

Case Studies

Case Study 1

At the beginning of the project, this student declared that they were aware they reading presently in their VA and also in bed at night before bed. They showed, on the visualised brain, that they felt Revision was most important for learning, followed by Reading for Pleasure, then Exams, then Time.

When asked about their feelings about Reading for Pleasure, they wrote, 'I just found it easier to concentrate on reading, I had to move my phone away as that was a big distraction... I feel relaxed, my brain felt like my brain was working.' They went on to say, 'this world needs colour, you want to get interested in your book and for me its difficult when theres no visible image in the book.' [sic]

This learner greatly enjoyed the Reading for Pleasure time. Having cited Spongebob comics as their favourite reads, which was indicative of their reading age (they tended towards the slim graphic novels we had provided. They showed a growth of Reading Age of 0.01% across the three months and increasing the ZPD range for book choices – going up a colour, which they were motivated by.

The student has since left their main VOC course due to inability to meet its demands. However, this initiative clearly gave them confidence and pleasure in reading and an improved capacity in reading skills.

Case Study 2

This student was identified by the English tutor early on in the project as a reluctant reader. They were dissociated from the beginning, both from the project and other learners. After having scored relatively highly on the reading age (almost matching their own age) they showed little interest in the books available to them that had been shortlisted so the tutor questioned them about their interests. They initially seemed to show little interest in anything other than gaming on their Xbox but, when questioned about the nature of their enjoyment, showed interests in themes of conflict and displacement via the genres of science fiction and fantasy.

The tutor chose several books from the adult fiction section along these themes and talked through the stories of each one. They chose a Kurt Vonnegut (*Cat's Cradle*) and proceeded through this for the next three weeks. Whereas they admitted an interest in the apocalyptic topic of the text and was happy to discuss the nature of time, they still didn't try and take the book home or engage with it beyond the reading time. This text was the first novel they had read in over five years, having avoided it at high school, choosing to study the exam revision approaches instead.

At the end of the initiative test period this learner and one other was invited to discuss the reading approach. They wanted to engage with the nature of the project, particularly its relevance to their VOC study: 'Why should I read stories? I like watching Youtube videos and listen to podcasts about cars and design. I'd rather spend my time reading things that are going to benefit me.' They then, unsurprisingly, sought to expound upon what was important in life, which offered the tutor an opportunity to guide debate onto the nature of critical thinking. It should be noted that this student had not spoken to this extent since the start of any course at college year, as corroborated by his VOC tutor.

This student benefitted from the time that reading in VOC time offered as they eventually acknowledged that discussing the nature of ideas and how they inform behaviour had illuminated their understanding of processes, primarily social.