



EFL learners' perception of the project-based learning method in extensive reading course

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ABSTRACT

The lack of English reading ability in Indonesian students is a common problem, and many times the teacher uses the Project-Based Learning (PBL) method to help students improve their English reading ability. This study wants to portray students' perception of the PBL method in the English extensive reading course. Data of this study were collected through interviews. The participants of this research involved five students from the English Extensive Reading class. The data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman analysis technique. By using a narrative inquiry, this study found that, according to the students' perception, the teacher provides projects that aim to support understanding of the material that has been given to students. In that activity, the teacher has a role as a facilitator. She guides the students to do the project and provides feedback to them. However, in the process of implementing PBL, the students find it difficult in terms of time because the project takes a long time. Overall, PBL help students comprehend better in the English extensive reading course.

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Introduction

The lack of English reading ability in Indonesian students is a common problem. The teachers used various learning methods that can improve students' English reading comprehension. One of the most popular methods for English reading is the Project-Based Learning (PBL) method. According to Bell (2010), PBL is a learning method that involves student literacy skills, starting from reading, writing, and speaking. The teacher gives students freedom in their learning and makes them select their own ways to show their more understanding. The students will have motivated to finish their assignments (Bell, 2010).

Project-Based Learning (PBL) is a learning method that can be applied at all levels of education. The aim of the PBL method is to find solutions to the problems and help students to learn about how to solve the problems and develop critical thinking skills (Muniarti, 2016). According to Bruce (2008), Project-Based Learning not only improves students' motivation but also improves students' success rates. PBL allows students to choose and create projects to give them freedom and ownership of their learning. Bruce (2008) claimed that students are no longer asked to memorize and reread the facts to the teacher.

Reading is one of the most important skills in the English language which students must master. Reading introduces them to improve new vocabulary, materials, and information that will be used with different language skills (Grabe & Stoller, 2002). The best reader has terribly high success in speaking, writing, and listening tasks. That is as a result of they gained input through extensive reading to improve their reading skills. Therefore, it is very important for learners to master their English reading skills each intensively and extensively for effective global communication (Anderson, 2012).

The Extensive Reading course is offered to the students in the second semester of the English Education study program. The purpose of the course is to help the students recognize, read, understand and enjoy a wide variety of authentic reading text in the academic course. According to Renandya and Jacobs (2016), Extensive Reading is reading large amounts of text, focusing on general understanding. Extensive Reading helps students to read at a rate faster, a faster reading speed is important for reading fluency (Renandya & Jacobs, 2016).

This research focuses on the students' perception of the Project-Based Learning method in the extensive reading course. By using a narrative inquiry, this research aims to investigate students' perception of the PBL method in an English Extensive Reading course. The research includes participants from the second-semester students of an extensive reading class at the English Education Department at one of public Islamic universities in Central Java, Indonesia.

Method

The design of this research is a descriptive qualitative approach by employing a literature study from relevant books and journal articles. Nassaji (2015) claimed that this type of research is also becoming increasingly used in the teaching and learning field of second languages because qualitative descriptive research is very suitable for L2 class teaching studies and real questionable. This research uses a narrative inquiry, which is a useful method that can be used in a variety of contexts and disciplines. Meanwhile, the analytical process employs Miles and Huberman's (1984) analysis technique.

The extensive reading course is chosen as the context of the study because in extensive reading class used the Project-Based Learning method. The extensive reading course is the compulsory course for the students in the second semester of the English Education study program at the English Education Department at public Islamic universities in Central Java, Indonesia.

The participants of this research are second-semester students who joined the extensive reading class at the university. The researcher chooses students from the English

Education Department in the Academic year of 2018/2019 because they are used the Project-Based Learning method in their English Extensive reading class. Five students from the extensive reading class will participate in the interviews. This research uses structured interviews for asking open questions and to obtain more detailed responses (Gray, 2004). The duration of each interview is thirty minute. The theme of interview questions included 1) the opinion about the implementing of PBL in the Extensive Reading classroom, 2) the role of teachers and students in the process of application of the PBL method, and 3) the benefits of using PBL in the Extensive Reading classroom.

Findings and discussion

Extensive reading through project-based learning

Reading is one of the most important skills in the English language which students must master. Reading introduces them to improve new vocabulary, materials, and information that will be used with different language skills (Grabe & Stoller, 2002). The Extensive Reading course is offered to the students in the second semester of the English Education study program. The purpose of the course is to help the students recognize, read, understand and enjoy a wide variety of authentic reading text in the academic course.

Extensive Reading is an English language course in which learners are involved to read lots of easy material in a new language. They select the reading material by themselves and read it by own way. They read for general, the whole meaning, and read for enjoyment and information. The students are encouraged to increase their comfort in reading materials that can be read easily and confidently (Bamford & Day, 2004).

There are many researchers who define about Project-Based Learning. According to Bell (2010), PBL is a learning method that involves student literacy skills, start from reading, writing, and speaking. Project-Based Learning (PBL) is the way to engage students in English reading skills and give them a sense of ownership of their own learning. Project-Based Learning is a key strategy for creating independent thinkers and learners (Bell, 2010). Muniarti (2016) claimed that Project-Based Learning is a learning method that can be applied at all levels of education. The aims of the Project-Based Learning method are to find solutions to the problems and help students to learn about how to solve the problems and develop critical thinking skills. According to Bruce (2008), PBL allows students to choose and make projects because it gives them more ownership of their learning.

According to Afriana, Permanasari, and Fitriani (2016), PBL is a student-centered learning method that provides meaningful learning experiences for students. The learning experience is built based on the PBL learning process. Tutik (2015) claimed that Project Based Learning method is a learning method that provides opportunities for teachers to manage the learning process by involving project work. Project work is a form of work that contains complex tasks based on challenging questions and problems. Project work is guides students to design, solve problems, make decisions, carry out investigative activities, and provide opportunities for students to work independently.

In Indonesia, the project-based learning method is designed as an innovative learning method that will meet the demands of 21s century learning and the 2013 curriculum. PBL is important to be applied in student learning activities in Indonesia. There are five reasons for the importance of PBL according to Nurhayati (2019), in which PBL is an innovative method

that fits the demands of the 2013 curriculum as well as the demands of 21st-century competency development, trains students ability to be sensitive (think critically) to problems and find solutions to solve these problems, provides real experiences for students in completing a collaborative work (project), provides opportunities for each student to be actively involved in a project according to the talents and interests of each individual, and is easy to apply in learning activities in all subjects and at all levels of education.

Meanwhile, according to Fleming (2000), there are other compelling reasons to implement Project-Based Learning. First, Project-Based Learning challenges students to use their minds creatively, independently, and responsibly, which gives them a sense of fulfillment and achievement. Second, the outcome of Project Based Learning is a better understanding of the topic, deeper learning, higher-level reading, and improved learning motivation.

The important role in the implementation of the Project-Based Learning method is the teacher, students, and the environment. The teacher has a role as a facilitator and guide in project implementation. Students have a more dominant role because students are more active in groups or individually to design, compile project schedules, implement the projects, and make a project report. The environment is a learning facility for students. Students can be used and access various learning resources around the school, home, or through the internet to find and explore material or concepts related to the project. In detail, the roles of the teacher and students are described as follows (Nurhayati, 2019).

According to Alldabus (2018), there are some challenges in implementing of Project-Based Learning. In relation to challenges related to teachers, some teachers assume that PBL is time-consuming and they can't cover as much material as a traditional lecture-based style. Another challenge is that some pre-service teachers are not confident in implementing PBL because the students would create too much noise. Meanwhile, challenges related to students involve some of the students worked on the project very quickly only focused on finishing their project rather than learning from the process. This can be attributed to the general fact that students were still exam-oriented and interested in getting high scores rather than acquiring skills.

Edstrom and Kolmos (2014) claimed that implementation of Project-Based Learning in the classroom can help students to develop long-term learning abilities. Project-Based Learning encourages students to practice working productively and cooperatively with other students, and teachers. They learn to speak, listen and make decisions in team settings which represent a growing number of work environments. Students also develop other skills that are essential for future academic or workforce pursuit planning, organization, and time management.

There are some previous researches conducted by several researchers. Barr and Chinwonno (2016) found that Project-Based Reading can affect English reading ability. The research from Barr and Chinwonno discusses Project-Based Learning in English reading ability that is similar to this research. The difference between this study and Barr and Chinwonno's research is from the setting and participant.

Kelly (2010) conducted research with the title "The Motivating Students to Read through Project-Based Learning. The research shows that students were motivated to read the content area of the texts because they work collaboratively with other students and are

given choices through Project-Based Learning. The research from Kelly is investigating Project Based Learning method that can motivate students to read which is similar to this research. The difference between this research and Kelly's research is from the setting and participant. This research will focus on Extensive Reading classes.

Maria (2017) conducted research with the title "Project-Based Learning in Reading: An Exploratory Study at a Colombian Public School." The research shows that Project Based Learning can help students in English reading. The research from Maria investigates the influence of Project-Based Learning in students reading process to enhance comprehension, which is similar to this research. This research will focus on Extensive Reading classes that are different from Maria's research.

Poonpon (2018) researched with the title Enhancing English Skills Through Project-Based Learning. The research found that Project Based Learning can help students to enhance reading comprehension and English skills. The research investigated students' opinions about the implementation of project-based learning in English classrooms that is similar to this research. The difference between this research and Poonpon's research is from the participant and setting.

In the English extensive reading course, the teacher provides projects to students

In learning activities in the extensive reading class, the teacher provides projects to students that aim to support understanding of the material that has been given to students. The projects given to students are reading log projects and novel reading projects looking for intrinsic and extrinsic elements that are made into interesting posters or mini-books. It can be seen from the interview:

There is a project in the extensive reading class, where we read novels and at the end of the semester we will make a poster based on the novel which contains intrinsic and extrinsic elements. In addition, there is a reading log project (Mark, WhatsApp interview, May 18, 2021).

In extensive reading class, the teacher provides projects to make mini-books or posters for the final project based on short stories or novels that are read by students. Every week there is also an individual reading log project (Lisa, WhatsApp interview, May 18, 2021).

In extensive reading class, the teacher provides an individual project namely reading logs. We are asked to write down what we read and get after reading the books or novels. The reading log will be checked every 2 or 3 weeks (Jenny, WhatsApp interview, May 18, 2021).

The teacher gave a project, namely a reading log project. We are asked to read freely whether we wanted to read how many books. Then the students write down a paper which contains the contents of the story, the characters, the title, the values that can be taken, and the author (Rose, WhatsApp interview, May 18, 2021).

In extensive reading class, the teacher gave a project reading log. Reading log is a project that students freely to read books that we want (Mina, WhatsApp interview, May 18, 2021).

Based on the interview data, it shows that in the extensive reading class the teacher provides several projects to students. This form of project can be seen in the sentences of "Project to make mini-books or posters for the final project based on a short story or novel that students read." In this case, the project makes students free to create works and be creative according to their respective interest. This is in line with Bell's (2010) view that PBL enables students to get freedom in their learning and to make them free to select their own ways to show their more understanding. Likewise, PBL allows students to choose and make

projects because it gives them more ownership of their learning (Bruce, 2008). Project-based learning can be applied at the university level as well as a high school and junior high school because PBL is easy to apply in learning activities in all subjects (Nurhayati, 2019). Project-based learning can be applied at all levels of education (Muniarti, 2016).

Project-based learning enables students to manage time and make a plan

The project that is carried out by students not only makes students learn about the material that they have learned. Students can manage time management and can make a plan.

From this project, I can manage time management and be able to make plans, because surely when you want to do something, you have to plan it first and we also have other projects besides the Extensive Reading class, so we have to be smart in managing our time (Mark, Whatsapp interview, May 18, 2021).

From the project, I can manage time management and be able to make plans, because when working on projects I set aside time separately. So I get used to managing time (Lisa, WhatsApp interview, May 18, 2021).

From the project, I can manage time management and be able to make plans, because in other classes there are also other projects so I have to divide my time and make a plans so that the project can be completed with maximum results (Jenny, WhatsApp interview, May 18, 2021).

From this project, I can manage time management and be able to make plans because the project has to be completed on time, so I have to be on time and have to share my time with work at home too (Rose, WhatsApp interview, May 18, 2021).

From the project, I can manage management time and be able to make a plans, because we should finish the project on time (Mina, WhatsApp interview, May 18, 2021).

The interview data show that PBL students can manage time and make plans to work on the project. Some sentences can be evidence for time management, such as "When working on a project I set aside time separately. So I got used to managing time" and "We make a plan so that the project can be completed with maximum results." In this case, students are given the responsibility to complete a project on time and the results can be maximized. This is supported by other research that Project-Based Learning makes students develop other skills that are essential for future academic or workforce pursuit planning, organization, and time management (Edstrom & Kolmos, 2014).

The important role of teachers and students in the implementation of PBL

The role of the teacher in the learning process is very important, but in the application of the PBL method, the role of students is also very important. The following is the student's statement in the interview.

The role of the teacher is to explain the material and direct us about the task. Meanwhile, the role of the student is to do the project well (Mark, WhatsApp interview, May 18, 2021).

The role of the teacher helps guide the course of the project, while the role of students is to work on projects and ask questions if anyone does not understand (Lisa, WhatsApp interview, May 18, 2021).

The teacher's role is to provide instructions for working on projects, provide explanations, provide feedback, monitor the progress of what students have done, check students' understanding. The role of students in working on the project. It will run well and we can get benefits from the project (Jenny, WhatsApp interview, May 18, 2021).

The role of the teacher in assessing the results of the project, directing students to carry out the project, then providing feedback and the role of students understand the project, and do the project well. If you have trouble, you can ask the teacher (Rose, WhatsApp interview, May 18, 2021).

The role of the teacher is to give instructions for the project and provide a feedback. The role of students do the project and understand the material (Mina, WhatsApp interview, May 18, 2021).

Based on the interview data, it shows that an important role in implementing PBL is teachers and students (Nurhayati, 2019). Some sentences can be evidence that teacher and student have an important role in implementing PBL, "The role of the lecturer to help guide the project and provide feedback" and "the role of students understand the project, and do the project well." In this case, the teacher has a role as a facilitator, guiding the course of the project and providing feedback to students. This is in line with Tutik (2015) stating that the Project-Based Learning method provides opportunities for teachers to manage the learning process by involving project work. Students have a more dominant role because students are more active in projects. This is supported by other research that PBL is a student-centered learning method that provides meaningful learning experiences for students (Afriana et al., 2016).

PBL method helps increase students' motivation

Reading is an activity that is very important to improve reading skills. However, some students feel less motivated to read. The PBL method can support increasing student motivation. The followings are an excerpt from interviews with students about reading motivation.

Before being given the project I liked reading and from that project, I previously only liked reading Indonesian books, now I like reading English (Mark, WhatsApp interview, May 18, 2021).

I like to read but rarely read books in English and I don't like reading English texts. This project made me read more often than before because I inevitably had to read and became motivated to read (Lisa, WhatsApp interview, May 18, 2021).

I don't really like reading but from the project, I am motivated to read because of reading you can get any information so I read more often (Jenny, WhatsApp interview, May 18, 2021).

I like reading and from that project it made me read more often than before because before that I read about 1 book once a week and 1 short story a week. But when there was this project, I used to read about 3 to 4 books for 1 week. Because one of them is the demand to work on the project as well and the books I choose are the ones I like (Rose, WhatsApp interview, May 18, 2021).

I like reading and from that project, I feel more motivated to reading English text because from the project we should read the books or novel that we want (Mina, WhatsApp interview, May 18, 2021).

According to the interview data, some students feel motivated by the project given by the teacher. In the interview excerpt "From the project I previously only liked reading Indonesian books, now I like reading English" and "From that project, I read more often than before." In this case, students who initially did not like reading English books became motivated to read English text. Related to this, Bell (2010) states that PBL involves student literacy skills, starting from reading, writing, and speaking. This is supported by other research that the outcome of Project-Based Learning is higher-level reading, and improved learning motivation (Fleming, 2000).

PBL method helps improve students' vocabulary

Mastering vocabulary is important for English language learners. The PBL method helps students to improve their vocabulary. The followings are excerpts from interviews with students.

My vocabulary skills have improved because from the project we read different texts, so we also get a lot of vocabulary (Mark, WhatsApp interview, May 18, 2021).

From this project, I can add vocabulary because when there is a new word I will look for the meaning in the dictionary and I remember the content of the reading because the type of text that is read is according to what I am interested in (Lisa, WhatsApp interview, May 18, 2021).

The vocabulary ability increases because there are many new words in the text so more vocabulary is obtained, because usually when there is a new word I will translate it so that it will make an impression in the brain (Jenny, WhatsApp interview, May 18, 2021).

My vocabulary skills have increased. Because from reading I was able to find some vocabularies that I didn't know before. Then I noted it could be about 15 vocabularies in 1 short story (Rose, WhatsApp interview, May 18, 2021).

My vocabulary skills have improved because from the project I can get new vocabulary from reading books (Mina, WhatsApp interview, May 18, 2021).

Based on the interview data, it shows that students feel their vocabulary skills have improved after working on a project given by the teacher. In the interview quotation, the student stated "The vocabulary ability was increased because from the project we read different texts, so we also got a lot of vocabulary." In this case, students not only focus on completing the project but also students get a lot of new vocabulary. Related to this Edstrom and Kolmos (2014) states that Project-Based Learning can help students to develop long-term learning abilities and improve their vocabulary skills.

PBL method helps improve students' reading comprehension

Reading comprehension is the main thing that must be learned in the language class, especially in English reading class and students must develop their reading comprehension. Project-based learning is applied in language classes to help students improve their reading comprehension. The followings are excerpts from interviews with students.

From the project, I became easy to find the essence and problems in the story and easy to understand the text (Mark, WhatsApp interview, May 18, 2021).

It makes it easy for me to remember the contents of books that have been read because in the project we are told to be able to understand and then note the important points, so we can remember those points. Everything will be easy if we note the important points. So even after the project ends, I try to always read quickly and note the important points (Lisa, WhatsApp interview, May 18, 2021).

From this project, we are trained to be able to understand the contents of the book. Finally, it will be easier for us to understand the content of the reading after the project ends because we are used to it, and we already know the steps from the teacher (Jenny, WhatsApp interview, May 18, 2021).

I became accustomed to skimming because I was told how to understand correctly, so even when I read, I tried to get used to speed reading first and after that looked for the essence of the reading. But even though speed reading must also know the point and we can find the correct content of the text (Rose, WhatsApp interview, May 18, 2021).

I read more fluently than before. There was a change especially when I caught some vocabulary. Now I used the system to understand words instead of translating words. So there are more changes without opening the dictionary. as I said before, from that project we are trained to be able to understand its

contents by making important points or outline points that we have read (taking notes) + speed reading. So, if there is new information, it is very helpful and immediately finds the point (Mina, WhatsApp interview, May 18, 2021).

The interview data, shows that PBL makes it easy for students to understand the text. In the interview quotation, the students stated "I find it easy to find the core and problems in the story and it is easy to understand the text" and "we can more easily understand the reading after the project ends because we are used to it." In this case, students easily understand the content of the text because from this project students are trained to get used to reading English texts and capture points from the reading. Related to this, Fleming (2000) states that The outcome of Project Based Learning is a better understanding of the topic, deeper learning, and higher-level reading. Based on previous research conducted by Barr and Chinwonno (2016), it shows that Project-Based Reading can affect English reading abilities.

Students stated in the interview that "I became accustomed to speed reading (skimming)" and "I became more fluent in reading than before there was a change especially when I caught some vocabulary." In this case, students are not only focused on completing the project but are trained to capture the information contained in the reading so that students become accustomed to finding the essence of the text. The project made students read fluently because students were used to reading English reading while working on the reading log project. Related to this, Bell (2010) states that PBL can involve student literacy skills, starting from reading, writing, and speaking. The previous research conducted by Poonpon (2018) shows that Project Based Learning can help students to enhance reading comprehension and English skills.

Challenges in implementing of project-based learning

In the process of working on a project, there must be difficulties or challenges experienced by students. The followings are the student's statements in the interview.

The challenges or difficulties I faced while working on the project took quite a long time to work on because we need to read and also need to understand the contents (Mark, WhatsApp interview, May 18, 2021).

The challenges or difficulties that are faced are sometimes given less time so it becomes rushed (Lisa, WhatsApp interview, May 18, 2021).

The challenges and difficulties are in terms of time because it takes a long time to work on a project (Jenny, WhatsApp interview, May 18, 2021).

The challenges or difficulties faced when working on a project are one that takes a long time, but other than that, nothing is too difficult. vocabulary that is poorly understood or does not find the heart of the story or the problem (Rose, WhatsApp interview, May 18, 2021).

The challenges or difficulties when working on the project is about the time because the project takes a long time (Mina, WhatsApp interview, May 18, 2021).

Students stated that, in the process of implementing Project-Based Learning, there were several challenges. Some sentences can be evidence for the challenges in the implementation of PBL, "the time given is insufficient so it becomes rushed" and "takes a long time to work on the project." In this case, students find it difficult in terms of time because project work takes a long time (Thomas, 2000).

In general, these results of the research show the student's perception of implementing the PBL method in Extensive Reading class and how students thought about the benefit of the PBL method in Extensive Reading class. While the previous research has not discussed more specifically the implementation of the PBL method in the Extensive Reading class.

Conclusion

This study portrays students' perception of the PBL method in the English extensive reading course. The researcher presents the conclusion from the results and discussion in a brief statement. During learning activities in the extensive reading class, the students perceive that the teacher provides projects that aim to support understanding of the material that has been given to students. Project-Based Learning (PBL) makes students accustomed to managing time management and being able to make a plans. In the implementation of PBL, the teacher has a role as a facilitator, guiding the course of the project and providing feedback to students. The students have a more dominant role because students are more active in projects.

However, in the process of implementing PBL, students find it difficult in terms of time because project work takes a long time. In general, PBL helps students comprehend better in the English extensive reading class. In this sense, students can easily understand the content of the text because from this project students are trained to get used to reading English texts and capture points from the text. Students are not only focused on completing the project but are trained to capture the information contained in the text so that students become accustomed to finding the main idea of the text. The project made students read fluently because students were used to reading English text while working on the reading log project. In addition, PBL increases student motivation, students feel motivated by the project given by the teacher. PBL improves students' vocabulary because students get a lot of new vocabulary from the project. Finally, the researcher recommends that further researchers interested to conduct a similar study about students' perception of project-based learning methods in English extensive reading course are expected to do more references and participants.

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Appendix 1. Interview questions

Sample interview questions

- (1) In your opinion, what is the Project-Based Learning method?
- (2) In your opinion, how important are reading skills for students?
- (3) Are there any courses related to reading skills in your campus?
- (4) What is the difference between intensive reading and extensive reading courses?
- (5) In what semester did you take the extensive reading class?
- (6) What material do you remember most in the extensive reading class?
- (7) Were you given reading material in the extensive reading course (novels, short stories, etc.) by the lecturer or did you choose the reading materials yourself?
- (8) Are you free to choose the type of reading in your extensive reading class (books, novels, news texts, journals)?
- (9) Is the reading material in the extensive reading class easy or difficult?
- (10) Has the lecturer ever given a project in Extensive Reading class?
- (11) How many times did the lecturer give a project in the extensive reading class?
- (12) What kind of project is given by the lecturer in the extensive reading class (examples of the project and what kind of project is explained)?
- (13) Was the project carried out individually or in groups?
- (14) For what group project does each group member collaborate on a joint project?
- (15) Do you think that working on projects and collaborating in groups makes it easier to solve problems in extensive reading material?
- (16) Did you learn to listen, actively speak, and make decisions with your group from this project?
- (17) Did the project allow you to manage time management and be able to make plans when working on the project?
- (18) In your opinion, what is the role of the lecturer when giving a project in an extensive reading class?
- (19) In your opinion, what is the role of students when working on projects in the extensive reading class?
- (20) What are your challenges or difficulties when working on projects in the extensive reading class?
- (21) Before being given the project did you really like reading? From this project, has it made you read more often than before? How can it be?
- (22) Did you learn to listen, actively speak, and make decisions with your group from this project? How can it be?
- (23) Do you think that after doing the project, you can improve your reading skills? How to?
- (24) Do you think the project will help you understand the material more easily? How to?
- (25) After doing the project, has your vocabulary improved? How can it be?
- (26) After doing the project, did you find it easy to remember the contents of the books you have read? How can it be?
- (27) After doing the project, did you become accustomed and easy to understand the contents of the book/text? How can it be?
- (28) After doing the project, did you become accustomed to skimming? How can it be?

- (29) After doing the project, did you become more fluent in reading than before? How can it be?
- (30) After doing the project, did you find it easy to find information in books/texts? How can it be?