

Investigating Adults' Experiences with Slow Learner Reading as a Pedagogical Methods

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Abstract

This essay looks at slow reading as a pedagogical tool for enhancing higher education learning, with a particular emphasis on encouraging significant engagement with academic texts. This research challenges the conventional belief that effective learning only means speed and efficiency, based on findings from a qualitative case study conducted within a vocational teacher training program in Norway. This study examines slow reading as an in-depth learning strategy's multiple facets by using a qualitative approach inspired by critical pedagogy. Included in the inquiry are various data sources from a research and development project, along with the views and thoughts of both students and teachers. The study reveals how people see and engage with slow reading as a teaching method and how it affects their learning experiences. Notably, the study shows that slow reading encourages reflection, interaction, and exchange of experiences and new ideas. In the end, this helps create an inclusive and dynamic learning environment. Finally, this study emphasizes slow reading as a method of study in higher educational

Introduction

Fostering a dialogue between the sciences and humanities requires time for miscommunication. Not all science can be explained. Science takes time. (The Slow Science Manifesto, 2023) Techniques include memorizing, reading aloud, and focusing (Newkirk, 2010).

Time-effectiveness has a tremendous influence on academics, altering perceptions on learning and education. Success has made "good teacher" synonymous with "effective teacher." Increased focus on reading efficiency and understanding teaching dynamics has led to pupils becoming overwhelmed by the amount of information available (Wallace, 2004). Frustrated students struggle to acquire viewpoints, examine books, and enjoy studying owing to the extensive information needed for proficiency.

A reading skills training may greatly enhance pupils' academic progress, according to research. However, slow reading is often overlooked as a teaching technique (Cox et al., 2003). Slow reading may be a purposeful educational strategy to slow down individual or group reading. This attempt fosters ownership of one's time and learning path, enabling reflection, questioning, review, and conversation. This initiative introduced slow reading to small groups of four or five individuals as an academic activity. Participants stopped to reflect on passages, connecting new knowledge to past experiences. 2005 (Martin & Salj'o)

The research focuses on time-efficiency as the key answer in academics, drawing on current views about efficient reading approaches. This initiative aims to enhance students' learning experiences via an innovative strategy that challenges the current culture of quick absorption and information overload. How might collaborative slow reading boost higher education learning?

The research analyses many data sources to analyse the pros and cons of slow reading as a teaching method. The study's setting, theoretical principles, and research summary are presented in the following parts. Next, we discuss the methodological approach and its limits. Next, two instructors and students discuss their experiences. The debate concludes with factors based on the findings and their implications for higher education. Long-term development Globalization has altered time and space limits (Giddens, 1990). Many scientists want a respite from academic and social unpredictability. Berg & Seeber (2016), Konel (2019), and Stengers (2018) have highlighted the issues of excessive speed and strong competitiveness. According to Honore (2004), recent times have been referred to as "The Age of Rage" owing to their sluggish pace. It symbolizes our fast-paced, anxious

age. Quick answers and fast pleasure might overshadow the depth and richness of thoughtful, slow teaching procedures. Thomas Newkirk (2010) stressed the importance of reclaiming written language's aural aspects and finding inspiration in certain sections in his critique of superficial speed reading. He suggested strategies for instructors to help students read more slowly and deeply.

The master's program for vocational teachers

The study was conducted as part of a master's program specifically created for Norwegian students who are focusing on Vocational Education and Training (VET) didactics. Vocational teaching is a profession characterized by a kind of dual professionalism that is inherent in the professional identity of its practitioners (Andersson & Kopsen, 2015). The main objective of this program is to provide instructors from vocational fields with the skills necessary to connect their previous experiences with new didactic and pedagogical abilities (Colley et al., 2003; Eraut, 2004). The program, which spans two years and is undertaken on a full-time basis, offers students a range of training opportunities aimed at enhancing their teaching skills in vocational education and training settings (Norwegian University of Science and Technology, 2023a). It facilitates the cultivation of academic reading, research comprehension, and writing proficiencies, allowing students to conceptualize and implement instructional endeavours. Upon the completion of their academic endeavours, students disseminate their research outcomes to the scholarly community by means of their master's theses. The curriculum furthermore functions as a platform for the ongoing professional growth of vocational education and training (VET) instructors who choose to pursue further academic endeavours. This is often the case after accumulating substantial practical experience in a certain occupation prior to obtaining certification as VET teachers. The course has been purposely developed to cater to individuals from various occupational backgrounds, such as healthcare, industry, telecommunications, and other sectors. Participants come together in multidisciplinary groups, which allows them to improve their occupational skills and educational knowledge. This collaborative setting recognizes the value of practical knowledge. The primary objective of this program is to support the ongoing development of competencies and professional growth for students throughout their academic trajectory and beyond (Norwegian University of Science and Technology, 2023b). The participants were actively involved in reflecting on their vocational practice, which allowed them to initiate efforts aimed at improving their competences and ultimately contributing to the advancement of vocational education in their respective sectors. Participants possess a diverse range of skills and abilities that enable them to methodically examine vocational practices, plan and implement research projects, guide educational processes, and make valuable contributions towards improving the vocational and didactic aspects of their respective organizations. The study's context is crucial for the interpretation of the results, given that the student group exhibits a significant amount of life experience and practical knowledge, yet often has difficulties with academic reading and writing.

Theoretical Frameworks and Conceptual Constructs

The group in this research is made up of adult learners with prior experience teaching vocational subjects. Within the educational system, the curriculum covers viewpoints on democracy, knowledge creation, and social power dynamics. We enable students to study autonomously and support their continuous growth by providing them with the means to interpret and integrate their experiences into the academic knowledge system. Slow reading as a group-learning technique facilitates experience creation and sharing on a larger scale in addition to helping with individual understanding.

Education has long been seen as a public benefit in the Nordic nations, intimately associated with democratic principles (Telhaug et al., 2006). Students are seen as equal members of the academic community here, not as inputs into a production process but rather as autonomous beings with agency and control over their own lives. These viewpoints emphasize group cooperation over solitary study and project-based learning, fostering a horizontal framework that encourages problem-solving, reflection, negotiation, and conversation (Sørbo, 2002). These views of education as emancipation are essential to placing this study in context because both teachers and students in this particular setting have expectations regarding how education is organized and think that learning objectives go beyond test scores and individual student performance.

The theoretical framework is predicated on the idea that both university pedagogy and pedagogy in general specifically, are impacted by cultural and normative presumptions about the nature of human interactions, the goal of educational activities, as well as the best instructional strategies pertinent to the topic (Biesta, 2015). In order to develop a really reflective teaching style in higher. It is essential in education to transcend the traditional teaching paradigms. A educational strategy like this would be defined by a steadfast dedication to challenging the core presumptions ingrained in educational procedures. A more thoughtful Pedagogy need to be cognizant of the complex web of human motivations and reasoning that inevitably appears within many educational contexts (Kincheloe et al., 2011) and could help educators and students transcend prevailing

narratives about effectiveness. and instrumentality (Agger, 1992, for instance). Furthermore, this kind of educational strategy might function as a dynamic framework, consistently incorporating fresh perspectives obtained from the ever-changing learning situations, and appreciating the teaching process and pupils conversing with one another and sharing knowledge. To adopt a reflective pedagogy, one must reject the inflexibility of conventional instructional frameworks and naturally adjust to the diverse learning settings that arise in different academic pursuits. Within Essentially, it is a philosophy of education that actively strives to harness change rather than just accepting it, resulting in a more a welcoming and flexible environment for schooling. Rather than concentrating just on the idea of "effective education," educators need to address deeper concerns about what's included in "good education." This change in viewpoint highlights the theoretical aspect of our conceptualization of learning. and reading in contexts of higher learning. Social constructivists emphasize the vital role that social settings and interactions play in the acquisition of information and skills, while cognitive learning theories heavily emphasize memory (Schunk, 2012). Literacy and literary education have long been valued for their ability to advance social and personal prosperity.

Progress (Sundstrom, Sjodin, 2020). But embracing a social perspective on writing and reading enables us to go beyond the idea of Rather than seeing literacy as a universal set of transferable abilities, Mannion acknowledges the creation of various literacies within social situations. in 2009, et al.).

Critical literacy views illuminate the ways in which instructional methods and curriculum may dehumanize and alienate pupils (Janks, Morrell, 2015; 2010). In this setting, a student reader is an active participant in the process of learning rather than just a passive participant moulded by diverse expectations, material circumstances, and instructional techniques, and positioned within a specific social and material environment (Sundstrom " Sjodin, " 2020). The notion of group learning is relevant to understanding the pedagogical features of reading in higher education in the area of critical pedagogy. Group learning procedures include a variety of perspectives, therefore it's critical for facilitators to understand the complexity of group learning (Lakey, 2010).

Fostering learning environments in higher education for adult learners

According to Karge et al. (2011), educators may use innovative teaching methods to encourage adult learners' active engagement and critical thinking. Creating favourable learning settings requires encouraging students to reflect, allowing them to continue learning beyond school (Allan & Clarke, 2007). Additionally, helping students understand their learning styles might improve learning outcomes (Rogers, 2009). Atkins and Brown (2002) emphasize that student response is as crucial as the teacher's efforts in effective learning.

Teaching is an engaging process that helps students learn intentionally. Students must understand the learning process before determining their learning style and developing successful study skills (McKeachie, 1986; Weinstein et al., 1988). Teachers may teach reading skills to improve students' comprehension (Küçükoglu, 2013). Block and Israel (2005) noted that prediction, connection-making, imagery, inference, questioning, and summarizing improve reading comprehension. Duke and Pearson (2009) emphasize the importance of explicitly identifying and illustrating these techniques, followed by group and partner practice, think-aloud procedures, and individual use. Adult learners with basic reading skills use different instructional methods to improve reading comprehension. Given their reading skills and life experiences, adult learners benefit from strategies that improve critical thinking, context-based knowledge, and the ability to decipher complex texts. Customizing teaching to meet adult learners' needs maximizes reading comprehension improvement in educational settings. Fenwick and Tennant (2004) define learning as the acquisition of new skills, perspectives, cooperative behaviours in social situations, and active community participation.

The surge of 25-year-olds enrolled in higher education over the last 50 years shows that the educational system is evolving (Caruth, 2014). Statistics Norway (2018) shows that Norwegian higher education has one of the oldest student populations in Europe. In teacher education, this study focuses on students' further education. Policies to improve schools may motivate this endeavour (Smeplass, 2018; Smeplass et al., 2023). After 20 years of job experience, many vocational didacticists prefer to attend university. Older students, who have more life experiences, have different academic content needs than younger pupils, who pursue a more linear educational path. To help adult learners, adopt innovative teaching methods that leverage on their prior experiences. Adult learners actively want group aid to learn and comprehend, according to Dirkx (1997). Concepts like "agentic engagement" (Reeve, 2013) and "student-centered learning environments" (Doyle, 2023) provide the foundation for educational methods that recognize and integrate adult learners' extensive knowledge and experience in the classroom.

Methods

This research design aimed to improve teaching practices and create more effective teaching methods that would facilitate collaborative learning and encourage students to reflect on their study strategies (Baeten et al., 2010; Beaty, 1998; Wilson, 2018) as they progress through the master's program. Multi-method case study design (Merriam, 2015) with qualitative approach informed by critical pedagogy. The study technique uses experience narratives to investigate the complex and subtle elements of teaching and learning (Webster & Mertova, 2007). Reconstructing how research participants valued slow reading is its goal (Connelly & Clandinin, 1987). Additionally, the research examines course curriculum by comparing students' course responses to instructors' written remarks.

The course examined the teaching profession, including professional competency and educational rule interpretation. Documentation was the foundation for professional communication, including the assessment of vocational labor and vocational proficiencies in pedagogy (Norwegian University of Science and Technology, 2023c). Students generated, examined, and debated numerous sorts of evidence from their didactic efforts, linking their roles as occupational workers and aspiring educators. Sessions were organized around numerous themes over four weeks. The role of the person in a group, quality in education, a community of practice, reflection, and critical thinking, and democracy and democratic learning processes in education were covered. Two professors and eight master's students participated in the study. Some students were acquainted with each other before the course, but most were not. The first gathering was for reciprocal introductions. After that, the students organized two semester-long collaborative groups.

Long, rigorous sessions lasting days were arranged throughout the academic year, with limited lecture frequency and length. This format allowed lengthy and intense collaboration across sessions, helping the slow reading technique succeed. Participants also have enough time to socialize within the facility. Slow reading was introduced at the start of the semester. Five intentional reading sessions were held in campus collaborative groups during the semester. Eight independent reading assignments were sent between group meetings to supplement these sessions. The course curriculum included texts related to group processes and collaboration (Ehn & Lovgren, 2006; Røkenes & Hanssen, 2012; Wenger, 2004), pedagogical theory (Dale, 2003; Dewey, 2005; Biesta, 2014), and academic quality and processes (Elbow, 1998; Rolf et al., 1993). Scandinavian and English texts were assigned.

Data was collected throughout four weeks of one academic semester. These weeks were intense and concentrated.

Students were expected to actively participate in reading and writing between sessions during the four-week term. This technique aimed to create and maintain a positive learning environment and encourage student collaboration. The professors actively participated in slow reading groups throughout the semester. Researchers observed and interacted with students throughout these sessions. Reading group organization and slow reading sessions went as follows:

1. The instructor chose slow-reading books.
2. **Long-lasting reading groups:** Students and instructors formed four- to five-person reading groups that stayed together throughout the semester.
3. Introduction to slow reading: Participants discussed the methods and tactics used to read slowly as a group. Intermittent reading or assigning a reader for a session were utilized.
4. **Reading sessions:** Each session lasted 1–1.5 hours. At intervals, groups would stop working to converse. Sometimes these arguments went beyond the reading content.
5. **Summarization and reflection:** After each reading session, the group summarized and reflected on their newfound knowledge. After that, group members independently reflected on their learning outcomes and techniques.

Data Source	Material	Description
Course materials	5, textbooks, 3 compendium articles/chapters, 1 white paper, 1 course description and 1 students' evaluation report	Textbooks, readings, and course resources
Teacher's reflections	1 elaborated note (one per teacher)	Two instructors' overall reflections on slow reading
Student's course	5 reflections	Students' final reflections on slow

reflections		reading
Student's reflections	session 12 individual notes	Students wrote and discussed their reflection notes twice during the course
Teacher's session notes	3 session notes	Notes after each group session with observations and reflections

Research Results

This research analyses participants' reflective notes to measure their judgment of slow reading and its integration within the course.

3.1. Multifaceted learning experiences for students

Rogers (2009) stresses the need of students knowing their learning style to emphasize the importance of slow reading as an efficient learning method. This emphasizes the importance of pupils identifying their learning styles. The following text shows a learner who struggles to understand slow reading and develop a methodical strategy to its proper execution.

Time seemed to be utilized inefficiently at first. The individual's full-time work and academic interests may motivate them to effectively complete chores and obligations. I felt this when deliberately reading items I had read separately. I also found that this procedure worked well with difficult materials. Some literature is thick, making it hard to understand. However, discussing a topic thoroughly was good. Note that reading the material aloud before the conversation may not have been required. I think leisurely reading is appropriate for this subject. I believe that you may chose important and difficult literature and set up time for in-depth examination and understanding. The first slow reading effort with recognized literature was easy. Individuals' initial mistrust implies contemporary reading's quick pace (Berg & Seeber, 2016). Rapid and effective information absorption has become practically natural, making purposeful reading slowdown appear counterintuitive. Despite this cynicism, the student recognizes the importance of leisurely reading, especially sophisticated literature. This shows the tension between modern reading habits and the benefits of a slower, more thoughtful approach to dense literature. In the following comment, a student explains the purpose of thoughtful and leisurely reading.

3.2. Insights from cultivating inclusive learning environments via the utilization of slow reading techniques.

The students' remarks highlight the relevance of educational investigation into slow reading's learning facilitation. This component of the study is based on course observations and recording, teacher self-reflection, student feedback, and various instructors' data. Pedagogy and educational theory underpin slow reading to promote learning. This teacher's role extends beyond power, aligning with educational paradigms that value inclusion, communication, and recognition (Biesta, 2015). This theoretical framework emphasizes creating a pleasant learning environment and honoring each student's individual identity and ambitions. These are essential for meaningful student interaction (Kincheloe et al., 2011).

As a university lecturer, the researcher has focused on helping students create a collaborative and information-sharing atmosphere during group sessions. The instructional framework showed the teacher as a facilitator and active participant in conversations, despite the class's authority. Analysis of reflection notes throughout time shows that the initial encounter with students was vital to building a robust, inclusive, and supportive learning community. This first meeting gave students a secure area to explore their learning experiences, perspectives, and concerns. The first intentional reading session emphasized the need of recognizing each kid to foster a sense of security in the classroom. From the start, students' names and interests and frustrations were documented. As they began their academic studies, students were asked about their backgrounds and goals. Student responses and teacher observations were meticulously recorded throughout these sessions. The speaker honestly addressed their personal experiences as an educator and researcher, including their tendency to utilize accelerated reading practices to improve reading efficiency. The quick pace of academia may make it difficult to find a "definitive interpretation" of the stuff they would study.

The study found that sluggish reading groups need a willingness to accept students' tangential talks, deviations, and irritations, per university curricula. Careful preparation preceded casual reading. The teacher's opinions were regularly disputed during reading sessions, exposing students' different interpretations of the same texts and language. The teacher's openness to new interpretations helped her learn the material. Slow reading included examining phrases and longer portions. This procedure was flexible due to group debates and agreements. The teacher intentionally gave the group liberty in choosing their approach to each book, despite occasional student

requests for help on whether to continue or take a break. The bulk of time was spent talking rather than reading. Reading aloud with chosen readers enhances the reading sessions. The calmness of the collaborative contemplation process allowed participants to spend minutes repeating passages before discussing their meaning and significance.

When the coworker first saw slow reading, she gained valuable knowledge since she had not been exposed to it as a student. The speaker suggested that quality is linked to efficiency and efficient learning. She believed slow reading helped reverse this condition, as shown by her written notes. She said the strategy was beneficial and fascinating for both the topic matter we studied and the collaborative learning approach. The author said, "We have engaged with various genres of texts using this approach." The first section included recognition and communication. Text grammaticality was easy to understand. I think leisurely reading helps build relationships, comprehend the need of appreciation in collaborative collaborations, and improve group dynamics. We discussed the consequences of thanking each other in a collaborative project. User text lacks academic knowledge to rewrite. The other compositions were academically hard originals. Examination showed that the technique was acceptable for understanding the topic.

Discussion – Potentials and limitations of the approach

Slow reading as a teaching strategy in higher education challenged academia's ethos of speed and efficiency. The study asked: "How can slow reading, when embraced collectively, contribute to higher education learning?" The study highlighted the need of time and meaningful interaction with academic literature, frequently overlooked in today's fast-paced digital age.

Modern higher education typically prioritizes efficiency and speed above knowledge and critical engagement with course topics. This pressure to quickly absorb material may overwhelm children, preventing them from exploring other views and questioning texts. The research uses critical and reflexive pedagogy to challenge existing educational norms and practices, and promote questioning core assumptions about teaching and learning.

Slow reading in groups helps adult higher education students overcome various problems.

Many students fail to read and critically analyse academic literature for their programs. Slow reading in a group may solve this problem. It helps pupils decipher academics and improve their learning skills together.

Participants in this research were vocational didactics master's students. They provided substantial professional expertise from many fields. However, many had less university experience. This unusual set of participants were adult learners with an abundance of practical knowledge who were refining their study skills as part of their higher education program. Interestingly, participants' shared weakness in satisfying academic expectations, such as digesting and writing texts, might be beneficial. It laid the groundwork for deep learning via conversation and reflection. This common experience of academic problems fostered friendship and encouraged participants to participate in serious conversations and introspective activities during slow reading periods.

The investigation shows that delayed reading affects people differently depending on the context. This highlights the intricacy of this instructional reading technique, which inspires and frustrates. Students reported that some found slow reading effective when performed independently, whereas others did not see learning results. Consider the pros and cons of slow reading as a group learning activity. It may work better in certain learning situations.

The slow reading method we offer in this research is not predefined. Instead, it reflects a desire to slow down reading and connect with materials. In smaller groups, we initiated an academic exercise where participants halt at certain moments in the text to think, debate, and connect new information to old experiences and ideas. Slow reading encourages collaborative thinking by developing and sharing experiences on a larger scale.

Five important factors arise when considering sluggish reading in higher education:

- 1. Select Text:** Slow reading requires careful book selection since the conversations are as important as the reading. Provide themes and subjects and evaluate texts' conversation potential.
- 2. Group Engagement:** Before, during, and after slow reading, groups should debate the method's efficacy and choose books for future sessions.
- 3. Instructor Facilitation:** Instructors should let the group determine when to halt, what to discuss, and when to continue. Members should exchange experiences, ask questions, and consider other viewpoints.

4. Openness to Unpredictable objectives: The open procedure fosters group debates, making it difficult to plan learning objectives for each session. Since it emphasizes non-instrumental learning, it is hard to suggest.

5. Complementary Learning Tools: Slow reading should enhance other learning. It works well for certain open discussions but not all. Thus, educators should consider it one of multiple teaching instruments.

Nordic higher education embraces critical pedagogy, questioning the traditional emphasis on speed over quality in teaching and learning. This technique may reveal information that speed-reading approaches hide. The slow reading groups described in this experiment show that people may learn as much from one other as from books. However, students and teachers must see the technique as one of multiple collaborative learning ways to succeed. Further research is needed to determine whether slow reading is more successful than other in-depth reading strategies.

Slow reading affects academic literature differently, according to course participants' comments. Slow reading may enable in-depth learning, but there are numerous drawbacks. In a higher education world characterized by quantitative quality indicators and instrumental learning outcomes instruments, these concerns must be carefully considered. However, slow reading strategies may provide new insights and spark debates among adult learners who are open to exploring this way together. Individuals and society benefit from learning and developing skills. Thus, time and effort spent in specialized learning situations should enable students to grow and learn more. Slow reading is an alternate strategy that builds students' reflective communication abilities, acknowledges their past experiences, and encourages new ways of listening in an inclusive learning environment. Such an approach to developing learning and reading abilities in higher education offers a richer and more meaningful education rather than mandating the "correct" way to comprehend and process information. This requires educators to rethink their definitions of great education and broaden their methods for empowering students. Integrating slow reading with other tactics may enhance learning in higher education by promoting critical thinking, conversation, and deep engagement with academic literature. Slow reading may affect educational environments, but further study is required.

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