other participants on a regular basis, but everyone seemed mostly comfortable and gave useful, well thought-out answers.

In answering the first question, six of the seven participants agreed that teenage students do not spend a large amount of time reflecting on themselves. The reason most participants gave for why this is ranged from students at this age being too caught up in the moment with what they are currently doing to think about even the recent past. One participant argued that posting images and statuses to social media is actually a form of social media that students do without even realizing it or meaning to, and all of the other participants agreed with this idea. Another participant recalled keeping a diary when they were younger but said that they no longer felt the need to do so due to the ability to look back on what had happened previously to oneself on platforms such as Facebook, twitter, and Instagram. The researcher was unable to find any research that could confirm or deny the potential trend of social media replacing the traditional usage of diaries or journals, but this could be a potentially fruitful topic for sociologists or psychologists to study in the future. The responses that participants gave to the first question slightly conflict with the answers given to the questionnaire, where nine out of sixteen respondents reported spending free time reflecting upon their past experiences at least once per week. This could, however, mean that respondents did not consider reflecting once per week “often”, as only three of the respondents reported spending free time reflecting on their past experiences at least once a day.

In answering the second question, the general consensus was that high school students did not spend a lot of time in school doing any kind of self-reflection. The first four participants all agreed that students their age did not spend much time doing self-reflection in school, with one participant offering the idea that teachers probably did a lot more self-reflection than students did. The fifth participant reminded the others that at the end of every year there was a “gada klase” in which students had to spend time reflecting on everything that they had done and that had happened to them during the year, in which all students agreed that this class did take place and was a form of self-reflection. Interestingly, none of the students mentioned the “creative thinking class” referenced by the English teacher interviewed in Chapter 1. Although all of these participants took the course as part of their class program in the previous year, it is possible that it did not make a significant enough impact on them to be remembered at this time or that students did not consider what they did during the class as a form of self-reflection. These responses again do not correlate well with the answers to the questionnaire, as ten of eighteen respondents reported spending at least once a week reflecting on their learning, seven reported doing so on past experiences, and twelve as regards to future plans.

The third question followed up on the second question by asking the participants whether or not they felt that self-reflection was something that was focused on by the school in general. Four of the participants claimed that they did not believe that this was a topic that the school focused on, and two of the participants chose not to give an opinion on this matter at all. Two of the participants considered homework to be some sort of form of reflection since students needed to reflect on their knowledge learned in class to be able to do the tasks correctly, one of the participants said that teachers did not generally assign any assignments that required reflection, and one said that lessons were focused on learning new things and not what had already been learned in the past. The previous questionnaire did not ask about the type of reflection that occurred during school or how it happened, so it was important to learn that at least these students did not consider there to be a culture of reflective learning at the school.

In answering the fourth question, participants were able to explain to the researcher what aspects of their development, if not self-reflection, were most focused on by the school. Two of the participants answered that they were taught how to learn and think for themselves, such as their math class where they first are told to try to read through and figure out how to use different math formulas for themselves before asking the teacher for help. Three participants believed that the school was most focused on rote learning and memorization, and the most important skills that they were developing were those of memory recall. They said that since different students generally had different learning styles, that they were taught how to memorize things in different ways that could be helpful for them. One student said that school taught them how to become more creative, because since they had so many classes and other obligations they had to learn how to be creative about managing their time and finding ways to get everything done. Other students did not particularly agree with this idea, saying that outside of the creation of their student businesses which was an obligatory part of their class curriculum that there were not many opportunities to do creative things.

In answering the fifth question, students generally were not in favor of making hypothetical changes to the curriculum or culture of the school in order to better promote self-reflection. One of the participants said they would not make changes to have a greater focus on self-reflection because he thought that it was already a part of the learning process for those people who enjoyed self-reflection and did it frequently. Another participant said that there was simply not enough time for students busy with many other activities to do self-reflection for it to be any sort of priority. A third participant argued that if self-reflection was made to be obligatory that students would only do it to receive credit and

not do any meaningful learning, which a different student agreed with and added that even students who already liked doing self-reflection might start disliking it just because was part of the class requirements. Two participants did not give any opinion on the matter one way or another, and one participant argued that if reflection was to be made a greater focus of the school it should be mandatory at least at the beginning to introduce the general concepts and show people how to do it. After hearing this, at least one other student agreed that the reflection task became more enjoyable as time went on even though it was mandatory.

The sixth question required students to think about if self-reflection was going to become a bigger part of the school's curriculum or culture, which class or classes it should be worked into. Three of the participants said that it could be worked into every lesson, perhaps as a prompt at the end asking about what they had done. One student said that it could become a part of the commercial science class in which they planned and developed their student businesses and that after self-reflection they could use their experiences to help mentor other less experienced students in their businesses. Two of the students finally referenced the creative thinking class that they had taken the year before, saying that it would be the perfect class for self-reflection. This gave the impression that self-reflection was not currently a normal, integral part of that class.

To answer the seventh question students each used one word to describe how the project had made them feel. One student chose the word "useful", a word that everyone else agreed with, although he added the additional qualifier that it would not be a good idea to have it done every single day and for it to be obligatory. Another student used the word "motivational", as she said that she had wanted to try journal writing before but had never found the motivation to just sit down and actually do it and also found that it was much easier than they had thought it would be. Another student agreed that it was motivational but for a different reason, because he found that he needed to make changes to his life in terms of time management and goal-setting that he had not realized previously. A different student said that it felt boring and like a drag. Three other students reported that they had felt this way at least at the very beginning, although they said that as time went on and they did more reflections that they began to enjoy it more. Another participant said that it felt intimidating at first due to the number of questions that needed to be answered and the frequency with which they had to be answered, a description that no other students at least vocally agreed with. The next participant said that the project made them feel like an individual and independent because they were reflecting on things that they had done and that they were learning from their experiences. The final two participants both said that the

unit had made them feel emotional, a description that the rest of the participants agreed with. They explained that looking back on what they had done on previous days made them relive the positive or negative things that had happened and feel those emotions once again, the final participant adding that he felt uplifted and happy as a result.

The penultimate question regarded the in-class partner-based discussion aspect of the unit which was not covered by the students' final written reflection assignments. All participants reported this being a positive experience even if it was a bit uncomfortable for them at first talking to classmates about their personal experiences. Two of the participants specifically pointed out that they had enjoyed getting to know classmates on a deeper level and that they all learned a lot about each other, a sentiment that all participants seemed to agree with. This was a pleasant surprise to the researcher, because although this was not one of the goals of that activity or the unit in general, students were able to use this discussion-based self-reflection activity as a positive way to create deeper interpersonal connections. Two students also said that they enjoyed the discussion aspect because it brought life to the lesson, and that although it had been interesting to write about their experiences that it was a lot more interesting to share with others and it kept students accountable to actually complete the homework on time since they knew that they would have to share with another person the next day.

The final question gathered feedback regarding whether participants would recommend this unit to be taught again to other English students, and if so what they might change or modify about it. All participants endorsed the unit to be taught again to different students, with reasons such as the unit having helped to improve their skills in using conditional phrases and learning new things about themselves. The most common modification that was proposed was reducing the amount of times that the reflections had to be written, most commonly to once per week. Even students who reported that they didn't generally like to do self-reflection said that they found it useful and that other students could find it useful as well.

Overall the group interview provided useful feedback for the development of critical incident analysis as a technique to improve high school EFL students' self-reflection skills and competence in the usage of conditional phrases. Although the interview showed that while there were flaws in the design and execution of the unit, the students had had a generally positive experience and that it was worth continuing to improve and develop as EFL curriculum.

## 4. Dissemination of Professional Experience

### 4.1 Theoretical and Practical Background

According to the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development, or OECD (2009), professional development is an ongoing process that involves training, practice, and feedback. No pre-service teacher training program could possibly be adequate in preparing teachers for all challenges and difficulties that they might face throughout their professional career, especially since new developments in education research are constantly being made. The OECD identified six objectives for teachers' professional development:

- *To update individuals' knowledge of a subject in light of recent advances in the area;*
- *To update individuals' skills, attitudes and approaches in light of the development of new teaching techniques and objectives, new circumstances and educational research;*
- *To enable individuals to apply changes made to curricula or other aspects of teaching practice;*
- *To enable schools to develop and apply new strategies concerning the curriculum and other aspects of teaching practice;*
- *To exchange information and expertise among teachers and others, e.g. academics, industrialists; and*
- *To help weaker teachers become more effective (OECD 2009: 49).*

A teacher's professional development program should fulfill at least one of the aforementioned objectives, although a truly effective program would fulfil a majority of the objectives.

Harmsworth and Turpin (2001) define professional dissemination as the “delivering and receiving of a message”, “the engagement of an individual in a process” and “the transfer of a process or product” (Harmsworth and Turpin 2001). They also identified three levels of professional dissemination. The first level, **dissemination for awareness**, helps audiences to be generally aware of a researcher's work and help create “word of mouth” that can help to build a professional identity within the research community (Harmsworth and Turpin 2001: 3). The second level, **dissemination for understanding**, targets specific groups whom the researcher believes that can directly benefit from the findings of the research and will require that such audiences have a deeper understanding of the work that was done (Harmsworth and Turpin 2001: 3). The third level, **dissemination for action**, targets groups with influence and specific skills that can help create a change of practice based on the results of the research (Harmsworth and Turpin 2001: 3).

Since the current research did not result in a critical incident analysis curriculum that the researcher would not yet feel comfortable recommending to practitioners as a wide-spread method for improving students' self-reflection skills, the researcher has so far only conducted dissemination for awareness. This dissemination took place at three different conferences that took place at the University of Latvia's Faculty of Education that were attended by teacher trainers, currently practicing teachers, and pre-service education students.

## **4.2 Evidence and Self-Evaluation**

The researcher has taken part in the University of Latvia's master's of education program over the past two years in order to further his professional development. The program updates individuals' knowledge of their subject and skills and attitudes in light of new developments, as it requires performing research using current literature on best practices and other developments. It enables individuals to apply changes to their curricula by requiring them to take part in an on-site practice and apply what they have learned to their lessons. It enables schools to develop and apply new curriculum strategies by preparing teachers with cutting-edge knowledge of current research trends and encouraging them as part of their practice to observe and interact with a school's administration. It exchanges information and expertise among teachers and other experts through organizing conferences in which student research is presented and peer-evaluated. It also helps weaker teachers become more effective by pairing students of the program together with one another in various projects and as accountability partners to ensure that students of the program do not get lost or fall behind and improve as practitioners. Therefore, the University of Latvia's master's of education program fulfills all of the objectives outlined by the OECD (2009:49) for teachers' professional development.

### **4.2.1 The Evaluation of Professional Identity**

In order to demonstrate the researcher's professional development regarding self-reflection, the following evidence has been chosen as an example of critical self-reflection. The assignment was completed to satisfy the requirements of the course "Educator's Professional Identity and Pedagogic Mastery" as part of the researcher's master degree courses. The assignment required the researcher to describe his professional history and development as a teaching practitioner, and analyzes events throughout the researcher's professional history that could be considered examples of critical incidents.

*“Look, do you see the school bus? Look at it! Look! Do you see the school bus? Do you see it? Do you see it?”*

My poor parents. From the second I could start talking, all they could hear about was school. Mostly me pointing out the dozens of school busses that would pass by our house on a daily basis or begging them to let me go to school. Once this persisted long enough for them to conclude that this wasn't just a phase or a temporary obsession, they made the somewhat unusual decision to send 2 ½ year old Joey Horgan to pre-school. No, not daycare where I might merely play with toys and color with other toddlers all day; I was going to be taught things by teachers. Though my memory does not go back far enough to remember, I imagine that I must have been more excited than I ever had been for my very first day of “school”.

Three mornings a week, my mom or dad would drive me 30 minutes and three towns away to Stepping Stones pre-school where I would spend half of the day learning about the alphabet, shapes, colors, and other useful things for two to five-year-olds to know. Unlike my younger sister who would later erupt in tears nearly half of the times that she was left at that same pre-school, my parents would have to pry me away from my favorite place to be. I would often cry when they tried to take me home, holding onto the swings on the playground and needing to be promised lunch at McDonalds to get in the car and leave. This, coupled with the fact that once I got home I would often arrange my toys (and sister) as “students” and would teach them what I had learned, was the earliest evidence that a career in teaching might be in my future.

Upon reaching the age in which I could finally go to “real” school on an actual school bus, my love for formal education had not faded. I would often ask for extra homework assignments all the way up until Grade 4 when we had our first truly challenging teacher. Ms. D. had just finished a five-year career teaching English to high school students and had decided to try something different. Unfortunately for us, she had not quite adapted to her new role as an elementary school teacher and gave us an overly challenging workload in which for each assignment every night we would not only have to copy the instructions of each assignment before actually doing it, but do so in cursive. This led to many parents having to openly “heavily help” their children with the various assignments, often complaining about what they saw as unfair burden on their students (and themselves). Although the next year she learned her lesson and adapted her curriculum to a more manageable level for Grade 4 students, I found that the work was usually doable albeit difficult. Looking back, this experience helped shape my pedagogical philosophy that an overly difficult workload is not beneficial to students and can be counteractive to the

teaching process, but also that it is better to give work that is slightly too difficult rather than too easy as teachers often underestimate their students' abilities to do challenging work.

Up until Grade 9, I was convinced that I wanted to be a civil engineer who helped to design bridges and other elaborate public infrastructure projects; that is, until I had the moment of clarity in which I realized that I was not gifted in any way shape or form at mathematics. Although I loved solving math problems and enjoyed the classes I had quite much, I was always prone to making simple mistakes in some part of the problem-solving procedures that would result in wildly incorrect answers. Getting only partial credit on a math test is one thing, while making small errors in the calculations for a bridge that might carry thousands of people each day is quite another. From then on when adults asked me what I was thinking of doing once I graduated from school, I would answer “something to do with English or history”. I didn't want to admit it yet since the field of education has a bit of a negative stigma in the United States, but I was already almost certain that “something” meant “teaching”.

When I later used to introduce myself as a history teacher, I quite often got told by the person who I was meeting for the first time that they hated history. Nearly 100% of the time I was able to correctly predict that the reason why they disliked the subject so much was because they had bad and boring history teachers. I have always understood the impact that a teacher of a subject can have on students' appreciation of that field, and I was fortunately blessed with seven straight years from Grade 6 to Grade 12 of history teachers who ranged from extremely competent instructors to inspirational, legendary figures in my life. I learned almost everything I currently know about writing essays from my Grade 10 history teacher Mr. S., and my Grade 11 teacher Ms. W. taught me more about critical historical thought than almost any professor I had in college. Nearly any of the history teachers I had in middle and high school would have been more than capable of teaching at the university level if they had wanted to, and there is no doubt in my mind that they are the collective reason why I was enthusiastic about joining their profession.

In the field of English, I was very lucky to be a member of Mrs. P.'s class in Grade 8. I will never forget how she took us through all steps of the writing process throughout the year, starting by showing us how to write proper paragraphs in the first semester all the way to multiple types of five-paragraph essays in the second half. What has stuck with me the most is how she used to stay every single day after school for as long as it took to meet with every single student who had a question or wanted her to look at their writing, acting almost as a private writing tutor for 80 different students. I have tried to emulate her methods for teaching writing skills to my own students as much as I possibly can, although I will never

know how she had the stamina to do so with far more students than I currently have at nearly three times my current age. I was equally lucky to have Ms. S. the next year whose enthusiasm and passion for the subject helped build my interest in poetry and literature. She and Mrs. P. were the only teachers who I remember ever teaching any sort of grammar whatsoever, and thanks to them I am able to more or less explain to my students when to use commas and when not to (something that most native English speakers do not even completely understand). After Grade 9, however, my interest in English began to evaporate. In Grade 10 and 12 I had Mr. M. who initially I loved as he spent large amounts of time in class telling us stories from his high school and college years, including ones that might not be deemed appropriate by the principal. The older I got, however, the more I realized that he seemed to be trying overly hard to be liked by all of his students. He would never give final grades lower than 80% (I never turned in a final paper to my Grade 12 class and still received a 90%), and although I appreciate how he gave us very challenging and interesting English readings that did not come from textbooks, I promised to myself that I would never become the kind of teacher that he was. Equally disheartening to me was my Grade 11 English teacher Mrs. B. who always gave us the impression that she highly disliked her job and wished that she was a professor at a small liberal arts college, not a high school English teacher for a bunch of badly behaved, privileged white kids like my friends and I. We often clashed, and by the end of high school I had decided that I would never become an English teacher or formally study English ever again.

With the end of high school quickly approaching, I had to pick the six to eight colleges that I would apply to for admission. I chose a mix of schools that had programs in history teaching and video editing, as those were the two subjects which I was torn between studying at college. My top choice, Boston University, had very high-quality study programs in both fields, and I had hoped that I could take classes in both and then decide in which I wanted to focus my efforts in the second or third year. Although I was accepted, I was not granted any significant scholarship money and instead chose what would become my alma mater, Emmanuel College, which I attended for free aside from expensive on-campus housing. As Emmanuel had no serious study program for film production, I focused my efforts on history and education as well as managing the college's online radio station during my last three years on campus.

I was once again lucky to have more fantastic history instructors, especially the extremely charismatic and somewhat intimidating Professor R. who taught me Chinese history and was in charge of the honor's program that I was a member of. She introduced me to the Fulbright program in my first year of studies, and although she was forced out of

her job due to a dispute with the administration she inspired me to always be enthusiastic and unpredictable in my own history lessons and continued to help me prepare for applying for a Fulbright ETA grant even after she left. I first started thinking about the Baltic states thanks to Professor M., our brilliant yet chronically disorganized professor of Soviet history who we had in our third year of studies. An assignment in the class in which we had to do original research on an aspect of the Soviet Union led me to meeting my very first ex-Soviet citizens who lived throughout Boston as I interviewed them about civil defense. I like to think that I have taken elements from the teaching styles of each of the talented history professors I had during my time at Emmanuel with the exception of Professor K., our boring and monotonous United States history professor who helped me to understand why so many people dislike the subject.

While I very much liked all of the education professors who I studied with throughout my time at Emmanuel, I was always a bit frustrated by the study program. The courses were extremely easy, and it seemed like we would often repeat the same few concepts over and over again without gaining enough practical knowledge that would actually be helpful in the classroom. Much of the advice that we were given regarding classroom management did not seem like it would actually work in real-life situations, and it was not until our third year that we had a class in which we really felt that we learned any useful techniques that we could actually use to teach history. Regardless, there were plenty of opportunities to gain practical experience in teaching. I had a very strong relationship with the head of the education department Professor M. who invited me to teach hands-on science in various after-school programs that she designed, and trusted me to create and manage a program that taught robotics to middle-school students in my last year of college. I coached a team of five students from a nearby inner-city school that met each Sunday with me and a few of my friends to design and build a robot using the LEGO Mindstorms system that would compete against other robots in the middle of winter of that year in an event just outside of Boston. I had participated in the program as a middle-school student myself, and coaching the team was one of the most rewarding experiences of my life as I saw the students go from never having written any kind of computer program or made any robot before to being able to create a working robot that could do complicated tasks and compete well against other robots. One of my biggest regrets in leaving the United States is that I was not able to continue working with those students, as although I certainly would have continued the program if I had not received the Fulbright scholarship, I feel that I was just another self-centered do-gooder who was using the opportunity to help disadvantaged children as a stepping block to other things. This experience is both why I wanted to set up a LEGO

robotics program in Latvia and also why I am reluctant to continue switching schools very often and want to stay in one place to make a prolonged difference in that learning community.

Students in Emmanuel's education program were first required to complete three "pre-practicum" observation placements in schools before being able to take part in a formal student teaching placement in our final year of studies. Each of my pre-practicums lasted for roughly three months and I was required to spend three hours three times per week at the school which I was observing. My first pre-practicum placement took place in an inner-city "magnet school", a public school in which only students who received a certain grade or higher on a city-wide exam could attend. I observed an eighth grade teacher who was often very sarcastic and harsh with her students, using classroom management methods that were completely different from those that I had been taught in my college classes so far but seemed to be mostly effective. This was the first real evidence that the sanitized management methodology that I had been taught was somewhat disconnected from reality. My second pre-practicum took place in a large suburban high school, and while the "mentor" teacher mostly ignored me I was always extremely impressed that she was able to captivate her classes despite her complete lack of charisma with extremely well-designed lesson plans and activities. I will always remember from that experience that a top priority in teaching history should be to find or create top-quality lesson material that can connect with and inspire students, and the personalities of the teachers themselves are not as important as I necessarily thought that they were. My final pre-practicum took place in a very small Catholic middle school with class sizes of between six to ten students, the only major take-away from that experience for me being that I never wanted to teach loud and difficult-to-focus middle-school students ever again.

Aside from my pre-practicums and the science programs, I had a few other opportunities to teach in my college years before I started my formal student teaching practicum. From my second year on I was a tutor for various history courses that I had already passed, leading study groups before major tests and holding consultation hours for the few students that came to me looking for help. That experience was one of the first chances I had to plan and execute a full lesson completely on my own based on notes I had received ahead of time, and I learned how important it was to do prior research and be able to answer any question that students might ask. In my third year I served as a writing tutor with regular office hours a few times per week helping any student who came to me, usually first-year students who had not been as lucky as I was in high school with the teachers who had taught me self-sufficient writing skills. I showed them how to edit for grammar and style

and taught them techniques such as reading the paper out loud or writing the different sections out of order, all advice I still give to my students who I teach writing to. I also learned the importance of not merely correcting students' work and instead showing them how to do it themselves, as the goal of the campus writing center was not just to help students with their writing but to help them to become self-sufficient writers. I also worked as a teaching assistant for a class on the history of popular music and a first-year students' writing seminar class. In both I was again required to hold regular office hours and occasionally teach entire lessons or parts of lessons to the students. In these classes I was able to learn a lot of important techniques from the seasoned professors that I was assisting and also learned how to be a team-teacher and work together to plan and implement curriculum.

At the beginning of my final year of college I finally started my student teaching practicum at a medium-sized Catholic high school (roughly 400 students) in a nearby suburban area that drew students from all across the city. I was required to go to the school all five days per week and had no other university classes during that time so that I could perform all of the duties of a full-time teacher. I was paired with Mr. J., a 72-year old educator who had worked a full career in the private sector before "retiring" and teaching United States history at the school for nearly twenty years. Mr. J. was a beloved fixture at the school who had worked very hard to keep the school open in an era of consolidations and budget cuts from the Arch-Diocese's office. Although he was a wonderfully kind person to me, I found in most of his lessons that I initially observed that he was unfamiliar with recent techniques in education practice and that he would often lecture from memory for entire classes without writing nearly anything on the board, sometimes starting with a lesson talking about the revolutionary war and then jumping to a discussion about Kennedy's foreign policy, switching to a few anecdotes about his time working in the private sector, and then ending with his thoughts on the American civil war. It was very difficult for students to make sense of and often put them to sleep, teaching me the importance of having well-organized and logically-formatted lessons.

After two weeks of observations I slowly began taking over three of his United States history classes and designing and teaching my own lessons based on the textbook that they were already using. I will never forget how helpful Mr. J. was to me in answering any questions I had about anything and guiding me through the politics that I would face from parents, administrators, and other teachers in my career as an educator. I also remember that he never questioned any of my methodology even though it was completely different from his, and I promised myself after this experience that if I ever became a mentor for a student teacher working in my classroom that I would similarly be supportive in giving them free-

reign to try out the latest in current education theory that I myself might not be yet familiar with. I also had a fantastic support network of my other student teaching peers who I would meet with once per week, teaching me that it is important to be able to have people I can rely on who are going through similar experiences as I to discuss issues and gain different perspectives on how to solve problems.

I will never be able to forget the cold Monday in November just after Thanksgiving when I showed up to work at 7:30 AM as usual only to find Mr. J.'s door locked and the light shut off. My heart skipped a beat: in over twenty years of working at this school, Mr. J. had never missed a single day of work. I walked up to the assistant principal's office to get the key to unlock the door and it was explained that Mr. J. was unwell and would not be back until at least the end of the week. Since I was already teaching three of his classes full-time and I had nothing else to do all day besides teach at the school, I offered to substitute teach the other classes: both college-level AP United States history classes that I had passed successfully in high school but were typically reserved only for seasoned professionals to teach. I now had a full-load of five classes per day just like any other teacher at the school, and had to quickly adapt to a very different type of schedule. "The end of the week" turned into "after Christmas break", turned into "around Valentines Day", turned into "the end of March break" before it was clear that Mr. J. was now too sick with serious illness to be able to come back and teach before at the very least the end of the year. As I had only a few afternoon classes to take in the second semester, I offered to serve as a full-time substitute teacher and before I knew it I was one of the youngest full-time high school history teachers in the entire country.

Balancing a full-time teaching job with full-time college classes (including writing a bachelor's thesis in the field of history) was by far the greatest professional that I had ever faced up until that point in my life, and led me to never wanting to do full-time studies while working full-time ever again. Luckily, my younger colleagues at the high school immediately adopted me into their community as one of their own and constantly invited me to lunches and afternoon get-togethers to help me like feel a valued part of their group. I also received a huge amount of help from the school's endlessly energetic librarian Mrs. C. who would constantly tell me that I felt like the son that she had never had and had a large amount of support from the school's administration who were delighted to have someone who was able to fill into Mr. J.'s shoes so quickly without a messy hiring process. I learned from my colleagues how important it is to make new members of a teaching community feel welcome in order to have a harmonious school, although I also learned how teachers can divide into very nasty cliques that can just as mean to each other as those that students divide into in

middle and high school years. I also observed that a school's administration is always most focused on making sure that things run very smoothly and might often overlook things that I would be worried about and focus on housekeeping issues that I might personally find less-important but are critical to them in keeping a school running smoothly.

I generally consider that first year of teaching high school to be the one in which I learned far more about how *not* to do things than how to do things correctly. I regret being so lenient and friendly with students at the beginning of the year since I thought that I was only going to be a temporary teacher who would disappear at the beginning of December and that there was no need to be as strict as a teacher who would have to work with them for the entire year. This made it very difficult to work with them once I was their full-time teacher as they knew me as the more fun and laid back teacher, and it was a bit more difficult to get them to take me seriously than if I had been stricter at the start of the year. It also did not help that I was only three years older than my oldest students, which led me to decide to not shave off the beard that I had luckily grown over the summer before my student teaching experience. My tests that I designed for students were often too easy or much too hard, and I had a difficult time keeping up with grading students' assignments since I often had to leave immediately after the final class to get to my own college classes that I was still taking on time. Most importantly, I was afraid to discipline students too harshly. There was one student in particular who would often heavily disrupt the class and keep other students from doing work. I was always too afraid to send him away from the class to the principal's office since it was my understanding at the time that teachers were not allowed to send students away from class and I was always afraid that the administration would think that I was unable to handle my students' behavior; I found out afterwards that I was the only teacher who had never sent that particular student away from a class before. Although I feel that I made many mistakes during those five months and would do many things differently if I had the chance to, towards the end of the year, when it became clear that Mr. J.'s health problems were too serious to allow him to teach again the following year, I was offered something that most 22-year-old history and education majors who had not yet even graduated from college could only dream of: a full-time history teaching job.

Although I was ecstatic to have this offer, I had a major dilemma: I had still not heard whether or not I had won a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant grant to teach in Latvia for one year that I had applied for in the fall. My theology professor Dr. J. had gone far out of her way to help me apply for the grant and had read many drafts of my personal statements and applications that I had written. Although I thought that I had very little chance to actually win the grant as there were 22 other applicants and some even spoke fluent Latvian, I was

surprised in December to learn that I was a finalist for the award. Due to budget issues with the Federal government that year, there was a long wait all throughout the spring to know who had been selected to teach in Latvia. The administration at the school were incredibly kind and patient in waiting a bit more than than a month between their initial offer and me finding out whether I would go, but I still had a life-changing decision to make if I found that I had been chosen to go. Was it worth accepting the grant and giving up an opportunity to teach full-time at a high school that many of my other peers could only dream of? Would I be able to find a job when I returned home to the United States, and would my experience in Latvia be beneficial to a career in history? There was no doubt in my mind, however, the moment that I received an email notification and read that I had been accepted at the very end of my Grade 12 students' final lesson with me; I had to go. I did not want to spend the rest of my life in Boston wondering what might have happened had I gone, so I said goodbye to the amazing people I had met in the high school and began preparing for my departure into the unknown.

Before leaving to Latvia, I met my fellow English Teacher Assistants who would be teaching in Eastern European countries in a large seminar in Washington DC. There we took part in a three-day training session on how to teach English as a Foreign Language in Eastern European Countries led by a professional speaker who had organized many similar condensed English teaching programs in the past. I was surprised that out of the more than sixty people attending, only my fellow Latvia ETA and I had had any previous experience in education at all. This was a bit disheartening to me to find that the program's philosophy on teaching was similar to that of "Teach for America", in which any smart college graduate can be thrown into a classroom and be a successful teacher with only minimal training. We learned virtually nothing about the grammar concepts that we might have to teach in the coming year, and most of the activities were appropriate for younger elementary school-aged students and not the high school or college-aged students that many of us would be teaching in Eastern Europe. I learned from the experience that material that is taught must always be relevant and appropriate to the target age group, and I left that weekend feeling woefully underprepared for the challenge of teaching English in a foreign country, even if I was only supposedly going to be an "assistant" and not a full-time teacher.

I found out just a few weeks before I was to leave that I had been assigned to teach at Spidola Gymnasium and Latvia Univeristy of Agriculture (LLU) in Jelgava. The vice principal of the gymnasium was kind enough to pick me up from the airport very late at night and drive me back to Jelgava, and my fellow English teachers immediately welcomed me as one of them and helped show me around the city and took me on a few excursions to nearby

villages and attractions such as Rundale Palace. The teacher I worked with was an older colleague who was extremely helpful in teaching me how the Latvian education system worked and gave me a lot of freedom to conduct my lessons that I had with each of her students' groups once per week however I wanted. I also felt quite welcomed at the university, and was often invited to various events by my department head. It was nice to have a lot of freedom to teach my lessons the way I wanted to, but I knew very little about English grammar or what exactly I should be teaching my students and I mostly did activities or games with them that looking back now I do not believe were very effective. I was also not able to make many strong connections with them since I saw each class only once per week which was not enough to really get to know anyone. Although I had a very fun time living in Latvia and getting to know people as well as the country's fascinating history and culture, I did not feel that I was teaching my students much of anything meaningful that would be useful for them in the future aside from some writing assignments that taught my students basic essay structures that had not necessarily been taught in their Latvian classes and preparing my students for the Grade 12 English exam through practicing the different parts of the exam.

Beginning in February of that year I started looking at various job opportunities for history teachers back in various parts of the United States, but my heart was not in the search for a new place to settle. I had already left behind all of my friends and family before going to Latvia and given up a major opportunity to have a long-term an enviable history teaching job. I had grown to hate Boston's self-important and rude atmosphere in my four years of living in the city and all of my friends had moved away from my home state of Maine, so no matter what I would be starting completely anew in moving back the United States at a new school in a new community for the third year in a row. I had grown tired of uprooting my life so frequently and had already made quite a few good friends and professional connections in Latvia, so I was both happy and relieved when LLU and Spidola Gymnasium offered me the opportunity to teach classes part-time in the following year. The decision to stay in Latvia confounded and disappointed my family and friends back in America, but I had always had a feeling deep inside of me that I had never truly belonged in the United States and Latvia was the first place where I had ever felt truly at peace with myself and that for whatever strange reason I "belonged" there. While it might not have been a logically sound professional decision, I have never once doubted that it was correct personal decision for me to make.

Legally living and teaching in Latvia a second year would not be easy. Although I was legally permitted to teach history in Latvia due to my qualifications that I had achieved

in my previous college experience, I would need to be qualified as an English teacher in order to teach in public schools. According to the government I only needed a few extra classes in addition to my previous qualifications to be able to teach English. The University of Latvia was the only institution that offered those courses in English and did not offer them individually but only part of an entire study program. I was extremely frustrated at the time that I would again have to teach and study full-time so soon after having decided that I would never do that ever again, but I saw that I would be able to earn a master's degree in a parallel program at the same time and decided to enroll even though it would be a bit of extra work and more expensive. Luckily I am an Irish citizen and simply needed to apply for a passport to be able to live and work in Latvia, although there was a minimum salary requirement that I would not be able to fulfil working at just Spidola Gymnasium and LLU. After a lot of desperate searching once I returned to Latvia after a summer in the United States, I was offered to teach English to Grade 6, 7, and 8 students at Riga's Waldorf School. Having no other job opportunities that would satisfy the requirement for residence in Latvia, I agreed to the opportunity to teach on Mondays and Tuesdays while I would teach at Spidola and LLU on Wednesdays and Thursdays.

The color drained from my face when I stepped into the principal's office on my first day of work at the Waldorf school and I was told that instead of working with Grade 6 students (the minimum that I had been trained for in my previous college experience), I would be teaching a full class of 32 Grade 3 students in less than thirty minutes. Although it was not a complete disaster and the experience of teaching much younger students than I was comfortable with taught me to be more adaptable and open-minded, my overall experience teaching at Waldorf School was mostly a failure and I did not feel that I was able to do a competent job managing the Grade 6, 7, and 8 classrooms or teaching material to them appropriately. I was still only in the early phases of learning how to teach English vocabulary and grammar from my University of Latvia classes, and I used many outdated and inefficient methods such as having students translated sentences from the present perfect to the present perfect continuous that did not create a positive experience and did not help them develop their English language skills. I was also not a good fit for the general atmosphere or culture of the school which allowed the students a high amount of freedom to be very physically rough with one another and did not require them to be as obedient or focused as students in traditional classrooms. This experience led to me never wanting to teach classes of students below high school age ever again, and also led to my heavy skepticism of holistic education methodologies.

Teaching at Spidola Gymnasium went fairly smoothly during my second year at the school, and since I only had one group of Grade 10 students that I worked with full time (along with once-a-week exam preparation and optional United States history after-school classes) I was able to get to know them very well and design a lot of creative and intricate assignments and projects for them to do. I was happy to find that my colleagues' attitudes had not changed towards me now that I was not longer a temporary curiosity and worked at the school as an official English teacher, and I was able to get further involved by creating a competitive debate team of students that traveled to various competitions throughout Zemgale and Riga. At LLU I taught the course "Business English" for the first time, a subject that was once foreign and difficult for me but that I have been able to continuously improve my content and instruction in the subject and can now easily teach many concepts from the class at a moment's notice. I also gained a lot of experience teaching English grammar to adult students at a language school called "Lingua Franca" in Riga and at the Zemgale NVO Center in Jelgava as well as to some private students. I began the year still feeling like a history teacher playing the role of English teacher on a day-to-day basis but ended feeling that I had finally broken the vow I made at the end of high school and had transformed into a true English teacher.

This year I have continued to teach at Spidola Gymnasium, LLU, and Lingua Franca, gaining more classes at each of those places to make up for no longer working at Riga's Waldorf School anymore. I feel that my methodology and management skills have continued to improve thanks to the experience that I have gained teaching in so many different places and also to the valuable information that I have learned in my courses that I have been taking at the University of Latvia. My colleagues and classmates continue to work as a very important support network for me. In the coming years I will have more difficult decisions to make regarding my teaching career, most importantly whether I want to remain in the rewarding domain of teaching high school students that I love doing every day or focusing primarily on teaching university students and delving deeper into the academic subject of education and conducting more research in that subject. It will not be easy deciding how to spend the rest of my professional career and making choices that will shape my future, but I know that I will continue to follow the instincts that have brought me to where I am today and confident that no matter what I choose to do I still will not look back in regret. Though there are many different ways that my professional identity and history could have been shaped, including having ended up in the fields of video editing or even radio, every time I step into a classroom and greet a class of students I know that there is nothing that I would rather be doing. Now I hope that I will be able to help other people down their own roads of

personal and professional development just like the dozens of important figures in my professional history who helped young Joey Horgan go from excitedly watching the school busses carry students to school each morning to enthusiastically greeting those students as they enter his classroom.

According to the Bain et al. (1999) scale, this assignment would probably be somewhere between Level 3 and Level 4. In the assignment, the researcher sought a deep understanding of why the overall experience had happened, considered alternatives to how things had happened (such as proposing alternative career paths), and attempted to explain his behavior using his own insight and precious experiences. To have been at Level 5, the researcher would have needed to draw a more concrete conclusion from the reflections and made specific plans on furthering learning based on the reflections.

#### 4.2.2 The Evaluation of Professional Competences

The following assignment was completed to satisfy the requirements of the course “Educator’s Professional Identity and Pedagogic Mastery” as part of the researcher’s master degree courses. The assignment required the researcher to evaluate sixteen of his professional competences on a ten-point scale and to provide evidence and justification for each rating.

### The evaluation of my professional competence

Please evaluate your performance according to the anticipated results of the Professional Master’s Study Programme Teacher

	<b>By the end of the Master studies, I can</b>	Evaluation in 10 point system	Evidence of your skills: which assignments in which course can demonstrate it.
1	find, obtain and select information in accordance with particular teaching aims	9	I was required to do this in lesson planning assignments in the class “Language Lesson Modelling”. Each student was given two random topics that they had to combine together and develop a lesson plan the included the elements. I had to try to hard to not only think of a way that these two topics developed, but search for content that I could use to teach them. I was also required to do this in the class “Didactic Approached in Education Practice II” in which we had to develop and analyze a lesson that used CLIL methodology to teach two different subject areas.
2	analyze, synthesize and evaluate the information obtained in accordance with particular teaching aims and objectives	9	This skill was required in “Language Lesson Modelling” and “Teaching Practice III” as in both lessons we were required to develop detailed lesson plans in which explained exactly how we analyzed, synthesized, and evaluated information in accordance with the aims and objectives of a particular lesson. We were required to detail the origin of different teaching material and explain how the elements were used in different stages of the lesson to further the lesson’s aims and objectives.
3	communicate the information clearly and convincingly based on both cognitive and affective processes and taking into account the	7	This was required by the mini-lesson teaching projects in the classes “Language Lesson Modelling”, “Language Acquisition Theory and Practice”, and “Didactic Approached in Education Practice I”, as in each of these lessons we were asked to justify how our mini-lessons were designed in accordance to Howard Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences and different learning styles that different students might have. I do not feel that I had a particular assignment throughout the various classes that I took in which I demonstrated

	characteristics of the target audience in various social and cultural contexts		the ability to take into account various social and cultural contexts of a target audience, which is why I only gave myself a “7” in this category. I do feel that this was a skill that was discussed in the class “Foreign Language Acquisition at Primary School”, although I can not think of an exact assignment in which I exemplified this ability.
4	enlarge my knowledge and understanding by carrying out research and studying in foreign languages	8	I spent the entire course “Didactic Approaches to Educational Practice II” studying in Latvian, and although I had great difficulties and did not improve my Latvian as much as I would have liked to I learned quite a few new words and had a lot of valuable practice listening to and speaking in the Latvian language. The classes “Education Research for Local and Global Changes”, “Psycholinguistics”, “Academic English in Educational Research”, and “Development of Master’s Thesis I and II” all enlarged my knowledge by making me carry out research, such as designing focus groups and interviews and analyzing data from these methods. They all helped in the development of my master’s thesis paper which is the most complete evidence of my growth as a researcher to date. The skills and process necessary to carry out education research are quite different from those needed for history research, and I had to do much more than just analyze pre-existing primary sources and felt like a far more active part of the research process than in any of my history research experiences.
5	demonstrate deeper interdisciplinary knowledge and its critical understanding obtained in research and teaching practice	9	“Psycholinguistics” was the best example of this development, as I had nearly no previous experience in either psychology or linguistics before taking this course. The final research project at the end of course required me to learn how to use the tools of psycholinguistic research to carry out an experiment, knowledge that I would never have gained otherwise. Although I did not conduct an experiment in my master’s research, I have a much deeper understanding of how psycholinguistic research works and how its implications can deeply effect education practice. While I will not change my practices based on any of the particular experiments that my classmates carried out, I now know that I must keep up to date with current research that is being done in the field so that my practices are as effective as possible.
6	demonstrate deeper knowledge and critical understanding of national characteristics and	9	The class “Language Acquisition Theory and Practice” taught me a large amount of information about current developments in the European education area, as I had previously been unfamiliar with the Council of Europe’s Threshold initiative and has only a cursory knowledge of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. I know understand what is required in each of the four “language activities” for

	developmental trends of education in the common European education area		each level of the framework. Along with “Language Acquisition Theory and Practice”, the class “Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication” taught me a lot of new information about the development of language teaching from the early grammar-translation method all the way up to more modern silent and communicative methods. In the latter class I was required to demonstrate a lesson that used one of the methods (desuggestopedia in my case) to show that I truly understood the differences between the various methods.
7	demonstrate skills of planning and implementing one’s teaching practice in connection to the requirements of labour market, social needs and innovative trends in education science and practice; taking risks to implement new solutions	9	I feel that I demonstrated this ability in the development of my master’s research throughout “Development of Master’s Thesis I and II”, as I tried to adapt a self-reflection method that had not previously been used in the high school context. This was based on reading the Latvian government’s requirements for education outcomes, and it was based on careful research of a method that has been evolving for more than six decades in the higher education and workplace context. Although this is not directly related to my studies, I have spent the last two years adapting my knowledge from my various master’s courses in teaching the subject “Business English” to university students in helping students to prepare for English-speaking workplaces.
8	implement positive interaction and demonstrate a positive attitude in diverse social environments ensuring pedagogical process	8	I was required to interact in a diverse social environment in almost all of my courses, but specifically in “Educator’s Identity and Pedagogic Mastery”. In that class I was required to interact with students from a wide variety of social and ethnic backgrounds and come to common understandings so that we could develop together as educators and learn about how to become more effective teachers. I only rated myself an “8” because I did not take the opportunity to develop my Latvian language skills enough, which would have been extremely helpful in my future as an educator in interacting with other colleagues and students in a deeper and more effective way.

9	demonstrate an innovative pedagogical approach to dissemination and implementation of the results of solving problems connected with well-being and coherent development of society	7	This was a skill that was required by the classes “Sustainable Cultural Environment of Education” and “Education Research for Local and Global Changes”, as we were required in various assignments to find ways to educate students on issues regarding the sustainability of our society. I only rated myself a “7” in this category because I am not sure which assignment helped me in the dissemination of the information that I learned, and I do not believe that I have done enough after those classes in my educational practice in disseminating that information to my own students.
10	participate in research activities improving my professional practice	9	In the classes “Education Research for Local and Global Changes” and “Academic English in Education Research” I had to create interview and focus group projects that taught me skills that were necessary for the completion of my master’s research in the classes “Development of Master’s Thesis II and II”. One particularly useful assignment was the one in which we were required to put the steps to creating a master’s paper in the correct chronological order, as this gave us a hands-on and memorable chance to try to figure out the entire process by ourselves. The research on Garden Path theory that I carried out in the “Psycholinguistics” course was not directly related to my regular professional practice but it helped develop my professional research abilities as it forced me to learn how to research in a different professional context than the ones that I am used to in the fields of history and education.
11	work together with other professionals in a team	9	I was required to work together on a team with other professionals in nearly every single class that I studied in, but one particularly memorable occasion was in creating the focus group research in “Education Research for Local and Global Changes”. Each one of my group members had a specific role in creating and implementing the focus group, and we all had to make sure to stick to deadlines and keep contact with one another to make sure that the project was completed in a timely manner and could be held to a high standard. Another instance that comes to mind is the day of activities in the class during the first weekend of “Educator’s Professional Identity and Pedagogic Mastery”, in which my course mates and I had to work together to create a tower that could stand on its own without falling over and communicate ideas to one another in an effective and organized way.

1 2 .	demonstrate skills of adapting to new situations and ensuring pedagogical practice in changeable social conditions	8	In the classes “Psycholinguistics” and “Literature, Film and Visual Culture” I was able to adapt to subject matters that I was not familiar with previously, doing experimental psycholinguistic research and creating a script for a movie adaptation of a Jane Austin novel scene. In the classes “Didactic Approaches in Education Practice II” and “Educator’s Professional Identity and Pedagogic Mastery” I had to adapt to the social situation of interacting with classmates who did not necessarily speak English, needing to use my limited Latvian language abilities or rely on others as interpreters. I do not know, however, if I can think of a specific activity that related to me being able to ensure pedagogical practice in these changeable social situations, although I am sure that I can apply the same skills to those situations if they ever occur in my pedagogical experience. Therefore I was only able to rate myself a “7”.
1 3 .	evaluate my own professional competence; can plan and direct my own education in the context of life-long learning	9	The classes “Holistic Development of Personality in Education Practice” and “Educator’s Professional Identity and Pedagogic Mastery” were most useful in helping me develop abilities in this regard, specifically in the assignment in the latter class in which I was required to write an extended personal professional history. In writing the professional history I was able to put my current and previous studies in the field of education in the greater context of my life-long development as a teacher. In that class I was also required to do various assignments in which I evaluated myself as an educator and as a student, especially this assignment that I am currently completing.
1 4 .	demonstrate deeper knowledge and critical understanding of the contribution of education to ensuring wellbeing and coherent development of society and sustaining and improving the quality of life for my own and the following generations	8	I was able to develop this knowledge most effectively in the class “Sustainable Cultural Environment of Education”, as we had to write different essays and reflection papers about how we could integrate elements of sustainability theory into our education practice and use it to improve the quality of life and foster global stewardship in the future generations of students that we are teaching. This was particularly true of the final essay that we had to write. I only rated myself an “8” in this category because although I learned a great deal of theory about this subject, I have not been effectively implementing what I have learned into my educational practice and need to find more ways to do so.

1 5 .	demonstrate skills of solving problems connected to well-being and coherent development of society as well as taking responsibility about personal input in problem solving during pedagogical practice	9	The topic of my master's research addresses what I have found to be an important issue in the development of students' well-being in society, their ability to do self-reflection. I have attempted to help solve this problem by adapting the "Critical Incident Analysis" method for use in high school English class. This was also an attempt to solve the problem of teaching students how to correctly use this and mixed conditional phrases in my pedagogical practice of teaching English.
1 6 .	I am aware of the contribution of my professional practice to solving problems connected to well-being and coherent development of society	10	I have taken nearly every available opportunity that I have had in disseminating the contents of my master's research on students' self-reflection in conferences at Latvia University's Faculty of Education. Although I did not participate in a conference in Liepaja that I potentially could have, at the time I thought that I had to take students to a debate competition in Riga and would not be able to. I have not had the highest-quality presentations so far in spreading the word about the research that I have done, but I look forward to debuting an upgraded and higher-quality version of my presentation at the International Student Conference next week.

## 4.2.3 Conferences

### 4.2.3.1 LU Academic Conference No 73 – Masters’ Readings “Teacher’s Performance for Personal Wellbeing and Sustainable Development of Society”

# CRITICAL INCIDENT ANALYSIS TO DEVELOP ELEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS’ SELF-REFLECTION SKILLS

JOE HORGAN

ADVISOR: DR. PAED INDRA ODINA

## Student Self-Reflection

- ▶ First formally addressed by John Dewey in 1910
- ▶ Models proposed from 1970-present day focus nearly exclusively on reflecting on students’ own work (Perkins, Moon, Costa, ect)
- ▶ Positive correlation found in 2011 between self-reflection skills and academic performance

## What are “Critical Incidents?”

- ▶ “extreme behavior, either outstandingly effective or ineffective with respect to attaining the general aims of the activity.”  
(Flanagan, 1954: 338)
- ▶ “critical incidents are produced by the way we look at a situation; a critical incident is an interpretation of the significance of an event.”  
(Tripp, 1993: 8)

## Critical Incident Technique

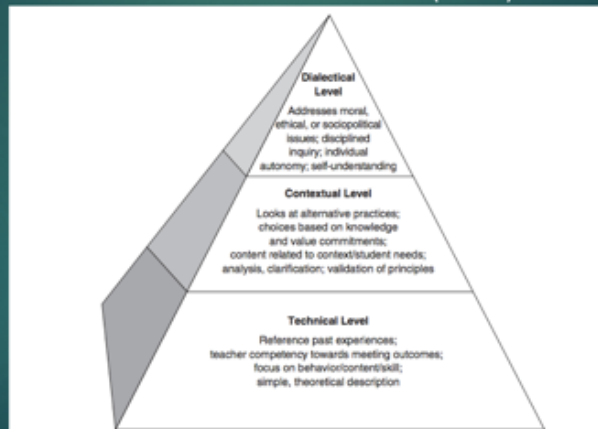
- ▶ Developed by John Flanagan in the 1940s-50s
- ▶ Analyzes an entire organization or system related to a situation
- ▶ Third-party observers collect data through observation or interview
- ▶ Five-step process:
  1. Identify aim
  2. Plan/specify behaviors to be observed
  3. Collect data
  4. Organize/analyze data
  5. Interpret/report findings
- ▶ Proposed uses: determining job responsibilities, designing operating procedures, measuring performance, psychotherapy, ect

# Critical Incident Analysis

- ▶ Developed by David Tripp in the 1990s
- ▶ Designed for individual use as a self-reflection technique
- ▶ Can be done alone or with the help of others
- ▶ Four Major Strategies:
  1. Thinking strategies
  2. "Why" challenge
  3. Dilemma Identification
  4. Personal Theory Analysis

# Evaluating Level of Reflection

The Van Manen Model: (1977)



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## Questions?

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LATVIJAS UNIVERSITĀTES  
PEDAGOĢIJAS, PSIHOLOĢIJAS UN MĀKSLAS FAKULTĀTE

### Apliecinājums

**Joseph Jack Horgan**

par piedalīšanos Pedagoģijas, psiholoģijas un mākslas fakultātes

Skolotāju izglītības nodaļas Maģistrantu konferencē:

**Skolotāja darbība personīgai labizjūtai un sabiedrības saskaņotai attīstībai**

Latvijas Universitātes 74. zinātniskās konferences ietvaros

2016. gada 12. februārī

ar ziņojumu

**“Critical Incident Analysis to Develop High School Students’ Self-reflection  
Skills in English Language Curriculum”**

LU PPMF dekāns

prof. Andris Grīnfelds

Skolotāju izglītības nodaļas vadītāja

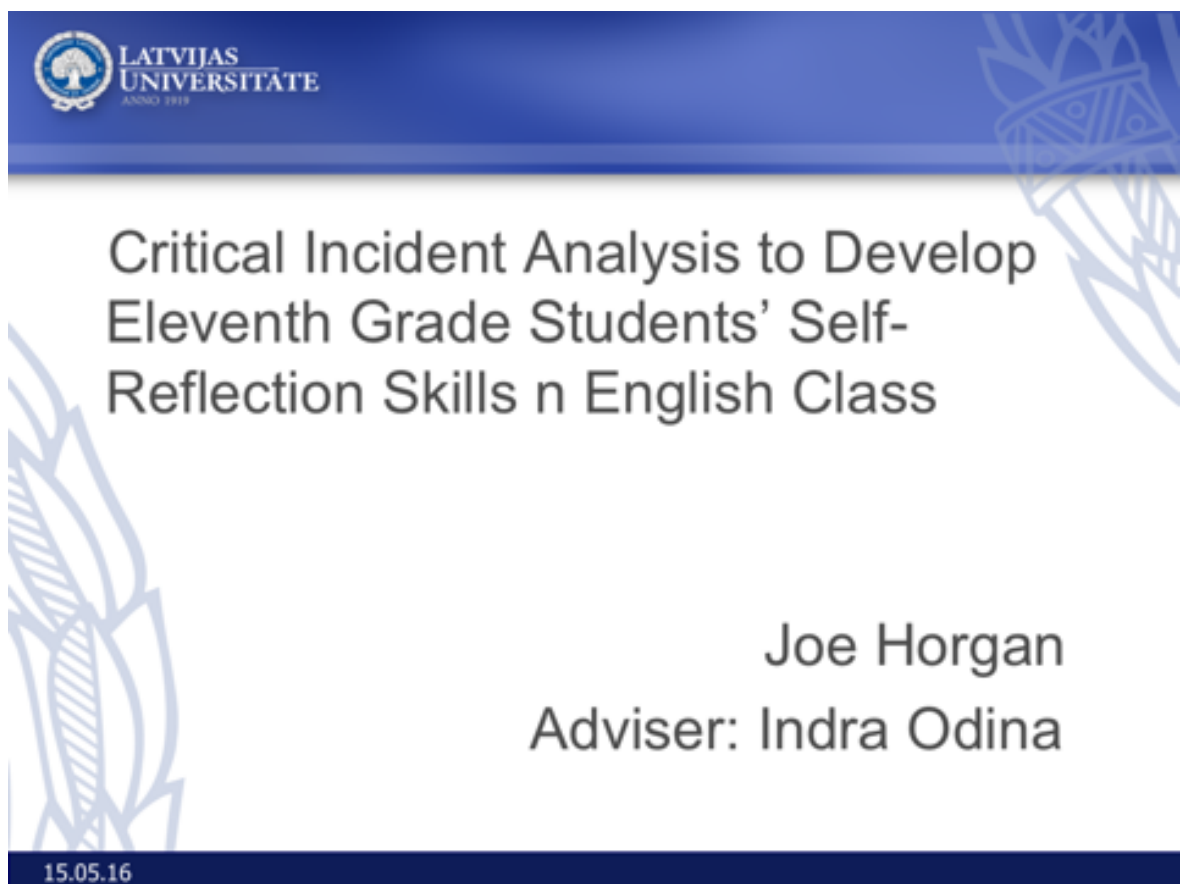
asoc. prof. Indra Odiņa

12.02.2016.

This first presentation that was given at the LU Faculty of Education, Psychology and Art Master’s Student Conference was generally effective at explaining the basic theory behind critical incident analysis and the development of research about critical incidents throughout the years, but it was unsuccessful at explaining exactly what new things the researcher was planning on doing with this concept or illuminating others as to exactly

how the researcher was planning on using critical incident analysis in his own classroom. There was too much of a focus on theory and literature review that was not particularly useful or interesting for the audience, and the researcher found it important that in the next public presentation on the research about the critical incident analysis unit that there would be a much greater focus on the lessons that were done in school, the overall goals of the unit plan, and the researcher's observations and conclusions upon the completion of the unit.

**4.2.3.2 LU Pre-Defense Conference (I know this isn't the correct name, I just didn't know it at the time)**



## Critical Incidents:

- “extreme behavior, either outstandingly effective or ineffective with respect to attaining the general aims of the activity.”  
(Flanagan, 1954: 338)
- “*critical incidents are produced by the way we look at a situation: a critical incident is an interpretation of the significance of an event.*” (Tripp, 1993: 8)

15.05.16

## The Aim:

- Explore how critical incident analysis can be adapted for grade eleven English as a foreign language (EFL) students to perform critical self-reflection.

15.05.16



## Objectives

- To review existing research concerning self-reflection in secondary schools as well as critical incident analysis;
- To explore students' experience with self-reflection;
- To design and carry out an interview with students and teachers to follow up questionnaire;
- To design and teach a three-week unit of English class for eleventh grade students based on critical incident analysis;
- To assess students' ability to self-reflect using critical incident analysis based on Bain et. al's (1999) five levels.

15.05.16



## Research Questions:

1. Is self-reflection currently being taught or practiced in secondary school, and in what ways?
2. Can critical incident technique be adapted to teach self-reflection skills as well as third and mixed conditional phrases to eleventh grade EFL students?

15.05.16

## Study Design and Sample

- Case study of a class of thirteen eleventh grade English students in Latvia

## Data Collection Methods

- Questionnaire distributed to students
- Interview of English teacher
- Focus group of student participants
- Analysis of student reflection journals
- Summative assesment

15.05.16

## Critical Incident Analysis:

- One good thing about \_\_\_\_\_ is that...
- One bad thing about \_\_\_\_\_ is that...
- One interesting thing about \_\_\_\_\_ is that...
- If I had(n't) \_\_\_\_\_, I would(n't) \_\_\_\_\_  
(use 3rd conditional, both parts in the past)
- If I had(n't) \_\_\_\_\_, I would(n't) \_\_\_\_\_  
(use mixed conditional, first part in the past second part in the present)
- If \_\_\_\_\_ had \_\_\_\_\_ instead, I would(n't) \_\_\_\_\_  
(this is for if something else had happened instead, what would be different? This can use either third or mixed conditional)
- If I was/did(n't) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ would(n't) have \_\_\_\_\_  
(if something about you was different, how would this event have been different, or have affected you differently? Use mixed conditional here, present first then past)

15.05.16

## Bain et. al (1996): Levels of Reflection

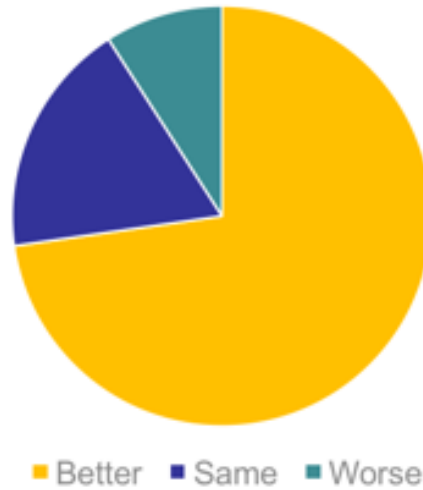
Reflection Level:	Description:		
Level 1 (reporting)	The student describes, reports, or re-tells with minimal transformation, no added observations or insights	Level 4 (reasoning)	The student integrates the data into an appropriate relationship, e.g. with theoretical concepts, personal experience, involving a high level of transformation and conceptualization The student seeks a deep understanding of why something has happened The student explores or analyzes a concept, event, or experience, asks questions and looks for answers, considers alternatives, speculates or hypothesizes about why something is happening The student attempts to explain their own or others' behavior or feelings using their own insight, inferences, experiences, or previous learning, with some depth of understanding The student explores the relationship between theory and practice in some depth
Level 2 (responding)	The student uses the source data in some way, but with little transformation or conceptualization The student makes an observation or judgment without making any further inferences or detailing the reasons for the judgment The student asks a "rhetorical" question without attempting to answer it or consider alternatives The student reports a feeling such as relief, anxiety, happiness, ect.		
Level 3 (relating)	The student identifies aspects of the data which have personal meaning or which connect with prior or current experience The student seeks a superficial understanding of relationships The student identifies something they are good at, something that they need to improve, a mistake they have made, or an area in which they have learned from their practical experience The student gives a superficial explanation of the reason why something has happened or identifies something they need or plan to do or change.		
		Level 5 (reconstructing)	The student displays a high level of abstract thinking to generalize and/or apply learning The student draws and original conclusion from their reflections, generalizes from their experience, extracts general principles, formulates a personal theory, or takes a position on an issue The student extracts and internalizes the personal significance of their learning and/or plans their own further learning on the basis of their reflections

## Positive or Negative Change in Students' Reflection Levels



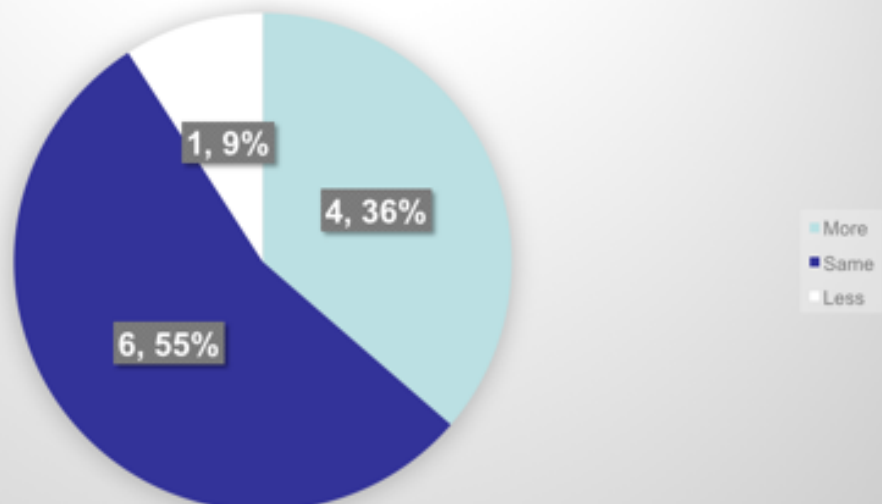
■ Positive Change   ■ No Change   ■ Negative Change

## Students Reported Changes in Reflection Skills Compared With Before Unit



15.05.16

## Students' Change in Belief Regarding Importance of Self-Reflection Compared to Before Unit



01.06.16

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15.05.16

While this “pre-defense” conference presentation improved on some of the previous presentation’s weaknesses, there were still some areas in which the presentation fell short. For instance, far too many slides were devoted to the introduction section, and it was unnecessary to have separate slides for aims, objectives, and research questions. The presentation was also too difficult to read; there were slides that included far too much text for a viewer to be able to reasonably read, such as the one about the levels of reflection. Slides which gave information in graphs did not include any numbers due to a copying error. Very few questions were asked after the presentation indicating that viewers might have been too confused about the presentation’s contents to ask questions regarding them, and those questions or comments that were asked or made all regarded how the presentation itself could have been improved visually. These criticisms and short-comings were taken into account by the researcher in the design of the presentation for the LU 15<sup>th</sup> International Students’ Research Conference.

#### 4.2.3.3 LU 15th International Students' Research Conference



## Critical Incident Analysis to Develop Eleventh Grade Students' Self-Reflection Skills in English Class

Joe Horgan

Adviser: Indra Odina

01.06.16



General Secondary Education Programme Main Objectives and Tasks:

2.1. to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary for personal growth and development, civic participation, employment, social integration and continuation of education

2.2. to promote the improvement of students' spiritually, emotionally and physically developed personality and to cultivate healthy lifestyle habits

2.4. to develop students' ability to learn and improve independently, motivating lifelong learning and the choice of a career (Dombrovskis 2013).

23.05.16

## Data Collection:

- Student Questionnaire
- Teacher Interview
- Analysis of Journals
- Analysis of Final Reflections
- Semi-Structured Group Interview

23.05.16

## *Grade 11 Students' Attitude Towards Reflection*

	Very Unimportant	Somewhat Important	Neutral	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Total	Weighted Average
Reflecting on my learning	6.25% 1	25.00% 4	25.00% 4	31.25% 5	12.50% 2	16	3.19
Reflecting on my life experiences	25.00% 4	0.00% 0	12.50% 2	25.00% 4	37.50% 6	16	3.50
Reflecting on the my future life plans	12.50% 2	12.50% 2	12.50% 2	37.50% 6	25.00% 4	16	3.50

23.05.16



### Students' Self-Reported Ability to Use English to Self-Reflect

	Stongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total	Weighted Average
I can use the English language to reflect on the learning I do in English class.	31.25% 5	62.50% 10	6.25% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	16	4.25
I can use the English language to reflect on the learning I do at school in general.	18.75% 3	68.75% 11	12.50% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	16	4.06
I can use the English language to reflect on my life experiences.	68.75% 11	18.75% 3	12.50% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	16	4.56
I can use the English language to reflect on the direction my future life plans.	56.25% 9	31.25% 5	12.50% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	16	4.44

23.05.16



### Amount of Time Spent by Students Inside of Class on Self-Reflection

	At least once per day	At least once per week	A few times per month	At least once per month	Less than once per month	Total	Weighted Average
I spend time in class reflecting on my learning.	25.00% 4	31.25% 5	18.75% 3	18.75% 3	6.25% 1	16	2.50
I spend my free time reflecting on my learning.	12.50% 2	43.75% 7	6.25% 1	37.50% 6	0.00% 0	16	2.69
I spend time in class reflecting on my life experiences.	12.50% 2	25.00% 4	37.50% 6	18.75% 3	6.25% 1	16	2.81
I spend my free time reflecting on my life experiences.	18.75% 3	50.00% 8	12.50% 2	6.25% 1	12.50% 2	16	2.44
I spend time in class reflecting on my future life plans.	12.50% 2	25.00% 4	31.25% 5	31.25% 5	0.00% 0	16	2.81
I spend time outside of class reflecting on my future life plans.	18.75% 3	43.75% 7	18.75% 3	12.50% 2	6.25% 1	16	2.44

23.05.16

### Amount of Time Spent by Students Outside of Class on Self-Reflection

	At least once per day	At least once per week	A few times per month	At least once per month	Less than once per month	Total	Weighted Average
I spend time in class reflecting on my learning.	27.78% 5	27.78% 5	22.22% 4	16.67% 3	5.56% 1	18	2.44
I spend my free time reflecting on my learning.	11.11% 2	44.44% 8	5.56% 1	38.89% 7	0.00% 0	18	2.72
I spend time in class reflecting on my life experiences.	16.67% 3	22.22% 4	33.33% 6	22.22% 4	5.56% 1	18	2.78
I spend my free time reflecting on my life experiences.	22.22% 4	50.00% 9	11.11% 2	5.56% 1	11.11% 2	18	2.33
I spend time in class reflecting on my future life plans.	11.11% 2	27.78% 5	33.33% 6	27.78% 5	0.00% 0	18	2.78
I spend time outside of class reflecting on my future life plans.	16.67% 3	50.00% 9	16.67% 3	11.11% 2	5.56% 1	18	2.39

23.05.16

### Critical Incidents:

- “extreme behavior, either outstandingly effective or ineffective with respect to attaining the general aims of the activity.”  
(Flanagan, 1954: 338)
- “critical incidents are produced by the way we look at a situation: a critical incident is an interpretation of the significance of an event.” (Tripp, 1993: 8)

23.05.16



## Critical Incident Analysis:

- One good thing about \_\_\_\_\_ is that...
- One bad thing about \_\_\_\_\_ is that...
- One interesting thing about \_\_\_\_\_ is that...
- If I had(n't) \_\_\_\_\_, I would(n't) \_\_\_\_\_  
(use 3rd conditional, both parts in the past)
- If I had(n't) \_\_\_\_\_, I would(n't) \_\_\_\_\_  
(use mixed conditional, first part in the past second part in the present)
- If \_\_\_\_\_ had \_\_\_\_\_ instead, I would(n't) \_\_\_\_\_  
(this is for if something else had happened instead, what would be different? This can use either third or mixed conditional)
- If I was/did(n't) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ would(n't) have \_\_\_\_\_  
(if something about you was different, how would this event have been different, or have affected you differently? Use mixed conditional here, present first then past)

23.05.16



## Partner Questions:

- *Why did this incident stand out to you?*
- *What else was going on at the time?*
- *Do you think that you have a personal opinion or bias that influenced how you interpreted it?*
- *Could you have interpreted this incident from a different point of view?*
- *What did/can you learn from this incident?*

23.05.16

## Final Reflection Questions:

- *What three things did you learn or understand better about yourself from doing this project?*
- *What was challenging about doing this project?*
- *What was useful about doing this project?*
- *What didn't you like about doing this project?*
- *Compared with before doing this project, do you think that you are better, worse, or just as good at reflecting about yourself?*
- *Compared with before doing this project, do you think that self-reflection is more important, less important, or just as important as you thought it was?*
- *What is one thing you will remember from doing this project?*

23.05.16

## Bain et. al (1996): Levels of Reflection

Reflection Level:	Description:
Level 1 (reporting)	Describes, reports, re-tells
Level 2 (responding)	Makes observations or judgments, reports feelings
Level 3 (relating)	Identifies personal significance, connects with other experiences, begins to understand relationships, identifies things they are good at, mistakes made, ways they can improve, superficial plan to change
Level 4 (reasoning)	Seeks a deep understanding of why something has happened, explores or analyzes concepts, events, or experiences, asks questions and looks for answers, considers alternatives, hypothesizes, attempts to explain their own or others' behavior or feelings using their own insight,
Level 5 (reconstructing)	Displays high level of abstract, draws conclusions, generalizes from their experience, formulates a personal theory, takes a position on an issue, extracts and internalizes the personal significance of their learning and/or plans their own further learning based on reflections

## Positive or Negative Change In Students' Reflection Levels Between First and Last Entries



■ Increase ■ No Change ■ Decrease

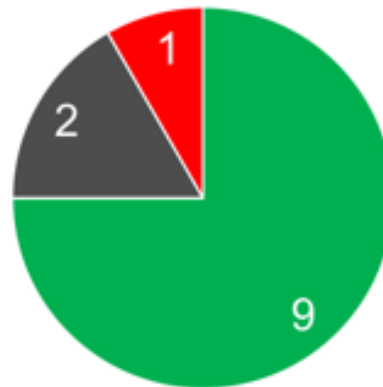
23.05.16

## Level of Self-Reflection Observed in Students' Final Reflection Assignments



23.05.16

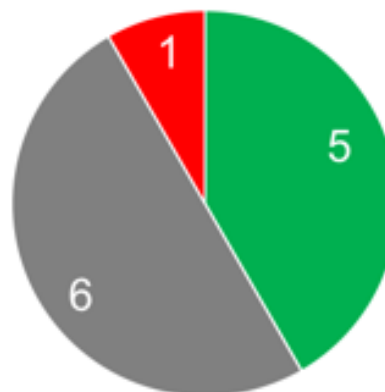
## Students' Reported Changes in Reflection Skills Compared With Before Unit



■ Better ■ No Change ■ Worse

23.05.16

## Students' Change in Belief Regarding Importance of Self-Reflection Compared to Before Unit



■ More Important ■ No Change ■ Less Important

23.05.16



## Future Potential Changes:

- Integrate critical incident reflections into year-long curriculum
- Better design of prompts to help students achieve higher level of scale
- More frequent checking of journals
- Improved grading system to reflect levels of reflection
- Greater focus on teaching of reflection skills

23.05.16



## Questions?



23.05.16

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23.05.16

While this presentation fixed many of the shortcomings of the previous two presentations, there were some areas that could have been improved upon for a stronger presentation. There was an obvious spelling mistake in the presentation's title on the opening slide that could have been fixed with a simple spell check. While the pie graphs were easier to understand due to the numbers being included, the titles were still a bit hard to read due to color choice. The tables of data that were included were not the best visual representation of the data as they contained too much text, and while the table that described the Bain et al (1999) scale was improved from the previous iteration it still probably contained too much text. At the end of the presentation only two questions were asked by the audience, again leading the researcher to believe that the presentation's content was unclear to the audience. These shortcomings were considered when the final defense presentation for the master's thesis was created.

## CONCLUSION

In reviewing current research, the researcher concluded that the importance and need for secondary school students to develop self-reflection skills has been widely acknowledged by education researchers at least as early as Dewey (1910). The past century has seen various models and methodologies that promote critical thought concerning students' own work, but little in terms of topics that are not directly related to school. Most researchers assume that students will somehow be able to translate self-reflection concerning their school work into general self-reflection skills that they can use as lifelong learners and critical thinkers. The researcher also found that critical incident analysis has previously provided a useful, proven tool for in-depth self-reflection on a wide variety of subjects. It has already been applied in many post-secondary education and professional settings in many uses with positive results. It so far has not been widely adapted or even considered as a technique to be used in secondary school classrooms, though there seem to be no obvious reasons as to why this has not happened.

After designing and analyzing a questionnaire, the researcher concluded that that high school students already performed a frequent self-reflection both in class and outside of it, with a majority of students finding self-reflection at least somewhat important and doing so at least once per week. A higher percentage of students wanted to spend more time in class reflecting on their learning, life experiences, and future plans than those who would like to spend less time reflecting on those subjects. As a whole, students also had a high level of confidence in their ability to use the English language to perform self-reflection. Analysis of the teacher interview showed evidence of a general lack of universal understanding of what the term "self-reflection" exactly mean, although the interviewed teacher expressed that self-reflection was something that was important for high school students to be able to do well and was something that should be focused on in school. The interview affirmed students' responses to the questionnaire in which students also reported that self-reflection was already occurring in school to some degree.

Based on analysis of students' reflection journals, unit grammar tests, and final reflection assignments, the self-reflection unit designed and taught by the researcher was only partially successful in improving students' self-reflection skills and abilities in using third and mixed conditional phrases. Analysis of the first and last journal of each student showed a general decline or stagnation on the Bain et al.(1999) scale, contrary to the researcher's hope that students' level of reflection would improve. Since the researcher did not analyze the level of every entry that each student wrote it is impossible to conclude whether there was an improvement of level before a decrease towards the end of the unit, and future research

should include more analysis of each journal entry. Students also struggled on the unit grammar test even after completing the self-reflection unit, and since the researcher did not make use of pre-testing it is impossible to know whether or not the students' knowledge and abilities improved in any way. Future research should include the use of pre- and post-testing of students' abilities in using conditional phrases.

In analyzing students' experiences during the self-reflection unit based on their reflection journals and group interviews, the researcher would make changes to the curriculum were it to be taught again. Students were asked to write journal entries too frequently over a short period of time, and did not receive enough support in the form of having their reflection journal entries reviewed and given feedback regarding. Students also felt uncomfortable in their abilities to do reflection, although they believed that their abilities in using conditional phrases improved. The researcher would modify the unit to provide more support in the self-reflection itself, possibly making use of the Bain et al. (1999) scale so that students have objective criteria on how to self-evaluate their own self-reflection. A grading system which made use of the Bain et al. (1999) scale or a similar system might motivate students to provide more thorough self-reflection than pass or fail criteria.

The researcher was able to adequately disseminate the professional experience of using critical incident analysis as a teaching technique to improve high school students' self-reflection and grammar skills, although there were significant flaws in the presentations that were given. Dissemination has so far only reached level one of the Harmsworth and Turpin scale (2001: 3) since the researcher does not feel that the curriculum developed is ready enough to reach the second or third levels of dissemination. Further development of the unit coupled with more questionnaires, pre- and post-testing, and deeper analysis of students' work will be necessary in order to better meet the original aim of this research.

On a scale from "1" (low) to "4" (high), the researcher rates the planning of the process of developing student's self-reflection skills a "2.5". The researcher did not plan self-reflection as a year-long activity and only focused on it during the beginning of the students' spring semester. There should have been more than just one teacher interviewed during the planning process to get a more complete idea of the culture of self-reflection at the school. Otherwise, the theoretical review of self-reflection in high school was mostly thorough and a self-reflection curriculum was planned.

The researcher rates the organizing of the usage of critical incident analysis in English lessons a "2.5", because there were many flaws in the organization of the learning process. The researcher should have planned the unit over a longer period of time and given more support in the modeling of self-reflection based on the Bain et al. (1999) scale and checked

the students' journals more frequently. Otherwise the usage of critical incident analysis during English lessons was organized and executed by the researcher to a satisfactory enough degree to have data that could be analyzed for the improvement of the organization process in the future.

The researcher rates evaluation of students' self-reflection skills as a "3," because the evaluation and analysis of the reflection journals, final reflection assignments, grammar test, and group interview were carried out thoroughly. However, the researcher should have created a grading scale more based on the Bain et al. scale to make his expectations clearer to students, and should have evaluated the journal entries and provided feedback on a more regular basis.

The researcher rates the dissemination of professional experience a "2," because not enough was done to disseminate the usage of critical incident analysis in high school EFL class, and the dissemination only reached Level 1 on the Harmswoth and Turpin (2001) scale. After further development of the usage of critical incident analysis in future years, the researcher hopes to disseminate the professional experience to a greater degree.

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## Appendix 1: Teacher Interview Transcript

Interview location: Jelgavas Spidola Gymnasium room #2

Date: February 4, 2016

Interviewer: Joe Horgan

Interviewee: Female English Teacher

Interviewer: So, what exactly is your definition of self-reflection? What exactly does self-reflection mean to you?

Teacher: Self-reflection, like in that there, there can be different aspects like, psychological, sociological, also in learning style, whatever you take... maybe you can specify. What exact definition have you been using for this research?

Interviewer: The definition used in this research is: "A mental process in which one gives active and careful thought to their past, present, or future actions or situation".

Teacher: Wow, that is quite the technical definition! **Laughs**

Interviewer: **laughs**, well for this kind of research it has to be. So do you think that high school students have the ability to do useful self-reflection?

Teacher: Not all of them. And not to an absolute extent, because they, many of them are, uh, so focused that you could name them "narrow-minded". So they don't really, um, care that much about their current state, they don't understand what is happening, they just uh keep focused on daily tasks, what's due and uh they don't take time for self-reflection. And actually, in this school and in teaching and learning process, you don't have that much, that's also one thing... Our school has this wonderful opportunity where they have this subject called "Critical Thinking", and there they have this opportunity to have an insight into their thinking process and how thought is formed or emotional states, they have the subject psychology but that's only for the senior classes, not the primary school children. Yeah, psychology. But, creative... critical thinking is for primary school also. But from what I have heard from them, they don't see it as an asset This lesson. I don't know why. Actually, there are great benefits for their future thinking abilities, they are given keys and turning points... But they don't take it seriously, like many things in life, they don't take it seriously. That's it. But it's okay, they're, they're adolescents, so... yeah.

Interviewer. So, um... So you think that self-reflection is an important skill for high school students to have?

Teacher: Of course. Definitely. Definitely. Yeah, for everybody. Especially when it comes to adulthood, it would be a great asset if they had it.

Interviewer: And why exactly do you think so?

Teacher: To... evaluate their current situation from many aspects and to be able to choose the right path. And also to have empathy to understand others. If you don't quite... if you are not able to define what is happening to you, you cannot understand what is happening with other people. That is my opinion.

Interviewer: Okay. So do you personally include any assignments or activities that require self-reflection in your teaching?

Teacher: Of course! By all means! We, I mean they, not we, just wrote an essay on the topic, “my future...” **laughing** It was fun reading them, because some of them were quite so to say... just... an inside, just a dream, just superficial. But some of them quite got the plan, actually. In detail! Not like in forever, but at least some ideas are clear for them. I was happy to read that a guy wrote that he would have four children and *one* wife. That was quite reassuring, that everything is okay with our future. So... **laughing** And of course dreams of becoming rich and famous... not that famous, but at least rich. That is very important for these people nowadays.

Interviewer: So besides this essay which sounds like it requires a lot of self-reflection, are there other ways that you include self-reflection in other assignments.

Teacher: Well for today, we had the topic of consumerism. And I showed them pictures of Banksy with Africans hunting trolleys, and they had to think what do those trolleys represent and symbolize. I try to get them thinking, I try. But they don't want to share their ideas, that's another point. Even those people that have some thoughts, they are not that confident about telling them out loud because nowadays... teenagers are always shy, but I have noticed in the last five years they have really been ashamed from other people's opinion of them. They are afraid of what other people would say. Even if they know those people for many years like classmates and so on. But it depends on the class. There is a social class that, well not all of them, but they are not afraid to spread their opinion. Then there is this kom class that would laugh at other classmates. And of course I would also be afraid if I was laughed at, so I wouldn't want to share my opinion. Yeah. Yeah, this particular class, yeah they don't want to express their opinion. And one person said today that he is so tired... he is so tired at the beginning of the lesson that he doesn't even *want* to think. So yeah. And today to make this kom class work we had two lessons, and in the first because I thought it was going okay we had a reading on Black Friday from Wikipedia, what it is, but first I asked them to write down what is Black Friday, what do they know about it, and they wrote down... then we read the text and we watched the video about the Black Friday events, and we discussed the vocabulary, and in the next lesson I started with the questions and I found out that they didn't pay attention. So I just dictated five questions and I asked them to write the answers to those questions. Two points for fully-answered questions, so in total ten, so I said “okay, if I see you only did superficially, I will put those marks. And at home, if you want to improve, but only after those lessons”. Because usually for teachers it is hard to define whether some of them, you see that some of them don't pay attention. And that is okay, because there is always somebody who wouldn't. And then there are some really bright students who are really eager to do it and really fast and like a torpedo, or a rocket I said okay, just to see... and I found that all of those answers could be found in the text that we had read. Together. Like we discussed already those things. And now we will see what are those results, and we will have lesson tomorrow, and then we will see. What about that reflection. Yeah. And for tomorrow, I also assigned them to think at home, and I decided that we haven't had a class discussion. And for participation in the discussion the topic is pros and cons of consumerism. And also I will mark how actively they are involved in that discussion, and that I will try out tomorrow.

Joe: Okay, and do you think that self-reflection is a skill that is taught to high schoolers at this school in general?

Teacher: Yes, I believe yes, like for example we have also in English lessons, not that much as would be necessary, but still in Latvian there is this subject “literature”, and there you need, you need to express your opinion, to think alone, to make connections.

Interviewer: About yourself?

Teacher: Also. With yourself or make connections about what, with current events or make connections with the history of that, and yeah I believe. And in history of course, in history, where teachers try to find similarities, some signs, which are very alarming or vice-versa very reassuring. And I believe that yes, I read a really nice quote that a person who doesn't know the history of a country is the person with no roots.

Interviewer: Okay, so you think that mostly in history class, and Latvian class, and English class, and critical thinking class.

Teacher: Yeah, yeah, because I, when we speak in the teacher's room, the math teachers are really worried because they don't really see the connections, they just cram some numbers, but because of the change in this education system... when we, Soviet people, had to prove the theorems these people are given the formula list, they don't have to memorize anything, and um they don't see the difference between millimeters or meters, they don't care... **laughing** If it's minus two or plus two... **laughing** they are just signs. They are just signs, and yeah it is a problem everywhere. And therefore math results are not that good.

Interviewer: Okay, then if you had the ability to change things and make some reforms, do you think that you would make self-reflection a priority for schools over other things?

Teacher: For high school students, yeah. Yeah, it would help them in life, definitely.

Interviewer: So you would make it a priority?

Teacher: But it should be integrated in the subjects. Not like as a separate lesson. Yeah.

Interviewer: So do you have any ideas on how it might be more integrated?

Teacher: Uh, we are doing that but uh, there is... It is necessary first of all to begin at elementary stages everything, by starting at the end of the day, with the class teacher what did you do, how did you feel, and at home talking with parents, talking is something that is missed these days. People are on their own, by themselves. And how can you learn to reflect your ideas, your thoughts if you are alone? If you don't have a person to speak with? I believe that you should start at the elementary level, because brains have partially formed at the secondary level already and some roots, how the idea flows are formed and are really stable, so yeah I believe yes, as everything that everything, at least the basics should be given at the elementary stage.

Interviewer: Okay, and do you have any other final thoughts on self-reflection and on high school students?

Teacher: Yeah, I believe that it would be great that they were able to write this motivation letter to express their ideas why they are applying to this or that university. I think yes.

Interviewer: Okay, well thank you very much.

## Appendix 2: Group Interview Transcript

Interview location: Jelgavas Spidola Gymnasium room #2

Date: April 4, 2016

Moderator: Joe Horgan

Group interview participants: 10<sup>th</sup> grade students

Participant 1: Male, 17

Participant 2: Female, 17

Participant 3: Male, 18

Participant 4: Female, 18

Participant 5: Male, 18

Participant 6: Male, 18

Participant 7: Female, 18

Moderator: So, uh, do you think that a lot of people your age spend a lot of time reflecting on themselves? Is it something important?

Participant 1: Um, so uh, I think that, most of people my age do reflect upon themselves, um, well, some people do it more and some people do it less, I think it's important for all of us to, like figure out what we did in certain situations and what we could have done better, and to change that if the same situation occurs.

Moderator: Do you agree; do you think that people your age tend to...

Participant 3: I have to disagree.

Moderator: Okay.

Participant 3: Because, uh, nowadays it's, I don't think it's common for teenagers to reflect on themselves. I think it was more common, like, five or ten years ago when everyone was writing diaries. I don't reflect on myself usually, you know maybe [Participant 1] do it, but it's not for me.

Participant 1: Well I didn't really mean it as in diaries, I really just meant it as "in your head, think about situations that occurred", like what you did, stuff like that, like developing the facts of it as some might say.

Participant 2: I agree with [Participant 3], in that teenagers don't really reflect on themselves usually, if it's not like homework, like you gave us, like [gargled background noise] which it was good, that we had something to think about, and we could uh... I think that I agree with both of [Participants 1 and 3], because we can uh reflect on some situations and uh, so if another situation like that comes, we could know what we could do better, but I think that we would write smart so that we don't do it as much as we need to.

Participant 4: Yes I agree also with [Participant 3] because I think that technologies has been, have taken over writing, I remember also that I wrote in fifth class nightly in my diary, because I didn't have anywhere else where to write something down.

Moderator: So you haven't done it a lot since fifth class?

Participant 4: Yeah, **laugh**.

Moderator: What about for you, [Participant 7]?

Participant 7: I think that teenagers, aren't uh the type of people who are reflecting on themselves, but uh, it could be more for like older people, because they have made some big mistakes in their lives, and good things, and they can reflect on them. But teenagers are like, living for the moment, and trying new things not not really I think reflecting on them, and on the past.

Participant 5: It is really hard to say, because to myself, I really do not like to reflect what I have done. Of course I think what I could do differently, or something but, I don't think it's uh, it's uh, needed for me, because it is just past, that's all.

Participant 6: Yeah, I think teenagers reflect on things, but like they don't understand that they reflect, because basically posting some statuses or updates or pictures on facebook is still reflecting, and they reflect on past experiences even not thinking that they are reflecting, like not meaning to but they are still reflecting.

Moderator: Interesting, so does anyone agree with [Participant 6] that facebook statuses can be a form of reflection?

Everyone: Yeah **nodding heads**

Moderator: Does anyone think that facebook statuses can not be a form of reflection?

Everyone: **silence**

Participant 7: Well it's not that, like, an important thing, it's like this small thing from everyday life, and we are not thinking, like [Participant 6] said that we are not thinking that we are reflecting but in some way we are reflecting, via social media.

Moderator: Okay, so now one thing that I am very interested in knowing is in school, during the school day, either as part of your classes or on your own, how much reflection if any do you think that you or other people you know do?

Participant 1: So, I don't really think that any of us really do big reflections, like our assignment was, or like for any subject or for any matter, I think that as [Participant 6] said that we did the social media thing with Twitter and Facebook where we reflect like that, but I don't think that most of my generation does it a lot, they sometimes just think about the situation but they don't really dwell in the past that much.

Moderator: Okay, would you agree?

Participant 3: Yeah, I agree, because we are not thinking about it, like we should do it, like we just even for **unintelligible** Instagram we just post pictures, we don't really know what we are doing. It's just happening.

Moderator: But at school?

Participant 3: No. None, like not really for myself at least.

Moderator: Okay. [Participant 2?]

Participant 2: Um, I think that people who reflect at school are teachers, I think that they reflect on the lessons after they are done, and think of how they could be different, how they could improve the lessons, but I think that it is actually important for students as well, uh because we need to improve our learning, but at least we need to know things that you are good at, the things that maybe we should learn more, I don't know.

Participant 4: **Laughing** Could you repeat the question one more time please?

Moderator: So do you think that you do reflection at school, that you and your classmates do reflection at school generally?

Participant 4: Not really. No, I don't think so.

Participant 5: Well I don't think we really have to do it by ourselves, our teachers have to say that we have to do it, for our school it's like for, "gada klase", we had to reflect on what we had done, all this year and what things happened, and that's when we write those reflections.

Moderator: Okay, so do you agree with [Participant 5] that you do do that?

Everyone: Yeah

Participant 2: We do it like at the end of the end of the year.

Participant 1: Yeah, like once a year.

Participant 2: It would be easier for us to do it, like, every week, because like the achievements that we have, we need to remember them and nobody can. So if we had to do that, so, it would be much easier.

Moderator: Okay, so do you agree with that [Participant 6]?

Participant 6: Yes, basically we are not doing it, but we should do a little bit of it time by time.

Moderator: So, do you feel that in general that in your classes your teachers encourage you to reflect on yourselves, either with your schoolwork or in your own lives? Is self-reflection something that's focused on in school?

Participant 1: Well, I don't think it's focused on.

Participant 2: Mmm hmm.

Moderator: Okay, well why don't you think it's focused on?

Participant 1: Um, well, no one really assigns us to do something like that, to reflect on ourselves. Maybe the closest thing to reflecting upon ourselves would be homework, to like reflect upon the lesson perhaps? But, nothing else.

Moderator: Okay, Participant 3?

Participant 3: No opinion.

Participant 2: Well... Uh, okay. So, I don't think... we don't do it in school. But, um... like [Participant 1] said, sometimes we do it in homework, but uh, I don't have much opinion on this.

Moderator: So, you would also say that it's not something that's focused on by the school.

Participant 2: Yeah.

Moderator: Okay, [Participant 4], do you think that reflection is something that's focused on by the school, in the lessons by your teachers?

Participant 4: **sigh** Ummm... I can't really say anything about this, I'm not really sure about this.

Moderator: Like, would you say that it is a priority at all?

Participant 4: No, not really.

Moderator: Okay, [Participant 5]?

Participant 5: So, if you have some homeworks, of course you have to reflect what have you heard in lessons, or something like that. I don't think it's a focus, it's just, you just have to do it if you want to make good homework.

Moderator: Okay, and [Participant 6]?

Participant 6: Yeah, I think lessons are mainly focused on to learn new things, not reflect on past things, we are just learning new and new stuff not thinking about what have we done in the past.

Moderator: Okay, so it seems like the consensus then is that reflection is not something that's focused on by the school?

Everyone: Yeah.

Moderator: Then if not self-reflection, what things outside of subject material, what aspects of your development or your growth are most focused on?

Participant 1: Mmm, I think that school tries to teach us how to learn, like they try to teach us how to learn ourselves, to.. uh, understand the process and to be able to recreate things on our own without the help of the teacher, like, they try to teach us more with the book so that we can read the book by ourselves and understand what it means, like how to, for example in math how to do different equations and stuff like that.

Participant 3: Yes, because sometimes in the book its not so well-described, how to do it so we just like, sitting there and wondering how can we do it. Then we just go to the teacher and then ask her, basically that's how we're developing in school. Because sometimes the books sometimes aren't the best.

Participant 1: Mmm hmm, I agree.

Participant 2: Well I think they um teach us how to memorize stuff, for different types of memory, like in math they write different formulas on the board or we can uh, hear them from a teacher, or in history the teacher usually speaks and some it's easier to remember that and for others it's easier to remember what's in the book. So I think they teach us just to memorize stuff in different ways.

Participant 4: I agree with them.

Moderator: So you think that school focuses more on learning how to learn and learning how to memorize things.

Participant 4: Yeah, and not really self-reflection.

Participant 5: I think that school makes us more creative, because we have much things to so, much things to learn, and you have to find ways to do it and just do it.

Participant 6: Yeah and I think basically that school is about memorizing things, it's about memory, how good is your memory, just, because you need to learn, remember, and write it down all again. Maybe some things like in our class those student companies make you be a bit creative and create new things, but mostly school is just memorizing, memorizing things.

Moderator: So um, now if you had a chance to, to sit in the director's office and you have the ability to influence what is taught and what's not taught and the overall culture of the school, would you make self-reflection a bigger priority?

Participant 1: I think that I personally wouldn't make it a bigger part, because uh, you can choose for yourself, like the learning method that you like, and uh reflecting on what you have learned in the lessons and what you remember in the lessons, I think that that is still a part of learning in general. So I think that it is a part of learning as-is like as it is in our educational system right now, and I don't really think that we need to enforce it more and make people reflect upon themselves more.

Moderator: Okay, so then you do think that it is already a part of the...

Participant 1: Yeah, in some ways yes it is, well for some people. As we discussed here, some people don't reflect upon themselves, but I do.

Moderator: What about you [Participant 3], would you make it a bigger part of..

Participant 3: Not really because students already have a lot to do in school, and sometimes we don't have a lot of free time to do anything else and we don't want to do anything more because we are already tired of it, so, yeah I wouldn't make it a priority.

Participant 2: I think I wouldn't do it either, if it's obligatory and the teacher says you have to do it and everyone in the class has to write a diary and reflect on themselves like every day, well people will just do it but they will do it just to get "I" or "check", but not do it themselves so that they can learn, and those people that already reflect on themselves will do it as well but people don't want to do it like if you force it.

Moderator: Hmm, so would the rest of you agree with [Participant 2] that it shouldn't be something that's forced for students to do? That if a teacher assigns something then people are less likely to want to do it?

Everyone: Yeah.

Participant 1: I think that it turns both groups, like the groups that want to do it and the groups that don't, and the groups that don't will have to spend their free times doing it, and the groups that want to do it it becomes obligatory for them to have to do it every day for example, and when it becomes obligatory I don't think it's like very fun or like someone wants to do it.

Moderator: Okay, do any of you have anything else to say about this?

Participant 6: Yeah, maybe I think that if I was in charge I would maybe make it like a bit forced, because thinking of how it was by myself, I really didn't think that it could be something interesting, but when I started doing it it got more and more interesting, I learned new things and I think that it could be the case, that some things you need to force it and then it will become second natural and then people would start liking it because it's very interesting things I'm seeing from my experience. It's like interesting if you start to, if you start doing it then you learn things about yourself that you didn't know and you get better organized by, and you get better as a person.

Moderator: Okay, so uh did anyone have an experience similar to [Participant 6]'s, because you guys as part of English class did have to write reflections every so often, so did anyone have a similar positive experience, that they enjoyed doing it more afterwards?

Participant 1: Well, I did like to do it, it was like, yeah, like I would do it more like once a month or something like that, but if you enforce it like once a day then it becomes like a chore and not interesting, but I agree with [Participant 6] that you we to introduce people to this kind of method, and to something like this, so that they know, like, that they can do it, and that things like this exists, and I guess [Participant 6] had the experience that it was actually fun in the end.

Participant 6: Yeah, because there was no need to enforce it to do it every day, maybe like once a week, once in two weeks it could be enough, and it wont be hard for them as well.

Moderator: Okay. So if self-reflection was going to become a bigger part of school, what class, or would there be a new class, what class would it fit into the best? English class, Latvian class, class lesson? How would you work it in if you had to?

Everyone: Hmmm.

Participant 6: Good question.

Participant 3: Maybe commercial science? Because we need to develop our businesses, so we could reflect on what we did and what we need to do, like, if there is like a need **unintelligible**, then you can like change the product or something like that, so it really could be a part of entrepreneurship, we could like see what we have done, and if we get really successful then we can show other people what we have done, like we could be a mentor for them, so we can teach them what could have helped, something like that.

Participant 2: I think that it could be done in like every lesson. Like, in the end of lesson. Even Latvian Language, so you learn something, like you learn everything about a work. And then you reflect on it! What did you learn, what you didn't learn, it would be good for that.

Moderator: Okay, so does anyone agree with [Participant 2] that it could be every lesson?

Participant 1: Yep.

Participant 6: I do.

Participant 5: I don't think so, because I don't remember how long ago how we had a lesson like creative thinking... last year, and it was once in a week, and it was a lesson where you talked, thinking creative. And I think it would be the perfect lesson for self-reflections. I don't think you would have to do it in every lesson, just once a week where it all comes together and you think about what you have done, things like that.

Participant 6: This kind of fits that lesson, I thought about it the same way, like if there was a lesson that fit it the most, creative thinking would be the one.

Participant 1: Yeah, but I think like uh...

Participant 6: Because you don't... Sorry... You don't need to do reflections in like sport or like lessons like that.

Participant 1: Well yeah, but still like I think that there's a difference between doing it in every lesson and doing it in one lesson, because in one lesson you would not reflect what you thought you would reflect on your life in general and what you have done. If you did it in every lesson, then you would focus on more on the subject and more on the lesson material that's been given to you.

Participant 6: But the question is, do you really need to reflect on the things that you learn or about your life in general?

Participant 1: Well, **laughs** yeah that is the question though we're trying to answer.

Participant 6: That's a really big discussion.

Participant 1: Yeah, **laughs** that is the big topic about this group interview.

Moderator: Well, so speaking about the big topic of this group interview, this next question is a very open-ended question and you can answer it in a lot of different ways and answer it basically however you want, but basically how did you feel while doing the self-reflection project? What is one word that you would use?

Participant 1: That's very difficult to put it into feelings in general, but I felt that it was useful, I did feel that sometimes it is needed to do that, but, um, as we discussed I don't think that it would be so useful to do it every single day and to have it forced upon you.

Moderator: Okay, so did anyone else feel that it was useful?

Everyone: **nods heads** "Yeah".

Participant 2: I felt that it was motivational.

Moderator: Okay, so why did you feel that it was motivational?

Participant 2: Hmm, because I tried writing journals before, but I didn't have the motivation every day to do it, but because it was homework I had motivation and now I can reflect on myself easier because now I know that it is not that hard. And like [Participant 1] said, useful.

Moderator: Okay, so did anyone else feel that it was motivational?

Participant 6: Yeah, because I have to organize my time better after seeing how much time I spent on really nonsense things.

Moderator: Okay, so it motivated you to do different things whereas for [Participant 2] it motivated her to maybe reflect some more.

Participant 6: Yeah, it really motivated me to see through my daily schedule and take care of the un-needed things and be productive and be more productive every day.

Moderator: Okay [Participant 3], what was one thing that you felt about it?

Participant 3: Other than like... a bit... When I did it sometimes it was like, uhh, like on Fridays I didn't have time to do it when we had to do it, and on Sunday I was just like bored.

Moderator: You felt that maybe it was a bit of a drag?

Participant 3: Yeah, a drag... Because I didn't do it on time, it was a drag.

Does anyone else agree with [Participant 3] that it felt like a drag to some extent?

Participant 6: At the very beginning.

Participant 2: Mmm hmm.

Participant 1: Yeah.

Participant 6: But when it started it was, I really enjoyed it.

Participant 2: Like when I heard the terms, like "you need to write ten sentences and reflect on one and then ten more sentences" or something like that, I thought "oh my god, such a big work, why do we need to do it?" But then when I started to do it, I think I just started to like it. Like I was scared at first.

Moderator: Okay, now did anyone else feel maybe not scared, but intimidated?

Participant 4: Ummm

Participant 1: Not really.

Moderator: Okay [Participant 4], what about for you?

Participant 4: It made me feel like an individual, but I don't know really how to explain it.

Moderator: "Independent" maybe?

Participant 4: Yeah.

Moderator: So how exactly did it make you feel independent?

Participant 4: That I am writing something down and then like reflecting and thinking about something that I have done that makes me like... learning.

Participant 5: I don't know how to call it, it was like emotional, because I didn't write on the same day on those things that I did, it was like I have to write about Friday, I did it on Monday, and I'd write it down and I'd just remember, "oh it was funny", and I'm smiling again, and it was just like emotional for me. It was fun to remember, because I didn't write bad things, just positive things that I liked in that day. So it was just nice to remember it.

Moderator: Okay, does anyone agree that they felt emotional a bit doing it thinking back to something that had happened.

Everyone: Yeah.

Moderator: Okay so [Participant 6] what was one thing that it made you feel?

Participant 6: I think um... I think it was a lot, a lot of emotions through it all, as I said at the beginning it was like, I really didn't want to do it but when I started doing it I felt like, like I started organizing my days better and I felt like I have achieved a good thing and I felt like really uplifted and happy.

Moderator: Okay, so the next question is, how did you feel about the part where you were speaking in class with a partner about what you had written?

Participant 1: Well, I like discussing things, and, what we did is we can also learn some new things about the other person, so uh, yeah, I think it was good. Because like also just studying in general if you don't ask a student, if he doesn't have to either hand it in or he doesn't have to do anything with his work, then he's just not going to do it, there's just no point in him doing it.

Okay, [Participant 3]?

Participant 3: Well, at first I felt like a little uncomfortable, because like myself, what I did in the last few days, but in the end talking to, like [Participant 1] for example, it actually felt quite good. Chatting about, just discussing some different things.

Participant 2: Well now I felt like I know more about my classmates, which was actually nice, like to know them on, like, a deeper level.

Moderator: Does anyone else agree with that, that you got to know people on a deeper level?

Multiple voices: Yeah.

Participant 4: Yes, that was what I was thinking about, and I agree with [Participant 2] that I learned a lot of new things about my classmates.

Moderator: [Participant 5], do you agree?

Participant 5: Discussions are just the best way to know your classmates better, so I think yes.

Participant 6: And I don't really have an opinion since I wasn't at school most of the time when we did this part, but the one time I did it was interesting because discussing things is much better than just writing things, it's like more, alive, and new. Which is better.

Moderator: Okay, so I just have one more question for everyone. Basically, would you recommend that this project be done for other English students? If not why, if so is there anything that you would change?

Participant 1: Yeah, I think I would recommend it to other English students, because uh like as we discussed its very useful to do it at least one time, to be introduced to this concept, and if you like it then do it more and if you don't then like, you don't have to. I think like the way we did was very difficult.

Participant 3: Well I think it improved out skills in English, because like we were translating **unintelligible** that you know that we did it in Latvian, but now we have to do it in English, and also we learned these tenses, past tenses, that also helped for the test. Like, studying **unintelligible**.

Participant 2: I think that it would be a good experience.

Participant 4: I think that it may be useful, but maybe once in a week.

Moderator: Okay, would anyone agree with [Participant 4] that [the journal entries] should be less often?

Multiple voices: Yeah.

Participant 4: Because some time you have to like uh, write a lot of things but some days you just can't think of things to write down.

Moderator: Okay, does anyone think that [the journal entries] should have been more frequent?

Everyone: No.

Moderator: Did anyone think that it was the right amount of times?

Multiple voices: A couple less, a few less.

Participant 2: How many times was it?

Participant 3: It was three or four times a week.

Participant 1: Four.

Moderator: Okay, [Participant 5], would you recommend it to be used, and for anything to be changed?

Participant 5: I'm the people who don't like reflecting on myself, but I think that it was really useful for me, so I would recommend it.

Participant 6: I would recommend it as well because other students will learn some new things about their time and how they spend it and maybe make some decisions out of it.

Moderator: Thank you. So now we're at the end, and I just want to know: does anyone have any final thoughts, either about self-reflection or the project in general to add?

Participant 1: No, I think that we discussed everything that we needed to cover.

Everyone: **nods**

Moderator: Okay, so thanks again very much everyone for your participation.

## Appendix 3: Student Questionnaire

### Reflection in School

#### Welcome to the Survey

Thank you for participating in this survey about self-reflection. You will answer a few questions about the self-reflection you do at school and during your free time. The results are completely anonymous, and individual surveys will not be shared with anyone.

Definitions:

According to Oxford's English Dictionary, to "reflect on" something is to "think deeply or carefully about it." "Self-reflection" is "serious thought about one's character and actions."

There are just eight questions, and the survey should only take roughly five minutes. Thank you in advance!

Next

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### Reflection in School

1. What class are you currently in?

2. Are you male or female?

- Male  
 Female

3. Please rate how important the following actions are to you:

	Very Unimportant	Somewhat Important	Neutral	Somewhat Important	Very Important
Reflecting on my learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reflecting on my life experiences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reflecting on the my future life plans	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**5. Please rate how often you do the following activities:**

	At least once per day	At least once per week	A few times per month	At least once per month	Less than once per month
I spend time in class reflecting on my learning.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I spend my free time reflecting on my learning.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I spend time in class reflecting on my life experiences.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I spend my free time reflecting on my life experiences.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I spend time in class reflecting on my future life plans.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I spend time outside of class reflecting on my future life plans.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**6. Please answer the questions below by entering the names of classes you take (you can write more than one per answer, or also write "none.")**

In which classes do you generally spend time reflecting on your learning?

In which classes do you generally spend time reflecting on your life experiences?

In which classes do you generally spend time reflecting on your future life plans?

**7. Please rate whether you would like to spend more or less time in class doing the following actions:**

	More Time	No Opinion	Less Time
Reflecting on my learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reflecting on my life experiences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reflecting on my future plans	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**8. In a few words, explain why self-reflection is or isn't important to you in general. (You can choose to leave this blank)**

Maģistra darbs „*Critical Incident Analysis to Develop Grade 11 Students' Self-Reflection Skills in English Lessons*” izstrādāts LU Pedagoģijas, psiholoģijas un mākslas fakultātē un **Bioloģijas** fakultātē.

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Autors: \_\_\_\_\_ Joseph Jack Horgan

*(paraksts)*

Rekomendēju/nerekomendēju darbu aizstāvēšanai

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*(zinātniskais grāds, akadēmiskais nosaukums, vārds, uzvārds, paraksts, datums)*

Recenzente: Mag. izgl. zin. lektore Anita Auziņa

*(zinātniskais grāds, akadēmiskais nosaukums, vārds, uzvārds)*

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Dekāna pilnvarotā persona: metodiķe Agnese Kozlovska \_\_\_\_\_

*(paraksts)*

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Komisijas sekretāre: Mag. izgl. zin. lektore Anita Auziņa \_\_\_\_\_

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