‘Investment in fellowship’

Investigating student behaviour within the context of self-regulated learning study classes from an identity perspective; how these behaviours are supported within the school; and what effect, if any they have on self-regulated learning processes.

- A case study -

PED 3900

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Master’s Thesis in Philosophy of Education

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Spring 2012

Abstract

By incorporating self-regulated learning study (SRL) classes into its timetable, Breivang Senior High School has created a specific arena for the school to potentially realise its obligations and responsibilities to key aims in the Upper Secondary Education Act. However, the teaching staff is frustrated that the students do not take responsibility for their learning in the study classes. This case study investigates the motivation for student behaviour within the context of self-regulated learning study classes at Breivang Senior High School. It explains: the utility value(s) (*nytteverdi*) of the classes from an identity perspective; how the utility value(s) is supported within the school; and what effect, if any the utility value(s) has on self-regulated learning processes. This research includes the collection and analysis of empirical data from study class observations, student focus group interviews, and individual student questionnaires. It also includes a review of the literature on self-regulated learning, adolescence, and identity. The findings from this study show that current approaches by teaching staff within the study class arena are serving to support a 'relaxed' utility value of the classes; and that central to helping learners become '*responsible for their own learning*' is the role teachers play. Teachers and school management at Breivang need to become aware of their own role in setting the norms of behaviour in the SRL study classes, and this dissertation supports teachers and management becoming more active in the SRL arena.

Key Words: identity, adolescence, self-regulated learning (SRL), identity utility, utility value

Acknowledgements

Deciding to work towards a master's degree is not without its challenges, especially for someone from a working class background who dropped out of high school! Although a master's degree is ultimately a lonely process, there are many who have walked beside me and offered their thoughts, comments, company and well wishes along the way. All have had my best interests at heart, and all have given me the freedom to learn and grow. Without you, I would not have come as far as I have. Several deserve a specific mention and thank you:

Breivang Senior High School: For permitting me to use the data collected in conjunction with the evaluation report on the study class program, and for allowing me to produce this body of work as a specific case study.
Odd Valermo and Tor Vidar Eilertsen: For giving me the opportunity to work alongside you both and assist you in your work. You neatly opened a door and gave me the idea and framework for my study.

My two supervisors:

- Anne Pernille Kran: For your, wisdom, support, thought provoking questions and comments, and good cheer throughout this process.
- Tor Vidar Eilertsen: For stepping in at the last minute and giving me the benefit of your knowledge and insight, constructive feedback, as well as pushing me to think a little more than I usually do – my head hurts now!

Kometen - Nord-Norges forskningsfond: For supporting my project and assisting in the challenges I faced to complete this work.
Jørgen Sundby: For helping me attain new heights via vertical mental gymnastics!
Mari Hammerud: For leading the way through the labyrinth of material from the Norwegian Ministry of Education as well as the valuable reading tips.
Kristin Lindsjørn: For being my personal trainer.
The gang in the master's rooms at university: For the discussions, advice, and friendship.

Celia Collins
Tromsø, May 2012

The stone in the mountain is rugged.

The stone in the river is round.

There must have been a lot of collisions.

But,

all the stones roll peacefully together in the last.

ishi

Meaning: stone, monument, musical instrument made of stones, obstinate, hard, a unit to show capacity

Origin: hieroglyph – 'A square stone under the cliff'.

This thesis is dedicated to '*Ishi'*

to say: *thank you*

for being

a rock!

Table of Content

1 Introduction

> *'Education isn't just an individual project, but an investment in fellowship'*
>
> (St.meld.nr.16, 2003: 11)

1.1 Background: Teaching and learning

'The purpose of upper secondary education is to develop the skills, understanding and responsibility that prepare pupils for life at work and in society, to provide a foundation for further education, and to assist them in their personal development'
(Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2012a: 1)

Meeting the competency and skill requirements of the labour force, as well as ensuring the growth of a society in which its members actively participate and '*evolve as human beings*', is the primary goal of education in Norway (St.meld.nr.44, 2008-2009). This goal is carried out within the context of the school system.

Historically, the general arrangement and occupation of schooling has changed little over time (Gamoran, 2001). However, the approaches to, and the content of teaching and learning have been highly susceptible to evolving trends (Cuban, 1990). Governments constantly endeavour to develop and implement new education theory, strategies, and content into their curricula to better effectuate learning. Norway's curricula documents M87, L97 and LK06 are illustrative of the variety of education models the Norwegian government has explored, each reform differing from the other in theory, content, and even implementation.

The changing trends of education reforms have been successful in giving our vernacular a different approach to the way we express and formulate ideas about education and schooling: we no longer talk or write about the concept of 'teaching' but rather that of 'learning' (Biesta, 2006). How we express ourselves can empower us to make changes to

how we approach things. The term 'teaching' implies a learned person transmitting information in front of a class; 'teaching' therefore, is a task performed that ceases as soon as the teacher stops transmitting knowledge. Whereas the terms 'learner' and 'learning' turn our attention to the students themselves and the activity in which they engage: a process of acquiring and creating knowledge.

Not only has there been a shift in vernacular, a shift in paradigm has also emerged: from traditional schooling that has been textbook driven with the teacher in full charge, to an approach that has more focus on the '*learner'* as the 'driver' of their own knowledge. The former *'transmittal'* role of a teacher in the *'transmittal model' (King, 1993)* or '*instruction paradigm*' (Barr and Tagg, (1995)2000) has been replaced by that of '*facilitator'* in what is now called the *'learning paradigm'* (ibid.). In other words, the teacher role has been transformed from that of '*sage on the stage*' to *'guide on the side'* (King, 1993).

The Norwegian Ministry of Education acknowledges the '*learning paradigm*' in its Core Curriculum when it states: '*Education should not just include the transmission of knowledge- it should also give the students the competence to create and develop new knowledge*' (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2012a: 7). It is envisioned that educational institutions in Norway give the students the '*competence to create and develop new knowledge'* by encouraging students to '*develop their own learning strategies and critical-thinking abilities'* (ibid.: 2) so that students can *'gradually take an increased responsibility for the planning and implementation of their learning'* (ibid.: 11). The question then arises: how can schools and teachers successfully accomplish this mandate?

1.2 Research Project: Context

Breivang Senior High School has developed a self-regulated learning study class program within its teaching timetable to help them realise their responsibilities and obligations to the Upper Secondary Education Act. The program is an organisational scheme whereby regular classes have been reduced by five minutes each to create room in the timetable for three study classes per week. The implications being that the study classes have reduced

the compulsory tuition time, and should thus be used for productive schoolwork. This time is allocated for students to carry out schoolwork such as completing homework, assignments, and project work, as well as test preparation, or self-directed extension work. The classes are based on self-regulated learning principles, in that the students themselves are to set learning goals, implement strategies, and distribute resources accordingly achieve their goals. The students have full choice over the work they will concentrate on, and the teaching staff is discouraged from influencing students in this choice (Eilertsen and Valdermo, 2011). Teachers are available to give subject specific help to those who request it, as well as offering adapted leaning (*tilpasset læring)* help to those whom the school targets as requiring extra tuition. In short, the study classes are designed to help the school meet its obligations to The Quality Framework objectives of '*adapted learning'* (*tiplasset læring*) and '*learning strategies*' (*læringsstrategier*), points 3 and 5 on the Learning Poster (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2012b: 2):

- *Stimulate pupils and apprentices/trainees to develop their own learning strategies and critical-thinking abilities*
- *Promote adapted teaching and varied work methods*

Furthermore, the study classes offer an arena for the school to embrace the Troms County Municipality's commitment to 'homework help' (*leksehjelp*), a continuation of the Norwegian Directorate for Education's national 'homework help' project (2006 – 2009).

In 2011 Tor Vidar Eilertsen and Odd Valdermo of the University of Tromsø were recruited to conduct an internal evaluation of the study classes at Breivang Senior High School. They were asked by the school leadership team to evaluate the current arrangement of the study classes (*studieøkt*) as the school saw various weaknesses within the operation and execution of the program.

The motivation for my study stems from two personal experiences. Firstly, as a visitor to Norway in 2001, and secondly as a research assistant to Eilertsen and Valdermo. When I first visited Norway I wanted to learn some Norwegian so enrolled in the only available course at the time at the Adult Education Centre (*voskenopplæring*). It was here I was

first confronted with the phrase '*You must take responsibility for your own learning*'. There were two of us in the class who were foreign languages teachers by training and experience, and we were both perplexed by our teacher's repetitious use of the phrase. We discussed our perplexity in relation to our beliefs of what it means to be a teacher, and neither of us could see what responsibility she was taking to enable our learning to progress to its potential. It was as if the curriculum document statement had absolved her of her responsibility and accountability as a teaching professional.

While collecting data for Eilertsen and Valdermo for their project: 'Evaluering av bruken av studieøkter (SØ) som leksehjelparena ved Breivang vgs'[1] one class in particular caught my attention. They appeared to have created a very strong and independent culture to the extent that they 'evicted' the teacher from the classroom whenever they had self-regulated learning (SRL) study classes. As an experienced classroom teacher and an apprentice researcher studying for a master's degree, I was both fascinated and curious to find out what was actually going on in the study classes, and why it was so. At the same time, I had stumbled across an economic model of analysis that gave me the idea to re-examine the same data from a novel perspective – that of identity. I became interested in applying this model to establish whether my findings could contribute to those of Eilertsen and Valdermo (2011) for the benefit of the program and/or school policy.

1.3 Research Focus

The aim of the internal evaluation undertaken by Eilertsen and Valdermo was to *'examine how the self-regulated study classes are effectuated* [in order to make recommendations] *to enhance the utility value (nytteverdi) of the classes'* (ibid.: 1). In their findings they state that they cannot recommend the continuation of the program as it exists today, and express their understanding if the school were to convert the study class hours back to teaching hours (ibid.: 19). In other words, they infer that there is little utility value *(nytteverdi*) in the self-regulated learning study class program.

[1] Although the report Evaluering av bruken av studieøkter (SØ) som leksehjelparena ved Breivang vgs is unpublished, I have chosen to reference it in the normal manner.

Although the opinions and ideas of the students were taken into consideration, the overall evaluation was primarily conducted from the perspective of the teaching staff and school administration. Dissatisfaction on behalf of the teaching staff called for a need to investigate the *status presens,* the results of which would either lead them to *'improve the effectiveness'* of the program, or revert back to a full teaching timetable (ibid.: 2). The report highlighted the need to 'tighten the belt' with regards to the rules and regulations of the study classes as many teaching staff were frustrated that *'... students fail to take responsibility for themselves* [their learning] *despite ten years of schooling.'* (ibid.: 17)

My study is situated both within the aforementioned aim of the report and the findings of Eilertsen and Valermo (2011). I focus my attention on the choices students are making in the self-regulated learning study classes, and the factors influencing these choices.

1.4 Overall aim

This study attempts to explain the motivation for student behaviour within the context of self-regulated learning study classes at Breivang Senior High School (hereafter referred to as Breivang). I propose to evaluate the utility value (*nytteverdi*) of the self-regulated learning classes from an identity perspective using the theory of identity economics as my tool for analysis. Identity economics offers a model that allows us to evaluate the factors at play that are guiding the choices and behaviours of individuals or groups in a social context. The sum of these factors is expressed in the utility value. It is assumed that the school was striving for a 'schoolwork oriented' utility value for the classes when it introduced the program, and that this was the utility value Eilerstsen and Valdermo were examining. However, the utility value of the study classes can be different from those envisioned by the school, and therefore, in this thesis I widen the usage of 'utility value'. In order to understand what potential utility values are operating, it is necessary to gain an insight into some of the factors that make up the parameters within which the students act. Those will be: some key features of self-regulated learning theory (self-regulation, goal setting, self-efficacy and feedback); the developmental challenges senior high school students meet as they prepare for adulthood; and the role identity plays in decision-

making. The findings of this evaluation could produce some valuable knowledge that may contribute to the recommendations of Eilertsen and Valdermo (2011) regarding the effectiveness of the self-regulated learning study classes, as well as aid the school in realising important aspects of its responsibilities in meeting the objectives of both The Quality Framework and the Core Curriculum.

1.5 Individual research objectives

Two main research vehicles will be used to facilitate this study: a review of the relevant literature, and the analysis of empirical data carried out within a case study. The empirical data consists of observations, group interviews and individual questionnaires, and will be analysed qualitively. Chapter 3, entitled 'Research Methods', contains details of my research strategy, analysis methods, and data collection techniques used to obtain the empirical data.

Specifically within the context of Breivang Senior High self-regulated learning study classes, the objectives of this research are to:

1. Explain what self-regulation and self-regulated learning is, and clarify the roles of goal setting, self-efficacy and feedback within a self-regulated learning context
2. Explore the developmental phase of adolescence, the role identity construction plays in adolescence, and how identity is constructed
3. Explore the role identity plays in decision making and how identity economic theory can be used as a tool to explain the motivation for student behaviour within an educational setting
4. Implement a case study that explains the utility value(s) (nytteverdi) of the self-regulated learning study classes at Breivang, identify how the utility value(s) is supported, and what effect, if any, the utility value(s) has on self-regulated learning processes within the study class arena

5. Formulate recommendations for the program at Breivang in view of these findings to help the school meet its obligations to The Quality Framework with a focus on learning strategies (læringsstrategier) and adapted learning (tilpasset opplæring).

Objectives 1, 2 and 3 will be explored in the Literature Review of this research study, whereas it is anticipated that objectives 4 and 5 will make key contributions to the self-regulated learning study classes at Breivang. The listed objectives are interlinked, as they are related activities that influence each other within the context of their occurrence. Sections 2.1 and 2.2 address the first two objectives and focus on the context within which the students operate. That is, the students are adolescents preparing for their adult lives, they are located within a self-regulated learning study class situation at school, and they have recently made (in 10^{th} Grade) a significant career-path decision that may have life-long consequences. What these factors entail and how they influence each other are important considerations in determining the utility value(s) of the study classes. Objective 3 is discussed in sections 2.3 and 2.4. It is directed towards understanding the meaning of 'choice' and 'action', and how they are linked together with 'who we think we are' as individuals located within a society or social group. The identity economic model that is applied to the analysis of the empirical data is a vital link between Objectives 1, 2 and 3. This theory will be explained under Objective 3 in Section 2.4, and will give readers an understanding of how it can be used to explain motivation for behaviour within the educational setting. As a result of the literature review, analysis, and discussion of empirical data, Objectives 4 and 5, pursued in chapters 3 to 5, will make contributions to the body of knowledge about how students make their choices within the self-regulated learning situation at Breivang. These could lead to recommendations based on a better understanding of the processes explored under Objectives 1 to 3.

The next chapter, Literature Review, presents the literature pertinent to the objectives of this research, beginning with an investigation of what is meant by the term '*self-regulated learning'*.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Self-regulated Learning Theory

In the shift from the '*instruction paradigm'* to the '*learning paradigm',* the modern educational institution and the student become two actors taking '*responsibility for the same outcome even though neither is in complete control of all the variables*' ' (Barr and Tagg, (1995)2000: 4). This isn't to say that schools and other learning institutions relinquish their teaching responsibilities, but rather they share the responsibilities from being sole providers of teaching, to co-producers of learning (ibid.). The shift in focus may be subtle, yet it is instrumental in providing the impetus for students to become a partner in their learning by giving them responsibilities to fulfil. Barr and Tagg express it beautifully when they say that the shared responsibilities of both parties, when acting ideally, results in a *'synergy* [that] *produces powerful results'* (ibid.: 5). In meeting the demands of the partnership to learning, students need to become *'masters of their own learning processes*' (Zimmerman, 2008: 167), in other words, take responsibility for their own learning (*ansvar for egen læring*). Self-regulated learning programs are one way to meet this demand.

This section sets out to meet Objective 1 of this research study. It outlines what self-regulation and self-regulated learning (SRL) are, explores the processes of becoming a self-regulated learner, highlights some key elements for fostering successful SRL programs in schools, and discusses why training students in SRL processes is important, specifically within the Norwegian context.

2.1.1 What is self-regulation?

Literature implies that there is little to indicate that self-regulation is specific to any particular social or ethnic group (Duckworth et al., 2009). It is an innately human behaviour that begins only a few months after birth and continues throughout our lifespan (Lyons and Zelazo, 2011). Self-regulation allows us to act and react appropriately to social codes of behaviour in given situations as we receive and interpret feedback from

our surroundings that influence our thoughts, feelings and behaviours; in other words, self-regulation is a reflexive process (ibid.). Reflexivity is a core mechanism of self-awareness; it helps us to identify the 'self' and the role the 'self' plays in relation to the 'other'[2]. This is in itself intriguing, as the concept of reflexivity in self-regulation is also an important aspect in identity theory[3], and could therefore be considered as a significant fusing point of the two theories. That is, a self-regulated learning program could be an arena for fostering identity and vice versa.

Self-regulation is a dynamic process whereby we regulate behaviours one-way and not necessarily another under differing conditions (Zimmerman, 2005). Bandura supports this notion when he defines human behaviour as '*a product of both self-generated and external sources of influence'* (1986: 454). Bandura (ibid.) posits that the fundamental structure of self-regulatory behaviour is an interplay between three influencing processes: personal, environmental and behavioural. Personal processes involve thoughts, feelings and perceptions; behavioural processes include actions such as self-evaluation or strategy implementation; and environmental processes are made up of external influences such as physical or social environment, feedback, and deadlines. These three processes all *'operate as interacting determinants of each other.'* (ibid.: 18). In other words, these processes influence each other reciprocally. However, the reciprocality is not necessarily equal between the three processes, any one or two of the determinants can override the other(s) depending upon the situation (ibid.). For example, at a football game it may be perfectly acceptable to gulp copious amounts of beer and issue expletives at supporters of the opposing team, however, when attending the annual Queen's garden party, one is expected to sip tea with a crooked 'pinky' and chit chat politely about the weather and how wonderfully deserving are this year's Queen's honours recipients. The former behaviour is not, however, a requisite for all sporting events, the Wimbledon tennis open would never allow such behaviour. The same persona must self-regulate according to the behavioural codes that apply either implicitly or explicitly in each situation. In the above

[2] 'Other' referring to the physical and social elements that make up our surroundings.

[3] Identity building and the role it plays in decision-making and self-regulated learning will be discussed at a later stage in this thesis.

example, the situational constraints, or the environmental determinant, is strong and has a greater influence over the personal and behavioural processes that dictate the regulation of behaviour.

2.1.2 What is a self-regulated learner?

A self-regulated learner is one who exerts control over the fundamental structures of self-regulatory function (i.e. the personal, behavioural and environmental processes) in order to influence their learning (Zimmerman, 1989). The social cognitive model of self-regulated learning (SRL) consists of three operational phases (*'forethought', 'performance'* and *'self-reflection'*) over which the self-regulated learner exerts their control (Zimmerman, 2008). Zimmerman and Campillo illustrate the SRL processes in their cyclic model 'Phases and sub-processes of self-regulation' (Figure 1) (ibid.).

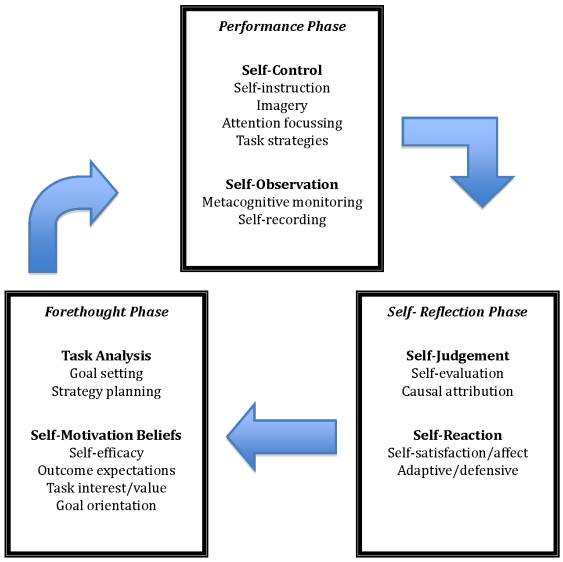

Figure 1: Phases and sub-processes of self-regulation (Zimmerman, 2008)

The model illustrates self-regulated learners as *'metacognitively, motivationally and behaviourally active participants in their own learning processes'* (ibid.: 167). It shows the relationship between the self-regulatory processes (behaviour), motivational beliefs (personal), and physical or social factors (environmental) of the situated learner that occur

before, during, and after learning (ibid.). When first given a task or assignment, students will in the *forethought* phase evaluate or consider their aspirations and resources available, set goals and plan accordingly. The student considers key motivational points such as; their belief incompleting the task (self-efficacy), the outcome they expect to obtain, the level of interest or value they place on the task, and the goal orientation they have in carrying out the task. These decisions and actions influence the student's self-regulation across the *performance* and *self-reflection* phases of SRL (ibid.), and feed back into each other instigating continual adjustment of goals and strategy selection, allowing learners to benefit from their previous experiences in the learning cycle (Duckworth et al., 2009). For example, if a student is unsure of their ability to complete the task (self-motivation belief), yet have set themselves the goal of doing so (self-motivation belief), they could plan a strategy that allows them to seek out advice (environmental influence), or co-operate with another learner both in the *forethought* and *performance* phases (task analysis, self-observation, self-control). In the *self-reflection* phase, they would then evaluate this strategy as being successful (or not), and use the strategy again (or not) to help them attain their goals (self-judgement, self-reaction), while building their confidence in their abilities (self-motivation beliefs).

2.1.3 Gaining self-regulated learning confidence

The acquirement and cultivation of SRL skills and strategies occurs as a progression '*from social sources … to self-sources.'*(Zimmerman, 2001: 22). Zimmerman suggests four phases of self-regulatory competence development whereby the first two rely on external influences, and the latter two on self-generated influences to evolve (Table 1). In the model, the learner acquires and practises self-regulatory competencies in the initial *observation* and *emulative* stages by relying on social influences such as, teaching, task structuring, guidance and feedback. Fostering and supporting learners during these stages is core to them becoming strategic and independent learners (Paris et al., 2001). Paris et al. reinforce the importance of both the external influences and the social nature in SRL development: '*the kinds of strategies, behaviours and affect that are desirable … are the 'things' to be regulated and are specified by significant others such as parents, peers, and classroom teachers.'* (2001: 255).

Table 1: Social Cognitive Model: Development of Self-Regulatory Competence (as cited by Schunk, 2001: 143)

Level of development	Social influences	Self-Influences
Observational	Models Verbal Description Social Guidance Feedback	
Emulative		
Self-Controlled		Internal Standards Self-Reinforcement Self-Regulatory Processes Self-Efficacy beliefs
Self-Regulated		

The model in Table 1 shows that the learner becomes increasingly self-reliant in the third and fourth stages of SRL as skills and strategies practised in the first two stages become internalised. The competent self-regulated learner is in the final phase of SRL development when they can adapt skills and strategies to suit different situations while being able to regulate and maintain motivation and self-efficacy. This is not to say that learners who have reached the final developmental stage are completely independent of others in their learning. A study conducted by Zimmerman and Pons shows that students who display high levels of self-regulatory behaviour rely significantly on assistance from teachers, peers and parents, and therefore conclude that SRL draws on, and even relies on social assistance (1986). An accomplished self-regulated learner seeks and depends on help and guidance (Schunk and Ertmer, 2000).

The teachers' role is of utmost importance in forming and fostering an academic identity that will enhance student motivation and learning (Paris et al., 2001). The teacher significantly contributes to creating a SRL environment that can become a part of the school culture (Akerlof and Kranton, 2010). However, there is a word of caution: '*students have little opportunity for self-regulation when teachers dictate what students do… and how they accomplish it'* (Schunk and Ertmer, 2000: 632). The self-regulating learner has a need for choice and control over one or more of the six areas in which self-regulatory processes can be utilised: *'motives, methods, time, outcomes, physical environment, and social environment.'* (Schunk, 2001: 126). Furthermore, teaching

learning strategies is no guarantee that students will either use them successfully, or at all, unless they perceive value in it, and believe it will contribute to a positive outcome (as perceived by the student!) (Schunk and Ertmer, 2000). Strategy instruction does not necessarily need to be taught in an independent program, teachers can give support and guidance while the students create and use their own strategies (ibid.). Goal setting, monitoring and feedback, as well as interest building, are key elements of SRL that can fostered by teachers.

2.1.4 Goal setting

SRL is a goal-directed activity that learners initiate and adapt when, for example, *'attending to instruction, processing information, rehearsing and relating new learning to prior knowledge, believing that one is capable of learning, and establishing productive social relationships and work environments.'* (Schunk, 2001: 125). Learning and motivation is positively enhanced when the learners '*exert control over setting and attaining goals*' (Schunk and Ertmer, 2000: 632). Goal setting occurs in the *forethought phase* and initiates the SRL processes. Adept self-regulating learners enter a learning situation motivated with goals that are specific, short term, and of moderate difficulty (ibid.). Short-term goals are important in the SRL situation; students respond well if they are able to complete parts of an assignment for example, in shorter time frames, rather than a larger piece of work over a longer time frame (ibid.). An assignment that has a two to three week deadline is considered a long-term goal in the school setting (ibid.). Proximal goal setting improves motivation and self-efficacy as well as giving current feedback on progress (Schunk, 2001).

The type of goals learners set is also of importance (ibid.). Students are more likely to experience efficacy[4] when they target and meet *learning goals* where the focus is on the knowledge and skills they will gain by performing specific tasks (ibid.). By attending to *learning goals,* learners are more easily able to explain (if asked) what they have learned,

[4] Efficacy is discussed further in this thesis and pertains to a student's belief about their capabilities to satisfactorily complete a task.

how they have learned it and refer to any adjustments in their learning in concrete terms. This differentiates *learning goals* from *performance goals* where the focus is more on task completion in which the learner is less able to verbalise what they have learned through the experience, only that they have completed something.

In order for goals to positively influence student performance and goal commitment, it is important that teachers allow students to set their own learning goals (Zimmerman, 2001). However, teachers are crucial to helping students set and modify learning goals as they have vital knowledge of the learner, learning outcomes, learning strategies, and general (if not specific) evaluation criteria. In other words, they know what is to be achieved, how it can be achieved, and who is trying to achieve it. Therefore without their input, students are very much left to their own devices and can easily set goals that are either too high - leading to failure, or too low - leading to complacency. Helping the students set goals that focus on the knowledge and skills they are learning causes students to pay attention to the processes of learning and raises students' efficacy experiences (Schunk and Ertmer, 2000).

2.1.5 Monitoring and feedback

Monitoring and feedback lead to adjustments in the learner's '*strategies, cognitions and behaviours'* (Schunk and Ertmer, 2000: 633) that contribute markedly to success over failure in the SRL environment. Monitoring progress occurs during the *performance phase* of self-regulation as a way of informing and motivating the learning process. Monitoring allows learners to evaluate their progress and strategies and make adjustments that are beneficial for both short-term goal attainment, and the long term SRL skill set (Schunk, 2001). Monitoring can be self-generated or come from external sources (Bandura, 1986).

As discussed earlier, students progress through four phases to become competent self-regulated learners. In the first two stages, *observation* and *emulation,* students rely heavily on social factors for SRL skill and strategy acquirement. Students internalise and self-regulate behaviour (and in this case, learning strategies and skills) to enhance

learning by gathering socially conveyed information (Schunk, 2001). One means of socially gathering this information is to compare oneself to others. When comparing one's actions and behaviours to those around us, learning '*accelerates … and saves us from experiencing many negative consequences.'* (ibid.: 128). In situations where students receive little overt guidance, they will avoid negative consequences by observing and modelling themselves on those around them whom they consider similar, replicating similar actions (and strategies) in order to fit into the environment (ibid.). Both regularity and proximity of monitoring are considered important elements of SRL (ibid.). Constant teacher monitoring plays a significant role in modelling preferred SRL behaviours.

External monitoring by teachers also improves student self-efficacy (and individual potential) as students gain efficacy information via feedback (Schunk and Ertmer, 2000). Feedback that signals to the student how well they are working towards their goals and applying strategies for example, can lead students to value their strategies even more, and encourage them to continue using them. What is more, students who gain guidance and encouragement in this way begin to attribute success to *'skill, effort and effective use of strategies'* thereby, positively influencing learning and motivation (Schunk and Ertmer, 2000: 636). The feedback however, must be credible for it to benefit a student's self-efficacy, motivation and achievement (Schunk, 2001). If students perceive that what, or how, they are learning has little value or purpose, then their belief that it will produce a positive outcome for them diminishes in favour of other activities that offer greater incentives in value and interest (Schunk and Ertmer, 2000). Asking students to explain their work for example, gives the student an opportunity to become aware of and value their learning processes and use of strategies (Duckworth et al., 2009). It forces the student to actively organise their knowledge, make connections, think of equivalent examples that others can relate to, and explain concepts and ideas in their own words – all of which are important processes and aids in helping to consolidate student understanding, and task and strategy value (ibid.).

2.1.6 Individual and situational interest

Interest is a motivational variable that plays a causal role in the self-regulatory processes of self-efficacy and goal orientation and is '*an outcome of the interaction between individual and environment'* Hidi (2006: 70). There are two types of interest in educational research – '*situational'* and '*individual*' (ibid.). *Individual* interest is related to the '*stored knowledge and stored value that refers to positive feelings and feelings of competence*' (ibid.: 73). These take time to build up and develop and can only be regarded as individual interest when a person *'has enough knowledge to organize information.'* (ibid.: 73). *Situational* interest is the precursor to *individual* interest, and is initiated and stimulated environmentally, first by triggering an interest, and secondly by maintaining an interest. There are many stories of teachers whose enthusiasm for their subject was infectious over most, if not all, of the students who felt lucky to have that teacher. Triggering interest does not have to be based on finding resources that grab students' attention. Teachers can positively influence the academic interests of students when they themselves show interest and value in a subject. Thus teachers can generate *situational* interest by engaging in the student's work and learning processes (ibid.).

2.1.7 Personal agency and self-efficacy in SRL

A competent self-regulated learner is capable of using their '*knowledge and sense of personal agency to enact this skill in relevant contexts*' (Zimmerman, 2005: 14). Zimmerman and Cleary define personal agency as; *'one's capability to originate and direct actions for given purposes'* (2006: 45). Personal agency plays a dynamic, multi-dimensional role in self-regulation and is heavily influenced by one's personal beliefs in one's perceived capabilities to succeed in attaining one's goals[5]. This belief is known as 'self-efficacy' and is perceived to be a key contributing factor in self-regulated learning. Studies have found that self-efficacy is a *'highly effective predictor of students' motivation and learning'* (Bandura, 1991; Zimmerman, 2000; Zimmerman and Cleary, 2006).

[5] These goals could be of any kind, for example, academic, vocational, sporting. In the context of my thesis, self-efficacy beliefs relate to academic goals.

Self-efficaciousness is considered and decided upon **prior** to any other actions in the self-regulation cycle (Bandura, 1991; 2000), and is operant across the whole of the SRL cycle (Schunk and Ertmer, 2000). It is an individual's predicted commentary on their *'future functioning'* (Zimmerman, 2000: 84) in relation to a task or goal. Self-efficacy forms the foundation of motivation, and acts as a significant factor in guiding a persons actions (or *personal agency*) (Bandura, 1991; 2000). Learners who are competent self-regulators approach a learning task with a strong sense of self-efficacy. Correspondingly, '*students' behaviours modify their efficacy beliefs*.' (Schunk, 2001: 127). The more adept students become at using SRL skills successfully, the more internalised those skills become, leading to effective self-regulation and achieved mastery – both of which increase the feeling of self-efficaciousness, motivation and learning. (Schunk and Ertmer, 2000). Task, skill and strategy mastery are therefore major contributors to an individual's sense of self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy is not solely an individual judgement about the self. Students gather information from around them that contributes to their sense of efficacy. Efficacy levels can be lowered or heightened when students see that others are struggling or succeeding respectively. Norms inform and motivate students: by observing similar others succeeding, they believe they can also succeed (Schunk, 2001). If students are not adjusting and creating new challenges by raising their goals, a status quo of effort may become the norm of behaviour, and self-efficacy and learning value may be transferred to other activities that offer greater reward, especially if an academic identity is not a part of a student's '*social reference group and future goals'* (Zimmerman, 2001: 7).

2.1.8 Why invest in SRL programs in Norway?

'*Research supports the notion that effective self-regulators form attributions that sustain self-efficacy, effort, persistence, and learning*' (Schunk and Ertmer, 2000: 636). Students use SRL processes to *'acquire academic skill, such as setting goals, selecting and deploying strategies, and self-monitoring one's effectiveness*' (Zimmerman, 2008: 166). Training SRL processes is integral to developing effective self-regulators, and countering

negative learning behaviours that affect student '*motives'* (e.g. procrastination, or task avoidance), '*methods'* (e.g. poor planning, not establishing a productive work environment, ineffective learning techniques and use of resources) '*outcomes'* (setting easy to achieve goals that require little effort to meet), and '*resources'* (eg. not seeking help and guidance at and within an appropriate time) (Schunk and Ertmer, 2000: 632).

All students who are '*mentally capable of learning also are capable of self-regulating their motivation and learning'* given appropriate training, guidance, and support (ibid.: 632). Yet, there is a belief that students, particularly older ones, don't need training in SRL processes (ibid.). In the Norwegian setting where responsibility for own learning (*ansvar for egen læring*) has been emphasised in the curriculum since Reform 97, teachers in general have become more 'hands-off' in their approach to teaching and learning, leaving the pupils to form and establish learning strategies for and by themselves (Haug, 2004). This approach is can lead students to develop often unique and sometimes ineffective learning behaviours that become steadfast routines, such as listening to (loud) music while studying, or working in noisy places (Paris et al., 2001).

Furthermore, among the Scandinavian countries, Norway is the only country where both learning strategies and motivation correlate to mathematical achievement (Kjærnsli et al., 2004). It could be reasonably assumed that this finding is transferable to other subject areas where Norway, with its 'hands-off' approach (Haug, 2004), emphasises the student's responsibility to learning (Kjærnsli et al., 2004). Kjærnsli et al. (2004) conclude from their findings that Norwegian schools should, therefore, be placing more emphasis on teaching learning strategies to its students. Additionally, Kjærnsli et al. (2004) also conclude that, in the field of mathematics, girls have lower levels of both motivation and self-efficacy than do their male peers. Students who have doubts about their learning capacities are less likely to successfully utilize SRL skills and strategies (Duckworth et al., 2009). Likewise, those students who have high self-efficacy beliefs do not necessarily possess the skills and knowledge to be good self-regulated learners (ibid.). This potentially presents a 'Catch 22' scenario to the Norwegian setting if SRL programs are not implemented with sufficient guidance and support by teaching staff.

Meland's findings (2011) also highlight the need for training in SRL. She reports that in a self-regulated learning situation, most teachers characterize many of their students as being lazy and wanting to occupy their time doing what they regard as fun. Furthermore, she reports that students '*view their schoolwork as meaningless'* and that often the students lack *'adequate skills and knowledge'* to self-regulate their learning (ibid.). Self-regulated learning will not occur when there is a belief that it is not beneficial (Duckworth et al., 2009). Lack of belief can stem from both teachers and students alike. Meland's (2011) study also reveals that the students feel that taking responsibility for one's own learning is a very lonely process, suggesting that SRL programs are not necessarily embraced or implemented as they are intended.

Furthermore, Damsgaard and Kokkersvold (2011) also point out that school can represent both a positive and negative influence on 'at risk' students. Giving students the skills and strategies, as well as the support they need to experience mastery at school, can be one of the most important 'protective' elements that allows students to continue to participate within one of the most important social arenas in an adolescent's life (Damsgaard and Kokkersvold, 2011). Effective self-regulated learning programs positively influence core aspects of a person's cognitive, motivational and behavioural well-being (Zimmerman, 2008). Additionally, SRL is a social process that takes time to form and foster (Zimmerman, 2001: 22). It is a partnership between teachers and students, in which students can receive a level of mastery that is consistent with their capabilities, and one in which students are 'seen'. At school, not being 'seen', lack of self-regulatory mastery, and lack of belonging are the most common traits among at risk youths (Damsgaard and Kokkersvold, 2011). Hence, it could be said that a school that supports and encourages a well-implemented self-regulated learning program could *'... make a decisive contribution to the science of the structural dynamics of class*' (Bourdieu, 1973: 72) by offering a means of countering the reproduction of inequality. Schools effecting SRL programs give students the tools required to govern themselves, their environment, and their resources to become proficient in enhancing their own learning processes.

The next section addresses Objective 2 of this research study: Explore the main aim(s) of the developmental phase of adolescence, the role identity construction plays in adolescence, and how identity is constructed.

2.2 Adolescence and identity formation

This study is situated within a senior high school and collects the constructed experiences of adolescents. In determining the motivations for their behaviours and attitudes within the self-regulated study classes, it is important to explore the developmental stage of adolescence. This chapter outlines what adolescence is and is not, discusses the role identity construction plays during adolescence, both in general and in the Norwegian setting, and explores how identity is formed.

2.2.1 Adolescence – What it is and is not

Until as recently as the late eighties, studies have been flavoured with the view that normative adolescent behaviour is at best, turbulent (Offer and Schonert-Reichl, 1992). These observations of adolescence, although strongly upheld for a long time, have been reconsidered by modern theorists and attributed to the fact that the psychoanalytic theorists of the day, who were working furiously to expand the knowledge base of their field, founded their conclusions on clinical experiences with a sub-group of the adolescent population that indeed exhibited (and sought help for) such behaviours (ibid.). Consequently these traits were attributed to the whole of the adolescent population. Fortunately, the minority of adolescents experiences this type of disruptive and disturbing behaviour during adolescence, the majority survive this period of development without much crisis (ibid.).

Adolescence is the phase that takes an individual from childhood to adulthood and is considered to extend between the ages of 12 and 25 years old (Rutter, 1980). In Erikson's model of developmental stages, a young pubescent adolescent transitions from *'being oneself'* and *'sharing oneself'* to '*finding oneself*' in late adolescence (Egeberg and Jerlang, 1987). A substantial amount of time (especially for young people) is spent in the

adolescent phase during which they undergo several significant milestones of physical, cognitive, and social growth and development (Gillies, 2000; Rutter, 1980). Adolescence is the pre-cursor to 'adult status'. It involves efforts to establish independence from parental ties, embark on forming and maintaining consistent and even intimate 'adult' relationships, and decide upon and work towards career pathways (Adatto, 1991). Gillies (2000) argues that complete autonomy from parents is not a condition of achieving adult status. Studies carried out by Gillies, although small, show that the opposite can also be true, adolescents can maintain strong familial relations and achieve adult status successfully (ibid.). Yet it is important to acknowledge that there is a significant shift in how adolescents experience family ties as they become more capable, confident, and autonomous in making their own decisions. In addition, adolescents exercise greater autonomy through experiencing love and intimacy, and invest more and more time in romantic relationships. These relationships increase in importance as they embark on their own search for self-fulfilment (Robb, 2007). Rather than perceiving these shifts as 'breaking away' from family ties, it could better serve to think of the adolescent process as 're-configuring' core relationships of which the peer group is a dominant feature (Pinker, 2005).

2.2.2 Adolescence - What is it good for?

The main objective of adolescence in Western societies is for young people to prepare for the roles and responsibilities of 'adult status'. To achieve this, adolescents must undergo a period of exploration to establish '*one's own identity as a unique person'* (Rutter, 1980). Erikson uses the phrase '*finding oneself*' and maintains that a young person must '*locate*' himself or herself by exploring the '*individual self*' operating within a '*social self*' (Egeberg and Jerlang, 1987). Young people must be permitted to carve out an identity for themselves that is more than the sum of their childhood identifications (ibid.). Adolescence is the period in which identity *'is consolidated for the first time*', and is the first time within the human life-cycle that our '*libidinal*, *cognitive*, *and psychosocial pieces* (are) *present all together'* (Marcia, 1986: 26).

Identity[6] is considered achieved when the normative adolescent has succeeded in creating a stable self-identity, is productive (able to contribute to the workforce), and is prepared for the civic and social responsibilities of adulthood (Hamburg and Takanishi, 1996). Identity construction does not happen at once, it is a slow, piecemeal process, and not everyone necessarily achieves full identity status. The process can be either delayed, completely arrested, or remain at a status quo. Marcia has been able to characterize and establish four identity statuses whereby adolescents *'may be found dealing with the identity issue'* (1986: 26). Those who have attained: Identity Achievement – have seriously evaluated occupational choices, religious and political beliefs beyond those they were exposed to during childhood, are capable of intimate relationships, have complex cognitive skills, and are flexible in their thinking; Moratorium – are currently exploring, and are concerned with issues, are anxious and sensitive, have instable family bonds, and fluctuate between contrariness and compliance; Foreclosure – have not undergone any exploration, however, they are thoroughly committed to the values and beliefs they grew up with, inflexible in their thinking, and lack emotional depth; Identity Diffusion – are either mildly interested in exploration or not at all, are casual and nonchalant in appearance yet often feel alienated or rejected, especially by a parent (ibid.). Given the combined knowledge of how identity is formed, when it is formed, and to what degree it is formed, Marcia (ibid.: 27) believes that it is then possible to create a '*facilitative social environment'* which '*should furnish sanction, encouragement and support for the late adolescent to explore a number of occupational and ideological alternatives'* thereby promoting an environment in which Identity Achievement status is possible for all.

2.2.3 Identity-formation and curriculum

The period of adolescence is nowadays considered at least as important in human development theory as the early years of life – previously thought of as the most important years (Offer and Schonert-Reichl, 1992). Schools therefore, particularly senior high schools, play a significant role in promoting and aiding identity formation in adolescents. Not only do adolescents spend a great deal of time in the school

[6] 'Identity' here pertains to self-knowledge - gaining a sense of who one is in the greater social context, what one wants to do with one's life, developing a sense of self-worth and belonging.

environment, but curriculum documents and school syllabuses are designed to encourage learning about ourselves and the world around us, as well as planning how to contribute to the world around us (i.e. choosing career pathways). As John Goodlad notes:

'The ultimate purpose of curriculum development … is to enhance one's ability to find meaning in one's life.' (Øzerk, 2006: 25)

The Norwegian Knowledge Promotion Reforms (Kunnskapsløftet) L97, and LK06 are built up around the exploration of ideological alternatives. These ideologies, 'the seven human (or educational) ideals' (*de syv menneskeidealer* eller *de syv danningsidealer*), and are designed to develop the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes of the students throughout their schooling on ever broadening and deepening planes. The educational ideals of the Knowledge Promotion Reform (Kunnskapsløftet) could philosophically and theoretically be said to support the '*facilitative social environment'* Marcia says identity construction requires. Therefore, if schools successfully implement and execute a program of learning that incorporates all seven ideals, then they pave the way for individuals to explore *'occupational and ideological alternatives'* - the premise of reaching Identity Achievement status (Marcia, 1986: 27).

2.2.4 Identity-formation - The timing and context

It has been established that identity-formation and consolidation are the main objectives of adolescence. However, there is some debate over which end of adolescence the critical process of identity-formation takes place.

Arnett (2000) stands firm in situating identity-formation at 'emerging adulthood' (18-25 yrs) and not at 'adolescence' which he posits at between 12-18 yrs. He acknowledges that although the period of what he calls 'adolescence' may kick-start the process, the bulk of the crucial developmental processes occurs in 'emerging adulthood', which occurs after senior high school (ibid.). In contrast, Kroger (2007) produces evidence suggesting that senior high school age (16-19 yrs) is the critical period for identity-

formation and completion. She conveys that there is a possibility, but not necessarily a certainty, that identity-formation can take place beyond senior high school.

The difference in findings between Arnett and Kroger could be ascribed to contextual dissimilarities. Arnett's studies are situated in the USA where career path exploration and choices are made after senior high school at the earliest. Delayed future career path choices allow greater room for identity exploration (Danielsen et al., 2000). By contrast, in the Norwegian school system (the target group of Kroger's studies), students are charged with making major educational choices (and therefore career choices) in the 10th Grade (junior high school) when they apply for senior high school. Consequently, occupational choices that have a potentially life-long impact are decided upon not long after puberty and before any significant identity-formation exploration can take place (ibid.). This has significant psychological ramifications for individual development and identity status:

'To require a decision having lifelong consequences to be made just at the time when the adolescent is in a de-structuring experimentation phase, or at least could be in one, deprives him/her of an essential condition (exploration) for identity construction.
(Marcia, 1986: 28)

The processes of exploring the answers to these questions are set in motion during adolescence and culminate in identity-formation which is hopefully realised, or at least well on the way to being realised by the end of adolescence (Danielsen et al., 2000). It is at the end of this 'construction' period that the individual will most likely have made choices that could have life-long consequences, not at the start as the Norwegian school system dictates (Arnett, 2000; Danielsen et al., 2000).

2.2.5 Identity-formation: A social process

In Erikson's developmental theory, identity construction is supported within the social structures of society and is therefore a socially situated process (Egeberg and Jerlang, 1987). Mead (1962) also articulates that identity building is a social process. Building

identity, whether it is individual or group identity, is heavily woven into the norms, beliefs and traditions, or culture, into which we are born (ibid.). We develop culture, identity, and behaviour through our experiences, interaction and communication with others. Mead (ibid.) proposes that we develop and explore our awareness or consciousness of the 'self' through communication. Communication is a product of social interaction that gives humans the faculty to think. Thinking arises from reflecting upon the attitudes, norms, values and/or beliefs of the group, giving us our sense of individual self-concept. In short, we can only experience ourselves through the attitudes and viewpoints possessed and displayed by others, and we are different things, in different situations, at different times, with different people who produce different social reactions (ibid.).

Identity construction is relational. It is carried out via interaction with others and the environment that surrounds the individual at any given time (Paulgaard, 2006). Adolescents are consistently assessing what they have and haven't got, or who they are and are not, by comparing themselves to other individuals or groups. Comparison is of importance to them in establishing themselves and their identities. Without a social environment in which to experience and respond to ideas and people in order to note similarities and differences, they could not come to define and re-define who they are in the here and now. In other words, they could not construct identity. This is also a cross-over point between identity construction and self-regulation, as feedback via comparison to those around us is how we gain self-efficacy and learn the accepted norms of behaviours around us.

Weeks (1990) attributes the relational aspect of identity to our human need to belong. Each of us is perpetually sorting our differences and similarities in relation to each other in order to establish and consolidate our '*sense of personal location'* (ibid.). 'Location' refers to where one is placed within a group or groups, rather than geographical location, although our physical location can be a factor of our identity. He goes on to explain that we all exist within a multifarious maze of '*potentially contradictory identities*' and the number of identities each of us has, or groups to which we belong, are conceivably endless. The ones we choose to identify with at any given moment is dependent upon a

range of variables (ibid.). The contradiction of multiple identities within each of us also gives rise to contradictory values associated with these identities. These contradictions create conflict both within the individual and the differing communities to which the individual belongs (ibid.). We all belong to a variety of groups that inter-relate within a web of social relations, and the processes that help us become whom we want to become begins in adolescence (ibid.). The period of adolescence is about uncertainty and exploration, within the context of the uncertainty of the era in which we live today.

The following section addresses Objective 3 of the Individual Research Objectives of this study. The meaning of 'choice' and 'action', and how they are linked together with 'who we think we are' as individuals located within a society or social group will be investigated. Following on, identity economics will be explained to give readers an understanding of how an identity economics model can be used to explain motivations for behaviour within the self-regulated learning study class arena.

2.3 Identity and making choices in the SRL context

As discussed in Section 2.1, one of the key components of self-regulated learning practices and of the study classes at Breivang is that students must initiate control over their behavioural and personal processes (Zimmerman, 1989). To initiate control, students must make, at the '*forethought phase'* of SRL theory, a decision (or several) prior to any action being taken (Zimmerman, 2008). The choice on how to use the resources available, to their benefit, belongs to the student. 'Choice' therefore, must also be regarded as a significant factor for initiating control in both SRL and the study classes. It is of course intended by the school that the students choose to use this time to their educational benefit since the purpose of the study classes is to give students "*the freedom to devote* [themselves to] *their professional work.*" (Eilertsen and Valdermo, 2011). However, Eilertsen and Valdermo (2011) report that a large portion of the teaching staff at the school are not satisfied with the choices the students are making in the context of the study classes. In other words, the students are perceived to be making poor choices. This section explores the inter-play between 'choice', 'action', and 'identity'.

2.3.1 Choice, action, and identity

Donagan's (1987) book title sums up the dependency humans have regarding our individual, societal and global need for 'choice': *"Choice, the essential element in human action.*". Krausz (2004) in his article, explains that 'choice' is the *"part of a situation that provides the opportunity for action"*. It is important to note his use of the word "*opportunity*", implying that 'choice' is conditional upon there being an "*opportunity*", or possibility for a 'choice' to be made in any situation. Holton (2006) also expresses this point by elaborating that some actions are purely subconsciously driven and require no form of decision in carrying them out, they have either become habitual, or simply require no conscious choice to be made – such as the order in which we dress ourselves every morning. These actions aren't necessarily consciously chosen prior to their every execution – they are, or have become automatic actions, and their functioning is referred to by neuro- and cognitive psychologists as "bottom-up" actions (Sun, 1999). However, prior to a conceived[7] action becoming automated, a 'choice' was initially made. In order for 'choice' to present "*the opportunity for action"* there first of all has to be options from which to choose and decide. However, in subconscious, or automatic actions where we act without perceiving a 'choice', it is possible to stop ourselves prior to action and ask whether we wish to change tact or continue as always, in which case an opportunity for introducing 'choice' to a previously subconscious action is presented (Holton, 2006). This process of cognitive thought intervention is referred to in neuro-psycholgy as a "top-down" processing approach to action and behaviour (Sun, 1999).

By defining intentional human action as: *"action that is preceded by propositional attitudes"*, Krausz (2004: 353) also defines 'choice' as: '*propositional attitudes.'* '*Propositional attitudes'* according to Russell consists of '*one's beliefs, desires and doubts.'* (1962: 21). This is interesting as Russell lights the way for 'identity' to enter as a

[7] I use the term 'conceived' to indicate a difference between actions that become automatic, as opposed to actions that are autonomous, i.e. that are under the control of the autonomic nervous system such as breathing. Holton doesn't make this distinction.

component of both 'choice' and the ensuing action. Identity, as discussed in Section 2.2, arises when individuals identify with (and question) societal values, beliefs, morals, behaviours, to establish a sense of belonging (Mead, 1962). Therefore, both 'choice' and 'action' are inseparable from 'identity' because 'identity' is a composite of what Russell terms the "*propositional attitudes*". Krausz (2004) goes on to explain that the '*propositional attitudes'* preceding our actions are sensitive to the conditions under which one makes a choice. Given that our identity is tied up within our choices, it then follows that one is sensitive to one's identity in making choices. Akerlof and Kranton (2010) also argue that 'identity' always plays a part in motivating the choices we make, regardless of whether one is aware of the choices made or not. The choices we make as individuals or even groups are socially situated, and must therefore incorporate identity as a causal element of behaviour (ibid.).

2.3.2 Choice, identity and Breivang – tying it all together

It has been established in Section 2.3 that 'identity' plays a key role in human action and therefore in 'choice', and that identity-formation is a key objective during the adolescent period. Danielson et al. (2000) stress the importance that context has on the development of identity. Steven Pinker (2005) also highlights the value of the peer group during adolescence in negotiating identity, and its significant role in helping shape the norms and ideals required to 'belong' to a group. Both of these influences can be seen at play in Coleman's (1961) extensive studies on the ways in which different status systems associated with teenage identities influenced the choices and actions of American senior high school adolescents. He found significant evidence to suggest that the actions of adolescents within the school (context) were dominated by those behaviours that supported or strengthened personal status, or belonging, within the group to which the students identified or aspired to identify (peer group). Coleman's findings support the theory that identity negotiation among adolescents is a significant, if not dominant motivational force for choice and behaviour among adolescents.

With a focus on Breivang, we could consider the period of adolescence to be the broader, or macro-context in which identity-formation takes place, and the self-regulated learning

study classes one of the many micro-contexts in which opportunities for identity exploration exist. We could then hypothesise that the role identity plays in choice, combined with the adolescent peer group, has a potentially important impact on the motivations and outcomes of the behaviours students initiate within the self-regulated learning context. This leads us to identity economic theory.

2.4 An economic model in an educational setting

Analysing the motivations of behaviour, and explaining how the mechanisms of choice operate and affect the outcomes of behaviour, is the chief area of interest for behavioural economists. This section presents background information on why and how I adopt an economic model to analyse the data in this study to meet objectives 4 and 5.

2.4.1 Identity economic model: background – rationale – application

The field of economics bases itself on understanding human desires and behaviours in order to predict how we respond to individual choice, especially in the market place. Economic theory proposes that we each make choices that will lead us to act in such a way as to "*maximise our utilities",* in other words, maximise the benefits of our choices (Inglis and Aers, 2008). Economic theory and analysis can be applied to explain both pecuniary and non-pecuniary motivations and behaviours (Akerlof and Kranton, 2010).

Traditional economic theory and analysis (sometimes referred to as 'rational choice theory') has concentrated on pecuniary motivations, referring to 'supply' and 'demand' to explain economic transactions and fluctuations of prices. In classical economic theory the 'demand' is determined by the consumers' 'utility function' (ibid.), which is a (mathematical) function characterising the consumers' desires and the costs they will accept to fulfil those desires. The degree to which a commodity is perceived to satisfy desires will determine the commodity's 'utility value' to the consumer. The utility value will then be expressed in a certain demand for the commodity that can be met by the supply side. If the price matches the utility value, a transaction will ensue. According to the theory, the utility value serves as a motivation for behaviour, helping to explain why

people are willing to rid themselves of money to obtain something. An example: Feeling thirsty may lead a consumer to put a utility value on a glass of beer that induces a certain willingness to pay. The 'utility function'[8] then serves to explain why the consumer will proceed to exchange 75kr for the beer.

When moving on to look at transactions between teachers and students, the perspective changes because money is no longer directly involved. Akerlof and Kranton (2010) postulate that a traditional application of economic theory whereby the students' 'demand' for education is explained by traditional motivations (utility function) as 'laying the foundations for future income' can not be applied. The students today tend not to define their utility function (motivational factors) by what is likely to boost their future personal economy, but rather by what boosts their current identity (Akerlof and Kranton, 2010; 2002; 2000) - which is closely tied to their status among their peers (Pinker, 2005; Akerlof and Kranton, 2010; 2002; 2000) .

The traditional economic analogy is still valid in the sense that the school invests money and resources in creating a 'supply' of education, while the 'demand' is constituted by the extent to which the students follow the tuition. The students are assumed to have a strong self-interest in providing that 'demand' by putting a high utility value on 'Knowledge and Professional Skills' (hence the school's belief in SRL study classes). However, Akerlof and Kranton (2010) posit that this assumption creates a mismatch of 'supply' and 'demand' because the students' utility function (motivational factors) that create 'demand' has not been correctly understood. The essential problem is that 'Knowledge and Professional Skills' are not the key variables in the utility function; 'Identity' is. The 'demand' side of the 'supply-demand' equation will then be determined by how the 'supply' side satisfies the utility function, i.e. identity benefit for the student. If the school supplies something that is in high demand (identity benefit), the students will eagerly consume it. If it only supplies something that is in low demand (knowledge), they will be less keen.

[8] Utility functions are explained in more detail in the Section 2.4.2

Identity economics makes the assumption that institutions perform optimally when those involved "*identify with it and when their norms advance its goals"* (ibid.). The next step then, in the line of reasoning discussed above, would be that the school could play an active role in forming the students' utility function (motivational factors) by influencing what provides identity benefit. If the school can create an environment where "doing your best" (and identifying with the school's values) gives status among your peers, it will add utility value to school work and thus serve to move the 'demand' over to one that satisfies the school's goals for the study classes. In order to gain this knowledge, it is necessary to explore what the current 'demands' are, and how these demands are being met and supported. By understanding the 'demands' a conclusion can then be drawn about the existing utility value (*nytteverdi*) of the study classes.

2.4.2 Identity utility as a determinant of behaviour

The identity economic model incorporates into its theory the behavioural mechanism of identity, particularly the social identity of the individual. Identity economics recognises, as sociologists do, that societies are made up of commonly understood categories (such as those of age, class, race, gender, Liverpool supporter, nerd etc.), each with their own norms and ideals of behaviour (ibid.). By understanding or exploring one's identities[9] in terms of these categories, individuals embrace the corresponding norms of the group to which they identify or wish to identify. Therefore, by conforming to (or deviating from) the norms of their (desired) identity, individuals either gain or lose 'identity utility' (Akerlof and Kranton, 2010; 2002; 2000). Losses or gains in 'identity utility' are understood by how the students either perceive or report that their actions benefit them (or not) when complying with the group norms and ideals. Identity economics assumes that a person acts to maximise their identity utility based on who they think they are, or should be, and the norms of the category to which they (wish to) belong.

[9] We have multiple identities as we take on different roles and therefore identities at different times (Weeks J. 1990; Mead GH. 1962)

In order to build an elementary theory of the utility value (nytteverdi) of the study classes at Breivang, the 'utility functions' of the study classes need to be examined. 'Utility functions' and what goes into them are how economists classify motivation (Akerlof and Kranton, 2010). It is the process that leads the students to maximise, or achieve the utility value (nytteverdi) of the study classes. It can describe either the conscious or sub-conscious choices people make and it does not discern between the two. The utility function in identity economics theory, as applied to the context of the study classes at Breivang, consists of three elements:

- The **social categories** that exist within the study classes and each individual's assignation to a category.
- The **norms** and **ideals** of behaviours that are affiliated with the assigned social categories that take place in the context of the study classes.
- The **identity utility**: the positive or negative outcome when the individual complies or fails to comply with the norms and ideals of the category. The identity utility in this case is the perceived gain or loss to the students' identity, which will determine their actions.

Ideals are defined as *"the exemplary characteristics and* (codes of) *behaviour associated with the social category"* (ibid.: 11). Norms and ideals of behaviours are dynamic and they can serve to satisfy both short-term and long-term goals. The students, as well as third parties, can influence and alter the norms and ideals, and consequently can alter the very nature of the social categories (ibid.). "*The norms of how to behave depend on people's positions within the social context"*(ibid.: 11). In other words, how we should act is influenced by who we think we should be within a specific social setting. That is, with whom or what we identify influences our decisions and interactions either in the moment, for a day, or for a lifetime. People naturally follow norms of behaviour adhering to their chosen social categories because they identify, or wish to identify with that category. People internalise norms and act in accordance with them, thereby gaining positive identity utility with the social category. When a person acts outside of the norms of the social category, they lose identity utility with the others belonging to the social category. The process of weighing up the losses and benefits of remaining or straying

from group norms is a balancing act between one's standard utility and one's identity utility. Understanding the effect the existing identity utilities have in influencing the behaviours of the students, and the manner in which these manifest within the school culture, could potentially open the door for the school (and others) to see how students' identities and therefore norms, could be shaped to bring them closer to the desired norms and values of the school (ibid.).

2.4.3 Other studies

To date, I have found only a few studies that implement a model of utility value within the education sector. One of these studies (Shechter et al., 2011) investigates the role culture has on the utility value in achievement behaviour, and is aimed at uncovering key differences in achievement between Asian and non-Asian math students. The other study (Hulleman, 2008) investigates how *situational* and *individual* interest interventions contribute to the utility value of mathematical learning. Neither of these two studies adopts an identity utility within its utility function and therefore, do not make suitable study comparisons with my work.

Akerlof and Kranton (2000; 2002), have developed the identity utility model and applied it to several whole school situations to explain both historical and contemporary inter-racial tensions. Additionally, they have applied the model to explain fundamental changes within schools that have evolved from being "down and out" schools to "shining example" schools. The articles I have found to date, detail the mathematical modelling behind their theory and are therefore not comparable.

There is a plethora of literature investigating various aspects of self-regulated learning processes. However, to my knowledge (à jour), this study appears to stand alone in its application of the identity economics model to establish: what the utility value of the self-regulated learning study classes in a senior high school in Northern Norway looks like, where the focus is on the identity utilities of the students; how these identity utilities are supported; and the effect, if any, the utility values have on self-regulated learning processes.

3 Research Methods

3.1 Introduction

This section outlines the research strategy chosen to answer Objective 4 of this study, together with the means of collecting data for analysis, the analytical approach used in sorting data, and the theoretical model to be applied for analysis. Potential limitations and problems with the chosen research strategy and its implementation will also be addressed.

3.2 Research Strategy

Objective 4 sets out to: 'explain the utility value (nytteverdi) of the self-regulated learning study classes at Breivang, how the utility value(s) is supported, and what effect, if any, the utility value has on self-regulated learning processes'. This objective will be realised through the collection and analysis of empirical data. The empirical research of this study is interested in facilitating an in-depth exploration and investigates a number of inter-related aims:

- What choices are students making during self-directed study classes (SØ)?
- What factors influence and support these choices?
- What do these choices tell us about the culture of the individual classes and of the school as a whole?
- To what extent are certain features of self-regulated learning theory effectuated?

In order to address these aims, I have chosen a qualitative research approach as being a best fit since the focus is on studying *'things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them."* (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000: 3). By undertaking a qualitative research approach for this study, I envisage gaining a rich understanding of underlying reasons and motivations for the choices students make within the specific context of self-regulated learning classes, and hope to generate new knowledge and ideas for consideration.

This research study is founded in a constructivist-interpretative paradigm. It is said that; '*all research is interpretative; it is guided by a set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied'* (ibid.: 19). I, the researcher, am unable to divorce myself from the world in which I have grown up and experienced. These experiences make up my 'self', my beliefs, knowledge, and understanding of the world around me, and they accompany me in undertaking this study. Because of this, I do not believe there is such a thing as an 'objective observer', my observations are at best 'blended with', at worst, 'blinded by' who I am as an observer, analyser and interpreter of the data I collect. However, I endeavour to undertake this study within the ethical practices of qualitative research by: being trustworthy and authentic in my research processes; presenting a balanced representative account of the students' views; creating an awareness of the students' constructed realities; and making recommendations based on my findings (Mertens, 2010).

The study continues to follow the constructivist paradigm, basing itself upon:

- A *'relativist ontology'* (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000: 21). I believe that reality is socially constructed and that multiple mental realities of the same phenomena can co-exist. These realities may change throughout the processes of the study, as they represent different things to different people at differing times, and it is my job to allow the concepts of importance as constructed by the students to emerge;
- A *'subjectivist epistemology'* (ibid.: 21) whereby knowledge is co-produced by both the researcher and the respondents; each influences the other. The choice of more personal, and interactive methods of data collection are therefore employed to reflect this relational process;
- Being *'naturalist'* (ibid.: 21) in that its methodologies are situated within a real context. The methods adopted for data collection are done so with the assumption that reality is socially constructed and can therefore only be carried out as an interactive process between the researcher and respondents in an attempt to represent multiple perspectives. It is my task in this case study to '*understand the multiple constructions of meaning and knowledge'* (Mertens, 2010: 18).

The research strategy that will be used to carry out this empirical investigation is a case study. Merriam (1998: 27) defines a case as '*a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries.'* This research fits this definition as it represents a close observation of a particular population (i.e. student and teacher behaviour and student attitudes) that is intrinsically bounded within a particular context (i.e. the self-regulated study class situation at a specific senior high school). At the same time, the research community has the expectation that all research will benefit certain audiences in order to assist understanding of phenomena under investigation (Stake, 1978). Stake believes that this understanding is effectual when the research captures '*the natural experience acquired in ordinary personal involvement.'* (1978: 5). The case study has an advantage over other strategies because it is able to get close to the experiences, expressions and understandings as they unfold in practice (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

This an evaluative case study that attempts to determine the value of the study class program at Breivang, and serves to highlight the program's strengths and weaknesses. It could also serve as an opportunity for the school to implement any policy changes to the current program should they deem them necessary in helping them to meet the school's learning strategies and adapted learning obligations to The Quality Framework. Additionally, this case study is particularistic as it focuses on a specific situation and examines the behaviours from the specific perspective of identity, and the relationship identity has with self-regulated learning practices.

There are limitations in adopting a case study strategy. Firstly, the making of generalisations from one case study is not always possible and therefore is considered neither predictive of future behaviours, nor descriptive of characteristics of a whole population group. However, knowledge does not necessarily need be formally generalised to be of benefit to the collective knowledge bank. A descriptive, evaluative case study can be of value and can lead to new ideas and policies or strategies (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

Secondly, readers may interpret a case study as representing the whole of the situation the case is based within (Merriam, 1998). This research study, however, investigates the self-regulated learning study classes only, and not the whole of the teaching and learning

situation at Breivang. The study classes occupy approximately 10% of the school's timetable (Eilertsen and Valdermo, 2011). Additionally, there are a total of 21 homeroom classes, five of which have been observed, interviewed and surveyed. Although this case study is not in any way representative of the whole school's learning environment, some trends or issues may arise in the analysis that could be seen by the administration as applying to the whole school environment.

Furthermore, case studies are susceptible to researcher bias because of any preconceived notions the researcher may have in conducting the study (Flyvbjerg, 2006). The researcher could influence the study by selecting anything from the data material and represent it as an in-depth description of the whole phenomena studied. Both these scenarios present a problem of verification as they can be construed as being '*less rigorous than ... quantative, hypothetical-deductive methods.'* (ibid.: 234). Flyvberg however, counters this criticism of case study research by arguing that *'subjectivism and bias toward verification applies to all methods* (of research).' (ibid.: 235). In the interests of adhering to the rigours and holding up to the scrutiny of scientific research, I have attempted to:

- Discuss the philosophical choice and nature of the case study;
- Adopt well-established data collection methods;
- Adopt a structured, systematic approach to data analysis;

and

- Provide details of data collection and analysis techniques applied in relation to this study, as well as avail the questionnaire for scrutiny.

3.3 Data Collection

3.3.1 Sampling

I was employed as a research assistant to the project: Evaluering av bruken av studieøkter (SØ) som leksehjelparena ved Breivang vgs. (Eilertsen and Valdermo, 2011). The data material collected in conjunction with this project was made available to me for this

study. The intention being to co-produce knowledge and understanding that compliments the original report with a comprehensive research study bound within a theoretical framework. As this was a commissioned case study, there can be no claim to achieving representative views of all senior high school self-regulated learning programs.

The data sampling includes a selection of five out of 21-homeroom classes across three different programs of study. Students were recruited from study programs that include academic courses and vocational studies, and include students from first year and third year programs. This study could therefore be considered as presenting findings based on data material that is representative for the whole school, as there is no focus on either one or the other course program, year group or gender. Furthermore, although this selection (and therefore study) can not be seen as representative of other senior high schools, it could still yield observations, or conclusions that may have relevance to other senior high schools that offer similar study programs to their students.

In order to capture the experiences of the students both at the beginning and end of their senior high school careers, classes in their first and third (final) years have been arbitrarily recruited. Not all programs comprise of a three-year course, therefore, classes that met the third year criteria included only those from the Media and Communications, and General Studies specialising in Arts and Design programs. One class from each of these two programs was randomly selected. One first-year class from each of the following programs was also randomly selected: Health and Social Sciences, Media and Communications, and General Studies specialising in Arts and Design. Design and Craft is another vocational study program at Breivang and is not included in this study as they were unavailable due to practical program requirements.

3.3.2 Method

This case study relies on three data collection techniques: focus group interviews, individual questionnaires, and observations. The former two techniques are the main source of data, as they express the attitudes and experiences of the research subjects that contribute greatly to establishing the motivations behind behaviour. Observation material

is used to a lesser degree to either support, counter or supplement what is stated. Observations were carried out only once with each class.

The focus group interviews were structured within a question framework for the interviewer to create the opportunity for the interviewees to express their views. The interview was not restricted to the framework, that is, issues that arose and were deemed relevant during the interview had the opportunity to be pursued and expanded upon. The use of focus groups were selected for two reasons; 1) as an efficient means of gathering a range and depth of information in a context where there were many respondents (up to 20 per class); and 2) focus groups can be useful in conveying key information about programs (Mertens, 2010). Focus groups were limited to ten students per group, requiring two focus group interviews to be carried out for each class. Written questionnaires were used as a supplement to the focus group interviews for two reasons; 1) to gather information from those who were less vocal in the focus group interviews (a weakness of focus groups); and 2) because of the ease in analysing questionnaires in comparison to group interviews (another weakness of focus group interviews) (ibid.).
Appendix A contains the structured focus group interview questions; Appendix B contains a sample questionnaire.

3.3.3 Site

This case study was carried out at Breivang Senior High School, in Tromsø, Northern Norway. Breivang has over 400 students and offers study programs in General Studies specialising in Arts and Design (3 years), Media and Communication Studies (3 years), Health and Social Sciences (2 years), and Design and Craft (2 years). This research focuses on establishing and explaining the utility value of the school's self-regulated learning study class program. Self-regulated learning study classes were incorporated into the school timetable by reducing regular classes by five minutes each. Three timetabled classes of self-regulated study are scheduled per week for each class, totalling approximately 2 hours and 40 minutes per week. The study class program is designed to support self-regulated learning and adapted learning needs as a means to meet key aims of The Quality Framework (Points 3 and 6 of the Learning Poster: Utdanningsdirektoratet,

2012b: 2). Additionally, the study class program supports the Troms County's initiative to offer homework support to students in the county.

3.3.4 Quality Control

I apply the concept of reliability by employing a tried and tested research strategy. Multiple methods of data collection (triangulation) such as interviews, questionnaires and observations, are used to enhance consistency. Triangulation is an important aid in verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation of results, as well as offering clarification of meaning by being able to express different ways of seeing the same phenomena within this qualitative research study (Mertens, 2010). In addition, reliability is sought through a structured, transparent and detailed approach in which transcripts, questionnaires and observation notes are all available for scrutiny until one month after final examination of this thesis.

Transferability is considered '*the qualitative parallel to external validity in post-positivist research'* and allows the reader of the study to establish comparisons of the research context to their own (Mertens, 2010: 259). In order to aid readers considering the transferability of this study, I provide a detailed account of the context and methods of the study so readers can gain as full an understanding as possible of the research setting and participants, should another researcher wish to replicate or compare the study.

3.3.5 Ethics

This study (registration number 28805) meets the ethical requirements of the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD). Appendix C contains a copy of the NSD's ruling. Given that this is a case study of a real school, anonymity of the participants has been preserved by removing names of individuals, classes, and teachers. Recorded transcripts have been deleted.

3.3.6 Limitations and Potential Problems

Many of the limitations of this study have been discussed above with the exception of the aspect of objectivity. Some degree of objectivity is gained by a significant lapse in time (12 months) from when the data was initially collected and transcribed to when it was analysed and interpreted for this research. This has allowed me to view the material with a fresh approach to analysis that further minimizes any bias that may be present.

Two potential problems in data transcription may have arisen. The interviews were conducted in groups and in Norwegian – a foreign language to myself. Group interviews can be difficult to transcribe as several people could talk simultaneously, or, one or two respondents could be seated far enough away from the Dictaphone and may not be audible. The group interviews were conducted in small rooms with groups of no more than 10 students as an attempt to counter these problems. The interview recordings have been listened to at least three times each in an effort to counter any meaning that may be either lost or confused in translation. Furthermore, areas of ambiguity in the transcripts were highlighted for the initial project's main authors to either verify or rectify should the need arise.

3.4 Framework for Data Analysis

An important part of this research is to analyse the case study data to identify and explain the students' utility value of the study classes at Breivang, and to reflect on the case study results in conjunction with the findings in the Literature Review. An identity economic theory model will be applied to the data to establish the utility value of the classes.

A secondary part of this research is to highlight how the utility values of the study classes influence aspects of self-regulated learning processes within the self-regulated learning environment. The data material was examined for evidence of the following: self-regulative behaviour – how the students plan and organise their resources to their benefit; self-efficacy – how the students perceive their capabilities to complete tasks to a

satisfactory level; and feedback – how the students are helped and encouraged by their teachers in a self-regulated learning context.

A framework analysis approach was employed to organise data and to facilitate interpretation. Data was organised thematically according to the students' attitudes and actions, as well as the teachers' actions, in order to capture the norms and ideals of behaviours and their identity utilities. Self-regulated learning skills and strategies were also recorded. Framework analysis is an ideal approach for organising the data as it can be sorted and compared both thematically and by cases (i.e. the different student groups), allowing for a two-dimensional analysis. The advantages of framework analysis are that it is systematic, comprehensive and transparent. Conversely it is time-consuming and there is a danger of the researcher becoming involved in the process rather than the outcome. Two main themes presented themselves from the report of Eilertsen and Valdermo (2011): behaviours and attitudes that contribute to a "relaxed" study class session, and those that contribute to a "schoolwork oriented" study class session. Therefore the description and analysis of data is divided into these two themes to better understand the driving forces behind each of these potential utility values of the study classes.

Prior to drawing up the framework, I took a 'loose' grounded theory approach to the data analysis to allow the sub-themes of behaviours and attitudes to evolve through the data to highlight the commonalities or anomalies that existed. Appendix D contains the final framework for analysis.

3.5 Procedure for Identifying the Utility Value of the Study Classes

In order to identify the utility value of the study classes, one must examine the components of the utility function[10]. The utility function is the process that leads the students to maximise the utility value of the study classes (Akerlof and Kranton, 2010). It

[10] For and explanation and discussion of the theory of identity economics and terminology, see Section 2.4.

comprises of three variables that will be considered for analysis: social categories, norms and ideals, and gains and losses in identity utility.

1. **Norms and ideals:** I examine the attitudes and behaviours of the students, as well as the behaviours of the teachers in order to establish the existing norms for each social category. Explicit statements of attitudes are the equivalent of giving an explicit statement about the current norms of behaviour (Akerlof and Kranton, 2010).

2. **Identity utility:** The perceived or reported gains and losses experienced by the students when they identify, or try to identify, with the norms of their group are a significant predictor of the overall utility value of the study classes (Akerlof and Kranton, 2010). There are a plethora of identity utilities active within a school, including one for those who identify to none. However, as this research is situated within self-regulated learning study classes at senior high school, it is proposed that students are pursuing either an 'academic' or a 'social' identity (or a combination of the two). It is assumed that students defining themselves as ‘academic’ will tend to act in a way that supports this identity, and therefore place a ‘schoolwork oriented’ utility on the study classes. Conversely, those assigning themselves to a more ‘social’ identity will look for a 'relaxed' utility value in their study classes and act accordingly. Discussion regarding potential gains and losses in identity utility will be made in reference to these two proposed identities.

3. **Social categories:** Norwegian senior high school students are divided up into study majors (*studieretning*), whereby students belonging to the same major and year intake, study all subjects together for the duration of their school life. Under normal circumstances they do not change classes, therefore, the social categories to which the students identify are the assigned classes of the students. Upon initial analysis, it was revealed that three of the classes held similar attitudes, and behaviours to each other. Accordingly, for the presentation of findings, and discussion, these three classes have been grouped together and called Group 1, while the other two classes remain separate and are called Groups 2 and 3 respectively. The initial social categories

(individual classes) and the final social categories to be analysed are presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Initial social categories and final social categories to be analysed

Initial social category	**Final social category for analysis**
Vg1a* - (first year class in media studies)	Group 1
Vg1b - (first year class in general studies)	
Vg3a - (third year class in media studies)	
Vg3b – (third year class in general studies)	Group 2
Vg1c - (first year class in vocational studies)	Group 3
'Vg' is the shortened form of the Norwegian term for senior high school (*Videregående*)	
*Vg1a (Class A) was randomly selected for observation, interview and survey. However, under observation, the classroom doors that separate this class from the other Year 1 Media and Communication Studies class were opened, and therefore both classes could be observed simultaneously. The observations for each class contrasted starkly with each other and both observations are included in this study. The selected class is hereafter referred to as Class A in the data description under the sub-heading 'Observation Data: Vg1a – Class A). The other class (not selected for study but included in the observation material only) is referred to as Class B in the data description chapter under the sub-heading 'Observation Data: Vg1a – Class B'.	

3.6 Coding System for Data Presentation

An alphabetical coding system is employed when quoting the students. The coding signifies a change in speaker. The same person can be represented in the same set of citation data without any recognition as such. The coding does **not** imply that person **a.** is the same person throughout the thesis; the coding system merely signifies a new contribution to the topic.

4 Case Study Findings: Description and Analysis

4.1 Introduction

An important component of this study is the implementation of a case study to meet Objective 4. In order to meet this objective, the empirical data gathered on the actions of the teachers and students, as well as student attitudes will be analysed to establish how these factors both create and affect the utility value of the study classes. Identity economic theory will be applied to analyse and discuss the data.

This section presents the case study findings by describing and analysing the data according to the three different student groups described in Chapter 3, Research Methods. The results of the analysis will follow the description and analysis for each group and will be divided into two parts. The first addresses the utility value of the SRL classes for the relevant group. The second part examines evidence of SRL processes of the same group with reference to self-regulatory behaviours, self-efficacy, and guidance and feedback. Based on the findings of Eilertsen and Valdermo (2011), two main potential utility values were assumed to be operating within the classes for each group: 'schoolwork oriented' and 'relaxed'. The description and analyses of data is presented under these two potential utility values for each student group.

4.2 Group 1

4.2.1 Description of Group 1 data contributing to a 'relaxed' utility value

The students pertaining to Group 1 admit that they are spending some, and at times a great deal of their study classes on activities other than schoolwork. Some students in the group mentioned that taking mini-breaks from schoolwork during study class was a temptation that leads them astray from their work, indicating a lack of self-regulation to manage their time and stay on task. Others maintained that it is was easy to be tempted to participate in social or other activities such as relaxing or surfing the Internet, especially if one was tired, as it allowed them to 're-charge' for the next lesson:

a. *'Just put your head down and rest up for the next lesson, maybe work for a quarter of an hour or so.'*

Many students in this group liken study class to their break times, explaining that it added to their enjoyment of school life as they offer relief from a full day of strict teaching regime, which helps maintain a good mood and work tempo throughout the day:

a. *'You are in a better mood since it is like an extended recess.'*

Two students in Vg1a summed up their relaxed attitudes and behaviours by stating that study class was similar to being at home, only with professional help at hand. Their classmates appeared to agree that it was a fair representation of the Vg1a's sentiment towards the study classes, that they felt relaxed enough to be able to combine study with other activities such as listening to music, chatting and participating in their digital lives with Facebook and the like:

a. *'It is almost like an extra recess. We sit and work while at the same time ... you can listen to music and there is no teacher talking, you can listen to music while you work, we can ... we feel more at home.' ...* **b.** *'Yeah, I feel more at home, but ... but you have a teacher alongside you.'*

However, several Group 1 students stated that they took into consideration how much time they had remaining on various tasks and assignments before they embarked on activities that were non-school related:

a. *'We have long deadlines for completing assignments ... suddenly you can find yourself sitting there watching a movie, not bothering to do anything else.' ...* **b.** *'If you don't have much or anything to do, then you would really prefer to sit and relax a little 'cos you are pretty tired after a lesson.' ...* **c.** *'For my part it is about how much time I have to complete my work ... if it is a while before it is due, then I can just as well use the study*

class to relax a little ... but if there isn't much time left, then I will work hard and effectively, get the job done.'

Several students from Vg1b also mention that their motivation and attitudes to work in study classes has tapered since the beginning of the school year:

a. *'Right from the beginning of the school year we heard "You must work hard if you wish to make good grades." But after a while … I found out it wasn't that hard to get good grades. So I can just use study class to do things other than study for a test or do homework.'*

Students in Vg3 state that they have experienced changes in teachers' approach to study classes since they were in their first year of senior high school. Then they felt there was tighter control over how they occupied their time in the classes, and that in general there was better teacher follow up and support for learning:

a. *'In our first year there was more pressure regarding what we did in study class, we had to do schoolwork, and often the teachers asked us what we planned to do in advance. Now, no one asks or follows up, we do what we want.' …* **b.** *'As a rule, the teachers are just there, they don't ask us anymore, but they try to help is someone needs it. Better follow-up would be extremely useful (like we had in our first year), especially since it is our last year now!!'*

Group 1 indicates their frustration over the attendance and punctuality of the study class teachers. They maintained that the teachers are often late, and in some cases not even present. The students view this as unfair as they would receive a reprimand (*anmerkning*) if they were late. However, the teachers don't get reprimanded. Furthermore, the students feel that a teacher not turning up to study class creates a barrier to their learning:

a. *'I am really unhappy about this. The teacher doesn't always turn up.' …* **b.** *'And many of them are late ... the rule is that if you come late you get a reprimand … they don't get a*

reprimand ... when teachers are late to study class.' … **c.** *'If you need the teacher and they don't come, you can feel a bit stupid.'*

Group 1 mention that sometimes teachers ask them what work plans they have for study class, indicating that teachers don't consistently practice this all the time. Additionally, the students feel that not all teachers were equally interested or willing to help. Students know precisely which teachers they could rely on for help:

a. *'They ask … ask what we have planned to do … sometimes.'* **b.** *'Out of 10 teachers, 1 to 6 help … you get help, but … they aren't … how should I say this …it seems like they aren't so motivated to help.'* **d.** *'I no longer hide that I am not doing schoolwork because the teachers we have now are more relaxed … I read the news and participate in net forums.'*

Vg1b introduced hearsay as a contributing factor to a 'relaxed' environment in the study classes. They stated that there is a lack of consistency within the school regarding study classes as a schoolwork arena, and that they felt this is unfair to all those who are 'required' to work, while other classes are allowed to do whatever they want:

a. *'I think we are the only class that has it* (study class), *because all the others have recess, for example if I am with someone from another class and I say that they have to go to class. They respond with "We just have study class!" and they are shocked that our teacher takes attendance and so on. They are allowed to be where they want and pretty much do whatever they want. … Why do we have to do schoolwork when the others don't have the same rules in their study classes?'*

4.2.1.1 Observation data: Vg1a - Class B[11]

Within 10 minutes of study class beginning, a third teacher came into Class B's room to deliver a message about the cancellation of the next lesson because the gym teacher was injured. This teacher remained in the room, and instigated an out-loud conversation with the assigned study class teacher. At one point a student in the room entered into and continued to participate in their conversation. The conversation lasted the bulk of the study class session, was about subjects that have nothing to do with schoolwork, and could be clearly heard by those sitting in the open room belonging to Class A.

4.2.1.2 "Teacher sabotage" – a barrier to SRL: Vg1b

At the beginning of the study class observation, the supervising teacher revealed that one day a week study class functions as an extended normal class because it follows on directly, with the same teachers present. This was the case on the day of observation. Upon questioning the students about this arrangement, they concurred that this was true. They also voiced their dissatisfaction claiming that it was a disruption to some of their study class plans. Some students acknowledged that they sometimes request to continue working as an extended lesson; however, others felt that it was unfair that they, and not the teacher, have to take initiative to have a study class as scheduled.

a. *'They expect us to continue working with subject X, and if we aren't finished with the work they have planned for the normal class in that subject, we are told we have to have to continue with it in study class.' ...* **b.** *'It is a nuisance because if we have something else we have to do, then well ... they should give us advance warning so we can plan for it. I think it is really poor.' ...* ***c.*** *'We have to take the initiative to actually have a study class from time to time. We have to say, "Now we need a 10 minute break, after which we want a study class." ...* **d. '***But ... we don't always get it because they say "Yes, but you all need to finish this or that." ... Then there is no choice.' ...* **e.** *'On top of that we ... they expect that we use study class to clean up.' ...* ***f.*** *'I often feel that I have to tell the*

[11] Refer to Chapter 3 'Research Methods': Table 2: 'Initial social categories and final social categories to be analysed' for explanatory note on Vg1a: Class A and Class B

teacher that we have study class, and say "Now I am going to do my subject X homework" or the like. I am getting tired of it.'

On the day of observation there was an added obstacle to the study class. The students explained that during the normal class tuition time, they had to wait for one of their teachers to go and buy some of the materials required for the lesson that took place prior to the scheduled study class. They were told that they could use the waiting time to organise their theory work since it was due to be handed in, and that this time would replace the study class. However, if a student had planned to do other work in their study class they were not given the opportunity to do so, making the exchange an unequal one.

4.2.2 Analysis of Group 1 data contributing to a 'relaxed' utility value

While these students are at times choosing to relax, they appear to be aware that their role as a student is to remain focussed on schoolwork. They state that by resting they are in fact coping with and planning for a long day ahead by 're-charging' for the next lesson. The benefits of resting could be said to be adding positively to their 'academic' identity utility even though their behaviour slides into the 'social' identity utility because they are not involved in schoolwork at these times. This could indicate that students are meeting dual identity utilities by being able to organise and plan their time so they can remain focused during instruction time perceiving gains in their 'academic' identity utility. At the same time, they are able to maintain and nurture their 'social' identity utility by being in contact with each other either in person or digitally, listening to music, or sharing a relaxed time with each other.

Self-efficacy also plays a part in forming the 'academic' identity utility of the students in the classes. If students perceive that they are planning and allocating their time accordingly in order to successfully complete the tasks on time, they will be in a position to reallocate the remainder of their study class time to something of greater interest and or value to them at the time – such as socialising or relaxing. Self-efficacy and success in delivering work on time would enhance their 'academic' identity self-esteem, while simultaneously making gains in their 'social' identity utility as they are able to manage

their time efficiently to satisfy both their ‘academic’ and ‘social’ identity needs. Furthermore, students in Group 1 voice that they are in fact prioritising schoolwork over other activities indicating that their ‘academic’ identity utility is of importance to them in the study class situation and that they act in a manner that will prioritise and support this identity utility over their ‘social’ identity utility.

First year students to the school had perhaps anticipated an emphasis on ‘academic identity’ and came to senior high school with expectations of norms of behaviours and attitudes that would support an ‘academic’ identity utility. However, after a short period of time (one semester) they appear to have established that the norms are not as they envisioned and have adjusted their behaviours and attitudes accordingly. No adolescent wishes to be labelled as an “outsider”, and fitting-in is necessary to make gains in their ‘social’ identity utility (Akerlof and Kranton, 2010). Therefore, by making adjustments in their attitudes and behaviour towards a more ‘relaxed’ disposition, they incur no loss of any ‘academic’ identity utility, as it is perceived to be ‘easy’ to get good grades.

Vg3a students are indicating that they wish to maximise their ‘academic’ identity utility and view this identity as an important part of being in their final year of senior high school. Although they have matured and can operate in a more self-regulated manner by being able to prioritise their work, they still recognise that they have a need for support and guidance. They consider teacher involvement to be even more vital now, as they are making some serious choices about the next phase of their lives. However, they voice that it is a struggle for them to make gains in their ‘academic’ identity utility when they perceive that the teaching staff does not support this identity.

In describing the actions of the teachers, students are in effect describing the norms that they associate with study class. Teacher behaviours are important to the norms of behaviours in the school (Paris et al. 2001). They are the ones who set the standards for the students to follow. When the teachers are turning up late or not at all, they are presenting a norm of behaviour and conveying the message that says, “It is ok to turn up late, or not at all.” Further more, this could have a negative affect on student self-efficacy and self-esteem as they are unable to get the help they feel they need to continue with or

complete a task. Consequently, their 'academic' identity utility incurs losses as they feel *'stupid',* and the overall use of the study class shifts from being 'schoolwork oriented' to being 'relaxed' because of external contributing factors. Where one student openly states that he no longer pretends to do schoolwork in study class, he signals a sense that the teachers don't care what he or the others do. Instead, he prefers to participate in his digital life, gaining 'social' identity utility by keeping up to date with the news and taking part in online forum discussions. Furthermore, lack of teacher consistency could significantly decrease a student's and even a whole class's 'academic' identity utility when study class is perceived by students as an extra burden, or even as a punishment in relation to how others are treated.

The observation of teachers talking aloud during a self-regulated learning study class conveys the message to the students that study class is a time for things other than schoolwork, and that the study class is an acceptable forum for idle chatter. The behaviours the teachers are modelling in these examples serve to weaken the 'schoolwork oriented' utility value of the study classes as it endorses the arena as being one that supports gains in 'social' identity. The teachers' actions indicate that study class is not a serious time.

Teachers treating study class as an extended lesson gives a direct signal to the students that study class is both unimportant and not for student use. This kind of action could be interpreted as a form of teacher 'sabotage' of SRL processes. Students who plan their work requirements around the study classes are being hindered from gaining 'academic' identity utility, as they are denied study class time, and have to follow the teachers' study class schedule rather than the timetabled one from which they had planned their work requirements and deadlines.

4.2.3 Description of Group 1 data contributing to a 'schoolwork oriented' utility value

Many of the students belonging to Group 1 express a sense of obligation to work rather than socialise in study classes, and that even if they have only one more piece of work to complete regardless of deadline, unfinished work takes priority:

a. *Now I feel like I should work in every study class.' ...* **b.** *'if we have something we haven't completed, then we should do that, if we have only one more thing left to do then we HAVE to do that.'*

Although in the section about 'relaxed' behaviours and attitudes some students showed a tapering of motivation to work since the start of the school year, other students voiced an increase in their motivation to work. Grades and the improvement of them are important to members of this group and several referred to their need to improve work focus after having received their report cards.

a. *'I make better use of the study classes now after getting my report card for the first half year. To study extra hard for tests* (for example)*.' ...* **b.** *'I started making more of an effort in study class to get my homework completed after I got my report card.'*

Several belonging to Group 1 spoke positively of the benefits of SRL supporting actions some teachers offered, such as being asked what they plan to do in study class. They agreed that it helps them to focus and become aware of their needs to complete something, and motivates them to use the time on schoolwork:

a. *'It is always a smart thing to ask us what we will work on.' ...* **b.** *'Not just ask "Are you here? ...* **c.** *' That way one is more aware over what one will, or should work with.'*

The students also feel more compliant to work on what they say they will, as the actions of one teacher added to their sense of obligation to schoolwork:

a. *'I am pretty sure she writes it down, what we say we will do, she always knows what people are working on, then she can go around and check that we are doing it.'*

All classes belonging to Group 1 were unanimous in their articulation that homework, project work, assignments and tests are very important factors in how they utilise the study classes. Many of the students voice that the benefit of doing schoolwork in study class is the extra free time they have when they are finished with school for the day:

a. *'What you get as homework ... and you get it done ... without having to come home tired and worn out and needing to sit down and begin doing homework. But with study class, you have the chance to get your homework done so can come home and just relax.'*

Several other students added to this by stating that having the teacher available helped them to get the work done, rather than having to sit alone at home with the work and not have a clue as to what to do, and risking handing the work in late or incomplete:

a. *'By working on homework in study class, I can get help from the teacher when needed and be done with the work. If I don't do that at school, then I would get home ... then sit around with homework I can't do or a question ... which I can't answer without the help of the teacher.'* ... **b.** *'I think it is great to be able to do homework at school – that way I can get help from the teacher.'*

Some students specified that they appreciated being able to complete pair-work tasks in study class since both of them were on-site and didn't need to make extra arrangements to find the time to work together.

a. *'If you are going to work independently, then you can do that at home, but in study class, both of you are there, so it makes sense to get the pair-work assignments out of the way.'*

The students working to meet deadlines or test preparation in a study class find that it gives them the motivation and structure to use the time well, this also leads some students to plan ahead:

a. *'I work well in study class when I know I have to get something finished and handed in the same week – then I get motivated.' ...* **b.** '*I had a test last lesson, managed to read through my notes in study class, I got 5+* (on the test).' … **c.** *''I look over all the work I have, check how long before it is due.' ...* **d.** *'It does happen that I think about it the evening before ... if we have a lot of work to do, I think about ... doing it in study class.'*

When asked about using the common area (*fellesareal*) during study classes, Group 1 clearly expressed their ideas of what kind of environment is, or is not, conducive to schoolwork. They emphasise that school is, and has to be, different from home, and that certain areas (such as the common area) are for socialising while others (classrooms) are for work:

a. '*No, not for working ... you don't work on a sofa, that speaks for itself ... you do that at home.'*

As mentioned in the previous section about 'relaxed' behaviours and attitudes, the students from Vg1b were concerned about the inconsistent approach among teachers for differing classes regarding study classes. However, they express gratefulness at being directed away from the 'relaxed' norms they witness among other classes, and compare themselves favourably to those whom they see as doing nothing in study class:

a. *'In a way it is quite good that we are 'forced' to work, that we have to do schoolwork, we probably get to do more than those who sit around in the cafeteria and eat chocolate and cookies all the time.'*

Another student mentioned the regularity of the study classes creates regularity to her work habits. She knows when she has the time to complete work and get help. Habit forming is a contributing factor to improving self-control (BBC, 22 January, 2012).

a. *'It is a permanent 'space' in which one can sit and work with what needs to be done.'*

Most of the students in Group 1 comment that it helps to motivate them and maintain focus when the teachers ask what they plan to do in study class. In addition, they view teachers who circulate the room and check that students are on task, or help them to get started or make a plan and so on, as being not only available, but also an important resource they would like to make use of:

a. *'Sometimes, they can point to something you are doing and offer a bit of advice … other times it can just be about them seeing that you are actually doing something, then you can catch them as they go around and ask them something.'*

Group 1 appreciated teacher help and availability during study classes regardless of whether the teachers were the subject specialist required, or occupied with teaching or supervision in another room:

a. *'Regardless of the subject teacher, that person tries to help you where they can.' …* **b.** *'I hear some of the teachers announce that, if they have a class then they say, " If there is something you are unsure of then I am in such and such a room." so you know where to get help.'*

Many in Group 1 intimate that they know exactly where and how they can get help if they need it. They recognise each other as a resource, know which subject teachers are supervising which study classes, and also make use of digital forms of contact with their teachers:

a. *'You get help from classmates if you need it.' …* **b.** *'The subject teachers have their own study classes so we can ask them* (then), *or* (plan to) *work on their subject in their study class.'*

c. *'If you don't see the teacher you need help from, then you can just send an e-mail or ring them and arrange a time when they can help you.' ...* **d. '***There is Fronter*[12] *if we can not get in touch with the teacher in person.'*

4.2.3.1 Reflections from Vg3a

As described above, Vg3a students vocalise their greater need as final year students for SRL study classes. They were able to reflect back on their school career and explain that although they have a lot of time on their hands, they have become more effective over the years in managing their study classes. In reflecting over their experiences of study class, they voice a frustration over the length of time it took them to become better organised, and that they would have preferred to have reached this point earlier in their senior high school life. They offer many examples of what they want and need from school to actively support them in study class:

a. *'That the teacher is here and has better control.' ...* **b.** *'That they turn up and take attendance and so on.' ...* **c.** *'That they ask us what we plan to do every study class.' ...* **d.** *'That they know what we are doing.' ... 'Instead of going round and commenting, "Oh, you are doing this or that." or the like.' ...* **e.** *'Yeah, especially in the first year when you aren't used to study class, there is a need for it* (active teacher guidance).' … **f. '***Get some kind of follow up.' ...* **g.** *'As long as you can learn this already in the first year, then you will gradually become a lot more structured.' ...* **h.** *'We could have become a lot more structured from the beginning.' ...* **i.** *'Instead of letting nearly 3 years go by.' ...* **j.** *'It only takes the teacher asking what you will do.' ...* **k.** *' They should require us to say, " I will work on this and that" beforehand.' ...* **l.** *'It becomes something else then. Then you have to do what you have said you would.' ...* **m.** *'That you have to do it during study class and that you have said it, and you could show* (to the teachers) *that you have done it.'*

[12] 'Fronter' is a digital forum that educational institutions in Norway utilise to disperse course and class information, or answer specific student queries for example. It is also the electronic 'post-box' where students are to deliver written assignments and exams etc.

4.2.3.2 Observation data: Vg1a - Class A[13]

Most of the students of this class were occupied with school related work for the entirety of the study class. The supervising teacher began the class by reminding them that they had an assignment due the following week, and pointed out some important elements that needed to be included in the assignment. The students were encouraged to ask questions and a short discussion followed. The teacher followed up by announcing loudly that she was going to take attendance – which she did. For the rest of the time, the teacher went around the classroom checking in on all of the students, and discussing their work with them. The class remained quiet and were observed as being focused on schoolwork for the duration of the study class – even with the audible conversations stemming from Class B in the open room beside them.

4.2.4 Analysis of Group 1 data contributing to a 'schoolwork oriented' utility value

Expressing an obligation to carry out schoolwork during study class illustrates that the accepted norm of behaviour is one that strengthens the general 'academic' identity utility of the students in the classes. Students support these gains by stating exactly how adding to their 'academic' identity utility during school hours influences and benefits their 'social' identity utility after school. Thus they recognise that there are more gains to be made in making use of the study classes as a schoolwork arena than not. They know that they can get the required work completed with professional help if necessary, and that their free time is not taken up with schoolwork. Being able to get help while doing homework alleviates the possibility of sitting alone with work that is confusing or not making sense, and risk losing motivation and confidence. Verbalising a desire to get better grades also supports a greater need to focus more attention on their 'academic identity during study classes. Additionally, positive gains in 'academic' identity are increased when they feel that someone is looking out for them by guiding and supporting

[13] Refer to Chapter 3 'Research Methods': Table 2: 'Initial social categories and final social categories to be analysed' for explanatory note on Vg1a: Class A and Class B

them. Regular, scheduled classes assigned specifically for SRL also give the opportunity for students to form the habit of engaging in 'schoolwork oriented' behaviours. Consequently, the study classes provide students with the opportunity to improve their 'academic' identity utilities, which they openly acknowledge and appreciate.

A sense of pride and mastery can be established when the student does well and can see the results of their work, thereby they are able to make significant, tangible gains in 'academic' identity utility during the study classes. The 'academic' identity utility gains are not just a result of grade attainment; students also experience success with taking control over their work and implementing basic time management skills. Successful planning and time management can be seen as a three-fold reward contributing to the positive 'academic' identity utility: students complete the work on time without stress, and have free time after school to involve themselves in other activities of interest. In addition, it could be assumed that they are in a better position to cope with unexpected eventualities or crises that may arise as they appear to have control over their work and life situations.

Group 1 demonstrate that they can regulate and discriminate between a positive and negative working environment, stating that the common area is not a suitable place to work environment. By remaining in the classroom they gain 'academic' identity utility, and actively choose to refrain from making positive gains in 'social' identity utility by not relocating to common areas during study classes. These students do not place themselves in areas where social activities are more likely to happen, this supports the evidence that they are actively seeking to make gains in their 'academic' identity utility. Furthermore, Vg1b students specifically point out others who are re-locating to the common area as gaining in 'social' identity utility value. By comparison, Vg1b are declaring they belong to another ideal, that they place greater value on their 'academic' identities, and consolidate this ideal by utilising the study classes as a 'schoolwork oriented' arena.

When a student can get the help they need, or it is offered to them while they are working, their 'academic' identity utility is supported and positively influenced. The help reinforces the value of the time the student is investing in their learning, and the

opportunity to improve the quality of their work, therefore supporting skill mastery, as well as encouragement to continue. A teacher making a point to let the students know where and how they can be reached also helps to encourage the students to remain more focussed on their work. It conveys the message that learning is important as well as their questions and problems, and that the teachers will help them in any way they can, thus adding positive value to the 'academic' identity utility. Furthermore, it adds to the students' 'academic' identity utility since they do not need to sit with a problem and feel 'stuck' for periods of time. The fact that they mention digital forms of contact suggests that the students are willing to wait for answers to problems, improving their levels of self-efficacy, as they are confident that help will be given in good time.

The observation of the teacher loudly and clearly signalling to the students that she was going to take attendance, sets an immediate standard that study class is to be taken seriously like any other class situation. By engaging with the students actively, the teacher was able to establish a working environment that showed that not only was she interested in their work, but also that she was there to help them stay focussed and utilise their time and resources according to her accepted norms and behaviours for study class. This scenario describes a situation that the students have voiced as appreciating, and adds value to the 'academic' identity utility of the study classes for the students. The added bonus for the students in this observed study class was that the teacher was also one whose subject expertise was in demand. Therefore could offer the students specialised tips and praise, contributing to student improvements to their work and adding to their self-efficacy about how they will complete the task.

4.2.4.1 Analysis of 'Reflections from Vg3a'

These students express their need to make conscious investments in their 'academic' identity utility when they emphasise that they are in their final year of study. They also appear to recognise that there are external factors that could contribute to gains in their identity utilities, and express regret and frustration over their perceived absence of these factors in their study classes. The students describe what they in retrospect feel they needed to improve the 'schoolwork oriented' utility value of the study class program. They are also clearly stating that active teacher guidance would have played a significant

factor in promoting this utility value of the classes. In their view, the 'hands-off' approach of the general teaching staff has worked against creating and supporting an 'academic' identity utility among the students. The consequence being, in their opinion, that study class, especially in the first two years of senior high school, is actively promoted as having a 'relaxed' utility value by allowing, and by default supporting, behaviours and attitudes of a 'social' identity utility to the detriment of an 'academic' one.

4.3 Results: The utility value of the SRL study classes for Group 1

The description and analysis of the data for Group 1 indicates that the main utility value for the study classes for Group 1 is 'schoolwork oriented'. The study classes serve as an arena where Group 1 students can complete homework assignments, prepare for tests, and get help and guidance. Even though Group 1 admits to spending a lot of time on non-schoolwork oriented tasks, have generous deadlines to play with, and experience 'teacher sabotage' of the classes, they are primarily interested in completing work in advance of the deadlines and maintaining or achieving good grades. They prioritise their schoolwork over being social, citing such benefits as help with their schoolwork, freeing up of private time and grade improvement as significant motivators. Although the 'academic' identity utility is almost solely associated with deadlines for assignments and tests, the students express a sense of obligation to schoolwork rather than to social activities in the study classes. They are engaged in learning, and interested in enhancing the positive rewards they gain by investing in schoolwork in the study classes. They know how and where to get help, and avoid areas that would not allow them to invest in their 'academic' identities such as the common area. Other rewards for investing in their 'academic' identity utility during study class include learning to organise time and tasks, improving grades, allocating or making use of resources accordingly, minimising stress associated with looming deadlines, and greater control over their schoolwork.

The sub-utility value of the study classes for Group 1 would be 'relaxed'. The students appreciate being able to balance their school day by implementing a lighter work-pace tempo, and create, explore and maintain meaningful relationships with each other by

socialising, either in person or via digital media such as Facebook and MSN. In addition, they continue to develop tastes and preferences in other areas of their lives that include keeping up to date with the news, listening to and sharing music and online movies.

4.3.1 An Anomaly: Student 'x'

One student mentioned that motivation was a problem in study classes not because he was tempted to social activities, but because he saw no gain in his efforts.

a. *'I work hard but just get poor grades --- it says something about my level of spirits … my motivation ….if you get a bad grade the day before … and come the next day expecting that you should work … it isn't really motivating to work when you have done so poorly.'*

While his classmates voiced their belief that this was just a matter of focussing and trying harder, Student 'X' articulated that it wasn't all that easy. His deflated level of motivation makes it easy for him to slip into behaviours that would be attributable to the 'social' category. However, the 'academic' identity utility the group displays influences his behaviour to conform to the norms of working to deadlines, prioritising work to social activities, and handing in work on time, even though he experiences losses to his 'academic' identity. This could indicate that he would prefer to fit in with the group than be left behind as an outsider, even if it means losing identity utility via the poor grades he gets. Albeit, he continues to work during study classes, and is able to voice the positive 'academic' identity utility gains he makes such as teacher help, after-school free time, and comment on appropriate learning environments – all of which express his willingness or need to struggle with his identity and support the 'schoolwork oriented' utility of the classes.

4.4 Results of Analysis of Self-Regulated Learning Elements for Group 1

Self-Regulatory Behaviours: The students of Vg1b appear to be well equipped with knowledge of how to get help and guidance, and several of their teachers make a conscious effort to be available to follow up on queries. Several of the students show signs of higher self-regulating learning skills by being able to organise their time, prioritise tasks and plan ahead according to resources available.

Many of the students in Vg1a however, by vocalising their need for subject specific teachers in the study classes, could be stating that they either do not know where to go to get help in that hour. Or, that they haven't planned ahead and allocated their work according to the supervising teacher's specialty.

Nearly all of the students in Group 1 are able to place themselves in a learning environment and avoid those places they considered inappropriate to learning.

Students in Vg3a provide evidence that suggests that the older you get, the more structured you become in your work. They placed a greater emphasis on their role as students as it is their final year at school, and that this brings with it an extra motivational aspect into their SRL actions.

Self-efficacy: Most of the students in Group 1 indicated that it is sometimes a problem to find work to do as they have either completed it, or are in the throws of completing the work. They cite generous deadlines attached to the assignments as the reason for being able to invest in 'social' identity utility gaining activities. The data indicates that Group 1 have a high level of self-efficacy in judging their abilities to complete the tasks on time to their satisfaction and they approach their work requirements in one of two ways. Either, they complete the work as soon as they can and utilize the remaining study class time for other activities of personal interest. Or, by first evaluating how long they can successfully postpone getting started on their work in order to have it completed on time, then investing the time prior to this self-imposed start date to 'social' identity gaining

activities. The former scenario would suggest higher self-efficacy and planning skills than the latter as it accommodates for any unforeseen situations that could disrupt their planning. This would create a situation of stress for the students who operate by the latter scenario.

Guidance, Availability and Feedback: Some teachers contribute to promoting self-regulated learning among the group by asking the students what they intend to do during the study class. Some students believe that a few of their teachers take note of what the students say they intend to do. However, these practices are reported by the students to be inconsistent among the staff. The students are well aware of which teachers expect them to work, and for whom it does not matter what they do.

The students feel that teachers asking them what they intend to do is a useful way to get them started on their work, and to remain focussed. Their comments suggest that this is beneficial and they would like it be common practice among all the teachers.

Only some of the teachers were reported, and even fewer observed, to actively engage with the students about their work. Students in Vg1a especially reported the benefits they gained when the teachers took an active interest in their work. They value the comments and suggestions that were offered and feel that the advice they get gives them a chance to improve on their work.

The teachers of Vg1b appear to be more active in their availability to students, as well as effectual in responding to their requests for guidance and help.

4.5 Group 2

4.5.1 Description of Group 2 data contributing to a 'relaxed' utility value

Many elements of the data for Vg3b that contribute to a 'relaxed' utility value of study class are similar to those of Group 1. Therefore, the following includes only those

descriptions of behaviours and attitudes that either add to or contrast the data described for Group 1.

In describing their use of the study classes, students in this group express ownership over the time by stating that it is their time and what they do with it is up to them.

a. *'I like to use the time as I wish.' ...* **b.** *'Actually, study class is your own choice.' ...* **c.** *'So you can either do it* (schoolwork) *in study class or at home.' ...* **d.** *'I relax so I have to do more at home, but that is up to me.'*

Furthermore, Group 2 appears to gain a sense of entertainment and enjoyment out of watching some teachers run around after them.

a. *'Teacher 'X' – he runs around looking for us.' ...* **b.** *'Yeah, it is so comical.'*

One student emphasised that he was lonely after school and that study class provides social opportunities that he feels he otherwise doesn't have. He is unable to self-regulate his learning in the study class arena, preferring instead to be among others.

a. *'I am really distracted when I sit with others, like friends for example, in study class. I work much better at home ... because no one is around me. But as soon as I get to school I am with people ... I am so lonely in my free time.'*

In contrast to Group 1 where they stated that sometimes it was difficult to find something to do, students in Group 2 stated that it is an excessive workload that leads them to treat the study classes as a social arena.

a. *'We have so much to do, we have to be able to relax from time to time.'*

Students of this group expressed that the study classes are a good idea, especially for those who take the idea seriously, however, the general attitude is that there are few who

do take it seriously, even the so-called ‘good’ students use a lot of their time on non-schoolwork related activities.

a. *’It* (study class) *is good for those who take it seriously’. …* **b.** *’But how many take it seriously?’ …* **c.** *’I see a lot of the really good students who do a lot of other things in study class and just relax.’*

Group 2 are consequent about removing themselves from their classroom during study class. Under observation all students belonging to Group 2 re-located to the common area for study class. The students claim that the chairs are too hard, and that it was much better to sit on the sofas or around the cafeteria area.

a. *’It is so tiring sitting here on these chairs the whole time and they are hard chairs … it is much better to sit on the sofas.’*

For them, the classroom is a place of work and not one they associate with study class. They even express their frustration at having to follow protocol that causes their delayed exit to the common area.

a. *’We waste so much time on it* (attendance taking) *because everyone has to start out in the classroom, and waiting for the teacher who is always late, then we have to say where we will be and what we will do, then there is only 20 minutes left!’*

When questioned about the disadvantages of working in the common area, many from Group 2 mention that there could be a lot of noise sometimes. They claim that the noise was primarily generated by first year students who had little respect for the amount of work third year students have.

a. *’It can get pretty noisy.’ …* **b.** *’Someone plays the piano, or shouts and runs around.’ ….* **c.** *’The first years have no idea what we do.’*

4.5.1.1 Observation data

During observation two classes simultaneously occupied the common area – Vg3b was using the area for study class, while the other had been let out of their normal class lesson for a break. Several groups from each class mingled with each other socially for about 15 minutes.

Four students were engaged in schoolwork the entire time they were in the common area, two working as a pair, and the other two independently. The two independent workers were asked how they coped with the noise of working in the common area. Both responded that it was necessary to 'tune out' by either sitting away form the others but still in the common area, or choosing work that required less concentration, such as reading a book, or that they listened to music to block out noise.

The Vg3b supervising teacher circulated the common area making himself available should they require help from him, and he took the time to speak with nearly every member of his class, however, he found it difficult to locate a few of them.

4.5.2 Analysis of Group 2 data contributing to a 'relaxed' utility value

Group 2 projects the image that promoting an 'academic' identity utility has little value to them. They express little obligation to carryout schoolwork in the study classes and believe that there are very few students who take study class seriously, even among the "good" students – those who would normally promote an 'academic' identity utility. Instead they prefer to take control of the time and exercise it as their whims fancy. It could be argued that they exercise exploratory-type behaviour in which their own authority as a peer group is tested against the authority of the school. There would be substantial gains in 'social' identity utility in being able to assert some authority in an institution where they have little say in the first place, even if their perceived authority is minimal, such as forcing teachers to look for them. Additionally, they make gains in maximising their 'social' identity utility by sharing their amusement over the consequences or results of their 'authoritative' actions.

The lonely student voices how his 'academic' identity utility has little value for him in the school environment. Investing in his 'social' identity utility results in a substantial return on investment by feeling that he has friends and is part of a group.

Through Group 2's reluctance to work in the classroom, they perceive that they are losing 'academic' identity utility when the action of the teachers equals valuable study time slipping away. However, they appear to be more concerned with visually confirming their 'social' identity utility when they choose instead to sit in the common area. Group 1 validates their gain in 'social' identity utility when they clearly state that the common area is a place to avoid if one wants to work.

Group 2 equates their final year status with a high sense of seniority, and yet in spite of the noise levels and the perceived workload of a final year senior high school student, they still choose to invest in 'social' identity utility behaviours by sitting in the common areas rather than their classroom. Even two of the four students who were observed as being fully on task during study class preferred to implement strategies that allow them to sit in this environment, such as 'tuning out', or choosing a task that required less attention in order to cope. These students also prioritise to be seen as adding positively to their 'social' identity utility in order to comply with the group's norms for the study classes.

Allowing two classes to occupy the same common area for two differing reasons can be considered a form of study class 'sabotage'. It sends a message to the students that it is acceptable to disturb and be disturbed by others while a study class takes place. It also signals that the school is condoning 'social' identity utility gains during study class time, which could also be construed as the school preferring these gains, and supports a 'relaxed' utility value over a 'schoolwork' utility value for the study classes.

4.5.3 Description and Analysis of Group 2 data contributing to a 'schoolwork oriented' utility value

The majority of the Group 2 intimated that deadlines for assignments, project work and homework tasks, as well as test preparation are significant motivators for utilising study

classes for any academic purpose. The reasons given are identical to those that Group 1 gave, i.e. more free time after school, good grades, better control over their schoolwork and meeting deadlines. All of which add positively to their 'academic' identity utility.

In addition, some students described a time they made really good use of the study class when they isolated themselves from the group. They worked alone and undisturbed, indicating that they are aware of the benefits of being able to self-regulate.

a. *'I worked alone in a group room to get some peace and quiet. Ended up with a 5 for the presentation.' ...* **b.** *'I sat once in a group room – completely alone. Absolutely no disturbances and maximum concentration. Got a lot done!'*

One student exhibits a high level of self-regulation in being able to regularly re-locate away from distractions. She knows where all the group rooms are and when the best time is to secure a room. This also illustrates a high level of 'academic' identity utility as knowledge gives her the opportunity to invest in learning, even when the group is occupied in activities that enhance 'social' identity utility.

a. *'On Tuesdays and Thursdays I sit alone in a group room nearly the whole day. I get a lot more done than I would if I sat in the classroom – it is too easy to turn and start chatting with others ... it is much easier to work alone ... up on the third floor there are many* (group rooms) *… and the library has two ... if you get in quick you can get one.'*

4.6 Results: The utility value of the SRL study classes for Group 2

The utility value of the study classes for Group 2 could be interpreted as being a combination "social/schoolwork oriented" utility with a semi-dominant 'social' utility.

Group 2 students insist that study class is their own time to distribute according to their priorities. When deadlines are imminent, group members gain 'academic' identity utility by making use of study class to fulfil their obligations as students and placing a

'schoolwork oriented' utility value on the classes. They also show pride that they are final year students and voice the importance of their work in comparison to first year students.

However, once work requirement deadlines are met, the majority of the group slips into behaviours that greatly enhance their 'social' identity utility. They place themselves in the common area where, as Group 1 implies and observations convey, it is easy to come into contact with others and therefore distract oneself with non-schoolwork related activities. Even when the students explain that it can get pretty noisy in the common area, they remain steadfast in their claim to the area as an appropriate study class environment. Even those who are perceived as 'good' students place themselves in the common areas, but adapt strategies to cope with the added noise. Their sense of 'ownership' over the study classes indicates that they are operating to norms that award them with a high 'social' identity utility during these times, to the point of sharing the comings and goings of teachers trying to follow them up as 'comical' moments.

4.7 Results of Analysis of Self-Regulated Learning Elements for Group 2

Self-Regulatory Behaviours: With the exception of a few students who are able to re-locate themselves away from disruption on a regular, planned basis, Group 2 shows tendencies of poor self-regulation. This is evidenced in such behaviours as: not associating the classroom as a favourable work area; spreading themselves around a large communal area where help and guidance is not easily attainable; completing work on a "need to" basis rather than planning and organising their time; not knowing when and where help and guidance is available.

In contrast to Vg3a, these students do not express any developmental progress in their abilities to structure their time and resources better than they did in their first two years.

Self-efficacy: The students pertaining to this group appear to be self-efficacious. Even though the majority of the group seem to relegate their schoolwork priorities to the last

minute, they are still able to complete work on time. As with Group 1, this could indicate that generous deadlines attached to the assignments could be a causal factor in their judgement and planning decisions. In being self-efficacious, they perhaps choose to approach their work requirements in the remaining one or two days of the deadline. This would then allow them to support their 'social' identities in the time preceding any deadlines.

Guidance, Availability and Feedback: It is difficult to summarise this element of self-regulated learning as there were very few comments made on the subject. The only assessment that can successfully be made is as follows: Teacher lateness or absence combined with the class's routine of dispersing themselves around the building makes it difficult for help and guidance to be available.

4.8 Group 3

4.8.1 Description of Group 3 data contributing to a 'relaxed' utility value

Group 3 expresses a strong sense of ownership of the study class time, that they are in charge of allocating the time as they wish, and articulate that it **is** a recess or extended lunch break. They have access to a digital projector in their classroom and make full use of this during break times and study classes to show music videos or films – a central and regular activity of the study classes.

a. *'It is the only free time we get to relax and hang out without a teacher around.' ...* **b.** *'Yeah, so we take a break, or talk to someone, or head to the cafeteria.' ...* **c.** *'The cafeteria is like a break.' ...* **d.** *'Yeah, and I think lunch is too short.' ...* **e.** *'We just do what we want.' ...* **f.** *'Nothing embarrassing though.' ...* **g.** *'It is the highlight* (of the day).' **… h.** *'It is up to us, if we want to work or not ... it is our choice ... they* (the school) *has given us this opportunity so it is certainly a choice if you want to make use of it or not.' ...* **i.** *'We can for example, sit and watch a film together and the like if we want ... but that is from lunch time, not just study class.' ...* **j.** *'Yeah, we are ... adult enough that we can decide for ourselves what we do with the time.'*

One student vocalised that those who make use of study class to do schoolwork:

a. *'... don't have social antennae.'*

Furthermore, Group 3 has very clear attitudes and opinions about teacher presence during study class. They are not interested in interacting with the teachers at all during most of the study classes, and actively 'evict' the majority of the teachers from the classroom.

a. *'When a teacher sits down* (in the classroom) *then we all just get up and leave the classroom.' ...* **b.** *'No one wants them here.' ...* **c.** *' Teacher 'X' gets it now.' ...* **d.** *'Yeah, but teacher 'Y' sits here.' ...* **e.** *' It irritates us when they sit inside here* (the classroom).' *…* ***f.*** *'It is ok when they sit outside there.' ...* **g.** *'It is revolting when they sit here ... I think it is.' ...* **h.** *'It gets so quiet.' ... 'I just can't sit here and work when they sit here, I feel observed.'*

Group 3's attitudes towards their teachers extends further, believing that the teacher should run around the school to ensure that students are indeed absent before marking them as such. In contrast, when the group is involved in schoolwork and has questions, they believe it is unacceptable that they have to look for the teacher. They expect the teachers to be where they are supposed to be during study class - in the classroom.

a. *'If we are not in the classroom we marked absent,' ...* **b.** *'But it is stupid if you are for example in the cafeteria buying something.' ...* **c.** *'And you get marked absent even if you just sit outside the classroom and work – they just don't notice that you are there.' ...* **d.** *'The teacher isn't always available* (when we need help)*, and it seems a little silly that we should have to run around the school to find them when they should be in the classroom.'*

4.8.2 Analysis of Group 3 data contributing to a 'relaxed' utility value

The students of this group have managed to manipulate the teachers into concessions that have set the norms of behaviour for the majority of the study classes – film and music

video watching. This group has successfully trained many of their teachers to leave the room, adding a powerful gain to their unified 'social' identity whereby the students dictate the operative terms of study class. I speculate that this has happened little by little through small requests that have probably been heeded to as gestures of goodwill on behalf of the teachers. Consequently, the teachers have inadvertently abdicated their authority to the students, and by default have sanctioned the 'social' utility value of the study class arrangement.

Group 3 express themselves as a single unit by using the personal pronoun "we" – other groups did not articulate themselves in this manner. This emphasises that the 'social' identity utility gains to be made in this class have a very strong connection to an individual's sense of belonging to the group. This is supported when one student verbalises what kind of students do not belong to the group.

4.8.3 Description and Analysis of Group 3 data contributing to a "schoolwork" utility value

A small number of students in Group 3 demonstrate a higher 'academic' identity utility and set themselves apart from the majority of the students. They appear to be engaged in schoolwork most of the time during study classes, however, they are compelled by the class majority to exit the classroom and find a group room to meet their 'academic' identity utility needs.

a. '*If someone wants to work then there are hundreds of group rooms that they can go to.'* ... **b.** *'That way they can get some quiet.'*

However, in response to being asked about the importance of deadlines and the usefulness of study class to Group 3, nearly all students responded that study class was vital for completion of schoolwork, particularly when a deadline is pending. Several stated that they had no plan, only that they completed what was necessary:

a. *'I work on what is needed, I mean, if I have a deadline the next day, I am not going to do anything about the math test in 3 days.' ...* **b.** *'It is like - knowing that you have lunch which is very short, then after that you have study class is so much better than knowing you have a math test after that.' ...* **c.** *'Yeah, 'cos then you have a chance.' ...* **d. '***Yeah, then you know that you have a math test at the end of the day so you have a chance to study for it, or if you have a deadline, you have a chance.'*

Group 3 are capable of maintaining their identity or role as students by completing work on time and studying for tests. In addition, gains in 'academic' identity utilities are more recognised when teachers of Group 3 are on site and maintain order and control in combination with impending deadlines:

a. *'Last week I studied hard for a test we had and I did really well. It was because a teacher was in the classroom and it was quiet enough to be able to work.' ...* **b.** *'When the teacher sat in the classroom, everyone was quiet and could work.' ...* **c.** *'It is a good thing when the teacher is in the classroom.'*

In addition, the teachers, in spite of being 'forced' out of the classroom during study class still make themselves available to help those who require it.

a.*'If you ask for help you get it.' ...* **b.** *'They are always available.' ...* **c.** *'If I need help, than I ask the teacher who is around, if they can not help me, then I wait until later to ask the specific subject teacher.'*

4.9 Results: The Utility Value of Study Class for Group 3

The findings for Group 3 suggest that study class has a dominant 'social' utility value for most of the students. The majority of Group 3 act as a large unit, call themselves "we", and are involved in social activities that can include them all, such as watching music videos and films on the projector screen. Group 3 study class teachers have reinforced

Group 3's utility value of study class by allowing themselves to be excluded from the classroom during study class.

The utility value of the study classes changes into that of being 'schoolwork oriented' only when deadlines and tests and imminent. It is at these times that most of Group 3 gains 'academic' identity utility in fulfilling their role as students by completing their work requirements.

A small number of students have a dominant 'schoolwork oriented' utility for the study classes; however, they have to work hard to make gains in their 'academic' identity utility among the majority by having to relocate to find a quiet area to work. Furthermore, they make heavy losses in their 'social' identity utilities since the class majority perceives them as not belonging because they prefer to invest in their 'academic' and not 'social' identities during study class.

4.10 Results of Analysis of Self-Regulated Learning Elements for Group 3

Self-regulatory behaviours: A minority of students are invested in learning and come to study class prepared to work, and are able to find spaces conducive to completing schoolwork, suggesting that they have high self-regulatory skills. The majority of Group 3 appears to act last minute with deadlines and test preparation presenting low self-regulatory skills such as planning and organisation of time and resources.

Self-efficacy: None of the students pertaining to Group 3 reported they are unable to complete work on time. This suggests that students in Group 3 appear to be self-efficacious. However, as with Group 2, the majority of Group 3 tends to relegate their schoolwork priorities to the very last minute. They choose to approach their work requirements in the remaining one or two days of the deadlines, allowing them to support their 'social' identities in the time preceding these deadlines.

Guidance, availability and feedback: Teachers of Group 3 appear to always be in the background ready to help those students who choose to ask for help. They are accessible and willing to offer help. However, they have been ousted from the classroom and are therefore unable to offer a learning conducive environment within the classroom.

5 Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This study sets out to explain the utility values of the self-regulated learning study classes at Breivang by applying an identity economic model, where the focus is on the identity utilities of the students. In this section I will first discuss the utility values of the study classes, then follow by exploring how these utility values affect SRL processes within the study classes, and conclude with any recommendations that may arise from these findings.

5.2 Part One: Utility values

5.2.1 Summary of findings: utility values for SRL study classes

In this study I have looked at the students as pursuing either an 'academic' or a 'social' identity (or a combination of the two). It is assumed that students defining themselves as 'academic' will tend to look for a 'schoolwork oriented' utility value in their study classes, while those assigning themselves to a more 'social' identity will look for a 'relaxed' utility value in their study classes. In the analysis chapter, three groups have been identified as having distinctly different identity utilities. In addition, one particular student ('X') belonging to Group 1 stands out from his group in a way that underscores certain points of the identity economic model, and is discussed as an individual type case.

5.2.1.1 Group 1: Dominant 'schoolwork oriented' utility value

The description and analysis of the data for Group 1 (made up of three classes) indicates that the main utility value for the study classes is 'schoolwork oriented'. Group 1 students display behaviours and attitudes that support an 'academic' identity. They maximise their identity utility by prioritising schoolwork over other activities during study class. They benefit in several ways by supporting their 'academic' identities such as having free-time after school, potential of getting help from teachers at school, as well as keeping up to date and even ahead of their schoolwork requirements. The sub-utility value of the study

classes for Group 1 is interpreted as being ‘relaxed’; they indulge in social activities when their work requirements and time constraints permit. They express that being able to take a break during study class has a positive flow-on affect for the normal classes, in that they can ‘re-charge’ themselves and remain focussed. for instruction.

5.2.1.2 Student ‘X’ – a member of Group 1

Student ‘X’ reports that his hard work is not reflected in his grades and consequently finds it difficult to maintain any kind of enthusiasm or motivation for his schoolwork. This would suggest that he is in danger of preferring to support a ‘social’ identity as it might offer him rewards that he is not getting by supporting his ‘academic’ identity. However, his class supports a ‘schoolwork oriented’ utility, not ‘relaxed’, so he has to choose between fitting in with his class’s ‘academic’ identity, or stand more or less alone in supporting his ‘social’ identity. He chooses to continue to operate to the norms and ideals of the class and support his ‘academic’ identity.

5.2.1.3 Group 2: Combined ‘schoolwork oriented’ and ‘relaxed’ utility value

Group 2 appears to hold a combined utility value for the study classes that is made up of behaviours that benefit both the ‘social’ and ‘academic’ identities within the group. They express the importance of their role as final year students in which they perceive the workload as being heavy in comparison to other years, therefore feel obligated to focus some attention to their schoolwork during study classes, particularly around deadlines when poor grades and incomplete work will not enhance their final year ‘academic’ identity utility. However, once work requirements and deadlines are met, the majority of the group slips into behaviours that greatly enhance their ‘social’ identity utility. They insist that it is up to them to decide how the study classes are to be used, and they are the only group that remove themselves from a classroom setting to the common area - an area designated by Group 1 students as not conducive to schoolwork, but rather to socialising. By spreading themselves out, they also test the boundaries of authority as their teachers are forced to look for them in order to help them, something they share as comical.

5.2.1.4 Group 3: Dominant 'relaxed' utility value

In direct contrast to Group 1, Group 3 holds a dominant 'relaxed' utility value for the study classes. Group 3 emphasises and enforces the 'relaxed' utility value of the study classes by excluding teaching staff from the room, engaging in activities that involve everyone in the class, for example, large screen film viewing is a frequent activity. Any students who wish to invest in an 'academic' identity must remove themselves from the classroom and find a group room as the classroom is 'designated' for non-schoolwork activities. One member of Group 3 points out that there are students in the group who do not have '*social antennae',* that these students will find it difficult to maximise their 'social' identity, intimating that by doing schoolwork during study classes they do not belong or fit in to the group. Most of Group 3 has a weak deadline driven 'schoolwork oriented' utility value of the classes whereby students act to maintain an 'academic' identity by fulfilling their schoolwork requirements at the last minute.

5.3 Discussion on utility value findings

5.3.1 Enduring versus shifting utility values

Discovering differing and shifting utility values across Groups 2 and 3 in the self-regulated learning study classes is an expected finding. Akerlof and Kranton (2010) maintain that an individual's identity defines who they are, and that who they are is reflected in the social category to which they belong. They go on to explain that identities are temporal and describe interactions that can either be in the moment or more enduring (Akerlof and Kranton, 2010). In identity theory, Mead (1962) also explains that we take on different identities depending on the situation (in this case proximal or distant deadlines). Furthermore, Bandura (1986) talks about the unequal reciprocality of the influencing processes of self-regulatory behaviour and that any one or two of the determinants can override the other(s). These theories of identity and behaviour could explain why the identity utilities in Groups 2 and 3 shift from being 'relaxed' to 'schoolwork oriented' when deadlines are impending. The shifting utility values for Groups 2 and 3 illustrate Bandura's model of self-regulatory behaviour as the interplay between personal, environmental and behavioural processes (Bandura, 1986). The

'environmental' determinant of the school or teachers imposing assignment deadlines or test dates overrides the personal processes, and influences the students and their decision making processes (either consciously or sub-consciously), leading them to act in a way that would confirm that their identity is that of a 'student'. To fulfil their 'student' role, or identity, requires them to complete work within specified time frames – which they do, before switching to another identity utility that occupies the place of importance in that moment. If more deadlines loom, it is then presumed that behaviours and attitudes will continue to support an 'academic' identity utility over a 'social' identity utility.

Group 1's 'academic' identity is more enduring that of than Groups 2 and 3. They allow themselves to maintain a better balance between the environmental, personal and behavioural processes that determine self-regulatory behaviour by prioritising 'academic' identity utility over their 'social' one. This leads them to act in ways that not only support their 'academic' identity, but their 'academic' identity allows them to investigate and implement self-regulated learning skills and processes to their study classes. This introduces the idea that an 'academic' identity supports SRL skills and processes, and also concurs with Akerlof and Kranton's theory that 'identity' is integral to our motivations for behaviours.

5.3.2 Group norms influence individual behaviours

Identity building is a relationally and socially embedded processes (Egeberg and Jerlang, 1987). This concept leads one to speculate that it could then be difficult to break away from the norms of the group to which one belongs, unless one no longer wishes to belong. This is evidenced in the behaviours of Student 'X'. Although he perceives himself to work hard, his 'academic' identity is weakened by poor grades, resulting in depressed motivation towards schoolwork. However, because he belongs to Group 1, which has a strong 'academic' identity and therefore a dominant 'schoolwork oriented' utility value for the study classes, Student 'X' is indirectly supported and influenced by the collective attitudes and behaviours the class. Rather than give up his quest for an 'academic' identity (for which he currently gains little reward), his behaviours and attitudes conform with those of his peers, in other words, the norms and ideals of the group. He continues

his persistence to belong to the group by participating in schoolwork-oriented activities during study class. It could be speculated that had Student 'X' belonged to another group, such as Group 2 or 3, he would probably drop his 'academic' identity in favour of behaviours and attitudes that would likely support a 'social' identity utility. Student 'X's' behaviour is consistent with what Akerlof and Kranton (2010; 2002; 2000) believe; that the collective norms and ideals a group displays influence the norms and ideals that individuals adopt in order to fit into the group. Within identity theory, conforming to norms of a group is essential to developing a sense of self-worth and belonging since we are not individuals without being members of a group (Mead, 1962).

5.3.3 Adolescence and study class as an identity construction arena

Another expected outcome of the findings is the existence of not only 'social' identities within each of the groups in the study classes, but also that a 'relaxed' utility value for the study classes exists (to varying degrees) for each group. Adolescence is a period for developing and consolidating identities (Kroger, 2002; Egeberg and Jerlang, 1987). Since adolescents are physically located in the senior high school environment during three years of this period, schools, by default, both play a significant role in and present an arena for promoting and aiding identity formation among adolescents. The self-regulated learning study classes at Breivang could represent a potentially ideal micro-context for identity exploration. Students belonging to Groups 2 and 3 make it clear that they have the right to utilise study class time as they wish, interpreting this to mean, that it doesn't have to be schoolwork based if they don't want it to be.

Additionally, the data analysis reveals that teacher monitoring and feedback at Breivang during SRL classes is minimal, suggesting that student *academic interest* is neither stimulated nor supported environmentally within the study class arena (Hidi, 2006). The implication of this is that the teaching staff, via a 'hands-off' approach to the study classes, inadvertently supports the 'social' identities of the students and the 'relaxed' utility values of the classes. When little overt guidance is offered, students will observe the behaviours and attitudes of their peers and emulate them in order to fit in to their surroundings (Schunk, 2001). If the students operate according to their own interests

without any guidance or *situational interes*t input from teachers, then they will rely on their *individual interests* – that is, those that give them positive feelings and feelings of competence (Hidi, 2006), as well as meaning and a sense of belonging (Weeks, 1990) – in this case socialising, exploring themselves and the relationships with each other.

From an identity theory perspective, exploration, development and the maintenance of relationships is a major aspect of adolescent development (Robb, 2007). Social relationships increase in importance during adolescence as a means of exploring and embarking on the lasting relationships that lead us toward autonomy outside of the family (Robb, 2007; Gillies, 2000). It is from within the collective that an individual can begin to reflect, *'be oneself', 'share oneself'* and '*find oneself*' (Egeberg and Jerlang, 1987), as well as gain a sense of belonging (Weeks, 1990). Furthermore, a solid sense of the 'self' is vital in negotiating 21st century futures (Arnett, 2000), and it is from within the social, collective setting that we can compare ourselves, note similarities and differences, define and re-define who we are in the here and now -in other words, construct identity (Paulgaard, 2006). While a 'relaxed' utility value for the study classes may not be the preferred utility value from the school's perspective, it could be argued that it may create a form of the '*facilitative social environment'* adolescents need to construct their personal identities – or sense of 'self' (Marcia, 1986: 27). This could be particularly relevant if the collective school life of a Norwegian individual falls short of the curriculum's intentions to contribute to an individual's growth and development through its implementation of 'The Seven Human Ideals' (*de syv* menneskeidealer).

However, perhaps even more relevant to the argument could be for the school to aim to counter any effects premature life-decisions have on identity construction (Marcia 1986), for which Norwegian students are vulnerable as they some make occupational choices in the early adolescent period – prior to when any significant identity formation exploration can take place (Danielsen et al., 2000). This being the case, a school might best serve its students by actively cultivating and supporting the individual 'academic' identities of the students. This could keep future opportunities open for as many students as possible and potentially counter some of the effects of identity foreclosure or diffusion that exist because of the system of which they are a part (Danielsen et al., 2000; Marcia, 1986).

Supporting and cultivating a 'social' identity over an 'academic' one would not appear to have the same degree of influence over identity status development (Danielsen et al., 2000; Marcia, 1986). Identity Achievement involves a spectre of exploration about beliefs (religious, ethical, moral and political), occupational choices, and critical thought development for example. This spectre suggests that peer groups, while invaluable to identity construction, may not satisfy the needs of individuals to attain this level of identity status. Those who are in Identity Moratorium and Diffusion however, could possibly benefit from the 'social' identity utility of the study classes.

5.4 Part Two: SRL practices

5.4.1 Summary of findings: SRL practices in the study class environment

The following are the significant findings from the analysis chapter regarding students' SRL behaviours. Given that SRL is a realtional phenomenon, it is also necessary to discuss the teachers' input, as it has been shown in this study to have a significant impact on the SRL processes of the students during study class.

5.4.1.1 Positive SRL practices

- Nearly all students in Group 1 are able to place themselves in a learning environment and avoid those places they considered inappropriate to learning.
- Several of the students belonging to Group 1 show signs of higher self-regulating learning skills by being able to organise their time, prioritise tasks and plan ahead according to resources available.
- Most of Group 1 teachers make a conscious effort to make themselves available and follow up on queries. Group 1 express that they get help when they ask for it.
- Some teachers ask students what work they intend to complete during study class.
- Some teachers take a tour around to see if the students are working and avail themselves to help should they be asked.
- **One** teacher was observed actively engaging with students and their work.

5.4.1.2 Negative SRL behaviours

- Group 2 students associate the classroom with schoolwork and not with study class and place themselves in area considered by Group 1 as a social area.
- Group 3 students use the classroom as an entertainment room unless deadlines are looming and work needs to be done.
- Groups 2 and 3 vocalising their need for subject specific teachers in the study classes could be stating that they either do not know where to get help, or, that they lack planning skills to allocate time and work according to the supervising teacher's specialty.
- Group 3 has manipulated the teacher out of the classroom during study class.
- Group 1: Vg1b teachers often use study class as an extension of normal classes.
- Teachers were observed dominating the study class arena with audible, non-relevant conversations.
- Teachers were observed and reported as being passive and unconcerned with student behaviours and chatter
- Groups 1 and 2 expressed the unfairness of inconsistencies of practice among teachers with the study class program 'rules'
- All Groups reported that study class teachers are usually late, or absent.
- Group 1 reported that they perceive several teachers as neither interested nor willing to help the students.

5.5 Discussion on existing SRL practices

5.5.1 'Academic' identity supports SRL processes

This study reveals that Group 1's 'academic' identity leads them to initiate and implement some self-regulated learning strategies and skills. They express knowledge of how to get help and guidance, either in person or digitally. They voice a preparedness to wait for answers to their queries or requests for help, suggesting they can organise and prioritise their work. Most of the students prioritise schoolwork over social activities, and several Group 1 students show signs of higher self-regulating learning skills by being able to plan ahead according to resources (teachers) and time available. Nearly all of the

students in Group 1 are able to place themselves in a learning environment and avoid those places they considered inappropriate to learning.

Group 1 demonstrates that the identity utility of the students within the study class situation leads them towards (or in other cases can lead them away from) self-regulated learning behaviours. This finding supports the theory of Akerlof and Kranton (2010; 2002; 2000) in that identity plays a key role in the motivations of the student behaviours. The implications are that the study classes are an identity forming and building arena. The motivations of the behaviours reflect the identities the students are building. In this case the students strengthen their 'academic' identity and act on it even though few of the teachers were observed or reported to actively engage in, and/or support students' SRL skills and strategies within the study classes. Those few teachers who were observed and reported as supporting SRL processes, contributed to further strengthen the 'academic' identities of the students. Both identity building and SRL are relational processes (Schunk and Ertmer, 2000; Paris et al., 2001), therefore it could be postulated that the more relational input there is, the stronger both will become. Group 1 supports this hypothesis when they voice a greater need for teacher input.

It would be easy to attribute the SRL tendencies displayed by Group 1 to students who are recognised as being 'good' students, or 'academic achievers'. However, the example of Student 'X' illustrates Akerlof and Kranton's (2010) assumption that it is possible to influence behaviours and attitudes of students, and consequently shape his or her identity utility by encouraging the 'preferred' behaviours within the group. This also exemplifies that regulatory behaviour stems from external influences (Paris et al., 2001). Mead (1962) emphasises that we are not individuals without being members of a group, and that by reflecting upon the attitudes, norms, values and or beliefs of the group we gain our sense of individual self-concept. Student 'X' experiences his 'academic' 'self' through the attitudes and viewpoints possessed and displayed by the group to which he belongs.

5.5.2 Generous deadlines – a double-edged sword?

Another interesting finding is that all Groups were established to pursue an 'academic' identity utility when deadlines were imminent. Thus it could be concluded that the study class arrangement meets the 'homework help' (*leksehjelp*) goals of Breivang by availing time and resources for students to complete coursework requirements and prepare for tests within school time.

By delivering and completing their schoolwork on time, the students perhaps perceive themselves as being self-efficacious. Self-efficacy is '*a performance-based measure of capability'* and a '*highly effective predictor of students' motivation and learning'* (Zimmerman, 2000: 82). However, many of the students reported having generous deadlines. Generous deadlines however, do not support SRL processes (Zimmerman, 2001) and they could be presenting the school and the students with a double-edged sword. Generous deadlines could falsely allow students (Groups 2 and 3 in particular) to perceive themselves as being; a) able to manage their time in such a way that deadlines are met, as well as b) capable of fulfilling work requirements. Under these conditions the students could perceive themselves, and be perceived of by others, as being self-efficacious. In the triadic process of SRL[14], goal setting and strategy planning are initiated within the *'forethought'* phase, and it is in this phase that the generous deadlines pose a problem for all classes. As we have seen with Group 1, they endeavour (with some effort) to move on into the *'performance'* phase by prioritising schoolwork over other activities. However, the SRL processes of Groups 2 and 3 appear arrested at this phase, possibly because the deadlines allow them to perceive themselves capable, and therefore they 'put off' the '*performance'* phase until they absolutely must. The combination of generous deadlines and the sense of self-efficacy the students have exert a strong impact on motivation and effort levels, and may be a causal factor in what Eilertsen and Valdermo (2011) report as the teachers' frustration over students' efforts, and the students' failure to take responsibility for their own learning.

[14] See Figure 1: Phases and sub-processes of self-regulation (Zimmerman, 2008), p. 10

5.5.3 Teacher input provides weak support for SRL

SRL processes are complex and take time to develop and master. Without instruction and guidance it is difficult to operate successfully as a self-regulated learner (Schunk, 2001). This study shows that when deadlines are imminent at Breivang, there is a universal demand for the teaching staff to be available. As soon as deadlines have passed, Groups 2 and 3 are ambivalent towards teacher presence and input as these students turn their interest to making gains in their 'social' identity utilities. In the case of Group 3, teacher presence even becomes a nuisance as it interferes with their 'social' identity utility.

The final year students within Group 1 reflect back on their three years at Breivang and voice frustration that they could have perhaps become more structured and effective learners earlier on in their senior high school careers had they received SRL teacher support and help, rather than using two years to 'discover' how to make best use of the study classes. Group 1 as a whole recognise the challenges involved in developing SRL competencies when they explicitly suggest the type of support they want and need from teachers to help them maximise their 'academic' identities. These students, through their 'academic' identities attempt to instigate SRL skills and strategies. However, they express their need for help from the teachers with goal setting, monitoring, and feedback during SRL study classes[15]. This finding clearly indicates that teacher support is required if one is to both maintain and maximise an 'academic' identity. It also confers with the findings of Zimmerman and Pons (1986) whereby students who hold an 'academic' identity rely (or wish to rely) significantly on assistance from teachers to become better self-regulated learners during SRL study classes. Schunk and Ertmer (2000) also conclude that an accomplished learner is one who depends on external help and guidance, thereby supporting the students' 'call' for greater teacher input. Furthermore, Group 1's statements echo the literature on the development of SRL competencies as well as interest development: the input and support from teaching staff is especially critical in the beginning phases of both SRL process and interest development, as well as in the

[15] Refer to Section 4.3.2.1 Reflections from Vg3a for list of suggestions they propose will support their 'academic' identities.

maintenance stages for sustained self-regulated learning to take place (Schunk, 2001; Hidi, 2006; Zimmerman, 2001).

5.5.4 Left alone in a social process

Group 1's reporting also suggests a concurrence with the students in Meland's study (2011); that self-regulated learning in the Norwegian context is experienced by students as a lonely process. However, the fundamental structure of SRL is interplay between the personal, behavioural and environmental processes that are both self- and externally generated (Bandura, 1986). Teacher feedback and monitoring is embedded within the externally generated environmental processes. If this element is missing from the self-regulation triad[16], then self-regulation not only becomes weakened as a product of only self-generated processes, but it becomes, as Group 1 and the students of Meland's study (2011) imply, a lonely process. Yet the results of this study both support the literature (Bandura, 1986; Zimmerman, 2005; Lyons and Zelazo, 2011), and demonstrate that SRL can not be a lonely process. It has to be a social process for it to function properly. This study shows that an 'academic' identity instigates SRL processes, and, as we have seen above with Student 'X', SRL processes support and encourage 'academic' identities. This suggests that self-regulated learning and identity construction are interacting determinants upon each other within the SRL study class arena. Both identity building and self-regulation are reflexive processes. Reflexivity is a core mechanism that allows us to act and react appropriately in differing surroundings (Mead, 1962; Bandura, 1986). Neither therefore, can be extricated from the social processes that allow us to both build identity and become self-regulating. This is illustrated in Group 1's need for teacher interaction to assist in maximising their 'academic' identities. Maximising their 'academic' identities is dependent upon them becoming effective self-regulated learners, however, to become effective self-regulators, they need the teacher interaction. Without the teacher interaction, they cannot optimally maximise their 'academic' identity. Consequently, if students are experiencing SRL as a lonely process (Meland, 2011), then it can be concluded that there exists a weakness in the self-regulated learning programs being

[16] Refer to Zimmerman's triadic SRL diagram page 10.

implemented in Norway where it does not appear to be recognised in implementation that SRL is a social process dependent upon environmental determinants throughout all stages of SRL competency development.

5.5.5 Responsibility for own learning requires empowerment

Teachers at Breivang reported being frustrated that *'... students fail to take responsibility for themselves* [their learning] *despite ten years of schooling'* (Eilertsen and Valdermo, 2011: 17). However, this study shows that teacher presence and interaction within the SRL arena at Breivang is weak, and that it is only those students pursuing an 'academic' identity who are able to take responsibility for their own learning by instigating some SRL processes. Therefore, the 'hands-off' approach of teachers that Haug (2004) alludes to serves to support the reproduction of inequality. As self-regulated learners, Group 1 students are attempting to take responsibility for their own learning. However, they recognise and voice their requirements for a 'partnership' with the teachers in order to become better learners. Teacher 'absence' in the SRL arena, however, hinders Group 1 in becoming skilful independent learners; therefore Group 1 students are also limited in the extent to which they can take responsibility for their own learning. It can then be postulated: if the extent to which Group 1 can take responsibility for their own learning is limited by teacher 'absence' in the SRL classroom, then how can Groups 2 and 3, who favour a 'relaxed' identity, be expected to promote an 'academic' identity, and consequently take responsibility for their own learning under the same conditions? As Meland (2011) reports, students do not come to senior high school already endowed with SRL skills and strategies, therefore they are from the outset in a weak position to take responsibility for their own learning. SRL empowers students to take such responsibility (Zimmerman, 2001), yet students can not take responsibility unless they have been adequately empowered to do so. SRL is a progressive '*social – self*' process that takes time to forge and foster (Zimmerman, 2001), and the students cannot be expected to foster these skills if they are alone in the process.

The reproduction of inequality is potentially supported in this situation. It could be hypothesised that students coming from 'non-academic identity' families could be

comparatively disadvantaged if the support required for SRL techniques is also unavailable at home, as it is at school. The theory being that students from academic family backgrounds could possibly still rely on a SRL partnership with their parents, while those from non-academic family backgrounds cannot. If so, they are left behind.

5.5.6 Teacher influence over utility value and school culture

Duckworth et al. (2009) agree that when there is a belief that self-regulated learning is not beneficial, it will not happen. In Meland's study, teachers reported that they experienced students to be lazy (Meland, 2011) and therefore difficult to motivate, and poor at self-regulating. This was also inferred by Eilertsen and Valdermo (2011) in their report. Equally, the results of this study show that a 'relaxed' utility value exists for all study classes, and that in one of the five classes represented in the study, it is the dominant utility value, and in another it holds equal footing with the 'schoolwork oriented' utility value. However, the teacher behaviours of, for example, lateness, absence, inconsistencies in applying study class rules, study class 'sabotage', and perceived unwillingness to help, all signal to the students that the study classes are of little value. This indirect message from the teachers could also reflect and explain the (semi-) dominant 'relaxed' utility values of the study classes for Groups 2 and 3 respectively. The message the students are getting is that study class is not so important, and therefore, neither is self-regulated learning. Paris et al. (2001: 255) point out that it is the '*significant others such as parents, peers, and classroom teachers'* who determine, consciously or not, the very types of behaviours, strategies and so on that are desirable in self-regulation. In other words, the message the teaching staff is collectively sending serves to promote norms that in effect support the 'relaxed' utility value of the study classes in the school. This is even evident within Group 1 where they voice a lack of support in their wish to promote an 'academic' identity.

The other side of this situation whereby an 'academic' identity is actively promoted as a norm of study class behaviour can be seen through the actions of one teacher in particular. During the observations of Vg1a, Class A, the study class teacher was active in her engagement with all individuals in the class the whole of the period, and all students were

observed to be 'on task'. In combating what could be perceived as automated behaviours (and from the school's perspective, undesirable self-regulatory behaviours), this teacher was actively presenting the students with schoolwork oriented 'top-down' cognitive input reminders to keep them focussed. Additionally, through her interest in their work and progress, she is also stimulating *situational interest* (Hidi, 2006) and providing efficacy feedback (Schunk, 2001). Students from the same class reported that they found it beneficial when the teacher did this. They could also ask questions on the spot without having to make the effort to get out of their chairs – they intimated that a lot of questions probably go unasked because of the students' perceptions of the teachers as unwilling to be disturbed when they sit behind a desk. Furthermore, the 'top-down' approach to conscious choice making and its subsequent actions are illustrated with Group 1 when students refer to the benefit they gain in being asked what they intend to do in study class. They state that it pushes them to set goals, thereby initiating the SRL processes, and they feel it holds them accountable throughout the study class, thereby 'forcing' them to enter into the '*performance phase'* of SRL processing.

Both scenarios illustrate the theory of how teachers significantly contribute to and shape the utility value of the study classes and ultimately, the culture of the school (Paris et al., 2001; Akerlof and Kranton, 2010).

5.5.7 Vocational versus academic courses

It is interesting to note that students belonging to Group 3 are the only students in this study enrolled in a vocational course; the others are in general or media studies which are considered academic courses. Further research is required to investigate whether there is a causal link between vocational students being more invested in their 'social' identity than non-vocational students, or whether this is a coincidental finding. It could suggest that the students belonging to this group perceive themselves as having reached a distinct identity status in their 'work identities' by having already chosen a specific vocational pathway (Danielsen et al., 2000), whereas students belonging to Groups 1 and 2 are still exploring various career options, as their senior high school courses can lead them to tertiary education should they so choose. Therefore, they perhaps have a greater interest

in supporting and maintaining their 'academic' identity to be able to consider further study as an option. Identity status assessment is therefore, another area that could further contribute to the body of knowledge from this study. However, since Group 2 portrays split tendencies, I speculate that course choice would have little meaning. If it should prove otherwise, the solutions offered below would still apply as interested third parties (i.e. the school) can influence and change the norms, ideals and therefore the utility value of the study classes, regardless of study course (Akerlof and Kranton, 2010) – we still need to support and encourage vocational 'academic' identities.

6 Conclusions

This study set out to explain the utility values for the self-regulated learning study classes at Breivang, how these utility values are supported, and how the utility values contribute to the self-regulated learning processes of the students.

In economic theory, everything has a utility value (*nytteverdi*), pecuniary or non-pecuniary (Akerlof and Kranton, 2010). Eilertsen and Valdermo support this theory in their evaluation report when they say that '*a school has to be more than just a school … study class can still contribute to general school welfare (trivsel).'* (2011: 20). In stating this, they intimate that a utility value for the study classes exists, that it is perhaps one of social benefit to the students, and that there are advantages to this. I have applied an identity economic model to the analysis of data, and established, as Eilertsen and Valdermo imply, that there is a 'social' identity utility within the utility function of the study classes, and it that leads to a 'relaxed' utility value in all of the five SRL study classes investigated. It has also been shown that the SRL study classes are particularly vulnerable to a 'relaxed' utility value due to very loose and inconsistent guidelines, and minimal teacher input. Both findings suggest that the study class program, rather than addressing the school's obligations and responsibilities to *adapted learning* and *learning strategies* as intended, is **unintentionally** addressing **parts** of point 4 on the Learning Poster:

- '*Stimulate pupils and apprentices/trainees in their personal development, in the development **of identity** and ethical**, social** and cultural **competence**, and in the ability to understand democracy and democratic participation.'*
  (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2012b: 2)

This then presents a dilemma for Breivang. To what extent should a 'relaxed' utility value be supported within compulsory schoolwork classes?

On the one hand, it has been shown with Group 1 that a 'relaxed' utility value can positively influence the 'academic' identity utility. Furthermore, as a senior high school,

Breivang is an institution trying to meet the needs of an adolescent population, and in developmental theory, the primary objective of adolescence is to form and consolidate personal identity (Egeberg and Jerlang, 1987; Kroger, 2002; Rutter, 1980). Marcia (1986) points out the possible implications in adult life for adolescents who do not fully explore their personal identities. Danielsen et al. (2000) show in their study that the Norwegian school system is susceptible to premature closing of identity status among adolescents when 10th Grade students must choose career pathways without sufficient identity exploration. Given that identity building is a socially embedded process, and that Breivang is in the Norwegian setting where identity achievement processes are vulnerable, it could be argued that a 'relaxed' utility value that supports a 'social' identity utility presents a necessary arena for identity construction. Based on this line of thinking, Breivang could change their intended goals for the study classes from *adapted learning* and *learning strategy development* to developing *personal identity construction* and *social competence.* However, I do not believe that this approach would adequately meet either the needs of the students, the frustrations of the teachers (Eilertsen and Valdermo, 2011), or the responsibilities of the school. There would be little change in the culture of the classes and the school; in other words, the school norms of behaviour would remain unchanged.

On the other hand, it has been established that a 'schoolwork oriented' utility value also exists in the SRL study classes. It operates as the dominant utility value for three of the five classes, and is in operation for all five classes when deadlines are impending. This study has also shown that an 'academic' identity leads to SRL processes, which in turn lead students to take responsibility for their learning. That teacher input contributes significantly to the shaping and supporting of the identity utilities and utility values of the study classes. Therefore, the teaching staff is instrumental in setting the norms of the school's study class culture. Furthermore, supporting an 'academic' identity is a partnership within the learning paradigm that requires the external influences of teachers, not only for SRL to function properly, but also to empower students to take responsibility.

The teacher partnership in the SRL classroom at Breivang was found to be inconsistent and unengaged. Kjærnsli et al. (2004) have also established that in Norway, unlike its

Scandinavian neighbours, SRL processes are a variable correlated to achievement, implying that if SRL processes are not properly supported, then achievement will not be either.

Finally, I have shown that the study classes are an identity-building arena and that they can support and build 'academic' identities providing the conditions to do so exist. Therefore, I would argue that Breivang would best realise its obligations and responsibilities to the government's education mandate of giving students the '*competence to create and develop new knowledge* … and … *to develop their own learning strategies and critical-thinking abilities'* (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2012a: 2) so that students can *'gradually take an increased responsibility for the planning and implementation of their learning* (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2012a: 11) by actively engaging in the SRL study classes in order to shape and form the 'academic' identities of its students. By doing so, the school can influence the '*social reference group and future goals'* of the students to include an 'academic' identity (Zimmerman, 2001: 7). The effect would be the school **intentionally** realising its original aims of the study classes, and meeting its obligations to The Quality Framework. Effective self-regulated learning programs positively influence core aspects of a persons cognitive, motivational and behavioural well-being (Zimmerman, 2008). Therefore, they are worth the investment of time and energy to do them well.

In short**,** by acting consistently and uniformly, the administration and teaching staff can change the norms of behaviours and attitudes of the students in a direction that will ultimately support a 'schoolwork oriented' utility value and 'academic' identity for the whole school (Zimmerman, 2001; Schunk, 2001; Akerlof and Kranton, 2010). *'Education isn't just an individual project, but an investment in fellowship'* (St.meld.nr.16, 2003: 11). '*Fellowship'* implies an alliance. *'Investment'* in this context is referring to the potential future educational outcomes of the individuals that make up a society. The implication being: one cannot *'invest'* in the future without acting on the *'fellowship'* today.

6.1 Recommendations for Breivang

1) Teachers and school management at Breivang need to become aware of their own role in setting the norms of behaviour in the SRL study classes. Inconsistencies in teacher practices (also supported by Eilertsen and Valdermo (2011) are contributing significantly to the utility values of the study classes at Breivang. Therefore, the school needs to explicitly decide the aim of the study classes, for example, '*develop academic interest and responsibility for own learning*'. Once the school has decided the aim of the study classes, it then needs to set the goals and formulate teacher guidelines that will lead the teaching staff to underpin the norms and values (and thus the identity) of the school, and strengthen the preferred utility values of the study classes. Above all, the school must act on its own guidelines, because the actions are what eventually will influence the norms of student behaviours and bring them closer to the school's ideals and values.

2) Teachers at Breivang also need to be aware that SRL is a long process that requires their support, guidance, and active involvement to function properly. Teachers, regardless of subject area, can actively support the 'academic' identities of students by engaging in feedback, monitoring, and goal setting with the students, as well as asking them to explain their work. Without teacher 'shaping', the students will look to their peers for the norms, and most likely tend towards the 'social' identity, unless the 'shaped' norms are those preferred by the school, which is not the case today.

3) Generous deadlines for work requirements have a negative effect on both SRL processes and on the 'schoolwork oriented' utility value of the classes. This is an area that needs readdressing by the teaching staff. The school also needs to take care that deadlines are not bunched, but rather spread evenly.

6.2 Limitations and further research directions

1. Identity economics has to my knowledge (à jour) not been applied in education studies in the Norwegian setting prior to this one. Within the scope of a masters thesis it has not been possible to explore the full potential of this theory. For this, further research is

needed. I believe this study has shown that it can indeed be a valuable tool, the scope of which could certainly be broadened.

2. This work is based on a single case study of selected classes at one individual school, and thus the conclusions cannot be generalised in a wider context, nor can they be seen as predictive of future behaviour. However, my study is based on wide literature on adolescence, identity, self-regulated learning, and identity economics, indicating that my findings may have relevance in a wider context. Further research is required to establish if this is the case or not. Any measures taken by Breivang should also be followed up with an after-study to see if the effects are as intended.

3. Whether vocational course students assign a different utility value to the study classes than the general studies courses, and if so if this may be associated with having formed a distinct identity status connected with a vocational pathway. This study included only one vocational study class and more research is required to establish course choice as a causal factor in 'relaxed' utility values.

4. Could students coming from 'non-academic' backgrounds be disadvantaged in the SRL arena when no teacher interaction is offered in comparison to those who are supported in their home environments?

5. Public perceptions of schools are hard to change. However, by changing the norms and ideals of the school internally, it should be possible to change the public perception of the school. Should Breivang choose to follow the suggestions above to actively support a 'schoolwork oriented' utility value through a school wide SRL skills and strategies initiative, to what extent does the school culture change? And, how would a 'new' school culture change perceptions about Breivang Senior High School?

6. If Breivang Senior High School was to adopt an 'academic' identity supportive environment through its SRL study class program, would this practice positively affect the identity status of the students?

7. Research shows that skill mastery improves self-efficacy, which in turn improves self-control (Bandura, 1991). Research also shows that better school experiences can build better relations between parents and their children, however, the reverse is unlikely (Damsgaard and Kokkersvold, 2011). Given that successful self-regulated learning leads to an 'academic' identity; that Norway is the only Scandinavian country that has a direct correlation between SRL, motivation and achievement (Kjærnsli et al., 2004); and that 68% of Norwegian students compete senior high school (Markussen, 2010), a longitudinal study of the effects successful SRL programs have on both the drop rates and behaviours of at risk students could be of significant benefit.

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8 Appendix A: Structured Focus Group Questions

Elevene og SØ

Kort info om SØ og hvorfor vi er der? I hvor stor grad…? Tidsfordeling, anslag: 30 min til fellesdelen – 15-20 til den individuelle

Gruppespørsmål:

1. Tenk tilbake på starten på Breivang: fikk dere noen innføring/skolering i hvordan dere skulle arbeide i SØ? Hvordan ble evt. fulgt opp etter oppstart?
2. Hva skal til for at elevene skal utnytte SØ til faglig arbeid/innsats?
3. Har innsatsen i SØ endret seg gjennom de snart tre årene på Breivang – generelt inntrykk (egenvurdering i skriftlig del)
4. Hvordan fungere ordningene for å sikre tilstedsværelse i SØ (fraværskontroll)? Endringsforslag?
5. Fordeler – ulemper ved å bruke fellesrom/kantine til SØ-arbeid? Endringsforslag?
6. Er det ulike forventninger og krav til arbeidet i SØ fra ulike lærere/fag?
7. Hvem utnytte SØ best: elver med stor, middels eller liten faglig kontroll?
8. Er SØ viktigst for den faglige læringa eller for klassemiljø, trivsel og sosiale forhold?
9. Gir SØ muligheter for å få hjelp til lekser?
10. Vil dere anbefale skolen å holde fast på ordningen med SØ? Hvilke råd vil dere gi for å forbedre ordningen, evt. til andre løsninger?

9 Appendix B: Student Questionnaire

Individuell del – 3SFA

1. jobber du annerledes nå i SØ enn i vg1? I tilfelle ja: hva gjør du annerledes?
2. I vanlig SØ: Anslå hvor mange prosent av tida du bruker til faglig arbeid.
3. Hva bruker du mest tid til i SØ (hvilke(t) fag, spesielle oppgaver, sosiale aktiviteter, andre (hvilke)?
4. Arbeider du med de fagene/oppgavene de du har mest behov for å jobbe med? Hvis ikke, hvorfor?
5. Jobber du mest individuelt eller samarbeider du faglig med andre i SØ?
6. Er du fornøyd med hjelpa fra læreren i SØ? Har det noen betydning hvilken faglærer som er der?
7. Hvor viktig er styringer som prøver, innleveringer, framlegg og lignende. for den faglige innsatsen i SØ?
8. Beskriv kort en situasjon der du syntes du utnyttet SØ godt: hva gjorde at den fungerte bra?

10 Appendix C: NSD Project Approval

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS
NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES

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Vår dato: 27.01.2012 Vår ref:28805 / 3 / KH Deres dato: Deres ref:

TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 22.11.2011. All nødvendig informasjon om prosjektet forelå i sin helhet 25.01.2012. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

28805	*Indentity Economics and Self-directed Study Classes (studieokt)*
Behandlingsansvarlig	*Universitetet i Tromsø, ved institusjonens øverste leder*
Daglig ansvarlig	*Anne Pernille Kran*
Student	*Celia Collins*

Etter gjennomgang av opplysninger gitt i meldeskjemaet og øvrig dokumentasjon, finner vi at prosjektet ikke medfører meldeplikt eller konsesjonsplikt etter personopplysningslovens §§ 31 og 33.

Dersom prosjektopplegget endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for vår vurdering, skal prosjektet meldes på nytt. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/forsk_stud/skjema.html.

Vedlagt følger vår begrunnelse for hvorfor prosjektet ikke er meldepliktig.

Vennlig hilsen

Vigdis Namtvedt Kvalheim Kjersti Håvardstun

Kontaktperson: Kjersti Håvardstun tlf: 55 58 29 53
Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering
Kopi: Celia Collins, Gitta Jønssonsvei 4/314, 9012 TROMSØ

Personvernombudet for forskning

Prosjektvurdering - Kommentar

Prosjektnr: 28805

Datamaterialet hentes fra et tidligere gjennomført forskningsprosjekt: 27063 "Evaluering av bruken av studieøkter...". Dette prosjektet er avsluttet og det ble gitt melding til personvernombudet den 06.12.11 om at datamaterialet er anonymisert. Vi viser også til Collins bekreftelse per e-post den 25.01.12 om at lydopptak er slettet. Personvernombudet legger derfor til grunn at kun anonymiserte data foreligger og kan ikke se at det foretas behandling av personopplysninger med elektroniske hjelpemidler eller at det opprettes manuelt personregister som inneholder sensitive personopplysninger. Prosjektet vil dermed ikke omfattes av meldeplikten.