

## **Orientations in Literature Teaching: Content Digitalization, Homophily, and Statements’ Analysis**

توجهات في تدريس الأدب: رقمنة المحتوى، الهوموفيليا وتحليل  
البيانات

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### **Abstract:**

Teaching Literature to EFL students is a complex problematic. Beyond instruction difficulties, teachers need to account for the global decay of reading. The situation is prevailing worldwide, and Algeria is not exempt from this phenomena. A review of literature teaching approaches, in Algeria, revealed a focus on formal methods that are devoid of in-depth treatment of the problem – despite their originality. For the sake of enhancing the teaching of literature and the reading skill, we elaborated a set of theoretical propositions based on reader response theory, homophily and digital tutorials. We assumed that rare and non-readers’ would change their condition when they are peered with more regular ones. On the ground of the theoretical set, a one shot case study was designed. An experimental course made of lectures and tutorials accounted for learners’ needs and points of interests. The course was followed by a statement analysis test which aims at verifying whether non readers enhanced their reading activities. On homophily, the results were not conclusive: regular readers did not affect significantly the behaviors of non-readers.

Nevertheless, an encouraging involvement in online assignments was observed.

**Key Words:** Teaching Literature; Homophily; EFL; Digital Reading; Statement Analysis.

#### الملخص:

إن تدريس الأدب لطلاب الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية مشكلة معقدة. فبالإضافة إلى صعوبات التدريس المختلفة، يتعين على الأساتذة تفسير التراجع الملحوظ على الصعيد العالمي في مجال القراءة. هذا الوضع سائد في جميع أنحاء العالم، والجزائر ليست بمنأى عن هذه الظاهرة. وقد أظهرت مراجعة مناهج تدريس الأدب الإنجليزي في الجزائر تركيزاً على الأساليب الشكلية التي – رغم أصالتها – تعوزها المعالجة المتعمقة للقضايا المطروحة. ومن أجل تعزيز تعليم الأدب الإنجليزي ومهارة القراءة قمنا في هذه الدراسة بوضع مجموعة من الافتراضات النظرية القائمة على نظرية استجابة القارئ والهوموفيليا والدروس الرقمية. وقد افترضنا أن الطلاب الذين لا يقرؤون والذين لا يقرؤون إلا نادراً سيتحسنون في هذا المجال إذا تم دمجهم في وسط الطلبة الذين يقرؤون بصفة منتظمة. وقد تم الإعداد على هذا الأساس النظري لدراسة حالة عبر دورة تجريبية تتكون من محاضرات ودروس لتلبية احتياجات الطلبة والتركيز على انشغالاتهم في مجال القراءة. وقد أعقب الدورة اختبار تحليل البيانات الذي يهدف إلى اختبار الفرضية المطروحة. وقد أظهرت الدراسة أن تأثير الهوموفيليا لم يكن حاسماً كما تم توقعه إذ لم يؤثر القراء العاديون بشكل كبير على سلوكيات غير القراء. رغم ذلك، يجدر بالذكر أن مشاركة الطلبة عبر الانترنت كانت مشجعة.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** تدريس الأدب؛ الهوموفيليا؛ الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية؛ رقمنة المحتوى؛ تحليل البيانات.

#### Introduction:

This paper addresses the question of literature teaching in EFL contexts. A recurrent problem that teachers of literature face is their learners' expressed reticence to fiction reading. From a didactic viewpoint, this is a complex situation whereby the learners clearly manifest their renouncement to reading and even a refusal to be involved in the reading experience. The question of literacy and reading had been embraced, at the international level, by various governmental and non-governmental organizations. The most notorious one is the PISA survey (Program for International Students

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Assessment). This project (in which Algeria is actively involved) is hosted by the OECD /UNESCO. In 2000, the first report stated that reading is one of the most significantly decaying skills. (See Section Possessions related to “classical” culture (P.17) <sup>1</sup>.

All scholars and practitioners agree on the importance of reading in formal and informal contexts. The concept of the quality of readings (namely classics) has been highlighted by the PISA survey as a cornerstone marker for the evaluation of literacy. According to Schwarz (2008): “... *we can still evaluate literature in terms of its quality and importance. Even in an era when we read different texts in different ways, it is possible to return to a focus on primary texts*”<sup>2</sup> (P.X).

The desertion of (classical) reading has become alarming, especially with the advent of digital culture and the dematerialization of cultural supports. Thus, screens replaced paper books; zipped files replaced films and musical albums, and so on. The early analyses of the PISA report predicted the gradual death of fundamental skills, such as reading. While scholars might find that digital culture does constitute an alternative to classical culture - as it brings back new culture consumers, the formal concerns (material vs. non-material supports) do not reflect the depth of the reading crisis. What might, roughly, facilitate access to culture (including reading fiction) does not forcibly guarantee the appearance and sustainability of reading forms: compulsory or recreational.

For Farbrizi (2008), the reading issue goes beyond literacy and erudition. In his view, literature develops critical thinking and indulges learners in consciousness awakening: *By teaching students how to play with a training in critical game literacy, games can shift in the classroom from an “edutainment” model of drill-and-repeat memorization to vibrant, even destabilizing texts that highlight student agency and responsibility in questions of social justice*”<sup>3</sup>. (P.10)

### **1. The Reading Crisis: a Theoretical Ascertainment**

Do you read fiction? If no, can you explain why you do not read it? These are usual questions posed by teachers, in the literature class. When the answer is no, there is a global tendency consisting in a non-effort justification that leans towards a set of explanations. Hence, the most frequent excuses consist in formulating statements justifying their stands:

- Devaluating the importance of the act of reading.
- The lack of time.
- The absence of a particular interest.
- The pain of understanding the utility of reading.
- Unreasonable fear of reading / the relevance of reading non-compulsory works.
- Unfamiliarity with complex forms of literary language.

These statements establish the usual attitudes of EFL learners in the literature class and ground the daily reality of literary instruction. Other extra-class factors count when teaching literature to EFL students:

- The decay of reading in general (PISA report)
- The prevalence of semiotic / visual learning modes
- The dematerialization of reading supports / The learners' learning preferences (Smartphones; Tablets)

These paradigms go beyond the control of the instructors. In fact, teachers witness the quick evolution in digital culture, with several variables: the spread of intuitive social networks, software, and the diversification of their content. Their adjustment to the situation would require an utter adjustment in their perceptions of the teaching methods and the course content. A persistent question is the one regarding reading on digital support. While more and more learners opt for digital content consummation, a considerable number of teachers remain reluctant as to the use of these learning modes in the classroom.

### **2. The Death of the Paper Book: Two Views**

A corollary to the above ascertainment is the question of the shift of the reading habits, from material supports to digital ones. This has marked the readers' conception of reading. Beyond perception, it is their relationship to the paper book that changed. Purists, thus, deplore the decay of the notion of the book's appropriation / ownership; the book is no longer considered as an object, neither as material property. This metamorphosis enacted a relational transition: from a tight bond with paper to a virtual experience in which the act of possession is not permitted. The sensory experience is replaced by a detached exposure that redefines the act of reading.

Pro-digital books hold a diametrically opposed view. They sense that the transformation is ineluctable and that it reflects the advent of new modes of cultural consumerism, in which the objects are dematerialized, stored, shared, and virtually purchased. This view refers to a series of factors that enhanced the shift and do put forward the acceleration reasons:

- Ecological factor
- Commodity
- Practicability (weight – size)
- Fastness
- Unlimited storage
- The culture of Sharing (Free-share)

Since the 2000s and onwards, with the outbreak of digital culture, many scholars suggested the gradual incorporation of digital tools within the literature class. Dauer<sup>4</sup> (2003) in Agathocleous et al. (2003) and Lancashire<sup>5</sup> (2010) in Kayalis et al. (2010) define clearly the shift from indoors instruction to the unlimited options offered by cyberspace. In the introduction of their seminal work *Teaching Literature at a Distance: Open, Online and Blended Learning*, Kayalis and Natsina (2010) acknowledge the transformation of literature teaching:

The teaching of literature poses significant challenges when transferred from face-to-face to a distance learning setting. Traditionally aimed at developing students' reading skills and interpretative abilities, literature teaching faces great difficulties when severed of such means as peer interaction, reciprocal classroom discussion and the form of 'cultural apprenticeship' normally practiced at seminars and tutorials (...) Finally, digital technologies have certainly unlocked unprecedented educational potentials, yet at the same time their widespread introduction in all aspects of the educational process calls for an imperative for caution. (pp.1-2)

Kayalis and Natsina (2010) further question the relevance and efficiency of digital teaching and its capacity to meet the most basic needs of a literature learner. While they do not reject the alternative recourse to online teaching, they express a skeptical thought on the prevalence of digital reading over classical reading:

The view of Beach<sup>6</sup> (2014), as one of the most actively creative theoreticians of literature teaching, tempers the anxieties of practitioners as the question of the disappearance of paper book reading:

In addition to the use of textbooks, in lieu of having students buy books, for example, novels for a literature class, you can now have your students readily access free e-books as books in the public domain or as no longer copyrighted from a range of different sources for reading on their phone or tablet, as well as excerpts of copyrighted books. They can search for books on the sites and apps listed below. (P. 91)

Richard Beach's works on digital-reading sustain the idea of taming the dematerialized teaching tools. In his book *Understanding and creating digital texts: an activity-based approach*, co-authored

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with Lee-Ann Kastman Breuch (2014), he suggests a series of theoretical ideals and their practical implementation – with one constant belief: the intertwined enhancement of reading through writing and vice-versa<sup>7</sup>.

### **3. The state of the Art in Algeria: The case of nowadays' learners**

In Algeria, EFL learners face a double problem: disinterest from reading and the unfamiliarity with the language. Thus, those who hold reading intentions are often blocked by the felt difficulty of the language. Actually, it is the first paradigm which is utterly difficult to solve. The growing familiarity with the target language will eventually occur. On the other hand, the learners' refusal to indulge in reading seems to be the most difficult task.

Interviewed along the making of this paper, a certain number of teachers expose creative ways to bring their students to read. Their attempts are in general practical swings between screen versions and the original text. Other teachers / researchers focus on the teaching tools and neglect the course content. What is missing so far is a holistic approach to the problem that accounts for the absence of intrinsic motivation and the use of digital support to stimulate that interest, and ensure its sustainability. If the film-based teaching of literature may demystify the readers' relationship with the book, it does not, however, guarantee the acquisition of reading habits and their enforcement in the long run. To facilitate the access to fiction reading, the reviewed Algerian academic works consist in three major choices:

Text to Screen
Text to Drama
Reading Reports

The observed teaching methods include the two firsts of the three literature teaching theories as identified by Beach et al<sup>8</sup>. (2011):

- Transmission Theories: teacher-centered, based on transmission of knowledge
- Student-centered Theory: learner-centered, predicated on students' tutoring
- Socio-cultural Learning Theory: a blended concept centered on classroom dynamics

Each theory possesses solid advantages and evident shortcomings. Nevertheless, there is a growing tendency to exploit all the theories altogether or episodically within online teaching. What stands as an unsolvable problem is the question of intrinsic motivation.

#### **4. Theoretical and Methodological Propositions: Is Readers' Response the response?**

The teaching of literature has matched the evolution of literary theory. In fact, the shift of priorities has made author-based approaches relatively outmoded. The modern day tendencies do privilege text-readers approaches: hermeneutics, reception theory, readers' response theory, and distant reading. Hence, it is judicious to relate the pedagogic/didactic projects to the epistemic evolution in the study of the literary texts. The works of Purves and Beach (*Literature and the Reader*, 1972), Charles A. Cooper (*Empirical Studies of Response to Literature: Review and Suggestions*, 1976) and Stanley Fish (*Is There a Text in This Class*, 1980) constitute a compound set of practical approaches to the stimulation of readers' interest in literature. The late works of Franco Moretti (*Distant Reading*, 2013) operated a shift towards digital reading and mass book consumerism.

As far as teaching is concerned, the classification of readers is a natural conception of their diversity. Yet, there stands another stratification of factors and their interconnectedness that harden the teachers' tasks: the generation gap is one of them. Reading, in other words, is a generational issue. It is commonly admitted that nowadays learners (Millennials and Generation Y<sup>9</sup>) have little appetite for reading, in general, and paper reading, in particular. Hence, instructors are confronted to the generation gap, but also to a mass behavior

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modification. At this level of complexity, the recourse to readers' response theory and its empirical extensions is needed. Readers' response theories shed light on readers' basic difficulties. Purves and Beach (1972) have listed<sup>10</sup> the most prevailing complexities encompassing in-class reading (See list below). They described readers' reactions and response to literature teaching:

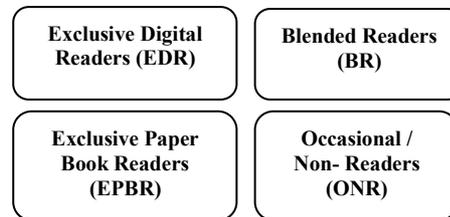
3. Difficulties in visualizing imagery;
4. Mnemonic irrelevancies which lead readers to digress;
5. Stock responses to the content of works;
6. Oversentimentality in response;
7. Overinhibition in response;
8. Doctrinal adhesions about the world which interfere in reading;
9. Technical presuppositions about how literary writing should be done;
10. General critical preconceptions about literature.

The above (edited) list had been established in a time when classical reading was the only mode of instruction. Nevertheless, the Purves-Beach observations are still valid and do constitute landmarks for literature teachers.

Nowadays learners' immersion in digital receptive skills (reading and listening) is not utterly handicapping: teachers of literature can turn the young learners' behavior into a new mode of reading. Thus, digital books, audio books, online literature lectures, and other reading-related activities can be exploited in an academic framework. The incorporation of the learners' habits in reading activities (and their responses) is likely to diminish their unfamiliarity with paper book reading, and comfort their casual behavior into a purposeful learning strategy.

### **5. Accounting for different readers' types**

Our observation of the learning styles, as viewed in three classrooms, revealed four major tendencies in the modern-day learners' habits and the nature of their bond with fiction reading.



**Figure 1: Readers' Types**

Accounting for the problem of reading involves, firstly, its conception as a multilayered issue – involving learning habits, consistency, and intrinsic motivation. The diversity of learners and their complexity calls upon a differential pedagogy of reading and the subsequent didactic tools. The readers' profiles can be analyzed as follows:

**Exclusive Digital Readers:** This type has developed reading habits that is exclusively predicated on digital supports. For them, reading does not involve the object, but instead, information gathering. They are avid of knowledge and pragmatic in their access to it.

**Paper Book Readers:** This type reads only material books. They fetishize the book and objectify the reading experience from purchase to reading – including any annotations they may put on the book's pages. They are immersive and meditative.

**Blended Readers:** These readers blend, nonchalantly, the digital and the traditional reading ways. They swing from type to type depending on the availability of the material, their mood or the extent of time and energy. They are as pragmatic as the digital readers, but they do not discard the traditional ways.

**Occasional/Non-Readers:** This layer of the population constitutes the majority of the observed learners. These readers do not express a specific need / urge to read unless it is compulsory. They even tend to avoid the question – as if they were at unease with the idea of doing what is not 'necessary'.

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On Digital Readers, Lundby<sup>11</sup> (2008) admits that this segment of the population possesses the most adaptive learners' habits:

Likewise, they make it possible to explore, in the setting of the classroom, reading formats and typologies other than the printed book, as well as work more in depth with the productive side of literature, which is often overlooked in the scheduled classroom activities (Sylvester and Greenidge 2009). This critical approach to formats with which students are in contact outside the school setting promotes their interest and motivation, in addition to deepening the construction of their identity as twenty-first-century readers. (P.243)

In this concern, it is the occasional / non readers who need to be specifically tutored and brought back to that essential cognitive activity – being, also, an unavoidable component of EFL learning. The most significant action a teacher can ever achieve is to persuade non-readers that reading can only be beneficial to them. If the objective is attained, there should be back up devices to install and enhance the newly acquired habit and maintain its sustainability.

### **6. Homophily: upgrading reading through imitation**

Homophily is a concept in sociology coined by Lazarsfeld and Merton<sup>12</sup> (1957) to describe the natural imitation undertaken by individuals towards their mates. It refers, also, to the tendencies of people to adjust to leading attitudes and look for a form of compliance from the group. Homophily was utilized primarily in creating social togetherness / mixing. In this paper, it is meant to be used in the classroom, as far as reading habits' enforcement is concerned. This sociological concept can be utilized for the sake of the creation of a catalyst of a social dynamics that can be channeled towards reading. In other words, it consists in engaging non-readers in the mimicry of

regular readers. If reading is primarily a personal/individual activity, the effect of the group (like reading clubs) on behavior modification cannot be neglected in bringing the less interested to work with the 'aficionados'.

Beach et al.<sup>13</sup> (2011) statements on the topic lean towards the use of the socio-cultural theories in the literature class. Without naming it, Beach et al. acknowledge the impact of homophily on classroom dynamics:

Students learn these [reading] practices not as isolated, autonomous participants but through participation in a joint, collective activity motivated by a purpose or object (Cole, 1996; Engestrom, 1987) ... Socio-cultural learning theory therefore emphasizes the importance of creating a social community that supports learning literature. As a literature teacher, you are socializing students into what could be called a literary community of practice reflected in the practices of a highly engaged literary book club (Edelsky, Smith, & Wolfe, 2002). In this community of practice, students assume the identities of careful readers who acquire various practices involved in interpreting and producing literature. (P.08)

Beach et al.'s allusion to the fact that collaborative learning might upgrade the students' performances comforts our assumption that homophily is a valid pedagogical direction. Subsequently, we assume that literature instructors can use it to enforce the learners' interest in reading through collaboration and imitation.

### **7. Field Work:**

Done with the theoretical considerations, the next objective is to set an experimental course that enables the redefinition of reading practices and the diminishing of reading aversion. Thus, Engineering /

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Designing a literature course will have to account seriously for the creation of self enforcing norms that impact the learners' habits. Our teaching method was inspired by the methodological propositions of Lazar<sup>14</sup> (1993), for the taxonomic repartition of teaching and Cox<sup>15</sup> (2011), for the diversity of the teaching activities, as well as the incorporation of digital reading.

**7-1- Course Content and Orientalions:** Our primary aim is to act on the cognitive level with a special focus on behavior modification, as intended by homophily. This move is meant to demystify reading and bring confirmed readers to affect the occasional and non-readers. As far as content selection is concerned, learners need to relate to the various themes they may identify with. Youth literature, here, consists in a youth-oriented body of texts that feature young characters.

Burger<sup>16</sup> (2016) advocates the use of youth-related course content: horror and fantasy, epic narratives, and self-quest:

Some victims can be avenged in fiction, if not in life.  
King's short stories and novels work on a variety of different levels to effectively appeal to and terrify readers: in the common experiences at the heart of many of his horrors, the reader may recognize a bit of themselves, feeling a thrill of emotion either at that resonance or as a result of their investment with specific characters, all while negotiating the larger, real world anxieties of King's contemporary moment.  
(pp.04-05)

Burger explains his teaching-focus on the master of horror (Stephen King) by the readers' need for identification, catharsis and wonderment through edgy topics. The comings of age and self-

fulfillment stories - within horror and fantasy - constitute criteria that appeal to nowadays readers' points of interest.

Instructors, on the other hand, take their responsibility in content selection. Besides compulsory classics, they are supposed to expose neophytes to what is likely to 'speak to them' and reflect their tastes. As outlined by Graham (2013) preconceptions about the literature course content might be prejudicial to teachers themselves: *In other words, teachers do not want to be handed down judgments about any literature, and especially not about African American literature. They do want to be assisted with the process of engaging new literatures critically and holistically* (P.02). The case of African American literature, or any other genre regarded as non-classical might deprive teachers from introducing learners to the real richness of fiction and the reading options.

In this one shot case study, we, firstly, undertook the identification of the levels of action. Hence, two directions were marked. On the pedagogical level, one can focus on classroom management: Class size is utterly crucial in instruction. The larger the class, the lesser learning is optimal and effective. Thus, the downsizing of classroom (at least for the tutorials) is the first and foremost condition. Classroom structures are of equal significance. The endorsement of homophily-based principles is to be used in the restructuration of the classroom into subgroups. During the tutorials, group formation will account for the mixing of all the types of readers. The use of mimicry and competition is likely to provide a learning dynamics.

On the didactic level, we focused on course content. Our study consists, also, in making the most accurate choices in course design and its content. A balance is to be achieved between the classics (for instance, Shakespeare – being one of learners' fear) and a more trendy and popular fiction that learners would relate to. Another aspect is tutorship and peer evaluation. Hence we favored a shift of the

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instruction from a teacher-centered approach to a collaborative structure is essential. Ultimately, the goal is to have confirmed readers take charge of the non-readers and initiate them to fiction reading.

**7-2- Participants:** A pre-requisite to the test, is the identification of the non-readers on the basis of voluntary statements. Among the 60 students, we identified the aforementioned reader types. In terms of reading frequencies, we spotted 04 subtypes:

Regular Readers:	09
Occasional Readers:	30
Rare Readers:	13
Non-Readers:	08

**Table 1: Readers' Distribution**

We formed 10 sub-groups (06 students in each). Including all reader types was crucial in the implementation of homophily. Hence, when peered with regular readers; non-readers might convert to more regular reading activities.

**7-3- A One Shot Case Study Design:** For the sake of verifying the effectiveness of homophily and teaching content reconfiguration, the learners were subjected to 3 tests - predicated on 3 pre-experimental courses. On participants' organization, we were inspired by the approach of Coombs et al<sup>17</sup>. (2016). The texts were given to the students in the two formats: paper and electronic. We accounted for students' cases with limited access to internet and computer devices. These students (13) were given free paper copies. Furthermore, all the students were given hard and soft copies of the film versions of the selected novels – to be viewed after the study of the text. In the tutorials, we formed mixed groups lead by regular readers who were asked to monitor their mates (rare and irregular readers), guide their activities, and provide assistance/ support.

**7-4- Procedures:** The courses were administered over 06 weeks. The duration of each course was one hour and a half, indoors.

Additionally, the students were given outdoor activities that were monitored on a social network private group. These activities included oral and written questions that would be submitted in the form of reading accounts.

<b>Lecture one:</b>
From Text to Screen: J.J. Tolkien's <i>The Lord of the Rings</i> .
Pedagogical tools: excerpt + film copy: <i>The Fellowship of the Ring</i> .
Film Discussion
Film vs. Novel Comparison
<b>Lecture two:</b>
Dramatizing Edith Wharton: <i>The House of Mirth</i>
A broad literary introduction (author's biography, themes, Characters ...)
Setting up the play (Gender switching / costumes and outfits)
<b>Lecture three:</b>
Literary Café – Debating Race in Shakespeare's <i>Othello</i>
Introduction to Shakespeare's Tragedies
Introduction to Post-racial Theories
The collision of Gender, Race and Tragedy (round table)

**Table 2: Course Content**

The tutorials' orientations included:

1. Book to film: systematic comparison and criticism of the film adaptation.
2. Dramatizations: on stage performance of one selected part of the narrative.
3. Reading clubs: collective debates on specific aspects of the text.
4. Reading accounts: individual reports.

**7-5- Course Description:** The course was carried during 06 weeks. Each course was instructed in two sessions. The first lecture comprised the theoretical aspect of the course: socio-historical context, the new formalist approach, and the study of themes-characters-motives-symbols. The second session consisted in a text-

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related set of tutorials. At the end of each course, the informants were subjected to a detailed interview inspired from Steller and Köhnken (1989). (See appendix).

The course took place in relatively casual conditions. The students were instructed in a large class for the lecture (theory) and in two subgroups for the tutorials (practice). The teaching kit included:

- Printed and digital excerpts from the selected works
- The film adaptations of the literary works
- Paper templates for written accounts
- Passwords for e-learning platforms (Zoom + Easy Class)

In order to avoid any behavior modification (Halo effect and Hawthorn effect) prior to – and during - the test, we informed the students that the course is a not a formal experimental procedure but a rather an informal test meant for gradual enforcement of the course content and the teaching of literary texts.

**7-6- Did the participants Read? How can we know?** The complexity of testing learners' reading is bond with the difficulty of knowing whether they read or not. Predicting lie and deceit (as found in psychological tests) can supply the ground base information to draw such inferences. When subjected to oral and written tests, the instructor may detect (through statement analysis) indices about the reader's relationship with the text. We chose the Steller & Köhnken Statement Analysis Test (1989) and adapted it according to readers' responses, as described by Purves & Beach (1972) and Cooper (1976). In addition, text-related tasks were given, to the participants, as compulsory assignments:

- Formal Test/Examination
- Written accounts / renditions
- Dramatizing the novels / Role play

The questions were administered in the form of individual and collective interviews in order to determine the readers' bonds with the

text and evaluate the degree of involvement in the reading assignments. In parallel, observations were made to check whether or not the regular readers have affected the less regular ones. Through repetitive questions and in-depth discussions, the interviews were recorded with the informants' permission and exploited in statement analysis. Thus we recorded around 10 hours of answers. The questions were centered on the texts with a focus on specific details:

<b>Lecture One / <i>Lord of the Rings</i>: Accuracy Test</b>
The role of Secondary Characters in TLOFR (Frodo, Sam, Merry and Pippin)
What differences did you note between the novel and the film?
<b>Indexes:</b> Quantity of Details – Biased reading
<b>Lecture Two / <i>The House of Mirth</i>: Sincerity Test</b>
The analogies between New York Society and the Victorian Society
What are the various life options offered to Lili Bart (Rumors)
<b>Indexes:</b> Self decrapation (liars are confident)
<b>Lecture Three / <i>Othello</i>: Argumentation Test:</b>
Testing the text-based argumentation –
Iago's Speech on Identity – What does it say about whiteness/blackness
Desdemona's handkerchief – What dramatic element does it introduce?
<b>Indexes:</b> Unusual Details

**Table 3: Sample questions and indexes**

**7-7- Results:** On a separate evaluation sheet, we noted the participants' reactions: hesitation, self- confidence signs, and autobiographical digressions. The regular readers showed less self-confidence, and less autobiographical digressions - in contrast with non readers.

The readers' statements were arranged into a semantic cluster reflecting the general tendencies. Only answers provided by the informants who scored 07/10 convincing responses were counted as enough quantifiable to make significant inferences. On the basis of students' statement and their oral / written performances, an analysis was carried out in order to test whether or not the learners have read

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what they were assigned to. Thus each lecture purported to test one major aspect of reading responses:

### 7-7-1- Statement Analysis Results

	Lecture 1 Accuracy	Lecture 2 Sincerity	Lecture3 Argumentation
<b>Accuracy</b>			
EDR	56 %	58%	61%
BR	70%	68%	62%
EPBR	52%	46%	49%
ONR			
<b>Information Recall</b>			
EDR	63%	52%	69%
BR	68%	66%	63%
EPBR	48%	50%	53%
ONR	40%	39%	42%
<b>Facts' Assertiveness</b>			
EDR	70%	72%	69%
BR	80%	79%	78%
EPBR	52%	47%	44%
ONR	23%	34%	26%
<b>Coherence</b>			
EDR	67%	70%	72%
BR	70%	68%	73%
EPBR	48%	48%	52%
ONR	53%	45%	49%

**Table 4: Statement Analysis Results**

A primary look at the results confirms the early non-empirical impressions: those who read do read, and those who do not read will

persist in their abstinence. The chosen paradigms in the readers' statement analysis provide the following observations:

- Blended readers score the best results: their flexibility to swing from paper book to digital reading is confirmed.
- Rare and non-readers use autobiographical digressions form text-related questions. Hence, instead of responding to oral and written assignments, they provide irrelevant – digressive answers that highlight their personal background.
- Once the novelty of the test gone, there was a global looseness among rare and non-readers.
- Homophily proved to be a considerable element in regard to the paper readers' imitation of blended readers. However, exclusive digital readers and non-readers seem not to have been affected by the group dynamics of the others. Thus, to the question: do you feel peers (direct/indirect) encouragement to read (more often)? The informants provided mixed positions. The majority expressed that their need is not urged by any competition feeling, nor do they need to imitate the others.
- Interest was shown in the course-related tutorials. In fact, the more the course leaned towards semiotic practice (film viewing and drama performances), the more the learners manifest their involvement. In return, the monitoring of outdoors activities revealed non-conclusive results (see table 5 below)

	<b>Conclusive</b>	<b>Non-conclusive</b>
Accuracy		<b>X</b>
Information Recall	<b>X</b>	
Facts' Assertiveness		<b>X</b>
Coherence		<b>X</b>

**Table 5: Readers' responses quality**

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**7-7-2- Outdoors Assignments Results:** The use of the learning platforms (Easy class + Zoom) enabled the progress of the teaching, in more formal contexts, as compared to social networks. Only rare and non-readers were monitored (see table 6 below).

	Lecture 1	Lecture 2	Lecture 3
Regularity of Posts	71 %	74%	83%
Forums Contribution Size	49%	51%	51%
Accounts Consistency	23%	27%	29%
Active Involvement	54%	57%	52%

**Table 6: Online work indicators**

Rare and non-readers score encouraging results in terms of involvement and participation. Nevertheless, no significant progress is noted regarding the reading progress indexes. Online back-up activities do reflect the same tendencies observed indoors: non-readers do not provide accurate and consistent accounts of the reading assignments.

**7-8- Limitations of the Study:** These results should be taken with caution. Some factors may have biased the test, one can name the following:

- The duration of the course: 06 weeks is perhaps too short to draw solid conclusions.
- The absence of valid motivation test allowing the understanding of the depth of the reading crisis.
- The absence of certainty on the non-readers' condition and how to reverse it.

Furthermore, the Covid-19 Crisis introduced an unexpected behavior modification bias. A broad survey conducted –informally– among the learners revealed two major tendencies: a prevailing

enthusiasm towards online learning and an even larger sentiment of frustration and anxiety.

A preliminary solution might be located within reading's connection with the writing skill. In fact, the failure to stimulate one skill can be overtaken in the enforcement of the related skill. Hence, the fact that reading and writing are interdependent will possibly make reading upgraded by writing fiction. Bringing learners to create their own text is an observable tendency in literature teaching. Beach et Kastman' *Understanding and creating digital texts \_ an activity-based approach*<sup>18</sup> (2014) contains a prevailing belief that reading (as a regular habit) cannot be attained unless learners start to make their own texts.

**Conclusion:**

All things considered, the decay of reading among nowadays youth is, hitherto, an established truth, not only in Algeria, but worldwide. The questions of literature teaching and reading in the EFL class appeal to a constant adjustment in the instruction methods and course content. The telescoping of several factors (the advent of digital culture and the change in learning habits, to name a few) has complicated the teaching of classical literature, to the extent that some have predicted the death of the paper book, and reading in general.

For the sake of revitalizing the dynamics of reading in EFL classes, we elaborated a theoretical proposition predicated on reader response theories and homophily. Readers' Response Theories provided the necessary understanding of the different readers' types and their general responses to the text. Homophily, on the other hand, was endorsed to sustain the assumption that non-readers would imitate the regular ones.

Once reader types identified and their distribution defined, we set an experimental course based on paper book reading, online activities, and varied tutorials. The aim was to verify whether non-readers started regular reading. The course was backed-up by a test to

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verify the non-readers' progress. The post-experiment phase consisted in readers' statement analysis – in search of indices (sincerity, accuracy ... etc.) that corroborate the informants' declarations.

The study revealed non-conclusive results on the effects of regular readers on non-readers. Nevertheless, regular and non-readers displayed a considerable involvement in non-textual activities (film viewing, dramatic performances, and online discussions). A critical analysis of the findings re-oriented the perspective of the treatment of the reading crisis towards creative writing. In fact, the current tendencies lean towards learners' training to create their own texts and substitute underachievement in one skill by enhancing the related one.

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**Table 1 Content criteria for statement analysis (from Steller & Köhnken, 1989)**

From: [A comparison of the effectiveness of two types of deceit detection training methods in older adults](#)

Category	Criterion	Description for present research
General characteristics	1. Logical structure	True accounts have an <i>inner coherence and consistency</i> (Undeutsch, 1984)
	2. Quantity of details	Abundant detail is impossible to fake (e.g., detailed description of the place). Do not count repetitions of the same details
Specific contents	3. Contextual embedding	Real incidents occur within the everyday relationships and happenings of life
	4. Descriptions of interactions	Describing interactions is a sign of credibility
	5. Reproduction of conversation	Dialogue of speakers is reported
	6. Unexpected complications during the incident	Surprising problems happen in real life
Peculiarities of content	7. Unusual details	Odd details are a sign of credibility
	8. Superfluous details	When someone lies they don't think of inventing irrelevant details, but these are often told in true accounts
	9. Accounts of subjective mental state	Reports of feelings or cognitions during the event indicate credibility
	10. Attribution of perpetrator's mental state	Reporting the affective reactions and thoughts of others is a sign of credibility
Motivation-related contents	11. Spontaneous corrections	Liars do not correct their statements
	12. Admitting lack of memory	Liars do not admit to lack of memory
	13. Raising doubts about one's own testimony	Liars do not raise doubts about their own testimony
	14. Self-deprecation	Liars are confident

### End Notes:

- <sup>1</sup> Literacy Skills for the World of Tomorrow: Further Results from PISA 2000 Unesco Institute for Statistics.  
<http://www.oecd.org/education/school/2960581.pdf>
- <sup>2</sup> Daniel R. Schwarz - In defense of reading\_ teaching literature in the twenty-first century, 2008.
- <sup>3</sup> In the Introduction of Mark A. Fabrizi's Horror Literature and Dark Fantasy\_ Challenging Genres, 2018.
- <sup>4</sup> Susan Jaye Dauer. From Teaching in Class to Teaching Online: Preserving Community and Communication. In Tanya Agathocleous, Ann C. Dean. Teaching Literature: A Companion. 2003, pp. 163-170.
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- <sup>6</sup> Richard Beach, David O'Brien - Using Apps for Learning Across the Curriculum: A Literacy-Based Framework and Guide, 2014.

- <sup>7</sup> See: the chapter ENGAGING IN ONLINE DISCUSSIONS. Richard Beach & Lee-Ann Kastman Breuch - Understanding and creating digital texts: an activity-based approach. 2014, pp. 107-133.
- <sup>8</sup> Richard Beach et al - Teaching Literature to Adolescents. (pp. 06-08), 2011.
- <sup>9</sup> See Prensky (2011), who names them, also digital natives: “In such a context, where students do not belong to the so-called Millennial Generation (Considine et al. 2009), nor are they ‘digital natives’ (P.33). In María Luisa Carrió-Pastor - Teaching Language and Teaching Literature in Virtual Environments, 2019.
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- <sup>11</sup> In María Luisa Carrió-Pastor - Teaching Language and Teaching literature in Virtual Environments. 2019, P.243.
- <sup>12</sup> See: Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Robert K. Merton. Mass Communication, Popular Taste and Organized Social Action, 1957.
- <sup>13</sup> Beach et al. Teaching literature to adolescents. 2011, P.08.
- <sup>14</sup> Gillian Lazar, Literature and language teaching: a guide for teachers and trainers, 1993.
- <sup>15</sup> Carole A. Cox. Literature-Based Teaching in the Content Areas: 40 Strategies for K-8 Classrooms. 2011, Chapters: Online discussion Boars, pp.31-36; Performance Reading, pp.57-64.
- <sup>16</sup> Alissa Burger (auth.) - Teaching Stephen King\_ Horror, the Supernatural, and New Approaches to Literature. 2016, pp.04-05.
- <sup>17</sup> Dawan Coombs, Jon Ostenson, and Whitney Sommerville, Seeing Harry potter as an at-Risk Student.. In Mark A. Fabrizi: Critical Literacy, Cultural Capital, and the Wizarding World. 2016, Chapter 11: pp 176-187.
- <sup>18</sup> Richard Beach & Lee-Ann Kastman Breuch - Understanding and creating digital texts: an activity-based approach-Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2014.