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MASTER'S THESIS

Use of Literature Circles to Promote Cultural Knowledge and Oral Communication

Exploring the issues of apartheid and human rights
through literature circles

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Acknowledgments

The present master thesis is a result of a continuous attempt at exploring and gaining insight into classroom practices. Although I completed my teacher education almost a decade ago, I still find myself trying to develop my teaching and explore the world of didactics. I keep asking myself: How can teaching be designed to let the voice of the student become prominent? How can I get the students to increase their talking and thinking skills?

During my master thesis studies I was introduced to the use of literature in order to engage EFL learners. There I appreciated the way Anna Birketveit opened my eyes to the use of picturebooks in intercultural education.

A foreword is a place for thankfulness. I am very grateful for the support and guidance from my supervisor Zoltan Varga through the thesis writing process. Thank you for valuable input and for keeping me on track. Also, I want to thank all the participants in my project, including the interviewed teachers, and particularly the students, the core of my work. Thank you for giving me insight into your thoughts and reflections. Without you this project would not have been possible.

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To Tuva, for showing me first hand the magic of books and how they spark reflection and thoughtfulness. To Birk, for approaching language with curiosity and playfulness and for daily reminding me of the value of reading aloud. To Guro, who from the age of one week accompanied me at the university. To my three children and to my husband: Thank you for more or less patiently waiting for me to give you the attention you deserve. I believe you all share my joy and relief of reaching the finish line.

Now, let's sit down and read a picturebook together!

Bergen, May, 2019

Runa Bjørlo Schwebs

Sammendrag

Bruk av litteratursirkler for å fremme kulturkunnskap og muntlig kommunikasjon

Denne masteravhandlingen undersøker hvordan litteratursirkelmetoden kan benyttes som del av engelskundervisningen på 10. trinn for å fremme elevenes forståelse for menneskerettighetsspørsmål og apartheid i Sør-Afrika.

Læreplanen for engelskfaget har i økende grad fokusert på interkulturell forståelse og kompetanse, og masteroppgaven har i lys av dette følgende problemstilling: *Hvordan kan litteratursirkler fremme diskusjon og refleksjon om interkulturelle og sosiale tema hos elever i engelskfaget?* Problemstillingen blir belyst gjennom tre forskningsspørsmål, alle knyttet til lesing av *The Soccer Fence*, en bildebok som danner utgangspunktet for litteratursirklene: (1) *Hvordan kan litteratursirkler hjelpe elever med å utvikle interkulturell forståelse gjennom å lese og diskutere en bok om apartheid?* (2) *Hvordan kan litteratursirkler fremme muntlig diskusjon mellom elever?* (3) *Hvordan fungerer bruk av bildebokmediet som utgangspunkt for samtalene i litteratursirklene?*

For datainnsamlingen ble en kvalitativ tilnærming valgt. Hovedmaterialet består av transkripsjoner av samtaler i to elevgrupper som deltok i et undervisningsopplegg med litteratursirkler, små elevledede diskusjonsgrupper som deler leseopplevelser og refleksjoner. I tillegg ble det i etterkant gjennomført en spørreundersøkelse blant alle elevene i deltakerklassen om hvordan de opplevde bruk av litteratursirkler i engelskfaget. Datamaterialet inkluderte også intervju med to lærere som anvendte litteratursirkler i engelskundervisningen.

Hovedfunnene i studien er at elevenes interkulturelle kompetanse blir styrket gjennom litteratursirklene. Elevene hjelper hverandre i å tilegne seg kunnskap om det sørafrikanske samfunnet, og de engasjerer seg i erfaringene bokens hovedperson gjør seg. Elevene deler leseopplevelser, utveksler meninger og bruker relevant vokabular. Slik synes samtalene å bidra til å fremme elevenes muntlige kompetanse, og med en bildebok som grunnlag, øker også elevenes multimodale kompetanse. Funnene viser dessuten at både lærere og elever mener litteratursirkelmetoden gir motivasjon og variasjon i undervisningen. Samtidig finner studien at elevene trenger støtte fra læreren i form av forberedte diskusjonsspørsmål for at de skal kunne aktivisere kritisk tenkning om og forståelse for temaene som drøftes.

Abstract

The present master thesis explores how the literature circle method may be integrated in 10th grade EFL teaching to foster the understanding of human rights issues and apartheid in South Africa.

The English subject curriculum has increased focus on intercultural awareness and competence. Bearing this in mind, the thesis proposes the following main research question: *How can literature circles promote student discussion and reflection upon intercultural and social issues in the EFL classroom?* This question is specified by three sub-questions, all related to the reading of the picturebook *The Soccer Fence*: (1) How can literature circles help students develop intercultural awareness by reading and discussing a book on apartheid? (2) How can literature circles promote oral student discussion? (3) How does the picturebook medium serve as a basis for student discussions in literature circles?

A qualitative approach was chosen to obtain the data. The main data sources consisted of transcriptions of discussions of two student groups taking part in a literature circle project, that is small student-led discussion groups sharing reading experiences. Additionally a questionnaire on how the students' experienced the use of literature circles was conducted. Moreover, the data included interviews with two teachers who used this method.

The study finds that the students' intercultural competence is strengthened through literature circles. The students help each other acquire knowledge about the South African society, and they engage in the life experiences of the book's protagonist. The students share their readings, exchange opinions and use relevant vocabulary. Thus the discussion seems to promote their oral competence, and having a picturebook as a basis, their multimodal competence is improved, too. The findings also show that teachers as well as students think that the literature circle method increases motivation and variation when working with human rights and apartheid issues. However, the study also finds that the students need teacher support, like prepared discussion questions, in order activate critical thinking on intercultural issues.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This master thesis explores how the method of literature circles can be used to develop the intercultural competence of lower secondary students using a picturebook as material. A central aim is to examine how the students, organized in literature circle groups, discuss human rights issues related to the picturebook story about how individual lives were affected by the South African segregation policy. In addition, the thesis investigates how students interact during their literature circle discussions, and how they experience and comprehend the picturebook medium. Finally, the thesis investigates the experiences of the teachers who conducted the literature circles.

1.1 Background, relevance and aims of the study

1.1.1 The thesis in the light of the English subject curriculum

The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (TNDET) underscores how cultural understanding is essential to “develop knowledge about, understanding of and respect for the lives and cultures of other people” (2013). Parts of the English subject curriculum set learning goals related to social and cultural issues. *Culture, society and literature* is one of four main subject areas in the curriculum and “focuses on cultural understanding in a broad sense” and “involves working with and discussing expository texts, literary texts and cultural forms of expression [...]” (TNDET, 2013). Thus, this thesis is grounded in the intercultural and literary competences specified in the curriculum.

The Norwegian *Core curriculum – values and principles for primary and secondary education*, emphasizes the school’s role in developing the students’ language identity and helping them become confident language users in order to think, create meaning, communicate, and develop relations to others (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017, p. 7). Another key principle concerns social learning and how students’ identity, attitudes, opinions, and beliefs develop in interaction with others (op.cit., p. 12). Thus, communication and dialogue lay the foundation for learning. This learning perspective can be traced back to

dialogic criticism (Bakhtin 1981, 2005) and to sociocultural learning theories and the ideas of Lev Vygotsky (2012).

The literature circle (LC) method is an educational practice based on the use of language in communication with others, which is in accordance with the aims for oral communication, as described in one of the main subjects in the curriculum. English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is supposed to foster the ability to use “the English language by listening, speaking, conversing and applying suitable communication strategies” (TNDET, 2013). Since the core of LC is communication, this method allows the students to practice and improve their oral skills and communicative competence. Since the LC method is based on a model of literary conversations designed for student-led groups, the model allows for collaborative learning processes where all students are actively involved in the group discussions. Thus, the method encourages the students to practice and develop their oral language competences, as well as their communicative competences through dialogues with others.

In addition, the method allows the student to reflect upon a literary work, in this case a picturebook, and connects reading and speaking skills. This is a working mode that meets the competence aim described as the ability to “elaborate on different types of English literature from English-speaking countries” (TNDET, 2013). The storybook on South African apartheid, was chosen in order to develop the student’s knowledge about and understanding of human rights and racial issues.

The *Core curriculum* states that the school shall facilitate learning in three interdisciplinary topics: public health and well being, sustainable development and democracy and citizenship (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017, p. 15). The topic of democracy and citizenship involves stimulating the students to become active citizens, in this case, providing them with an understanding of human rights and opportunities to find solutions to challenges and dilemmas through knowledge and collaboration. Furthermore, the *Proposal for renewal and improvement of school subjects* highlights citizenship and the role of English as a subject in preventing prejudice, and in developing tolerance and active citizens in our global society (TNDET, 2019).

The literature circle conversations in the student groups participating in my research project, were incorporated in a wider teaching unit, spanning a four-week period. The aim of the unit as a whole was to discuss human right issues, and violations of these basic rights, in a historical perspective. Within this frame, two topics received particular emphasis: the

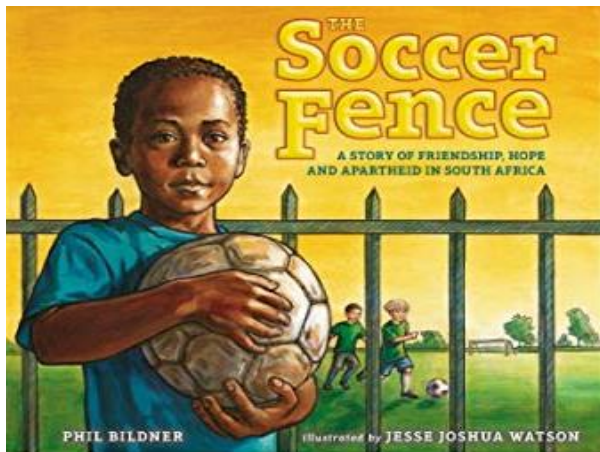
segregation policies once enforced by the laws of the USA and South Africa. The themes relate to the EFL competence aims concerning the ability to “discuss and elaborate on the way people live and how they socialise in Great Britain, USA and other English-speaking countries” and to explain features of history and geography in these countries (TNDET, 2013). The theme of South African apartheid focused on in the literature circle conversations relates to geographic and historical perspectives, as well as human rights issues.

1.1.2 Reading literature in a classroom setting

Laila Aase highlights the school’s role in facilitating shared reading situations in which the reading takes place within a hermeneutic community, and where the classroom is an arena for various interpretations and understandings (2005, p. 107). She goes on to stress that through reading books in the classroom, learners can develop understanding, and thus expand their minds. According to Pamela S. Gates and Dianne Hall Mark, readings of literature may promote intercultural understandings by allowing children “to enter worlds not physically open to us” (2006, p. 9). To read about other people’s experiences may engage us emotionally in ways that may change our perception of ourselves and “our sisters and brothers of other backgrounds”, Gates and Mark claim (2006, p. 99). This insight highlights the importance of teachers having a broad knowledge of children’s literature, as well as didactic knowledge related to how to arrange for shared reading experiences.

The background for the present thesis is the idea that using literature circles in the EFL classroom is a way to develop language skills, critical thinking, and cultural knowledge. Many of the topics in the English subject curriculum that the students are expected to engage in, are demanding and complex. It can sometimes be difficult for them to see the relevance of exploring other cultures, history and political systems. In literature circles, students would share reading experiences and discuss literature, making the learning processes more lively and interesting.

As Anne M. Dolan states, children's literature is “a key to unlocking the past and the future” and “allows children to visit unfamiliar places virtually” (Dolan, 2014, p. 48). Moreover, by using a picturebook, the complex content can be explored through both text and pictures, and thus be made more accessible for all students in the class. Dolan argues that this medium provides “an invaluable resource to promote global perspectives and values of justice” (2014, p. 40). This view has motivated my choice of using a picturebook as a source for literature circle discussions about racial segregation.



1.2 The picturebook *The Soccer Fence*

The Soccer Fence by Phil Bildner and Jesse Joshua Watson

The picturebook used as reading material for the literature circles, is entitled *The Soccer Fence. A Story of Friendship, Hope and Apartheid in South Africa* (2014). The book was written by Phil Bildner and illustrated by Jesse Joshua Watson. As the title suggests, the book deals with the South African apartheid system, the election of Nelson Mandela and the changes this led to. The first and most extensive part of the book, consists of a fictive story told from the point of view of Hector, a South African boy living in a Johannesburg township in the period before and after the 1994 election. The last pages of the book include an section with information about South African history. This part presents an overview of the apartheid policy, from the first segregation acts of 1913 until Nelson Mandela's presidency in the mid 1990s. By combining fiction and non-fiction, the book presents the topic of South African apartheid through the lenses of different genres.

The narrative part depicts how children's lives were affected by the segregation of blacks and whites. Through text and pictures, the reader follows Hector during the last years of the apartheid regime and the first years of democracy. He loves soccer and dreams about one day playing on a real pitch like the boys in white areas do. In the second part of the story, Hector experiences that some of his dreams come true. He makes friends with one of the boys he had earlier observed playing soccer on the fenced football ground. Eventually, Hector is

invited to play soccer with his new friend on the same pitch he had previously been excluded from. When South Africa in 1996 hosts the football championship African Cup of Nations, Hector's team, *Bafana Bafana* from the Johannesburg township, win the championship. The story's mentioning of several exact details about this championship is repeated in the book's historic overview, and thus, the events in the story coincide with the facts provided.

The *fence* is a much repeated motif in the book, first introduced in the title and in the front page illustration, and then reiterated several times in words and pictures. In the first part of the story, the motif serves as a symbol for the barriers in a segregated society, while in the last parts, the opening of the fence is a symbol of dreams and friendships across racial barriers. However, the visual fence motif in the endpapers does not show any open gates. In the front endpapers the image depicts a barbed wire fence with wooden poles, while the image at the end depicts a solid fence made out of steel or iron. The former represents the fence around the Johannesburg township, the latter the fence surrounding the football ground in the white area of the town. These images contribute to frame the book's contents, and may serve as a reminder that there are barriers still to be challenged, not only in the South African society, but across nations and societies.

A fundamental feature of the picturebook medium is the equal role of words and images. In picturebook research, the notion of *iconotext*, translated from Swedish 'ikonotext', coined by Kristin Hallberg (1982), is widely used to describe the interdependence between verbal and visual modes. In *The Soccer Fence*, the text and the images contribute equally to the storytelling. For instance, the protagonist, Hector, is characterized by the visual images of his facial expressions, as well as the text's descriptions of his sadness, hopes and dreams; and the text strongly highlights his love for soccer playing, and this is reflected by the images. Similarly, the verbal descriptions of the different living conditions in the township versus the white areas are reinforced and elaborated on by the visual images. Thus, the verbal and visual storytelling support and elaborate on each other reciprocally.

1.3 Thesis and research questions

Due to the increased focus on intercultural awareness in the English subject curriculum, more research in the field is welcomed. This thesis explores how the LC method may prove to foster intercultural competence. In order to investigate this, the following main research question was formulated:

How can literature circles promote student discussion and reflection upon intercultural and social issues in the EFL classroom?

Against this background, the thesis question is made more specific in three sub-questions, all of which relate to the specific reading material, the picturebook *The Soccer Fence*:

1. How can literature circles help students develop intercultural awareness by reading and discussing a book on the issue of apartheid?
2. How can literature circles promote oral student discussion?
3. How does the picturebook medium provide a basis for student discussion in literature circles?

The investigation of the LC method builds mainly upon Harvey Daniels (2002) and his model of literature circles, while the issues related to intercultural competence are largely based on Michael Byram (1997; 2006) and his model of intercultural communication competence. Several studies have developed and discussed the models of Daniels and Byram within an international educational context, and this will be further referred to in chapter 2. However, the aim of the present thesis is to investigate how LC can be used in intercultural education in a Norwegian EFL context, a topic which seems not to be well documented.

Furthermore, the thesis refers to studies addressing intercultural topics in children's literature, in this case a picturebook. As highlighted by Anna Birketveit (2015), there is a need for more research on the use of picturebook in EFL education: "[T]here appears to be very little research conducted on using picture books as reading material in EFL" (p. 5-6). Most of the studies to be found, deal with picturebooks use at lower levels. However, picturebooks have great potential for wider use in the 8th-10th grade EFL classroom. The present study seeks to contribute to the field by investigating how a picturebook functions as a basis for LC in 10th grade.

The main data material in this study consists of audio recordings of students' literature circle discussions. In addition, student questionnaires and two teacher interviews serve as supplementary sources.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is structured into six chapters. A bibliography and appendices are included at the end.

The Introduction presents the context, the background and the relevance of the study along with the research questions. In addition, a brief introduction to research on LC, the primary text, and the theoretical framework is included in this chapter.

Chapter 2 explains the theoretical basis and foundation of the study. This includes theory on LC, previous LC research and reader response theory. The chapter goes on to tackle the notion of intercultural competence, including intercultural education, and theory on the use of picturebooks in teaching intercultural competence.

The third chapter accounts for the choice of method and data collection. The chapter describes the qualitative research design, addresses the questions of validity, reliability and generalizability, and raises ethical considerations. The chapter also includes a chart of the teaching plan used in this project.

Chapter 4 presents the findings and the analysis. The chapter is divided into three main parts based on the three research questions. The findings from each of the research questions are accounted for and analysed separately.

Chapter 5 discusses the theory and findings in the light of the proposed research questions. Like the previous one, this chapter also has a three-fold division, one for each of the research questions.

The final chapter includes closing comments related to the study, and focuses on how literature circles in EFL education can be explored further.

Chapter 2: Theory

2.1 Literature circles within the frame of literature didactics

The use of literature circles in a classroom context relates to questions of literature didactics in a wider sense. In didactic theory, the questions of why, what and how represent fundamental ways of asking, and this is the case also within literature didactics. *Why* should the students read literature? *What* types of literature should they be offered to read? *How* should we teach literature? This chapter will first briefly discuss the questions of why and what, before turning to the question of how to teach literature. There are, of course, a wide range of methods available for the purpose of teaching literature, but in this case the intention is to reflect upon the use of literary conversations as a tool to communicate literary works.

2.1.1 The value of reading literature

Åsmund Hennig (2017) stresses that it is important for students to read literature because literature may help readers to develop their understanding of themselves as well as of other people (p. 11). Through images, descriptions and reflections, literature contributes to reader's comprehension of the world they live in. In addition, literature provides insight into how language functions as a tool to structure thoughts, things, and events. According to John McRae (1994), literature challenges students' imagination, empathy and creativity. McRae distinguishes between representational and referential texts. Referential texts are informational and communicate at mainly one level, whereas literary texts have a representational language and challenge both the reader's feelings and thoughts. Using literary texts in the classroom, therefore, gives the learners text experiences that will engage emotions, as well as cognitive abilities.

The importance of ensuring a rich literary environment for learners is also stressed by Anna Birketveit and Gweno Williams (2013). They highlight that texts for both children and adults can "open up imaginative perspectives, interrogate values and assumptions, and lead to enhanced understanding of global cultures and differences" (Birketveit & Williams, 2013, p. 9). The two authors, who specifically focus on the EFL classroom, highlight the significance of offering a wide array of literary texts to the students. The encounter with a variety of texts

will increase the learners' chance of finding texts which may engage and enthuse them, and eventually turn them into lifelong readers (Birketveit & Williams, 2013, p. 9).

2.1.2 Literature conversations in a teaching context

The acknowledgement of the formative role of reading literature leads to the question of how to teach it. Laila Aase (2005) argues that literary conversations should play an essential role in teaching literature. According to Aase (2005, p. 106), conversations about literature make readers pause and look back at the text, as well as relate to alternative readings of the text than their own. There are several ways of conducting literary conversations in a classroom context, and literature circles represent a model designed for student-led group work.

In general, there exists a need for schools to create a more *challenging, authentic, and collaborative* learning environment for the students. The LC method is a student-centered and collaborative approach to reading literature which takes into account all these approaches. By working in small, structured student groups, learners explore collaboratively a piece of literature to gain an in-depth and enriched understanding of the text. According to Harvey Daniels, the sharing of thoughts about written texts is the core of literature circles (2002, p. 30). The dialogue, including its social aspects, is the foundation of this method. As a promoter of literature circles, Daniels emphasizes how the structure of literature circles “welcome[s], build[s] on, and gradually broaden[s] student’s responses to what they read” (p. 38). By engaging in a peer-discussion on a literary work, the students may expand their minds and “make reading a special part of their interior and exterior lives, forever” (Daniels, 2002, p. x).

Although not an initial goal of literature circles, Daniels points out that literature circles can also prove to be as an engaging format for teaching integrated, thematic units (2002, p. 234). Using literary texts in the classroom will give the learners text experiences that will engage emotions as well as cognitive abilities. This will also make it easier to learn topics related to the book.

Roy Waade and Anke Zondag (2018) argue that oral skills in English should be practiced in a social setting that is similar to the actual world, because our everyday language is aimed at an audience, the listener. This means that we continuously improvise and adjust our language in order to be understood by those who listen to us. These authors have explored how competence in improvisation, as included in music and English education, may create dialogues between the students. Thus, Waade and Zondag highlight the social and realistic aspects of learning. A dialogue is not a manuscript with given lines, but a creative, two-way

form of communication where statements from each participant build upon each other. The emphasis on authentic student dialogue makes literature circles a useful method in the EFL classroom. The student discussions of literary works provide opportunities to practice oral skills in a social setting based on improvised speech.

Daniels (2002, p. 234) argues that literature circles foster skills that are being learned *inductively*. Through participation in literature circles, students learn about “the nature of different genres, about authors’ ways with words, about how characters reveal themselves” (p. 234). Previous research has highlighted several benefits of literature circles both within language learning in general and EFL in particular. In this project, however, the focus is on how LC can promote student discussion on *cultural* and *social* issues in the EFL classroom.

Traditionally, many class discussions are based on questions asked by the teacher and leave little time for students to think about their responses. According to Daniels this approach encourages passivity and fosters the opposite of authentic or critical thinking (2002, p. 212). Daniels argues that literature circles “allow for active participation by everyone at once” and “[t]he small-group format also invites kids’ real questions into the mix and safeguards against teacher domination of all conversations” (p. 235). Thus, Daniels claims that literature circles function as a tool to encourage genuine and authentic discussion among students.

2.1.3 The purpose of role cards in literature circles

The LC method may include various role sheets, designed to offer students a support structure while reading and in the peer-led discussion groups, and thus provide a scaffold for thinking and talking about the text (Daniels, 2002, p. 99). The intention of the role sheets is to create a cognitive purpose for the students while reading, and help them both to focus on and to express their reading experiences.

The various roles are designed and communicated in the form of ‘role cards’. Daniels also applies the terms ‘role sheets’ or ‘reader response sheets’ to describe the principle of designed reader roles. Each student is intended to focus on one specific role while reading the text, and thus, the students are instructed to observe and reflect upon elements specifically related to their role cards. This process is intended to serve as a preparation for the subsequent group discussions.

Daniels proposes four “basic” roles based on reflections real readers do automatically when reading literature (2002, p. 103). The *connector role* involves linking the text to one’s

own life, feelings and experiences, or to events and knowledge from news, books, films etc. The role of the *questioner* includes wondering about, clarifying, analyzing, challenging or critiquing points in the text. The task of the *literary luminary* or *passage master* is to highlight important, memorable or special parts of the text, and to re-read, analyze and share them with the group. The *illustrator's* focus is to give a graphic, nonlinguistic response to the text, and thus, this role functions as a reminder of how skillful reading also requires visualizing. Daniels states that each role embodies a specific kind of thinking that real readers do (2002, p. 99). The different roles ensure that the students interact with the literary text according to the role card instructions. Daniels points out that “the role sheets have both cognitive and social purposes: they help kids read better *and* discuss better” (2002, p. 99). The ultimate purpose of using role sheets is to give the students a gateway into a deeper understanding of the texts read and discussed.

Daniels emphasizes that role sheets should only be used temporarily, until the different cognitive angles implied in the role card design, are internalized by the reader (2002, p. 99). Moreover, he comments that, although the roles are very open-ended, they may make discussions too mechanical and restrict the readers’ responses. Thus, the use of role cards may prove a risk to eventual achievement of the goal of natural, student initiated conversations about literature.

In addition to the “basic” roles, educators can adapt and include optional roles like the *summarizer*, *researcher*, *vocabulary enricher/word wizard*, and *travel tracer/scene setter*, depending on the literary text being read (Daniels, 2002, p. 103). Within intercultural theory, an essential question is how language and culture are linked. The role sheet ‘Word Wizard’ guides the learners to focus on language and vocabulary, so this role includes the potential to strengthen the students’ “awareness of the social and cultural significance of the words and expressions employed” and support their comprehension (Heidari, Ketabi & Zonoobi, 2014).

Since LC offers the students various role cards to support their reading process and their sharing of reading experiences, the students are encouraged to practice engagements with the text through visualizing, connecting, illuminating or questioning certain aspects of the text.

2.2 Theoretical basis for literature circles

2.2.1 Collaborative learning

Literature circles have a social constructivist theoretical framework, in which learning and development of cognition are viewed as a co-construction where social interaction and communication play a fundamental role. Because literature circles are based on collaborative learning and reader response theory, this method seems to be a salient approach to encourage learners to read and to discuss authentic literature about social and cultural issues. Daniels argues that from a theoretical point of view “literature circles are a form of independent reading, structured as collaborative small groups, and guided by reader response principles in light of present comprehension research” (2002, p. 38). This implies that reader response theory, combined with perspectives on collaborative learning, can guide our understanding of how literature circles work in the classroom.

2.2.2 Reader response theory

Reader response theory is an umbrella term for various theories that focus on the process of reading literary texts. Recognition of the reader as a meaning maker, who is interacting with the text, is the central principle of reading response theories. Numerous theories about the reader’s role, the reading process, and how readers respond to the literary text have been developed. Among the most influential theorists associated with reader response theory are Iser (1974), Eco (1981), and Rosenblatt (1994, 1995). A common idea in reader response theories is that the meaning of the text is “created” or “produced” by the individual reader. There exists not one single “correct” interpretation or meaning for all readers (Abrams & Harpham, 2009, p. 299).

However, Umberto Eco points out the distinction between what he calls ‘open’ texts, which requires the reader to actively collaborate in the creation of meaning, and ‘closed’ texts, where the reader’s response is more fixed (Cuddon, 1999, p. 726).

In Wolfgang Iser’s model, a literary text has two poles: the text created by the writer and the reader’s responses to the text (Hennig, 2017, p. 22). These poles create a number of “gaps” which the reader actively and creatively must fill in, in conjunction with the text (Abrams & Harpham, 2009, p. 299). The reader becomes a co-creator of the text with opportunities to interpret the text according to his or her understanding of what is being read.

This makes the experience of reading an “evolving process of anticipatory, frustration, retrospection, reconstruction, and satisfaction” (p. 299). Iser stresses that readers will fill in these gaps in their own ways; the gaps in the text invite the reader’s contributions, and therefore every reading will be different (Hennig, 2017, p. 23).

This thesis emphasizes the reader response theory developed by Louise Rosenblatt. This theory is particularly relevant to the context of education and classroom activities. Rosenblatt (1994, p. 186) emphasizes the importance of viewing the classroom as a social environment. She expands on this by arguing that “collaborative educational methods [...] [have to] include spoken and written interchange among students” (p. 186). Consequently, her theory can be adapted to the LC method, as highlighted by Daniels, who points to Rosenblatt’s argument that the readers’ exploration of the text gives it life, and that meaning is constructed through the reader’s interaction with the text (Daniels, 2002, p. 37). Furthermore, Daniels highlights Rosenblatt’s view that “there is no correct interpretation of a literary work, but multiple interpretations, each of them profoundly dependent on the prior experience brought to the text by each reader” (p. 37).

An essential idea in Rosenblatt’s theory of transactions between readers and texts is her distinction between two kinds of reading, *efferent* and *aesthetic* reading (1994, p. 23). The reader’s focus of attention differs in these two reading-events. In efferent reading, the main focus is on “what will remain as the *residue* after the reading - the information to be acquired, the logical solution to a problem, the actions to be carried out” (p. 23). By contrast, in aesthetic reading, the focus of the reader is on “what happens *during* the actual reading event,” and the attention “is centered directly on what the reader is living through during his relationship with that particular text” (p. 25). Rosenblatt points out that the same text may be read both efferently and aesthetically and that the reader may move between these two counterpoints during the reading.

Gro Ulland and Anne Håland (2014, p. 247) argue that teachers seem to give efferent reading a high priority when working with literature, and go on to suggest that teachers should emphasize the value of aesthetic reading experiences to a larger extent. This statement, which addresses teaching practices in today’s Norwegian classrooms, is in accordance with Rosenblatt’s concern that teaching practices may primarily influence students “to adopt an efferent, fact-accumulating, attitude” (1994, p. 39). Rosenblatt highlights the importance of stimulating aesthetic reading experiences by letting the readers explore how “the words could make them see and hear and feel and think” (1994, p. 40).

2.2.3 Cognitive criticism and formative perspectives on reading experiences

Another reader-oriented approach relates to the field of cognitive criticism. Literature studies within this field focus on why and how interaction and transaction with fiction is possible. Maria Nikolajeva (2014), who has applied cognitive criticism in her research on children's literature, highlights how the act of reading fiction may stimulate cognitive and affective responses to the actual world. These responses in turn can serve to improve one's understanding of the actual world, Nikolajeva argues (2014, p. 8). She holds an optimistic view regarding the formative potentials of reading fiction: "[S]uccessful children's fiction challenges its audience cognitively and affectively, stimulating attention, imagination, memory, inference-making, empathy and all other elements of mental processes" (2014, p. 227). Consequently, she advocates the reading of children's fiction as a means to develop cognitive, emotional and empathic capacities.

Martha Nussbaum's contribution to the field focuses particularly on the formative and ethical implications of reading literature. In her essay "The Narrative Imagination", Nussbaum claims that "[n]arrative art has the power to make us see the lives of the different [...] with involvement and sympathetic understanding" (1997, p. 88). She expands on this by discussing how experiences of the arts, in particular narrative art forms, may encourage respectful attitudes towards others. The aim is to foster 'world citizens', a concept Nussbaum understands as "an acknowledgement of those who are different than ourselves, both in concrete circumstances, and even in thoughts and emotions" (1997, p. 112). Nussbaum's concern includes educational purposes, and thus she highlights the importance of bringing literature into the curriculum. She supports ways of teaching literature that allow the students to involve in, reflect upon and discuss their reading experiences. The works of literature we choose "will inevitably respond to, and further develop, our sense of who we are and might be" (1997, p. 106), and this is "the strongest reason for including such works in the curriculum" (p. 111). According to Nussbaum, teaching literature is a means of cultivating humanity, not by dissemination of canonical or seminal works per se, but by valuing the power of imagination which literature may ignite in our reading experiences.

Daniels proposes that "[a]s a classroom structure, literature circles can welcome, build on, and gradually broaden students' responses to what they read" (2002, p. 38). In accordance with reader response theory, the readers in LC are highly involved in the creation of literary meaning-making, and the individual reader's context and background are essential in the meeting between reader and text. In literature circles, the point is not for all the students to

find one common interpretation of the book, that they can all agree on. On the contrary, the point is to let the students share all their thoughts and ways of reading with each other, and thereby broaden their perspectives and reading experiences.

To sum up: The practice of literature circles is highly concerned with how the readers contribute to the text, and with the dialogues that spring from the reading acts. Thus, the LC approach corresponds with foundational ideas in reader-oriented theories and ideas of collaborative learning.

2.3 Literature circles research

Previous research has explored how literature circles have been used, both in the classroom in general, and in the FL classroom specifically. Research indicates that LCs increase the students' responses to literature. Almasi (1995) found that peer-led discussions promote students' verbalization and "offer opportunity for significantly greater amounts of verbalization in terms of both the quantity and the quality of the discourse (p. 343). She found a higher level of cognitive growth in peer-led discussions of narrative texts than in teacher-led discussions. Similarly, Sweigart (1991) found that exploratory talk in peer-led groups improved comprehension of complex topics (p.469). McCall (2010) points out that "all group members must prepare to participate in the small group discussion and then must contribute to the discussion" (p.153). The current study also emphasizes how literature circles "encourage students to take more of a leadership role in the classroom, expect their active involvement, and challenge them to think more deeply about social studies content within texts" (McCall, 2010, p. 152). Thus, in literature circles students can apply their reading and speaking skills to enhance their understanding of history and culture, thereby promoting intercultural competence.

Other research has focused on aspects of the various benefits of literature circles. Mohamed Elhess and Joy Egbert (2015) describe the multiple benefits of using literature circles to improve students' language learning. They claim that literature circles can help students improve comprehension skills, develop oral proficiency, and reinforce writing skills. In addition, they emphasize that this method increases student participation in a safe classroom environment, and it may enhance responsibility and motivation, expand collaborative discussion, and increase scaffolding opportunities during the learning process (Elhess & Egbert, 2015).

Scholars have also problematized the method of literature circles in the classroom. Amanda Thein, Megan Guise and DeAnn Sloan (2011) highlight the complexity of LCs and argue that the students' assigned roles in literature circles "do not provide sufficient scaffolding for teaching students to engage in critical discussions of multicultural and political texts" (2011, p. 23). Furthermore, the authors claim that increased teacher participation is needed to challenge the students' perspectives when reading multicultural and political texts. They suggest that when teaching such texts, teachers should offer more scaffolding by joining the student-directed literature circles and providing students with discussion tools that "elicit critical rather than personal responses" (Thein et al., p. 23).

Based on the findings of Thein et al., the present study has taken into consideration the issue of scaffolding practices in order to prepare the students for the discussion part of LCs. After the sharing of reading responses according to the role cards, the students were offered a range of teacher prepared questions about the book, targeted to challenge the students' perspectives about apartheid.

2.4 Adapted version of literature circles

According to Daniels (2002, p. 36), one goal of literature circles is for the readers to have a "clear and deep understanding of a book" (p. 36). The aim for the present project, is not only to have the students understand the chosen book itself, but also to give the students a deeper understanding of the topic and values central to the book in order to develop intercultural competences. Therefore, this project goes beyond the initial goal of literature circles when it seeks to use a picturebook about apartheid and human rights with the goal of teaching students intercultural competence and to promote oral communication skills in English as a foreign language.

One reason for using literature circles in an educational setting, is to build reading fluency and spark the joy of reading by letting the students choose their own books (Daniels, 2002, p. 233). According to Daniels, practices in authentic and mature literature circles include eleven key ingredients (2002, p.18), among them *students choosing their own material* and the opportunity for different groups to read *various books*. However, he also mentions that some of these key features may be intentionally left out, either at the beginning of the LC learning process, or when using LC to teach mandated curriculum. The present project focuses on students' discussions of cultural and social issues. Thus, an adapted version of literature circles has been developed. This project emphasizes the *theme* of a teacher-

selected picturebook, rather than the students' choice of literature. Since the whole class explores the same book, the students will have a collective foundation for further conversation about the topic. Moreover, because the class has little or no previous experience with LC, the fact that everyone reads the same book will help them navigate in this new process.

Furthermore, this project is tailored to fit a limited time span. Daniels points out that literature circles practices are long-term processes which, over time, will solidify the "students' grounding in the culture of books" (2002, p. 89). However, as the aim of this project is to explore how the careful selection of material, the organization of mini-lessons and the sharing of reading experiences in class before and after group literary conversations, can make literature circles a powerful meeting with literature.

2.5 Intercultural competence

In our globalized society, where cross-cultural interaction is constantly expanding, intercultural understanding is a crucial competence. Intercultural competence (IC) is the ability to communicate and interact effectively and attentively across cultures. Hild Elisabeth Hoff (2016) emphasizes that interculturality involves the "ability to look beyond actions and words, to reflect upon the effects of subject positions and to analyse cultural assumptions from different vantage points in order to bring about new, imaginative understandings" (p. 52).

2.5.1 Byram's model of intercultural competence

Byram, a leading researcher in the field of intercultural competence, has developed a framework to describe a variety of components in what he calls *intercultural communicative competence* (ICC) (Byram, 1997).). Byram's highly influential model of ICC has been especially prominent in foreign language education since the 1980s (Hoff, 2016, p. 56). The model identifies five different qualities of a competent intercultural speaker: a) knowledge of self and others (*savoirs*), b) attitudes, expressed through curiosity and openness to other cultures and the valuing of otherness (*savoir être*), c) skills in interpreting and relating (*savoir comprendre*), d) skills of discovering, in acquiring knowledge about and interacting with people from other cultures (*savoir apprendre/faire*), e) critical cultural awareness with the ability to critically analyse one's own and other cultures (*savoir s'engager*) (Byram, 1997, p. 34).

Since Byram’s model is specifically designed for the foreign language classroom, it is highly useful for educators; it breaks down the complex concept of intercultural communicative competence into detailed descriptions of aspects of learning (Heidari, Ketabi & Zonoobi, 2014). Theoretical frameworks that highlight the interrelationship of language and culture, like the ICC model, may motivate educators to give communicative strategies a higher priority in practices of teaching and learning language. In this perspective, Byram’s five components, or *savoirs*, guide us to view language learning as a communicative, interactive and meaningful practice.

Byram states that he has proposed his model of intercultural communicative competence on a number of occasions (2006, p. 116). The five components as described above is consistent, but the graphic representation of the model varies somewhat. The figure below is retrieved from Byram’s article “Developing a Concept of Intercultural Citizenship” (2006).

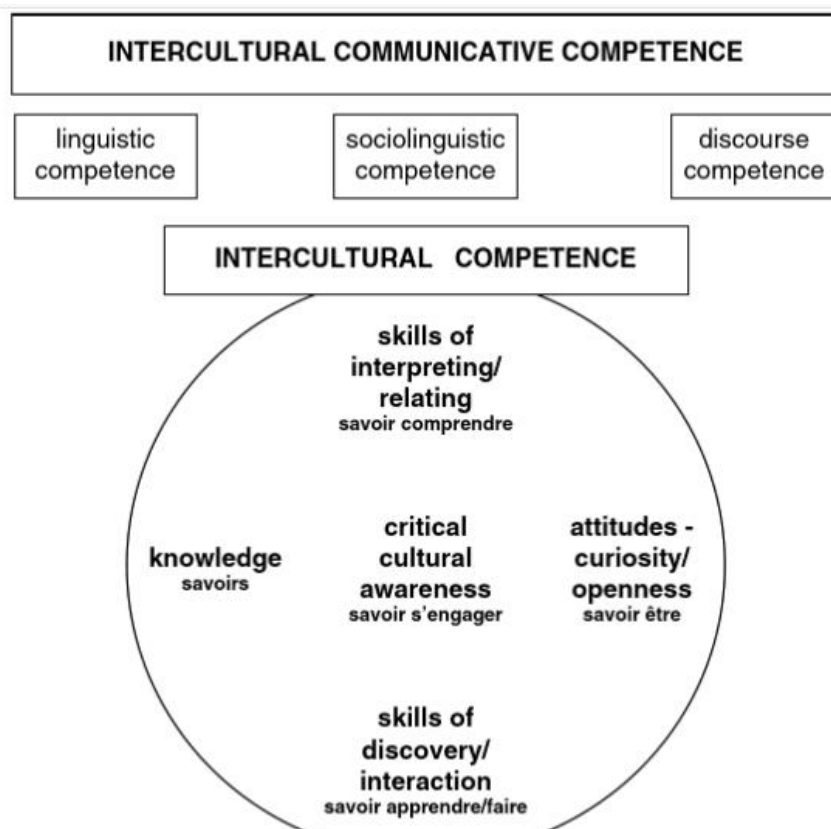


Figure 1. Byram’s model: The components of intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 2006, p. 118).

The model integrates foreign language teaching and intercultural competence, proposing “an integration of linguistic/communicative objectives with intercultural competence objectives“ (Byram, 2006, p. 117). In his article Byram considers how the aims and objectives of teaching intercultural communicative competence can be combined with education for democratic and intercultural citizenship in FL teaching (2006, p. 109). The English subject curriculum also highlights this: “Development of communicative language skills and cultural insight can promote greater interaction, understanding and respect between persons with different cultural backgrounds. Thus, language and cultural competence promote the general education perspective and strengthen democratic involvement and co-citizenship” (NDET, 2013).

The concept of democratic citizenship stressed by Byram (2006), as well as the documents of The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (NDET, 2013), have parallels with Nussbaum’s concept of “world citizenship”. Nussbaum argues that since literature has the “ability to represent the specific circumstances and problems of people of many different sorts”, it is highly beneficial to include literature in the “curriculum for world citizenship” (1997, p. 86). Her statements are thus highly relevant to the topic of intercultural competences involved in EFL education.

In Byram’s model there is an interdependent relationship among the five *savoirs*: “the evidence provided from a learner’s work on a text or interaction with a person would be attributable to more than one *savoir* or competence” (1997, p. 105). Though all the components in the model are viewed as important skills in the process of developing intercultural competence, Byram connects the competence of critical cultural awareness (*savoir s’engager*) specifically to educational purposes (1997, p. 34). He defines this concept as “an ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria perspectives, practices and products in one’s own and other cultures and countries” (1997, p. 53). In his article from 2006, Byram adds that this competence includes “the ability to decenter from one’s own culture and its practices and products and to gain insight into another” (2006, p. 117). Moreover, he claims that critical cultural awareness is important as an educational objective “where the teacher of language and culture takes responsibility for the education of pupils and not just the development of their communication skills” (p.117).

Byram (1997, p. 47) clearly relates intercultural competence to communication skills. This is made evident by including *linguistic*, *sociolinguistic* and *discourse* competences in the model. He defines linguistic competence as the ability to produce and interpret spoken and

written language, sociolinguistic competence as the awareness of how choices of language forms is determined by the context of the dialogue as well as negotiations of meaning with the interlocutors, and discourse competence as the ability to use, discover and negotiate strategies for the production and interpretation of texts (Byram 1997, p. 48).

In the present thesis, Byram's model of intercultural communicative competence is applied to investigate how the students practiced and developed intercultural competences as well as language and communication skills while reading and discussing the picturebook *The Soccer Fence*. The students' linguistic competence is explored by examining their use of vocabulary relevant to the theme; their sociolinguistic competence by analyzing how they communicate with each other in the group dialogues, and their discourse competence in terms of their strategies to explore, interpret and discuss the theme of South African apartheid as described in *The Soccer Fence*. Moreover, Byram's five components of intercultural competence are used to examine how and to what extent the students expressed and gained intercultural competences during the literature circle process. Aspects of the students' communicative and intercultural skills will be further discussed in chapters 4 and 5.

2.5.2 Intercultural education in EFL teaching

Because the aim for language teaching is to give the students tools for efficient communication with people from different and diverse cultural backgrounds, the role and development of intercultural competence has become a highly relevant topic in EFL teaching in the past 20 years (Gómez, 2012). Anne M. Dolan argues that "intercultural education is essential for all children in equipping them to live in a diverse, globalized society" (2014, p. 27). Luis Fernando Gómez (2012) highlights the significance of intercultural competence in the teaching of English as a foreign language, and argues that "the main goal of second language learning should not only be effective communication, but the search for the understanding of cultural boundaries and the attempt to come to terms with those boundaries" (p. 50). In this intercultural communicative world, today's students need to develop both advanced language skills and the ability to appreciate other cultures (Heidari, Ketabi and Zonoobi, 2014).

Sissil Heggernes (2017) emphasises that culture and communication are natural topics in EFL classrooms and argues that IC should be included in the new core elements in the forthcoming Norwegian English subject curriculum. Heggernes views intercultural competence as a part of the students' *Bildung*. Rooted in "Formålsparagrafen", the Norwegian

Knowledge Department (2017) also emphasizes that education should open doors to the world, promote the value of culture, identity and diversity, develop critical thinking and ethical consciousness (p. 4). Heggernes argues that IC should be an important topic in language courses (2017, p. 88).

Hoff (2017) claims that due to the increased focus on standardization and testability in education, the use of literature in the EFL classroom may focus primarily on promotion of reading skills, at the expense of aesthetic and analytical approaches to literary texts. As a consequence, Hoff states, “personal involvement and critical thinking that intercultural learning requires” may be left out (2017, p. 1). Based on research within the field of EFL didactics, Hoff stresses the value of integrating “language, culture and literature in language education” (2017, p. 1).

Hoff’s view supports the choice of using LC when teaching social and cultural issues in the EFL classroom. As explained in chapter 2.2.2, the LC method is anchored in reader response theories, not the least in Rosenblatt’s idea of reading as a transactional process between the text and the reader (1994, p. ix). When Hoff argues that encounters with texts should include both personal involvement and critical thinking, this seems to correspond well with Rosenblatt’s transactional reader response theory, and thus, with vital premises for the LC method.

In another article, Hoff (2016) reflects upon how literary texts may promote intercultural awareness by offering an opportunity to practice “multifaceted analysis of intercultural communication” (2016, p. 54). Interpretations of texts open up a “reflection and critical distance” for the reader, a process which allows the reader to experience “phases of conflict, misunderstanding and ambiguity” (p. 54). She argues that incorporating literature in intercultural education, promotes “learners’ ability to handle conflict and ambiguity in a constructive and creative manner” (p. 57) and stimulate their “disposition to see the world not in black or white but, in multiple, subtle nuances” (p. 58). These aspects are also highlighted by Janice Bland (2016), another EFL researcher involved with intercultural competences. She points out that “[N]arratives are an important pedagogic medium, they metonymically represent cultures of the language learner's own world or cultures unfamiliar to the learner” (Bland, 2016, p. 44).

Hoff (2016; 2017) and Bland’s (2016) reflections on how intercultural awareness may be fostered through the process of interpreting literary texts, are relevant to the practice of LC. The specific structure of literature circles; reading the text, preparing a written text response,

and sharing and discussing thoughts about the text with others, gives the students several opportunities to revisit the text, analyse, reflect and create meaning. This includes the opportunity to observe and discuss how the text describes experiences of people in other societies and culture than their own.

Another issue widely discussed in studies concerning intercultural competence in EFL education, deals with the choice of text material. Gómez (2012) argues that teachers should focus on using authentic materials in the EFL classroom as a tool to promote learner's intercultural competence. He claims that the selection of texts included in the textbooks used in EFL teaching is often limited when it comes to genre variation and diversity of cultural information (2012, p. 50). He argues that the use of textbooks with a limited range of genres, tends to support the development of the four language skills, rather than qualities of intercultural competence. He suggests, therefore, a shift to include a broad range of authentic text material, which would likely benefit the students in developing both language knowledge and cultural awareness (Gómez, 2012, p. 50). Against this background, the choice of *The Soccer Fence* as a basis for the LC in this project, is aligned with Gómez' reasoning about the benefits of employing authentic text material when teaching social and cultural issues to EFL learners.

Daniels discusses the importance of the quality of the books to be used in literature circles (2002, p. 94). To engage, motivate and lay the foundations for lively student discussion, the chosen literature needs to include some sort of character development, conflict, risks, growth or values. Dolan emphasizes that it is important for teachers to critically review and assess books based on their educational goals (2014, p. 40). Bland argues that both the language and ideological perspective must be taken into consideration when choosing suitable literature materials for English language education (2016, p. 42). The teacher must consider both what language is represented and how the literary work represents the world. In addition, the reading level of the students must be considered (Daniels 2002, p. 95).

Dolan emphasizes how multicultural literature should be incorporated into the curriculum to develop understanding and empathy in the classroom (2014, p. 45). She argues that multicultural literature, especially picturebooks, can be used as “a tool to focus on social equity, justice, prejudice, praxis and the development of an understanding of the experience of oppressed groups” (2014, p. 45).

These viewpoints are relevant to the LC conversations investigated in this thesis, which is guided by the theoretical framework of intercultural competence. The use of a literary text, like *The Soccer Fence*, which deals with complex intercultural and social issues, encourages the FL learners to be actively and collaboratively engaged in the interpretation process.

2.6 The use of a picturebook in teaching intercultural competence

As defined by Maria Nikolajeva and Carole Scott (2001), picturebooks are literary texts in which verbal and visual representations are interdependent; in other words, characterized by “the complete parity of word and image” (p 5). To highlight the interdependence, the authors adopt the spelling ‘picturebook’ in order “to distinguish it from picture books, or books with pictures” (2001, p. 8). The one-word spelling has been widely accepted within the field of picturebook research, and this practise has been adopted in the present thesis, except for quotations from studies using the traditional two-words spelling (‘picture book’).

In recent research, the picturebook is viewed as a *medium*, not a genre or a format. One reason is the understanding of the picturebook as an *intermedial* work of art, which combines the modes of text and images (Christensen, 2014, 6). Moreover, the picturebook is increasingly understood as a border crossing medium, appearing on digital platforms, as well as in the traditional book medium (p. 6). As a consequence, there are many interconnections between picturebook studies and media studies. For these reasons the term ‘picturebook medium’ is employed in this thesis.

Dolan highlights how visual literacy is increasingly important in our visual world. She claims that “skills of looking, appreciating and interpreting visual design” determine our ability to comprehend and read images in a meaningful way (2014, p. 16). Children need to practice these skills, Dolan states, and she advocates that picturebooks provide a valuable source for this practice (p.16). This is also emphasized by Birketveit (2013), who points out that picturebooks are “an undiscovered treasure trove in EFL”, and that these books “open the door to multiple constructions of meaning, and engage and challenge readers across the boundaries of age and reading skills” (p. 17). These statements indicate that picturebooks may serve as a beneficial tool to differentiate reading processes for learners of various skills and ages.

The decisions teachers make when reading a book with their students, influences the students’ interaction with the book. According to Dolan, teachers often emphasize the written

word of a text rather than focusing the learners' attention on illustrations, and consequently the students miss out on valuable visual literacy practice (2014, p.16). To remedy this, she urges for teachers to be more aware of how words and illustrations cooperate to "create potentially powerful images of human beings and places," and "to interrogate these images in a manner that promotes enquiry-based learning and develops skills of critical visual literacy" (p. 16). In the present project, the use of role sheets, in order to focus the students' attention on the interplay between the text and images, is in accordance with Dolan's literacy perspectives and her highlighting of the need to practice and apply visual, as well as verbal, literacy skills.

In addition to discussing picturebooks in the perspective of literacy skills, Dolan states that picturebooks also have a valuable place in intercultural education (2014, p. 17). She claims that, by demonstrating meaningful concepts and representations of the world, a picturebook can help foster learners' intercultural ability and skills. Arguing that intercultural education is rooted in literacy education, which includes the skills of reading, writing, talking and listening, Dolan pinpoints how picturebooks may act as a point of departure to practise a multitude of literacy skills, including the search for intercultural insights (2014, p. 23). This point may be relevant to the literature circles to be investigated in this thesis, a practice which includes precisely the skills of reading, writing, talking and listening, while observing and discussing words and images in the actual picturebook.

Dolan supplements her literacy perspectives with aesthetic perspectives, highlighting the importance of guiding students into the aesthetics of picturebooks (2014, p. 23). This experience, she claims, is also primary for the reading of multicultural literature (p. 24). Though Dolan herself does not expand her discussion with references to reader response theory, her arguments may well be aligned with Rosenblatt (1994) and her ideas about the values of aesthetic experiences, and not the least with Nussbaum (1997) and her ideas about the formative role encounters with literature may have.

Chapter 3: Method

3.1 Introduction

As outlined in chapter 1, the present study intends to investigate how a selection of 10th-grade students participate in and reflect upon their experiences with literature circles, based on reading a picturebook about South African apartheid history. During a four-week period, the students studied the topic of human rights, focusing on the American segregation policy and South African apartheid history from a historical perspective. During the end of the period, the students were engaged in literature circles using two picturebooks targeting the topic: *Rosa* (on US segregation) and *The Soccer Fence* (on South African apartheid). Only the reading and the discussion of *The Soccer Fence* is examined in this study.

3.2 Choice of method

Research methods, are divided into two basic approaches: *qualitative methods* and *quantitative methods*. Qualitative methods include a large number of informants, emphasize objectivity, systematization, and control, and the aim is to express results in terms of variables and quantitative sizes (Befring, 2004, p. 69). Qualitative methods include fewer informants, value opinions and intentions, and focus on general impressions (Befring, 2004, p. 69). However, the two approaches are not diametrically oppositional and one can find elements of both within the same research project. Mackey and Gass stress that the choice of research methods are closely tied to the theories the project is based on, and that the research methods are not devoid of context (2012, p. 1). Research methodology in EFL studies is continuously evolving and building on methods and tools from different fields, including education, linguistics, psychology and sociology (Mackey & Gass, 2012, p. 1).

One can distinguish between qualitative and quantitative methods related to the “objectives of the research and the characteristics of the data” (Befring, p. 75). Qualitative approaches explore how the informants understand themselves, their intentions, attitudes and opinions and are useful in order to achieve insight into “people’s emotional life, in their sorrows, worries, happiness, hopes and beliefs” (Befring, 2004, p. 76). For example, by examining what EFL students may say, write or show, it is possible to acquire knowledge about their motives and their personal experiences. Edvard Befring points out that by having

insight into *people's intentions*, one can gain a better understanding of the learning process and people's behavior (Befring, 2004, p. 76). Since the approach chosen in this study is intended to provide the most insight into the topic in question for each case, the qualitative findings may be difficult to verify. Because qualitative research is characterized by “words and free forms of expression rather than numerical data” (Befring, 2004, p. 75), the method demands a high degree of personal integrity on the part of the researcher (Befring, 2002, p. 29).

Duff claims that the strength of qualitative research lies in “its ability to exemplify larger processes or situations in a very accessible, concrete, immediate, and personal manner” (2012, p. 96). She elaborates on this point, adding that case study research “seeks depth rather than breadth in its scope and analysis” and aims to particularize rather than universalize in order to “yield insight of potentially wider relevance and theoretical significance” (p. 96). Postholm and Jacobsen also recognize the importance of contextualizing empirical evidence (2018, p. 104).

As shown in 3.2.1, data for the present study was collected from three sources: audio recordings, questionnaire and interviews. Although the questionnaire has elements of quantitative surveys, this study has a mainly qualitative approach. Befring emphasizes that it is essential to gain insight into “people's self-awareness and personal intentions, the ways they perceive themselves, their experiences and social circumstances” in order to understand their behavior and actions (2004, p. 75). Qualitative research methods can be a way to gain this understanding.

3.2.1 Data triangulation

By collecting data from different sources and gathering information from multiple perspectives, the aim was to obtain a *thick description* of the phenomenon in question (Friedman, 2012, p. 184). Through *method triangulation*, in which multiple sources of data are used in the analysis, the validation of data is facilitated and the validity of the study strengthened. By combining several data collection methods, the researcher can elicit information from different perspectives in order to acquire a fuller picture of the particular context of a given study. Because no single method will answer all research questions, it is useful to be aware that the limitations in one data collection method can be compensated for by the strength of a complementary method (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 133).

Daniels also underscores the importance of considering learning events from several, different angles. He suggests that one should “use *multiple measures*, examining students’ learning growth from several different perspectives” in relation to the use of literature circles (2002, p. 188). Although Daniels mainly considers triangulating assessments from a practical in-classroom perspective, where it provides the teacher a “thick” picture of children’s learning (p. 188), the aim is, similarly to the present study, to obtain the most accurate information possible about what happens in the classroom.

The methods of data collection used in this project are a) audio recordings of students’ contributions in the literature circles, b) a questionnaire in which students self-assessed their experience, and c) a semi-structured interview with two teachers who implemented LC in their classes. The audio recordings are the main source of data, and this data material is strengthened or challenged by the questionnaire responses and interviews. The transcriptions of the audio recordings of the student discussions, were examined applying a thematic analysis.

3.2.2 Action research

The present study has both theoretical and practical aims. In addition to providing further insight into and knowledge of the use of literature circles in the EFL classroom, the project suggests a practical change with regard to teaching methods of intercultural competence and student’s oral engagement. Consequently, this study has elements of what is called “action cum research”, “practitioner research”, or simply “action research”. In action research, the researcher does not limit the project to surveying and analyzing the topic in questions, she also aims to introduce new impulses, intervene and possibly provoke a change in the ongoing social processes (Befring, 2004, p. 87). Since this type of research is often practically motivated, teachers who conduct action research typically aim to explore specific issues within their own classroom context (Loewen & Philp, 2012, p. 63). In this project, the aim was to develop the students’ intercultural competence and promote oral skills in an EFL context.

Action research has clear parallels to experimental approaches (Befring, 2002, p. 48). The researcher plays an active role, stepping outside the neutral spectator’s position, and actively trying to influence the field in question. In addition, action research is provident, and thus prospective rather than retrospective, as it aims to introduce future change in behavior, systems or processes. Befring states that action research potentially “represents a strategic

resource for building bridges between theory and practice, between knowledge and action” (2004, p. 87). The objective of this study is to combine theoretical knowledge and classroom insight and thus create new impulses regarding teaching intercultural competence in the EFL classroom.

Loewen and Philp stress that action research has its strengths in its practical outcomes (2012, p. 64). Because the research is motivated by and seeks to solve identified issues in the classroom, it is in itself situation-specific, and may help to solve the contextualized problem in question. Through gaining new perspectives, understandings, and ideas, teachers acquire input for further planning and implementation of new actions in the classroom. Another benefit from action research is its potential to promote professional development within the school or team through stimulating reflective teaching (Loewen & Philp, 2012, p. 63). It is important to note that action research also has its limitations. Because the research is context-specific, the findings may be limited when it comes to generalizability, and therefore contributions to the field (Loewen & Philp, 2012, p. 64).

Loewen and Philp refer to a four-step loop when doing action research, including a phase of *exploration* and planning, followed by an action stage of practical *intervention* in the teaching/learning process, then an *observation* phase with the teacher documenting the action and its effects, and finally a stage of *reflection* (2012, p. 63).

Employing this four-step process, the first step in the present project was to identify the challenges of teaching intercultural competence and promoting oral discussion in the EFL classroom. The idea was to approach the topic by developing a learning design that used the method of literature circles based on a picturebook which involves intercultural features. In the practical intervention step, the action stage, the literature circles were designed by the researcher and implemented by the students’ English teacher. In the third step, the English teacher did not engage in documenting the action and its effects. The documentation was gathered by the researcher using the three sets of data described above. The last stage, reflection, involved analyzing the data material, and discussing the implementation and problems that occurred.

3.3 Sample

The target group of this study was lower-secondary students studying the history of human rights in an EFL context. The selection of participating students was based on accessibility

and proximity to the researcher, and the cohort was a case of what is called *convenience sampling* (Befring, 2004, p. 135).

Convenience sampling is often based on practical and financial considerations, as it is the in this study. The sample consists of 21 10th-grade students from an English class in a Bergen lower secondary school. These students were learning about the topic of human rights, segregation and apartheid. The sample did not target participants with similar linguistic skills, or other specific skills or characteristics. Nor did it consider the gender breakdown. Consequently, the participants were diverse in terms of gender, ethnicity and academic skills. The diversity of the cohort is thus in accordance with Daniels' view on group composition in literature circles. Daniels argues that heterogeneous groups are important for the success of literature circles and that "effective reading discussion groups tend to see diversity as an asset" because they then will "have a range of responses, ideas, and connections in the group" (2002, p. 37). The students' various backgrounds, levels of English and gender in this cohort thus strengthened the literature circles and allowed for different viewpoints from multiple perspectives in the group discussion.

3.4 Teaching plan

As explained earlier, the present study is based on data material derived from one section of a four-week's teaching unit about human rights issues. The aim of the unit as a whole was to teach students about human rights issues in a historical perspective, based on examples of segregation policies in the USA and South Africa. In this learning context, all the students would be reading two picturebooks. The first one, *Rosa* (2007) by Nikki Giovanni and Bryan Collier, tells a story about Rosa Parks and the US segregation policy in the 1950s, while the second one, *The Soccer Fence* (2014) by Bildner and Watson, deals with South African apartheid. Through the design of the literature circles, the lessons aimed to foster intercultural competence and oral activity among the students. Moreover, the literature circle sessions were intended to spark the students' joy of reading.

As mentioned, this thesis explores the experiences of student-led literature circle conversations about the *The Soccer Fence*. This part of the teaching unit was conducted in week 4 (see table 1). Table 1 outlines the time frame, each lesson on the topic, and the organization model of the project.

Time	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5
Topic of lesson	Introduction to human rights, segregation and apartheid	Segregation in the USA LC-introduction	Apartheid in South Africa	Apartheid LC on <i>The Soccer Fence</i>	
Lesson content	1. Introduction to the topic: Human Rights - a historical perspective on violations of these basic rights 2. Racial segregation in the USA	1. Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks 2. LC introduction and procedural mini lesson on response roles. Individual reading of the book <i>Rosa</i> and LC preparation 3. LC discussion on <i>Rosa</i>	1. Apartheid in South Africa 2. Nelson Mandela	1. Introduction to <i>The Soccer Fence</i> Class-reading of the book. Independent written reading response based on role cards. LC discussion in groups 2. Student questionnaire on LC	
Model of organizing	Researcher not present	Preparatory LC-task on <i>Rosa</i> . Researcher present	Researcher not present	LC with audio recordings Student questionnaire Researcher present	Teacher interviews Researcher present

Table 1. Project organization

The targeted topic, including human rights, segregation and apartheid, was taught over the span of 4 weeks with a total of 9 60-minute lessons. The researcher outlined the topic and the time schedule, while the class' English teacher would develop the content of each lesson, choosing teaching resources and would teach each every lesson throughout the period. The students used several sources, including textbooks, online resources, pictures, and various video clips. The researcher decided which historical characters the lessons should focus on, and selected the specific reading material for the literature circles. The researcher was present in class during the two literature circles sessions and when the students completed the questionnaire.

Neither the English teacher nor the class had any previous experience with literature circles, therefore the reading of the book *Rosa* was included as a preparatory task for the *The Soccer Fence* LC. The literature circles on *Rosa* were not recorded and were carried out so the students would be comfortable and familiar with the LC method. This book narrates the story of the important historical figure, Rosa Parks, who, in the 1950s during the American Civil

Rights Movement, pushed for change. The student readings and discussions were included in the project as part of the students' exploration of the topic of US segregation.

Regarding both of the books, the literature circles were designed to be a one-sitting read. The teacher would introduce the book and read it out loud to the class while each student followed in his or her own copy. Afterwards, the students did an individual reading of the book based on the role card provided, and completed their reading response sheets before they were grouped together to discuss the book.

In the case of *The Soccer Fence*, the student-led LC discussion consisted of two parts. In part one, the students shared the reading responses they had written based on their role cards (see Appendix 4). In part two, the students used teacher-prepared questions about the book (Appendix 5) as a framework for the group discussion. These questions required that the students find and discuss specific parts of the book, compare differences and similarities, comment on symbols, and extract information and reflect on the issue using the illustrations and text in the book. As this project focused on how intercultural competence can be fostered through students' oral communication in literature circles, the group size was limited to compel "each member to be an active participant and imbues each member with responsibility and investment" (Chase & Pfeifer, n.d., p. 1). Thus, each literature circle was composed of 4-5 students.

3.4.1 The method of role cards

According to Daniels (2002), the use of specific role cards serves to support the students' engagement in the actual text to be discussed. The set of roles used in the present project is based on Daniels' descriptions of role sheets (see 2.1.3). However, in the present project the roles were further developed. The following five roles were used: *the connector*, *the character explorer*, *the scene setter*, *the word wizard* and *the text and image explorer*. The *connector role* encouraged the students to relate the book to experiences from their own lives or the world around them, like information from the news, historic events, films, tv-series, books, etc. *The character explorer* pinpointed the main character in the story, and *the scene setter* focused on the environments described in the story. *The word wizard* looked for words with a special meaning, words that were puzzling, unfamiliar, repeated a lot, or keys to the meaning of the text. This role was specifically included in this project to help the students enhance their vocabulary on the topic of human rights and apartheid history. *The text and image explorer* challenged the students to respond to the visual as well as the verbal features of the

text. This role was particularly designed to support the awareness of the interplay between words and images in the picturebook, which is important to understanding the book. In Daniels' descriptions of role sheets, he does not specifically take into account the use of picturebooks. However, since Daniels has introduced a role card labelled *the illustrator*, a role that asks the students to illustrate scenes from the actual text, he thereby seems to value the idea of exploring relationships between words and visual images.

To ensure that all students practice the various "takes" on the text, Daniels stresses that the roles are meant to rotate each session (2002, p. 104). In this project, however, due to the time limitation, the students would participate in one role only. Thus, the audio recordings reflect how the students experienced their particular role on this one occasion.

Because the students in this project have no previous experience with literature circles, and thus have not fully developed strategies to enrich their reading, this project made use of role sheets to support the students' reading of the text. Since the LC project in this case was based on a picturebook, the students' observations and comments involve their experiences with the book's combinations of words and pictures.

3.5 Data collection methods

3.5.1 Audio recording

In order to map the students' oral activity, and particularly in order to study the degree to which they discussed the topic (shared thoughts, opinions, reflections and responded to each other), audio recordings were made of two focus groups participating in the LC. The two groups were chosen randomly. The audio recordings were transcribed and used as data material in the analysis. Audio recording as a method may be beneficial because it provides the opportunity to listen to the discussion of the participants without them feeling the pressure of being observed and is thus less intrusive (Friedman, 2012, p. 187). It also gives the researcher the opportunity to produce a written record of the conversation.

Transcription of audio recordings

The audio recorded data from the LCs were transformed into written text. According to Loewen and Philp, (2012, p. 68), when making decisions concerning transcription, the researcher should take into consideration the fact that transcription is part of the process of data interpretation. The researcher needs to be aware that any transcription will always be an

artificial construct of the oral expression (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, p. 205). Kvale and Brinkmann emphasize the importance of focusings on the *quality* of the transcription and how the interpretation process from the spoken to the written language may create practical and fundamental problems (p. 204). Because the form of the narrative changes in the transformation and translation from oral to written text, aspects of the oral discourse may be lost. A written, transcribed text will lack qualities of the oral language, like intonation, irony, tone of voice, and body language including gestures and attitudes. Video recordings would include most of these aspects. However, the data material included no visual recordings of the LC work, because the research did not focus on the student's nonverbal communication. Moreover, videotaping would raise extensive anonymity challenges. However, the participant observation role of the researcher allowed the taking of field notes to supplement the audio recordings.

Decisions related to transcription are dependent on the aims of the research (Loewen & Philp, 2012, p. 68). Loewen and Philp maintain that it could be beneficial for the researcher to view the transcribing process as a way to become familiar and involved with the material (p. 68). Transcribing the data involves decisions concerning type of transcription, how speech is transcribed, how detailed the transcriptions need to be and if non-verbal features should be included (Friedman, 2012, p. 190). The researcher should take into consideration that choices made in the transcribing process potentially form and influence the analysis. Friedman stresses that transcripts can “never be objective, but must be viewed as a product of multiple subjective decisions” (2012, p. 191).

When transcribing the audio recordings in the present project, it was regarded as sufficient to do a broad transcription which approximates regular orthography, although syntactic errors were not corrected. Also, laughter and other relevant nonverbal exclamations were included in the transcriptions. As the focus of the project was to investigate how the students discuss and interact with the literary material, gestures related to the book, like page turning, were incorporated into the written record. Any student names mentioned by the students in the transcriptions were changed to ensure anonymity.

3.5.2 Questionnaire

In a research project, questionnaires can be used to obtain insight into the participant's attitudes and beliefs. The method assumes that, through self-report, one can describe or measure characteristics or beliefs less likely to be evident from observations. While self-

report may be a limitation of this method, one must rely on the participants' willingness to report honestly and accurately (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 129). Still it is fruitful to investigate how the students express their own thoughts and experiences, and to study the learning process from their perspective. Duff makes the point that the students "play a central role in ascribing meanings to his or her own SLA experiences and to interpreting learning processes and abilities" (2012, p. 96).

In this project, audio recordings and teacher observations imply an outsider or researcher perspective not necessarily shared by the students. Therefore, in order to gain a better understanding of how students perceived working on the human rights topic and participating in group discussions, questionnaires were given to all students in class (Appendix 3). 17 students responded. Due to technical problems and limited time, four students were not able to respond.

The questions that the students were asked focused on how they experienced the use of role sheets, reading responses and oral activity in group discussion. The purpose of the questionnaire was to contextualize the data from the audio recordings and observations of the literature circles. Because this study is considered an action research project, the students were also asked how they felt about using LC in the future. The data material was gathered from 9 sets of open-ended questions, and all students received the same questions. To ensure that language was not a barrier, the students had the option of answering the questions in either English or Norwegian. As the students generally preferred to write digitally, the questionnaire was conducted in a software program and then completed forms were printed out. To ensure the students' anonymity and privacy, their responses were not saved digitally and did not include any names. The use of a software program also ensured that any unreadable handwriting would not cause problems when analyzing the results.

3.5.3 Teacher interview

Miller and Glassner argue that in-depth interviews can provide narrative accounts which give valuable insight into the realities and phenomena underlying research (2011, p. 131). The aim for qualitative research interviews is to understand the social world from the perspective of the person interviewed and elicit the value of their experiences and accounts of the targeted situation (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 21). In-depth interviews, referred to as "a conversation with a purpose", seek to uncover the participants' own views (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 108). One can argue that interviews obviously cannot entirely mirror the

reality of the social world. However, interviews may provide “authentic accounts of subjective experience” (Miller & Glassner, 2011, p. 131), and thus make a valuable contribution to the field of research.

In the present study, the two EFL instructors who had used LC and *The Soccer Fence* for teaching about apartheid in 10th grade, were interviewed. One of the teachers taught the class during the research, the other taught another class at the same level. The aim was to acquire insight into how they experienced LC in their EFL classroom. A semi-structured approach to the interviews was chosen. Through a partly structured conversation, the aim was to explore a few predetermined topics related to the use of LC. This was done to ensure that the participants’ perspectives on the phenomena of interest remained the core of the interview, an underlying assumption fundamental to qualitative research (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 108). The teacher interviews were done separately with each teacher. To ensure a comfortable free-flowing conversation, the interviews were conducted in Norwegian. The teachers were asked about their experiences with LC and how they perceived the students’ oral discussions and reflections related to apartheid. During the conversation, the researcher took notes, which were later translated into English by the researcher. In the findings, the teacher's answers were categorized according to each research question, and are to be found in sections 4.1.3, 4.2.3, and 4.3.2.

3.6 Data analysis

Friedman stresses that in qualitative research, the analysis is not considered an isolated step in the research (2012, p. 191). On the contrary, it starts during the data collection phase and pervades the whole research process. Elements of the analysis include collecting data, reflecting upon how the data relates to the purpose of the research, categorizing the data, processing reflections concerning the analysis, finding patterns and themes in the organized data, and linking prominent themes to concepts and theory (Friedman 2012, p. 191).

In the present study the point of departure for the analysis was the transcribed audio recordings of the students’ oral discussions. The transcribed datasets were studied to identify student vocabulary (words and expressions), and subsequently to organize this in thematic categories based on the research questions (see 4.1.1). A combination of preset and emergent categories was developed, starting with some preset categories and adding others as they became apparent.

Within this framework, the data from the students' oral group discussions and their written questionnaires were subjected to a thematic analysis. A thematic analysis is "a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79).

Moreover, a discourse analysis of the students' oral discussions was carried out. The focal point of discourse analysis is the linguistic or structural features of the data material (Friedman, 2012, p.192). This analysis was carried out in the light of the second research question. It included studies of vocabulary, oral activity, verbal interaction and social cooperation.

The student questionnaires and the teacher interviews were used as supplementary sources, adding and nuancing the audio recording information.

3.7 Validity, reliability and generalization

Addressing questions of *validity*, *reliability* and *generalization* is crucial in research (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 192). Reliability and validity refer to the objectivity and credibility of research (Peräkylä, 2011, p. 366) and generalization to how transferable the results are to other contexts. Postholm and Jacobsen point out that the quality of the research is rooted in how the knowledge is produced (2018, p. 219). Therefore, to evaluate the quality of the research, it is essential that the researcher critically describes how the findings are derived. The researcher needs to reflect on both the validity and the reliability of the research.

3.7.1 Validity

Validity refers to the degree to which the results of a study are valid assumptions about what one intended to research (Befring, 2004, p. 155). A core question is whether the data measure what it is supposed to measure, the topic under investigation. Validity is concerned with how interesting and relevant the data are in light of the given research question.

The issues of validity depend on the qualitative methods chosen and differ according to the type of data collected (Peräkylä, 2011, p. 366). Validity considerations may include the so called "observer's paradox", which suggests that the presence of the researcher might change the behaviour of the participants (Friedman, 2012, p. 187). As an action research project, the present study sought to minimize the influence of the appearance of the

researcher, who took part as an insider observer. Thus, the students were familiar with her presence, of which they seemed to take little notice.

In the project, validity also depended on whether the audio transcript would provide a relevant record of what took place in the student discussions. Moreover, validity is concerned with whether the views expressed by the interviewees reflected their experiences and opinions outside the interview situation, or whether they were an outcome of the interview situation itself. In the questionnaire, validity was contingent on the formulation of the questions and student answers. Nuances in the students' arguments and reasonings may be weakened or not appear at all. It is up for discussion whether other frames or more time would have elicited more comprehensive answers.

3.7.2 Reliability

Questions of reliability relate to the accuracy of what is measured and the way the data is handled, and consequently to what degree one can trust the research results. Reliability concerns the consistency of the research results and whether the findings can be reproduced by other researchers at another time. Qualitative studies may be difficult to replicate because encounters between the researcher, participants and the research field will not be the same (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p. 223-225).

In developing datasets dependent on audio transcriptions, like the one in this study, one should be concerned about the transcribers reliability in the transcription process. As discussed in 3.5.1, any transcription involves an element of interpretation, therefore the reliability of the transcription may be influenced (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, p. 211). Evaluating the conversation transcripts is important. To enhance the reliability of the audio recordings in the present study, significant efforts were made to ensure accuracy and inclusivity. Similarly, the questionnaire and the interviews aimed to avoid leading, ambiguous and equivocal questions, and both the students and the interviewed teachers had the option of choosing between English and Norwegian language when responding.

3.7.3 Generalization

Questions of generalization deal with whether or not the findings have universal validity or may be applied beyond the case studied. Generalizability refers to the degree to which the

results of the study can be transferred or generalized to other contexts (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p. 228).

In order to strengthen the generalizability of the findings of the study, the research process has been made as transparent as possible. As presented in 3.3, convenience sampling was chosen, but the disadvantages of this technique were considered prior to the choice. A convenience sample is not necessarily representative of the population in general, and the results and inferences would apply only to the sample itself (Befring, 2004, p. 136). However, as far as one can tell, the selected students in the present study seemed to be an average of Norwegian lower secondary school cohort. It is therefore reasonable to believe that the findings are relevant beyond the selected sample.

3.8 Ethical concerns

Ethical considerations play an important role in all qualitative research approaches. The knowledge acquired in any research is always a result of the researchers' own understanding of the setting and situation studied (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p. 220). Befring maintains that qualitative approaches are intuitive in form, with room for improvisation and personal choice in the research process, therefore examining the method can be challenging for other researchers (2004, p. 69). As the researcher will never be able to ensure a fully neutral position regarding his or her own subjectivity, it is crucial that the researcher consciously presents the data, analysis and discussion in the context from which the results derive (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p. 220).

3.8.1 The role of the researcher

Postholm and Jacobsen (2018, p. 219-220) emphasize how the quality of research is not solely linked to the results of the study, but rather arises from both the research process and the research result. Therefore, to ensure the quality of a study, the researcher should be conscious about how the knowledge gained is produced, and critically reflect upon the interpretation of the methodology and its validity and reliability. Thus, the researcher should make sure that ethical measures are taken in advance of the project, during the process, and when producing results (2018, p. 246).

Kvale and Brinkmann highlight that the researcher's integrity plays a decisive role for the quality of the research, including the researchers knowledge, experience, sensitivity and

equity (2009, p. 92). The present researcher teaches English at the school in question, and therefore possesses a substantial competence in relation to the learning context, and a possibly conflicting role of researcher/teacher should presumably be minimized.

Kvale and Brinkmann underscore the importance of considering the ethical aspects of conducting interviews throughout the study, from the initial thematizing process and planning, through the actual interview situation, during the transcribing, analyzing and verifying process, and to the finalizing of the report (2009, p. 80).

The ethical perspective also relates to how the researcher will document, consider and present the data. The researcher's goal is to describe the experiences of the interviewed person as objectively as possible, with regard to depth and detail of the persons accounts. This includes representing the interviewed person's view fairly and portraying the interviewee's view consistently with the person's opinions (Miller & Glassner, 2011, p. 133). It is important to ensure that the data from the interview is as accurate and representative to the field of research as possible (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 92). In the present study, informed consent from the participants was obtained, and the interviewed teachers were anonymized for ensuring confidentiality.

3.8.2 Reporting the project

Because this project deals with personal information, the project was reported to the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD) (Appendix 6) prior to project implementation in the classroom. In accordance with the NSD guidelines, consent forms (Appendix 1 and 2) were distributed to all participants, including the student's parents, due to the age level of the students. The consent forms informed them about the project, which was based on voluntary participation with the possibility to withdraw from the project at any time.

3.8.3 Privacy, anonymity and confidentiality

As accounted for earlier in this chapter, several precautions were taken to ensure the participants' privacy, anonymity and confidentiality of the data collected in the present study. Any names mentioned by students or teachers were changed.

3.8.4 Ethical considerations related to action research

As this project recruited participants from the researcher's own workplace, several ethical considerations were taken into account. When recruiting informants to the project, participants may have found it hard to decline the invitation due to the researcher's role as a teacher and colleague at the school. To minimize any possible uncertainty, the students and their parents were informed in a written letter that taking part was voluntary, that they could withdraw their consent at any time during the project, and that the students would be taught the same subject regardless whether they participated or not (Appendix 1). The researcher did not use any personal or academic student data known to her through her role as a teacher at the school. In addition, the researcher only collected information relevant to the purpose of the project. The researcher also instructed the participants that no information regarding third persons should be passed on during the time of the project.

Chapter 4: Findings

The purpose of the thesis is to investigate how literature circles can promote student discussions and reflections on intercultural and social issues in an EFL classroom. This chapter presents the findings of the study, divided into three parts based on the research questions: *How can literature circles help students develop intercultural awareness by reading and discussing a book on the issue of apartheid? How can literature circles promote oral student discussion? How does the picturebook medium serve as a basis for student discussions in literature circles?*

Parts one and two include data from audio recordings, student questionnaires, and teacher interviews. The third part presents data from audio recordings and teacher interviews. This part does not include answers from the student questionnaire because the questionnaire did not focus on the picturebook medium in particular. The purpose of the questionnaire was twofold: to shed light on the students' experiences with the LC method and to investigate their understanding of *The Soccer Fence* as a whole. Consequently, the students were not specifically asked about the visual-verbal qualities of the book. Thus, the findings related to the research question concerning the picturebook medium are based on the audio recorded LC conversations and in teacher interviews.

It is necessary to clarify how the terms *discuss* and oral *discussion* are used in this study. The term *discuss* refers to how the students examine, explore, study, analyse, and consider the topic of apartheid and human rights. The term oral *discussion* includes how the students talk with and respond to each other, debate, exchange views and become involved in a dialogue where they respond to fellow participants statements.

As explained in 3.4, the student-led LC discussions consisted of two parts, one based on the role sheets, and the other on the teacher-prepared questions. In the excerpts from the transcribed student discussions below, the teacher-prepared questions appear in italics in order to indicate that the students are reading these questions out loud. See appendix 7 for the transcriptions of the complete discussions of group 1 and 2.

4.1 Part one: Literature circles and student discussions on apartheid and human rights

4.1.1 Audio recordings

The transcriptions of the audio recordings of the student discussions were examined applying a thematic analysis. The vocabulary used by the students was coded and organized in groups of words. Based on these codes, five themes emerged, resulting in five categories: *the issue of race, the issue of human rights, the issue of apartheid and segregation, the issue of the first black president, and words expressing empathy and emotion.* The identified themes and the corresponding words are listed below in table 2. These categories were used to organize and analyse the findings in relation to the student discussions of apartheid and human rights.

a) The issue of race	b) The issue of human rights	c) The issue of apartheid and segregation	d) The issue of the first black president	e) Words expressing empathy and emotions
racial segregation discriminated non-white racism races multiracial non-blacks difference between colored people and white people	justice liberty equal rights more rights freed, freedom hope and dreams less rights	apartheid divided country separated Johannesburg township fence as symbol of separation regime punishment apartheid was abolished	united elected as the first black president united a divided country vote rights to vote ANC reunites	ignored lonely not included invisible sad happy worried that he can't play pain gratefulness

Table 2. Student vocabulary categorized by issues

When the students participated in the oral discussion, they actively used vocabulary related to the topic of human rights and apartheid. The vocabulary was used by the teacher in the preparations/lessons before the LC, and the words also appeared in the book *The Soccer Fence* itself. Table 2 shows that the vocabulary employed covers a fairly wide range of topics

related to intercultural issues. The expressions in the table were repeated several times by various students.

The correct use of the words in context indicates that the students had learnt and understood the vocabulary as well as gained insight into political, racial and human rights issues in the South African apartheid period. The following analyses of student conversations investigate how the students used their language skills actively to express their understanding of and opinions on the South African apartheid system. These findings correspond with Byram's model for intercultural communicative competence, which "proposes an integration of linguistic/communicative objectives with intercultural competence objectives" (2006, 116).

a) The issue of race

The following excerpts of discussions exemplify how the students address and comment on racial issues. In this context the concept of 'race' refers particularly to the segregation policy in South Africa and to the way *The Soccer Fence* describes the consequences of this policy for people's lives.

The issue of race 1: Choice of words

Group 1

Student E: *What can you say about the main character of this story?*

Student A: I can say something. His name is Hector.

Student E: He is black

Student A: Sounds a bit racist.

Student E: Yeah, but that's true.

Student C: Non-white

Student A: He has dark color of his skin

Student E: He's black

Student A: ...(laughs) thought you said he's fat
(everyone laughs)

Student E: No his B-L-A-C-K

Student B: He is skinny, likes football, wants to join the more privileged kids, the non-blacks.

Student E: He has hopes and dreams to play football with them.

Student B: The blacks...the white guys.

Group 2

Student D: Okay. Multiracial...I discovered...very weird....but yes...but racial is a thing that has more than one race that like in the book they said that at the end I think.

[...]

Student D: But they just completely ignore him [Hector]. And he still does not understand that his...yeah....he is different from them because he is black and they are white.

[...]

Student D: There were more than one race that was controlling the country

In group 1, the students discuss which terms to use when talking about races. They mention the terms “black”, “non-white”, “white”, “non-blacks”, and “dark color of his skin”. Some use the words “multiracial” and “colored kids”. Student A explicitly comments that the word black “sounds a bit racist”. In group 2, student D reflects upon how the main character himself seems not to be aware of how much the color of his skin affects the way the other kids look at him and how this makes it difficult for him to understand why he is treated differently. These comments highlight the students’ experience of the question of race as a sensitive topic and their awareness of how the words they use may have negative connotations. These insights may be attached to Byram’s concept of ‘intercultural citizenship’: “The issues that arise in the social discourse are affected by contemporary and historical nuances and values, and the relationship between language and thought, between language and world view is crucial” (Byram, 2006, p. 111). The discussion on how specific words may imply racial discrimination, thus indicates skills of critical cultural awareness. Moreover, the students’ reflections on value-laden implications of words can be associated with Byram’s term ‘sociolinguistic competence’ (1997, p. 48), in the sense that language relates to social factors, and to his term ‘discourse competence’ (1997, p. 48), in the sense of how conventions of culture are implied in the production and interpretation of language and texts.

Finally, the students’ negotiation regarding the choice of words highlights how the process of reading and discussing literature includes encounters with ambiguity and open-ended questions. As Hoff (2016) points out, incorporating literature in intercultural education may promote “learners’ ability to handle conflict and ambiguity in a constructive and creative manner” (p. 57) and stimulate their “disposition to see the world not in black or white, but in multiple, subtle nuances” (p. 58). In this case, the opportunity the students were given to discuss their reading experiences in LC groups, seems to strengthen their awareness of semantic nuances in words concerning racial issues.

The issue of race 2: Living conditions

Group 2

Student A: When reading this book, what information do we get about values and different life styles of children in South Africa?

Student B: Daniel, do you want to answer that?

Student D: It seem like the white kids are normal, or like not normal in terms of how rich but the black kids seem like they do not have that much money, I don't no, maybe that's way they live in the ...[unclear sound].

Student B: Catherine, do you want to way something?

Student A: It is pretty obvious that the lifestyles are different and you can see that by the clothes they are wearing and where they are playing football and their appearance and....yeah it is obvious that the black kids are poor and the white kids are rich.

[...]

Student D: On the page in front here you can clearly see apartheid because they are poor...

Student E: ...and they're black

Student D: Yeah and they're outside. If they had been white they would have been inside.

Student A: Rich and they have a house

Student D: Tv. And a big house or a mansion

Student A: Yeah, they would have been inside or...

Student D: ..yeah, and not one TV for one, two, three, four, five, six, eight people.

Student A: Like the boys on the orange page they play football and they're happy and all, but the environment is like so much worse. And there's like a crappy fence and muddy and dry and orange and the houses are not the best quality, while on the other side here the boys are still happy and all and they have nice shoes and nice clothes. Everything is green, there is a nice fence, a nice house and they're at a green park, where they could play with a proper football while were the black, who have less rights, probably less money as well. And one of the boys owns a pair of shoes. and they have, like earlier described, like an egg formed ball. It just says a little bit about how they lived like worse life than the white people.

The students reflect frequently upon the differences in living conditions between races in South Africa during apartheid. Student A in group 2 comments on how the obvious difference in lifestyles, clothes, appearance and football show how rich and poor the different races are. Referring to the pictures in the book, the students point out specific things visualized differently for blacks and whites, such as football equipment, living environment, township football field versus proper football field, economy, or the quality of houses and clothes. The students also connect the different living conditions to the unequal rights for white and black people during apartheid.

The issue of race 3: The unique role of sports

Group 1

Student E: On the page I chose there is a lighter setting than in the earlier pages because the picture is of the 1994 African Cup of Nations...or in 1996 it was maybe. Where the white kid and the black kid stood up in their seats with their right fist up in the air. They found a common thing they both liked instead of racism. Ehh...on the pages I chose, the apartheid isn't described as a huge thing because the black kid and the white kid doesn't act like apartheid was anything. I believe the reason for this is that football is the sport that unites the people...or united the people of South Africa. And football was the thing they had in common.

Group 2

Student C: Look at p. 27-28 (yellow background). In what way does this picture illustrate how sports help unite and create hope for people? I feel like it illustrates it like in South Africa can make everything together, black or white, because it is there like countries football team so blacks and whites can celebrate together and their proud of what their country had done together, so that reunites them through that.

[...]

Student D: The picture of the white boy and the black boy raise their fist. This one [sounds of finding a picture]. It shows that a black boy and a white boy can be teammates even though they have different color on their skin. Because they belong to the same nation and flag.

The students here discuss the theme of this book: The unique role that sport can play in bringing people together despite their differences. Student D in group 2 notes that at the end of the book it is made clear that through the football cup both races “belong to the same nation and flag”. Student E in group 1 remarks that the white and black boy “found a common thing they both liked instead of racism” and refers to the picture where the children celebrated South Africa’s first championship soccer trophy. He makes a point of how “football is the sport that unites the people...or united the people of South Africa. And football was the thing they had in common.” Several students comment on this point, and this engagement indicates that they take an interest in the role the multiracial football team played in the wake of democracy in South Africa.

As a whole, the excerpts of student discussions presented in this category highlight the students' awareness of the linguistic and semantic implications the word 'race' and interrelated words may have.

b) The issue of human rights

This category deals with human rights issues in a wider sense than the issue of race. The excerpts in this category imply reflections on the issues of equal rights, the right to vote, and individual and political liberty.

The issue of human rights 1: Equality for all

Group 2

Student D: The teammates are very important because they all have to play on the same team because they are all in a divided country when and then....yeah..in 1996 there were Africa Cup of Nations and then the cup for the country reunited. *Why are they [the word multiracial] important to the topic?* Because all people are equal no matter what....no matter the race or the color of your skin. It doesn't mean that a white person can't be teammate with a black person.

Group 1

Student A: My role is character explorer, and the main characters' name is Hector and he has dark skin and brown eyes and he has a lot of dreams and he likes soccer and it seems like he wants equal rights because he wants to play soccer with the other kids.

Student C: I had the text and image explorer. The first picture shows me how bad they had it but still they manage to be happy over what they have and how they have it. And the second picture showed me that the white kids had it much better than the colored kids and they have more rights than the black ones.

During the discussion, the students reflect upon the essence of human rights and emphasize this principle of equality for all humans. They make the point that these rights apply to everybody, regardless of color and race. Student A in group 1 states at the very beginning of the discussion that Hector wants to have the same opportunity to play soccer as the white children have: "it seems like he wants equal rights." Student C follows up by stating that "the white kids had it much better than the colored kids and they have more rights than the black ones." Student D in group 2 points to the word multiracial and uses teammates on a football team as an example to explain how people are equal in the desegregated country of South Africa. The students express clearly how they feel everyone in a society should have the same rights and opportunities. However, they do not question whether all persons in Norway or in other Western societies are granted the same rights and opportunities. According to Byram, critical cultural awareness implies the ability to evaluate critically values and practices in both one's own and other cultures. (2006, p. 117). Though the students show insight into the significance of human rights, which may be related to knowledge about self and others, the category of *savoirs*, in Byram's model (2006, p. 118), the conversations do not display insight into critical awareness of the human rights situation in their own society.

The issue of human rights 2: Election

Student E: Yeah he [Nelson Mandela] won. They printed it in the campaign. He was the first black president in South Africa. They maybe meant that that would be a liberty of the black people and the end of apartheid.

Student B: Oh yeah right. Because they could vote. They got their liberty so they were celebrating that they could vote.

The students express an understanding of how soccer after the 1994 election came to be a symbol of how a country became united after being divided. In addition they consider how the opportunity to vote is an important part of having equal rights. They also talk about the consequences the election of Mandela as president had for black people and their rights in South Africa.

c) The issue of apartheid and segregation

The students focused on this category in particular, in relation to their understanding of the historical background of the apartheid period and the process leading up to Nelson Mandela's presidency. The excerpts also show the participants' reflections on the connections between the book's fictional part, describing the segregation policy through the child protagonist's experiences, and the factual and historical part added at the end of the book.

The issue of apartheid and segregation 1: Fiction versus reality

Group 1

Student B: So purpose is to focus on connecting the book as the role of the connector. First question was: *How is the book connected to the topic of human rights?* The book relates to football to the way towards abolishment. The book shares hope and dreams of Hector to play. But the dreams were accepted after South Africa were free of apartheid. *How is the book connected to history/relevance today?* The book tells the story of South Africa and the story of a black boy who wants to play football. Yet the story becomes, no covers the most important parts of the nations' story. *How is the book connected to your life/other peoples life?* This book is about relating football to the many stories of apartheid. This is a fictional book about an actual event. The story of this book may be connected to a story of another child and to apartheid. Hehehe. *How is the book connected to the news/things you have heard in the media?* The book covers how they get to vote, the book connects how they, wait [reads again], how they elect Nelson Mandela as the first black president of South Africa. The book tells us how Bafana Bafana won the ACN and how it united a broken country....a divided country. So *I thought* the book portrayed the story of apartheid in a very interesting way through football and a kid. *I liked* how it all played out and I liked the ending. The story played well with the history of what actually happened in South Africa and *I wonder* how this would happen while in the middle of apartheid in the real world.

[...]

Student D: And *I thought* it was a great story which combined history with fiction. *I liked* the ending as well because it show that there are no more difference between colored people and white people.

Group 2

Student A: So I am the connector and I think the book is connected to the topic of human rights because the book included both things, racial segregation and at the end apartheid was abolished in South Africa. And this is a possible story and it could have happened in the past. And that's way the book is connected to history today. And maybe a boy in the 1990's actually experienced this or not exactly like the book explained it, but a similar situation. And we don't know if it happened, but it is possible. And it is a relevant story about a black kid while apartheid was going. And black and white people were separated and they could not play together.

The students show that they are aware that *The Soccer Fence* is a fictional story about a critical moment in South Africa's history. In the first part of the discussion, student B in

group 1 remarks that this “is a fictional book about an actual event.” Moreover, she points out how this book relates football to the many stories of apartheid and how the story may be connected to children in similar situations during apartheid. Student A in group 2 stresses the relevance of this story since “maybe a boy in the 1990’s actually experienced this, or not exactly like the book explained it,” and also the fact that it is possible that a similar story could have taken place during that time. It becomes clear that the students use the fictional story to grasp the seriousness of apartheid and relate this to what actually took place during apartheid. Student D in group 1 mentions that the book includes a factual section at the end describing South African history and the apartheid timeline, saying “it was a great story which combined history with fiction”. Student B in group 1 comments how the story “played well with the history of what actually happened in South Africa” and further wonders “how this would happen while in the middle of apartheid in the real world.”

As stated in 2.2.2 and 2.2.3, Rosenblatt’s transactional theory and Nikolajevs’ applications of cognitive theory emphasize how reading literature implies both cognitive and affective responses. Rosenblatt’s distinction between *efferent* and *aesthetic* reading (1994, p. 23), the first one described as reading for informational purposes, the latter as an event of reading to engage in the text’s aesthetic aspects, may be applied to the students’ comments on fiction versus reality. According to Rosenblatt (1994, p. 23), a given text may be read both efferently and aesthetically. Thus, the students’ comments on the picturebook’s fictional and factual aspects, may illustrate the mixture of aesthetic and efferent reading experiences as described by Rosenblatt.

Recent theories of cognitive criticism stress similar facets of a reading process. As stated by Nikolajeva, “reading fiction makes the brain *stimulate* cognitive and affective responses to the actual world, and therefore [...] can improve our understanding of the actual world” (2014, p. 8). The student discussions cited above exemplify combinations of cognitive and affective responses in their sharing of reading experiences with their fellow students.

The issue of apartheid and segregation 2: Time and place

Group 1

Student E: Yes, I was the scene setter I was going to find out where the book...ehh.. where the story took place. I found the story took place around 1990s, which is plus minus 5 years, in South Africa. On the page I chose there is a lighter setting than in the earlier pages because the picture is of the 1994 Africa Cup of Nations...or in 1996 it was maybe. Where the white kid and the black kid stood up in their seats with their right fist up in the air. They found a common thing they both liked instead of racism. Ehh...on the pages I chose, the apartheid isn't described as a huge thing because the black kid and the white kid doesn't act like apartheid was anything. I believe the reason for this is that football is the sport that unites the people...or united the people of South Africa. And football was the thing they had in common.

Group 2

Student C: This story likes happen in South Africa in about 1993 to 1996 ish because it's like before Nelson Mandela is chosen president but also when Bafana Bafana wins the African National Cup. The action takes place in a Johannesburg township and like the fence decides where the black people live to be like separated from the whites.

The students refer to where and when apartheid began and ended, identifying “South Africa” and “Johannesburg township.” They also place the story in the historic time of this political system. They discuss daily life during apartheid, how it must have felt to live under such conditions, using Hector, the book’s main character, as a reference.

The issue of apartheid and segregation 3: Imagining daily life

Group 1

Student D: [...] And *I wonder* how it felt like that the racial segregation ended because this for sure is a little bit different and weird in so many years were separated and then united...like does it ever happen at all?
[...]

Student C: And I wonder how it was to be under that time. And I felt it was quite sad about how kids could play.

Some students wonder about and try to imagine what it must have been like to live in a segregated society. Student D in group 1 finds this almost impossible to imagine and wonders if it happened at all. This indicates that the students make an effort to be curious and open minded towards experiences of segregation, an attitude which corresponds with the competence of *savoir être* in Byram’s model (2006, p. 118). The students’ attempts to imagine and understand daily life experiences in an apartheid context also relates to the intercultural skill of *savoir comprendre*, the competence involving interpreting and relating to other’s experiences (p.118). The student admitting his difficulty in imagining the living conditions in a segregated society may be seen as a sign of how challenging it can be to grasp experiences in cultures very different from one’s own.

The issue of apartheid and segregation 4: The fence symbol

Group 2

Student C: Hector his standing outside like the fence and he wants to play with these boys who are inside the fence and he's like "Can I play" and "I wanna play" but they completely ignore him. And I think they like classify the whites they were so much better than every black person so it felt like he was not included, he was just like shut out. And I also feel like the fence is a symbol of the separation of between the black persons and the white persons. And like the topic of apartheid described like through the setting is well they completely ignore him, they act like he is invisible, pretend he isn't there and when he was there. His mother was also like don't make any trouble. So like the punishment for the blacks who made trouble was still so much worse than for the white ones.

Group 1

Student E: ...and this shows hope because the black and the whites are in the same place not against each other or separated.

Student D: Look how close they are.

Student E: Yeah. Hector and Chris?

Student D: Maybe before they were like...juuh [grose sound]

Student E: But now they are like Bafana Bafana yeah, best friends.

Group 2

Student A: And I wonder if the white boy was afraid to answer the black boy, because he didn't want to get in any trouble for talking to him. Like in this picture he, Hector was standing outside the fence asking if he could play with the white boys, but they didn't answer him and just kept playing and maybe they're having. The last page eh...the last page were they play football together maybe that is a symbol that apartheid was over and finally black and white people could be together without consequences.

Several of the students use the symbol of the fence in the book to illustrate segregation and explain that the fence marks where the black people live, separated from the whites. Student C in group 2 describes how "the fence is a symbol of the separation of between the black persons and the white persons" and illustrates the situation by referring to how Hector wanted to play football "with these boys who are inside the fence" and how the white children exclude and "shut out" Hector because they view whites as better than black people. The comments illustrate how the students use the fence to describe the situation, and thus develop understanding of the consequences of the apartheid regime.

The issue of apartheid and segregation 5: Symbols of hope

Group 1

Student B: First questions was: *How is the book connected to the topic of human rights?*. The book relates to football to the way towards abolishment. The book shares hope and dreams of Hector to play. But the dreams were accepted after South Africa were free of apartheid. [...] *How is the book connected to the news/things you have heard in the media?* The book covers how they get to vote, the book connects how they, wait [reads again], how they elect Nelson Mandela as the first black president of South Africa. The book tells us how Bafana Bafana won the ACN and how it united a broken country....a divided country.

Group 2

Student A: [...] The last page eh...the last page were they play football together maybe that is a symbol that apartheid was over and finally black and white people could be together without consequences.

The students comment on the development from apartheid and segregation in South Africa to a more united country. Student B in group 1 stresses how opportunities for black people opened up when apartheid ended: “the book shares hope and dreams of Hector to play” and how the dreams of playing football together “were accepted after South Africa were free of apartheid.” Student A in group 2 notices the symbolism of the story’s last doublespread where the children play football together and says that “maybe that is a symbol that apartheid was over and finally black and white people could be together without consequences.” The students also comment that this last picture “shows hope because the black and the whites are in the same place not against each other or separated.”

The conversations referred to in this category illustrate how combinations of cognitive and affective aspects in the sharing of reading experiences, contribute to the students’ development of intercultural communicative competence as defined by Byram (2006). Most specifically, the comments on the issue of segregation and apartheid relate to Byram’s descriptions of the quality of *savoir*, gaining knowledge of others, and to the quality of *savoir comprendre*, including skills of interpreting and relating to other’s experiences (2006, p. 118).

d) The issue of the first black president in South Africa

This category has a specific focus on Nelson Mandela’s leading role in the freedom fight, the 1994 election and Mandela’s presidency.

The issue of the first black President in South Africa 1: Mandela’s historical role

Group 1

Student E: It says that “*Today, we celebrate liberty!*”. What do you think is meant by this? I think that what they mean about this is that because Nelson Mandela was elected as the first black president...

Student D:..and he won.

Student E: Yeah he won. They printed it in the campaign. He was the first black president in South Africa they maybe meant that that would be a liberty of the black people and the end of apartheid.

Student B: Oh yeah right. Because they could vote. They got their liberty so they were celebrating that they could vote.

Student A: *On p. 13-14 (orange pages) we find the front pages of three different newspapers. In what way do these tell about an important historical event in the history of South Africa?*

Student B: I say it shows the election and that Nelson Mandela is starting to win the poll for being the president for South Africa and that he finally wins and then give them equally rights. I think that this can be an important historical event because for the first time it was a black president or a black president candidate up against a white one and then if the white one won the black would have more rights and more...ja...

Student E: And the newspapers tell the story. First they tell the people that they need to vote, then we see that NAC leads with Mandela at the front and then it says that he won.

Student B: That is kind of the three stages of the election.

Student E: Yeah.

The students show that they are aware of the role Nelson Mandela had as the first black president and what his presidency meant for South Africa's future. The students discuss when the election happened and the impact of the election on the country itself and black people's lives. Student B in group 1 says it was "an important historical event because for the first time it was a black president or a black president candidate up against a white one and then if the white one won the black would have more rights." Student B in group 1 remarks that Mandela "united a country that was divided because of race and apartheid".

The issue of the first black President in South Africa 2: Mandela as a symbol of hope

Group 2

Student A: *What impact did Nelson Mandela have on all of Africa? Anybody?*

Student C: He gave hope to everybody.

Student A: Yeah, I agree.

Student D: and he loved sports, which says in the book. And football. And again, can I say it? It is a very nice way to.....ka heter det på norsk? Connect the nation. Because they were very divided and then they got to the final and won the Africa Cup of Nations and then they kind of became teammates. Yes, anyone else? About how he made an impact?

Student B: A, did you have a comment?

Student D: I think that it is really good that he went to prison for 27 years just to make...or...he suffered so other people could....

Student A: Yeah, and I think that when he was in prison they believed in him and he was going to get out, so he could help them and save them. [...]

The students mention, in particular, how the election gave hope to people and how it led to more equal rights. Student C in group 2 says that Nelson Mandela "gave hope to everybody." Student E in group 1 thinks that because Mandela was elected president "that would be a liberty of the black people and the end of apartheid", followed by a reply from student B: "Oh yeah right. Because they could vote. They got their liberty so they were celebrating that they could vote", thereby highlighting the connection between liberty and the right to vote.

The students also consider Mandela's imprisonment, of which they learned in previous lessons on the topic. Student D in group 2 says, "I think that it is really good that he went to prison for 27 years just to make...or...he suffered so other people could". Student A interrupts, adding "yeah, and I think that when he was in prison they believed in him and he was going to get out, so he could help them and save them." These comments show how the students make use of previous knowledge when discussing Mandela's role in South African history.

The issue of the first black President in South Africa 3: Relating to other's experiences

Group 1

Student B: What impact did Nelson Mandela have on all of Africa?

Student C: Everyone got along and...not at first but then he planned a cup and sport united people.

Student E: I think the impact is that he can show everyone that ehhe that everyone can have equal rights if they fight hard enough and stay together.

Student B: Just in South Africa he united a country that was divided because of race and apartheid and racial.

The students register the role of football, and how this sport became a symbol of how South Africa went from being “divided” to building “teammates”. In relation to Byram’s model, the conversation excerpts in this category underscore the role of knowledge, *savoir*, in the development of intercultural competence (Byram 2006, p. 118). Moreover, the way their knowledge about Mandela connects to their understanding of his significant role for ordinary people indicates their ability to relate to other people’s experiences, the competence of *savoir comprendre* in Byram’s model (2006, p. 118)

The students do not, however, talk about or consider the situation in South Africa today. Nor do they relate apartheid to other kinds of discrimination in various societies, including our own. Perhaps this lack of connections to other contexts indicates that the connector role in the LC role sheets may be too demanding for the students to handle on their own. Thus, there is a need for this specific role to be developed further with the support of the teacher in a class conversation. It seems that *The Soccer Fence*, as well as other books addressing multicultural issues and violations of human rights in today’s societies, have the potential to be further discussed in teacher-led conversations in full classes as a follow-up to the student-led conversations in LC groups. This combination of literary conversation practices might serve to enhance the students’ intercultural critical awareness by enabling them to connect human rights issues in other societies to examples from their own cultural context.

e) Words expressing empathy and emotions

This category deals with signs of empathy and emotions embedded in the student statements. It includes examples of identification with the book’s child protagonist as well as his barriers and aspirations.

Empathy and emotions: Expressing feelings

Group 1

Student A: My role is character explorer, and the main characters' name is Hector and he has dark skin and brown eyes and he has a lot of dreams and he likes soccer and it seems like he wants equal rights because he wants to play soccer with the other kids. And a description of the character...here!...ehm...this one [finds a double spread in the book and reads]. *One day I whispered I am going to play on the field just like that.* And this made an impression on me because it shows that he dreams big and seems a bit worried that he can't play with them. And if I was this person I would feel a bit sad to be ignored and left out so many times by the other kids. But I would be really happy when I got to play. And I thought it was a nice book and I liked the ending that everything turned out okay. I wonder how it must feel to be discriminated just because of my skin. And I felt pain when I read the book.

Student B: [...] I felt overwhelmed with gratefulness for Mandela and soccer at the end.

Student C: And I wonder how it was to be under that time. And I felt it was quite sad about how kids could play.

Group 2

Student B: Ehhh....I have character explorer. I can begin with Hector which is the main character. And I have chosen to write about that he is a good kid, and this one (shows a picture) I think and the picture tell he was. He is lonely. He was a bit lonely at the upstart while he tried to say hi, but the others were not listening.

Student C: Hector his standing outside like the fence and he wants to play with this boys who are inside the fence and his like "Can I play" and "I wanna play" but they completely ignore him and I think they like classifies the whites they were so much better than every black person so it felt like he was not included, it was just like shut out. And I also feel like the fence is a symbol of the separation of between the black persons and the white persons. And like the topic of apartheid described like through the setting is well they completely ignore him, they act like he is invisible, pretend he isn't there and when he was there his mother was also like don't make any trouble. so like the punishment for the blacks who made trouble was still so much worse than for the white ones.

Student A: And maybe a boy in the 1990's actually experienced this or not exactly like the book explained it, but a similar situation. and we don't know if it happened, but it is possible. And it is a relevant story about a black kid while apartheid was going. And black and white people were separated and they could not play together. And I wonder if the white boy was afraid to answer the black boy, because he didn't want to get in any trouble for talking to him.

Student A: Yeah, I agree with you. I think he's like ten years old and that he loves football but then it's like he doesn't quite understand why the white people just completely ignore him. If you go to here, you can see his face. His like he wants to join in and to me it looks like does understand why he can't join in.

Student B: If I was this person I would feel that they only ignore him on the picture then they scream two times. But they both like me in the same way not like me in the same way. And I thought that it was sweet when Hector and Chris play football together in the last picture.

[...]

Student C: But when he tries to going to these three boys with the football, they don't see him, and I think he just tries and tries when he tries because...he tries to get their attention but they don't give him one so he come along the next day but..... even the second day. So guess he is a bit lonely.

As mentioned earlier, the skill of interpreting and relating, *savoir comprendre*, is included as one of the component in Byram's ICC model (2006, p. 118). In these extracts, several of the students show that they are able to adopt someone else's' perspective. Student A in group 1 comments that "if I was this person I would feel a bit sad to be ignored and left out so many times by the other kids". Student B explains that "If I was this person I would feel that they only ignore him on the picture then they scream two times. But they both like me in the same way not like me in the same way". These students are attempting to relate the main character's experiences of exclusion to their own, trying to interpret this part of the story in

the light of their own knowledge. This is in accordance with Nussbaum's idea that narrative imagination may foster empathy, including the ability to envision "what it is like to be in a person's place" (1997, p. 91).

The students reflect on how it must have felt to live under apartheid conditions using Hector as reference. They comment that the black boy was "ignored", "left behind", "lonely", treated as "invisible" and "not included" by the white children. They also remark that "he wants to join in and to me it looks like does understand why he can't join in". Student C in group 2 describes how lonely Hector must have felt: "I think he just tries and tries when he tries because...he tries to get their attention but they don't give him one so he comes along the next day but...even the second day. So guess he is a bit lonely". Student A also briefly mentions how the white children might have experienced the situation and said that the white boy "didn't want to get in any trouble for talking to him". Student A in group 2 shows empathy by saying that "*I wonder* how it went with Hector." These comments relate not only to *savoir comprendre* in Byram's ICC model, the skill of interpreting and relating, but also to *savoir être*, expressed through curiosity and openness to other cultures and the valuing of otherness (Byram, 2006, p. 118). Student statements like "I guess" and "I wonder" indicate attitudes of curiosity and openness regarding how it must have felt to live in a segregated country.

The students expanded their impressions on how the surroundings and life situation differed between the races. Student A in group 1 tries to imagine being in this situation: "I wonder how it must feel to be discriminated just because of my skin." The students express sympathy with the book's main character Hector, and what he went through. This illustrates Nussbaum's emphasis on the fact that "literary imagining both inspires intense concern with the fate of characters and defines those characters as containing a rich inner life" (1997, p. 90). The students also share Hector's joy regarding football and how this created hope and dreams for a boy in a difficult situation. Student A, group 1 puts herself in Hector's place: "I would be really happy when I got to play".

During their discussion, the students point out the specific emotions they experienced while reading *The Soccer Fence*. Student A, in group 1 says that she "felt pain when I read the book" and student C, group 1 says that "I felt it was quite sad about how kids could play." Student B, group 1 says she "*felt* overwhelmed with gratefulness for Mandela and soccer at the end." The students clearly react emotionally to the story, and they are able to express their emotional responses during the discussion. As Nussbaum emphasizes, literary scenarios may

initiate *compassion*, understood as the capacity to recognize “that another person, in some ways similar to oneself, has suffered some significant pain or misfortune in a way for which that person is not, or not fully, to blame” (1997, p. 90-91). The students’ remarks cited above clearly involve the type of compassionate attitude as explained by Nussbaum.

As referred to in the theory chapter, Rosenblatt (1994) highlights the value of reading literature aesthetically. The findings show that both text and pictures in *The Soccer Fence* stimulate the students’ empathy by contributing to making them “see and hear and feel and think” (Rosenblatt, 1994, p. 40). Therefore, findings show that the LC method stimulated readings that enhance aesthetic experiences, in the sense of activating sensuous and emotional impacts.

4.1.2 Questionnaire

As stated above, a central purpose of the questionnaire (see appendix 3) was to gain insight into how the students experienced the literature circle. The questions and distribution of student answers are listed below in table 3 and in table 4 (4.2.2). Questions a-c (table 3) helped to shed light on the first research question, regarding how the literature circle helped the students understand and discuss the topic and how they felt about using role cards when reading. Question d-g (table 4) focused on the second research question. To obtain an overview of the distribution of the answers, they are labeled either ‘positive’, ‘partly positive’ or ‘negative’, based on the content.

Questions asked to students	Participant answer (N=17)
a) Did the role card help you in your reading of <i>The Soccer Fence</i> ?	Positive: 8 Negative: 9
b) Did the literature circle help your understanding of the topic of human rights and the apartheid regime? Why/why not?	Positive: 11 Partly positive: 5 Negative: 1
c) When doing literature circles in class, we first read the book, then you wrote your own reading response, then you participated in a group discussion. Did this structure help you understand the topic/book and share your thoughts about it?	Positive: 11 Partly positive: 1 Negative: 2 Not answered: 3

Table 3. Student questionnaire: experience of literature circle.

The answers related to questions about *the students' understanding of the topic*, indicated a variation in how they perceive the topic. The majority say the LC helped them understand the topic better. One student says that, because he already understood the topic, it did not help. Those who said it partly helped their understanding explain that, although they did not learn any new things, they got “a little refresher about the topic.” In addition, they make a point of the fact that it partly helped because they gained insight into what fellow students knew about the topic and thought about the book. Among the students who find the LC helpful in understanding the topic, many comment that they learned from their classmates and their viewpoints. One student says “I think it did [help] because I heard other people's viewpoints and learned new things about the book that I did not catch.” Several students note that the LC helped them reflect on the topic as well as understand the book itself better because they “could focus on one thing, but still understand everything”. One student says that, by studying the pictures, he understood the living conditions under the apartheid regime and the differences between the races better.

When asked if the role they received helped in their reading of *The Soccer Fence*, about half of the respondents answer that it did not help them. One student comments that he would have preferred a second reading of the book instead of doing the reader response sheet. Another student says that the word wizard role did not help him as he thinks the text had “too few important words”. Students who answer that the specific role helped them, say that it was useful because the roles made them focus on specific and important words related to the topic, reflect on various parts of the book, provide a summary and remember the most important events of the story. Other students explain how they became more aware of specific parts of the book, like the setting and how “the main character Hector really was thinking and how he felt”. One student comments that it helped him “compare the book to today's society”. Several students note that the role made it easier to focus their reading because it helped them “noticing things [they] would not normally notice” and because they “had a meaning while reading this book”.

The majority agree that the way the class read this book, structured in individual reading, writing a reading response and then a group discussion, helped them to understand the topic/book and assisted them in sharing their thoughts about it. Students who answer negatively, explain that there was too little time to write the reading response and that was the reason for why it did not help them. The students who answer that the structuring process was useful, say that it helped them understand the book. One student specifies that the process did

not help him understand the book, but contributed to his understanding of the complex topic “because the topic was not that understandable, but the book was.” Another student says that it helped because he had to “go more deeply into the character and then present it to the others on the group”. Yet another comments that he understood the topic better because the LC “made me summarise what the book was about”. Several students say that they learned more about the topic using LC because “the structure, it put my mind into a state of learning. In this state I was more able to pick up information”. Another student points out that he understood the topic better because “it was good to discuss with my classmates”.

In summary, the majority of the students say that the LC helped their understanding of the topic because they could share and hear other student’s viewpoints and that the roles they received made their reading more focused. Some students say that their understanding might have been better if they had had the time to read the book several times. The pedagogical implications of these comments will be discussed in chapter 5.

4.1.3 Teacher interviews

In the interviews, the two teachers were asked about their experiences with employing the LC method in class and how they experienced the students’ use of role cards when reading *The Soccer Fence*. They were also asked what impression, if any, they had of the students’ opinions and reflections on the topic during the LC-discussion, and how they experienced the students’ actual oral discussion. Finally, the teachers could comment on whether they felt that something did not work out well when using LC, and if they would use the same method again.

When discussing the use of LC in class, the teachers stress the fact that this method opened up for the students’ own thoughts and challenged them to interpret, argue and draw conclusions of their own. Teacher B notes that this can be demanding for some students and reflects on the need for the students to become familiar with this method in order to fully benefit from it.

The two teachers highlighted a number of aspects in relation to how they experienced the use of role cards in LC. Teacher A maintained that using role cards made the students *go deeper into* the book instead of just skimming through it. She says the role cards gave the reading a purpose because “the students had something they needed to figure out based on the role they had”. She also reported that she was surprised by how active the students were during the listing and reading part of the LC. The teacher says that in this class, the students

took turns reading the book to each other while the rest of the group took notes on their role cards. Thus, the students worked actively during the reading response session. According to teacher A, the role cards forced all of the students to participate, “because of the roles, none of the students could be ‘free riders’, like I often experience in group work”.

Teacher B points out that the role cards generally worked well. However, he notes the importance of prior knowledge about the students’ level in order to ensure level-adapted tasks. He also says he experienced that the role cards worked better when the students had to write down their reading responses (in the preparatory task with the book *Rosa*, teacher B noticed that the students did not make any written notes when reading the book). In both classes the teachers put together the LC groups carefully. Both teachers say they wanted to include students of different levels and language skills in all groups. Teacher A says that the heterogeneous groups worked well, promoting discussion involving *all* students. In addition, she recounts that “when one student did not understand his task, the other students in the group helped him figure it out because they knew they were going to present their findings to each other. The more skilled students helped the less skilled students in a positive way”. This teacher says that she had explicitly told the students in advance to include the whole group in the discussion. Both teachers stress the importance of making it clear to the students what each role requires and the significance of modelling the use of role cards in preparation to ensure that the students know how to use the roles cards while reading.

The findings in this part of the project reveal that the students identify important themes of the book, and they demonstrate abilities to discuss and reflect upon important issues related to apartheid and human rights. In the questionnaire the students themselves point out how listening to fellow students’ viewpoints made them learn more. This was further confirmed by the teacher interviews. Both students and teachers mention that the use of role cards helped to focus the reading and encouraged the students to take an active part in the discussion.

4.2 Part two: Literature circles promoting oral discussion

4.2.1 Audio recordings

As shown above, the student-led oral discussion consisted of two parts: sharing individual reading responses based on role sheets, and a discussion guided by teacher-prepared questions about the book.

During the first part, the students shared their reading responses with each other. Each of the students participated in turn telling about their responses to the book based on the role they had. The audio recordings reveal that in the very beginning, some students express uncertainty about speaking English and about sharing their thoughts and understanding of the book. However, after a few minutes of warm-up, speaking English to each other becomes more natural to them.

During this “sharing-part” of the discussion, the students sit quietly, and do not challenge each other’s opinions by asking follow-up questions or commenting on fellow students’ responses. Therefore, this part of the discussion resembles a series of monologues where students present their responses to the text in turns while the rest listen quietly.

Oral discussion excerpts 1 and 2: Student leadership

The findings in this category focus on how student leadership was implemented in the LC groups. Although a “discussion director” role was not included among the role cards, it is evident that in both groups one of the students takes the self-assigned director role. Each of them functions as a moderator by inviting the other students to speak with phrases such as: “Catherine, do you want to start?”, “Okay, thank you. Torgeir is next”, “Daniel, do you want to answer that?”, “Do you have anything to say? I know you lost your reader response sheet. But do you have anything?”, “Yeah, I agree with you”, and “Anyone else?”. These two students ensure that all the students in their respective groups have the opportunity to share their reading responses. These observations correspond with McCall’s findings which highlight how literature circles “encourage students to take more of a leadership role in the classroom” (2010, p. 152).

Excerpt 1

Group 2

Student A: *What impact did Nelson Mandela have on all of Africa? Anybody?*

Student C: He gave hope to everybody.

Student A: Yeah, I agree.

Student D: And he loved sports, which says in the book. And football. And again, can I say it? It is a very nice way to.....ka heter det på norsk? Connect the nation. Because they were very divided and then they got to the final and won the Africa Cup of Nations and then they kind of became teammates. Yes, anyone else? About how he made an impact?

Student B: A, did you have a comment?

Student D: I think that it is really good that he went to prison for 27 years just to make...or...he suffered so other people could....

Student A: Yeah, and I think that when he was in prison they believed in him and he was going to get out, so he could help them and save them. [...]

In the excerpt above, student A poses a question and invites all group members to answer. She also responds to their answers. As a consequence of student A's taking the initiative to invite all members to talk, the group shows interest in listening to comments from all of the students in the group. In addition, two other students take on leader responsibility in order to include all group members in the discussion. When student D says; "Yes, anyone else? About how he made an impact?", student B supports this initiative by asking: "A, did you have a comment?". As a whole this excerpt highlights how the group dynamics challenges several students to practice a leadership role.

Excerpt 2

Group 2

Student A: *What pictures/texts illustrate apartheid/separateness and what pictures/text illustrate hope and a united people? Why?*

Student D: The one that is green and orange kinda of symbols...ehhh...

Student A: Jeg skjønnte ikke det.

Student D: Kind of illustrates apartheid, apartheid because again he's black and they white and they can play together they have different color of their skin. Then you get to the....African Cup....

Student B: ...game

Student D: Yeah, Cup of Nations. Then they're kind of reunited by football and it's really nice because football can unite all nations. You can clearly see on this page they're holding their hands up, they're like becoming friends.

Student B: That's a good answer.

Student A: Yeah

Student D: Next. How about....

Student B: E, do you want to say something?

Student D: Maybe you should say something?

Student B: Yes E, English

Student B: Okey, we have a comment about....

Student A: E, speak to....

Student E: No

Student D: E, det står at noe som illustrerer apartheid

[They all speak unclear Norwegian]

Student A: In the purple page you can see they are...the newspaper it says end of apartheid question mark. And that symbols hope and that apartheid was abolished.

Here again, student A assumes a director role by reading the teacher-prepared questions. Then, when student A admits right away that there is something he does not understand, student D takes the initiative to explain and to further develop the role football games had in the post-apartheid period, stressing, in particular, the significance of The Africa Cup of Nations, in which South Africa participated with multiracial teams. This type of student agency which initiates a cooperative exploration of a topic, may be seen as an example of a leadership practice.

Moreover, the role of student B may be viewed from an agency perspective. This student seems to define her role mainly as being supportive and affirmative towards fellow students' comments and to ensure that everyone is included in the discussion. Observing that student E hesitates to participate, student B chooses to address the group member directly: "E, do you want to say something?" This is immediately followed up by student D, who also addresses student E directly. Interestingly, when it proves hard for student E to respond in English, the students decide to speak Norwegian for a short while to ensure that E will understand. Thus, the group members' fellowship seems to be a vital quality for this student-led discussion. In teacher-led discussions, the teacher traditionally would take on the responsibility to include inactive students. However, as excerpt 2 shows, this aspect of a leadership role seems to be managed well among the students during the group discussion.

These excerpts include various examples of student leadership qualities. Three out of four students in this group take the initiative to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to be involved in the discussion. The same students support each other in sticking to the discussion topics, and in the case of misunderstandings or lack of understanding, the students alternate who clarifies the issue. One student in this group tries to participate in the discussion, but he seems to benefit from fellow students' efforts and willingness to help.

Oral discussion excerpt 3, 4 and 5: Collaborative engagement

As mentioned in 2.2.1, one of the core principles in LC is the element of collaboration. As Daniels argues, the dialogue and social aspects are the foundation of this method: intending to welcome, build on, and broaden students' responses to what they read (2002, p. 30). The following excerpts show how the students engage and collaborate in their discussion of *The Soccer Fence*.

Excerpt 3

Group 1

Student A: Compare the boys on the orange page to the boys on the green page. What differences do you notice?

Student B: The boys on the green page has football shoes while the boys on the orange page has....

Student E: ...barely shoes

Student B: ...no shoes at all

Student A: ...barefoot. And the balls.....

Student B: ...the ball...the boys in the green page has better football than the boys in the orange. They had and actual field to play on with green grass while the orange just had sand and stones and sticks.

Student A: And if you see in the back there is a nice house here and townships here.

Student B: Yeah and they have an actual fence, opposed to the black guys.

Student E: Just some sticks

Student B: ...and rope...

Student E: ...or wire and sticks

Student A: But you guys started talking before I had read all the questions (laughs).

Student E: That's okay.

The extract above illustrates how the students build on each other's sentences, continuously expanding their responses by helping each other: "...barely shoes...", "...no shoes at all.", "...barefoot. And the balls..", "...the ball...the boys in the green page [...]". In this conversation all students have something to contribute, continuously adding new words. In contrast to the students' monologue during the sharing of reading responses in the first part of the discussion, the excerpt above shows how the students engage in a natural, free-flowing dialogue, almost over-eager to discuss the pages of the book. In this engagement in talking, one student interrupts and directs the conversation back to the original question by saying "but you guys started talking before I had read all the questions". This is again an example of student leadership as discussed in the previous sub-chapter.

Excerpt 4

Group 1

Student D: I am the word wizard, I my job is to focus on the vocabulary of the text. I found some words that were related to the topic of apartheid. First one is freed, liberty, and ANC, hero who was Nelson Mandela who became the president...first African....nei...first president...nei

Student B: ...first black...

Student D: ...first black president in South Africa. In 1994. And I found freedom and justice and vote because non-white had the rights to vote after the regime...apartheid ended. And then I found dream is celebrated at the end.

Student B: That's good.

[...]

Student D: Wait, what's the question?

Student E: It says that "*Today, we celebrate liberty!*". What do you think is meant by this? I think that what they mean about this is that because Nelson Mandela was elected as the first black president.

Student D:..and he won.

Student E: Yeah he won. They printed it in the campaign. He was the first black president in South Africa. They maybe meant that that would be a liberty of the black people and the end of apartheid.

Student B: Oh, yeah right. Because they could vote. They got their liberty so they were celebrating that they could vote.

Excerpt 4 illustrates how the students repeat each other's comments in order to elaborate on each others' answers. The repetition of the other student's comments becomes a starting point to expand the reflection and sharing of information. It also functions as a support for the student's contributions. Repeating fellow students' statements has an affirmative function and also helps to explore and develop the reflections further. Furthermore, in this group, the supportive role becomes prominent with comments like "That's good" and "Oh, yeah right". Thus, these expressions play an important part in creating collaboration during the discussion. The students discuss the political situation and show an ability to collaborate in order to grasp information. In addition, this excerpt shows how the word wizard makes active use of his role card by applying the vocabulary he noticed as a preparation for the discussion.

Excerpt 5

Group 2

Student B: Yes, mam. I think Hector does not really understand what's going on in the apartheid because it doesn't seem like it is affecting him that much.

Student A: But I think that this was like after the apartheid was abolished because it was still some like left. Or do you agree? Well, how long did this last for? You know Nelson Mandela was chosen as a president in 1994, and they won the football series in 1996.

Student B: Now you see here he is not selected yet, it is just 1990. He was elected in 1994.

Student A: Okay, I did not notice that.

Excerpt 5 highlights the students' ability to correct each other in a supportive way. Two students argue about a specific scene in the story about the book's protagonist, Hector. They seem to disagree about when this scene takes place, before or after the 1994 election. Interestingly, during this discussion both students have the opportunity to present exact information about specific historical events, and thus they share essential knowledge about South African history. In the end, student B clarifies the year of the scene with Hector, while student A accepts this information as something he at first did not notice. In this discussion the students prove their ability to listen to each other's arguments and a willingness to learn from each other.

During the second part of the LC discussions the students focus on the teacher-prepared questions about the book. The audio recordings reveal that the students stay on the topic of apartheid and human rights for the entire discussion, and they discuss the topic continuously using the book as a reference. In one case, a student struggles to follow the

discussion and starts to sing a Nelson Mandela song the class had listened to earlier, but the group soon returns to the discussion again.

The audio recordings confirm that the students invite others' opinions and respond to fellow students' statements to a greater extent during the discussions framed by the teacher-prepared questions than in the LC discussion. As mentioned earlier, one reason for this may be the fact that the students were unfamiliar with the use of role card in LC discussion. However, the students' preparations for their role cards, seemed to be a source of knowledge and reflections the students could rely on also in the latter part of the LC discussion, which was organized by the teacher prepared questions.

As the analysis of findings above demonstrated, the students made several efforts to help each other in order to gain a better understanding of the topic either by complementing each other's sentences or by asking fellow students to clarify. Moreover, the students often build their comments on their fellow students' statements. On the whole, the LC discussions seemed to promote skills of explorative and attentive dialogues.

The way literature circles encourage students' collaborative engagement resonates with Rosenblatt's emphasis of the role that the social environment and the spoken or written interchange among students plays in the reader's response process (1994, p. 186). In the student-led discussions, the individual students' interpretations of the text and their shared opinions and understanding are constructed through their interaction while focusing on the text. This finding is also in accordance with Bishop's argument, referred to in Dolan (2014), that the reading of multicultural literature has to include an aesthetic experience to have an effect. This is achieved when readers are given time and opportunity to make thoughtful responses to their own readings by interacting with other responses, whether similar or not to their own understandings or experiences (Dolan, 2014, p. 23).

Although the conversations included follow-up questions and examples of how students elaborated on their fellow students' statements, the students do not seem to challenge each others' opinions and reflections. This may have to do with the fact that the students do not relate the topic to human rights issues in their own society and culture, for example racist attitudes and scepticism towards immigrants. A connection to the students' own cultural context would potentially have generated more diverse opinions within the group, and a need to challenge each other's viewpoints.

4.2.2 Questionnaire

As explained in 4.1.2, this thesis focuses on how the students experienced the literature circle. Table 4 shows the distribution of answers regarding how the role cards helped the students prepare and discuss the topic, and how the students feel about using literature circles to learn about social issues.

Questions asked to students	Participant answer (N=17)
d) Did your own preparations with your specific role card help you participate orally in the discussion? (i.e. you knew what to look for, writing your own reading response) Why/why not?	Positive: 10 Partly positive: 2 Negative: 3 Not answered: 2
e) Did the different roles in your group help your group discuss the topic of apartheid and human rights? Why/why not?	Positive: 14 Negative: 2 Not answered: 1
f) Did you enjoy this way of learning about the topic? Why/why not?	Positive: 11 Negative: 4 Not answered: 2
g) Would you like to use literature circles when reading books in class in the future? Why/why not?	Positive: 12 Negative: 3 Not answered: 2

Table 4. Student questionnaire: Oral discussion and role cards

The questionnaire also asked the students to comment on how the structure of LC and the different roles/reading responses helped the group *discuss the topic* of apartheid and human rights. The great majority report that it did help. One student says that it helped, “but it was not like a big difference, not like look there is a zebra!”. Among the students who say it helped in the discussion, some comment that it made the discussion more focused and that they got to “hear what my classmates had to say about the book and themes”. Several students highlight how the roles were useful because it gave them an opportunity to learn from each other, “present our viewpoints”, and “share our own opinions and hear what the others had to say”. One student, who did not receive a role because he was late for class, comments that “I learned from the different people who had different roles and it helped the discussion since people had different things to say instead of the same”. Another student stressed the fact that the discussion actually made him speak English in class, and another that “it was good to

discuss with my classmates.” A third student says it was easier to understand the topic when discussing, compared to writing “because we talked about it and it was much easier to understand when you talk about it than it is when you are writing about it”.

More than half of the students maintain that the written reading response helped them participate orally in the discussion. Three students say it did not help due to the limited time they had to prepare, and to not receiving a role because he was late for class, the third did not give any reasons. One student notes that the reading response did not affect his oral participation since the book was short and because he did the reading immediately before the discussion, he would have participated equally actively regardless of doing the written reading response. Two students comment that it was partially helpful, explaining that the written response only helped to answer the questions about the topic they had prepared, not the second part of the discussion. One student, who had the role of the Word Wizard, claims that because he found too few useful words in the book, he could only use a few words in the discussion. The students who were positive to the way the reading responses helped them participate in the discussion explain that as they took turns sharing their responses, they had the “opportunity to discuss while the others listened. Afterwards we shared our own opinions in different roles”. Several students comment that it was easier to take part in the discussion because they were prepared, they knew “more about the text and images”, they knew that they “had something to present”, and had a “kind of a script to rely on”. One student reports that it made him feel calmer “in case I forgot what I was going to say”. Another student says that the written reading response made the discussion more thorough.

The questionnaire reveals that nearly all the students enjoy sharing thoughts and answering questions in collaboration. The majority state that they liked this way of learning about the topic. Four students mention they did not like LC practice because it was boring and because one person in the group could potentially “ruin it all”. The students who liked this way of learning about the topic, comment that they enjoyed it “because it was a breath of fresh air” and “because it was more fun than a normal class”. They also note that “it was fun to see what the other people in my class thought about the topic” and they liked the fact that the teacher-prepared questions because they “really helped when we got into groups and started talking about all of the topics”. Another student enjoys doing LC “because we get to use our English plus we learn things and get to see other perspectives”. Although positive, two students comment on how the group setting affected their experience: “It was quite fun, I did wish that we could choose our own group so that we are more comfortable to talk” and “I

liked it but I think for next time the groups should be separated because it was kind of distracting when the other group talked and uncomfortable”.

Most students are positive to using LC when reading books in class in the future because it stimulated their oral discussion. Several of these students stress that they enjoyed the speaking part of LC, both because they got to talk themselves and not just listen to the teachers as they normally do most of the time, and because they “learn to speak better English”.

4.2.3 Teacher interviews

With regard to the teachers’ experiences with the LC method, teacher B notes that the students tended to be too tied to their roles while sharing their reading responses with the group. Both teachers report that none of the students managed to ask each other questions while sharing their prepared responses to the book, and it was the teacher-prepared questions that encouraged the students to talk to each other. However, teacher A says that “the role cards were still important because it made the students read the book more actively, look for specific things and read several times to find the answers. Also, having prepared something in advance made it feel safer for some students because they knew they had something to share at the beginning of the discussion”. This teacher also emphasizes that “I do not think the discussion had worked that well without the role cards”.

When the teachers were asked how they experienced the students’ oral discussion, teacher B points out the difference between the first and second time the students engaged in LC. The first time, the discussion was somewhat limited and the students did not talk very much. As an explanation, the teacher refers to the lack of differentiation concerning role cards and the organization of the lesson. The second time it worked really well, he says, because of changes implemented based on the first experience. In addition, the teacher notes that the improvements might be due to the students’ awareness of his presence while he listened and assessed the second discussion. Teacher A says that “I was pleasantly surprised that some of my students, whom I have never heard speaking English in class before, actually spoke English.”

The findings in 4.2 suggest that most students, as well as the teachers, stress the positive effects of the LC experiences. In particular, the findings highlight how the literature circles seem to promote engaged ways of reading and to help the students participate in oral discussions. The majority of the students report that they especially enjoyed sharing thoughts

and learning from others while discussing. The role cards seem to have stimulated the following discussion by offering the students a script to support them, especially in the beginning of the discussion.

4.3 Part three: The picturebook medium as basis for discussion

4.3.1 Audio recordings

This section deals with the use of a picturebook as a basis for the LC discussion. The following excerpts of student discussions describe in particular how the students refer to the picturebook's visual elements.

Reading of a picturebook 1: Illustrations as sources of information

Group 2

Student A: The environment is like so much worse. And there's like a crappy fence and muddy and dry and orange and the houses are not the best quality, while on the other side here the boys are still happy and all and they have nice shoes and nice clothes. Everything is green, there is a nice fence, a nice house and they're at a green park, where they could play with a proper football while were the black, who have less rights, probably less money as well. And one of the boys owns a pair of shoes. and they have, like earlier described, like an egg formed ball. It just says a little bit about how they lived like worse life than the white people. Anyone else?

Student C: At the orange picture you can see that the boy is wearing a normal coat that they usually wear but the white boys wear...and white socks, and shoes, but the black kids are, they're not wearing shoes at all. Their football is kinda old and bad and I think it is not enough air in this ball and they're not playing in a soccer field just in the garden, I don't not, like in the streets.

Student A: Anyone else?

Student D: Yeah. I agree with you too because the...team have football jersey, football shoes and socks and proper football butthey don't even have shoes probably,.....they play outside the house/street, because they can't.

Group 1

Student C: The first picture shows me how bad they had it but still they manage to be happy over what they have and how they have it. And the second picture showed me that the white kids had it much better than the colored kids and they have more rights than the black ones.

Group 2

Student A: It is pretty obvious that the lifestyles are different and you can see that by the clothes they are wearing and where they are playing football and their appearance and...yeah it is obvious that the black kids are poor and the white kids are rich.

In the narrative part of *The Soccer Fence*, the text focuses on telling a story about Hector and his dreams of playing football, and does not give many explicit descriptions of living conditions and lifestyles, differences between races, and the consequences of the apartheid system for black people. The illustrations contribute largely to the depiction of these

aspects of the story. The student discussions reveal clearly that the students use the pictures as a help to visualize their understanding of apartheid. They use the illustrations especially when they describe and reflect upon the differences between the races in South Africa during apartheid. Based on the illustrations, the students compare the living conditions of the blacks and whites, as represented by the characters Hector and Chris, and comment that the white children have football shoes while Hector has “no shoes at all” and that the white children have better footballs and football fields than the black kids. Student A in group 2 explains what the illustrations tell him in this way: “It is pretty obvious that the lifestyles are different and you can see that by the clothes they are wearing and where they are playing football and their appearance and....yeah it is obvious that the black kids are poor and the white kids are rich.” Thus, as argued by Dolan, picturebooks have a valuable place in teaching practices to foster intercultural competences (2014, p. 17). The examples presented above demonstrate how specific illustrations help the students develop intercultural competence by demonstrating meaningful concepts and representations of the world. Through the pictures, the students acquire knowledge about living conditions and differences between races during the apartheid period.

Reading of a picturebook 2: Illustrations as a source to characterize people

Group 2

Student A: Okey, next question. *What can you say about the main character of this story?* C, do you want to start?

Student C: Yes. Okay. well I think he is a good kid that he is lovely, but in the start, if you see in the picture, you see he is alone, and nobody’s with him. He has no shoes and is dirty.

Student D: *Do you find something in the illustrations that would help you explain the words/their meanings/relevance?* The picture of the white boy and the black boy raise their fist. This one [sounds showing the picture]. It shows that a black boy and a white boy can be teammates even though they have different color on their skin. Because they belong to the same nation and flag.

Student A: Yeah, I agree with you. I think he’s like ten years old and that he loves football but then it’s like he doesn’t quite understand why the white people just completely ignore him. If you go to here, you can see his face. His like he wants to join in and to me it looks like does understand why he can’t join in.

The students themselves specifically refer to the visual images in the book several times when discussing different issues. Sounds of pages being turned and students saying “here you can see” and pointing at an illustration. In her explanation of how Hector might have felt and experienced the situation, student A, of group 2 makes a clear reference to a picture: “If you go to here, you can see his face”. When describing the main character, student C refers to the picture as a support when she explains “if you see in the picture, you see he is alone”. These statements supports Dolan’s argument regarding how words and illustrations

together “create potentially powerful images of human beings and places” (2014, p. 16). Thus, Dolan argues (p. 16) that picturebooks’ “representations of people, male and female, adult and child [...] foster a range of interpretations”. Her stressing of the role of characterizations conveyed through images as well as words, proves to be highly relevant to the analysis of the excerpts above.

The students actively use the visual elements of the book as a guide to explain the different emotions depicted in the portraits of both the black boy and the white children. Since the textual part of these doublespreads does not say anything about emotions, it is clear that the students’ choice of words like “ignored”, “invisible”, “lonely”, “not included”, “sad”, “pain”, “worried that he can’t play”, and “happy”, is based on their interpretations of the pictures. Student C, group 2 says: “And like the topic of apartheid described like through the setting is...well they completely ignore him, they act like he is invisible, pretend he isn’t there”.

The students also use the characters’ facial expressions throughout the book to interpret the characters’ various emotions related to the process of moving from a segregated society towards a united nation. Thus, the interpretations of the visual characterizations become an important part of how the students understand the issue of apartheid. This shows that the students interact with the pictures as well as the text to “create” or “produce” their individual and also shared responses to the picturebook. This type of meaning-making process, as Daniels points out, is in accordance with Rosenblatt’s reasoning that the text comes to life through the reader’s construction of meaning and explorations (Daniels, 2002, p. 37). In this case, the LC discussions highlight the joint roles of text and images in the process of interpreting and exploring the picturebook.

Reading of a picturebook 3: Illustrations as apartheid symbols

Group 2

Student C: Hector his standing outside like the fence and he wants to play with this boys who are inside the fence and his like “Can I play” and “I wanna play” but they completely ignore him and I think they like classifies the whites they were so much better than every black person so it felt like he was not included, it was just like shut out. And I also feel like the fence is a symbol of the separation between the black persons and the white persons. And like the topic of apartheid described like through the setting is well they completely ignore him, they act like he is invisible, pretend he isn’t there and when he was there his mother was also like don’t make any trouble. so like the punishment for the blacks who made trouble was still so much worse than for the white ones.

[...]

Student A: *What pictures/texts illustrate apartheid/separateness and what pictures/text illustrate hope and a united people? Why?*

Student D: The one that is green and orange kinda of symbols...ehhh...

Student A: Jeg skjønnte ikke det [speaks Norwegian].

Student D: Kind of illustrates apartheid, apartheid because again he’s black and they white and they can play together. They have different color of their skin. Then you get to the....African Cup....

Student B: ...game

Student D: Yeah. Cup of Nations. Then they’re kind of reunited by football and it’s really nice because football can unite all nations. You can clearly see on this page they’re holding their hands up. They’re like becoming friends.

Furthermore, the students point out how the illustrations depict symbols of apartheid. As noted in 4.1.2, student C in group 2 remarks that the illustration of the fence is “a symbol of the separation between the black persons and the white persons”. In addition, some students underscore how the book’s use of colors indicate different living conditions during apartheid. Finally, there are comments on how the depictions of people of different races holding, hands symbolize a united nation.

Reading of a picturebook 4: Lacking visual-verbal literacy

Group 1

Student D: And these words were important to the topic because ehmm, it tells us ehmm how the people felt and their journey to history to racial segregation. And I did find some illustrations that might help explain the words. But the words say a lot for themselves, but some illustrations like Hector and Chris play together shows that there are no more separation between races.

However, some student statements indicate lack of awareness of how the interplay between text and picture is essential in the meaning-making process when reading picturebooks. Student D in group 1 explicitly claims that the text alone included enough information, and indicates that the pictures are not needed. The same student goes on to talk about how the pictures describe how two of the characters in the book hold hands and become friends. Thus, the student is not consistent in his statements and does not seem to be fully aware of the role the pictures play in creating his understanding of the topic.

With regards to the importance of mastering the “skills of looking, appreciating and interpreting visual design”, Dolan argues that children need to practice these skills (2014, p. 16). The findings in this study support this view. In addition, the findings indicate the potential picturebooks have to enhance visual and verbal literacy among students.

4.3.2 Teacher interviews

When describing the students’ reading of *The Soccer Fence*, teacher B points explicitly to the role the picturebook format played to the students’ thoughts and reflections about the topic. The teacher says that, throughout the LC discussion, it became clear that the pictures in the book helped the students visualize what happened, and made it easier for them to “connect general knowledge when they had the aesthetic and the individual characters”. Teacher B further elaborates on this, saying that the picturebook “made the students think more. One thing is to read about the history and give them the specific terms and vocabulary. But it still remains distant to them. But when you give them the book with pictures, you make them think and relate more. Take the example with the picture in the book of the fence that separates. The students clearly see the contrasts in the differences.”

Teacher B also notes that reading a picturebook, and combining learning about the topic with visual images, is in accordance with the principle of varying the teaching material as well as methods: “Literature is a great way to explore different issues, especially topics related to people. After gaining some knowledge about the topic, the students can explore the topic further using pictures, for example how people and faces are portrayed”. The teacher also comments on the significant role the illustrations played in providing the students with a picture of the conditions during apartheid. The teacher says that he observed one student saying that “when we read about it in advance I understood it was bad, but it wasn’t until I saw the pictures I understood how it actually were”.

Teacher B observed that a few students expressed some reluctance to read a picturebook. He reported that, in the beginning of the lesson, some asked if they had to read a children’s book. The teacher comments that using a picturebook may make the students feel that they are being treated as children. This attitude refers to the traditional view that picturebooks target a young audience. However, over the last couple of decades the selection of picturebooks has evolved to address audiences across generations and age levels. As stated by Birketveit, “[t]oday, picturebooks exist for all ages, and they are an art form that challenges readers on all competence levels” (2015). In contrast to this view, picturebooks do

not yet seem to be widely accepted as teaching material in lower secondary school classrooms. Thus, by including a picturebook in this project, the study intends to contribute to the field of research which explores the potential of picturebooks to promote reading skills across age levels.

Both the students and the teachers stressed the role of pictures in visualizing the conditions during apartheid. The students are able to analyse the pictures, and to draw conclusions regarding what the pictures symbolised, and the teachers point out the value of this in the students' effort to grasp the seriousness of apartheid.

The findings in part three reveal that the students used the illustrations as both a source of information, and as a help to characterize people, to relate to their emotions, and to investigate the symbols of apartheid. The findings also reveal a lack of student awareness with regard to the interplay between text and images in picturebooks.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Chapter 5 discusses the findings in the previous chapter in the light of the research questions and the theory presented in chapter 2. The discussion consists of three main parts, each related to a research question, integrating the data collected from audio recordings, student questionnaires, and teacher interviews.

5.1 How can literature circles help students develop intercultural awareness by reading and discussing a book on the issue of apartheid?

5.1.1 Literature circles and the development of intercultural competence

The study supports the view that literature can help promote the understanding of ourselves and other people's experiences and environments. In addition, literature enhances our awareness of language as an essential tool to structure and grasp thoughts, objects, and events (Hennig, 2017, p. 11).

Through the framework of literature circles, the students not only practiced communicative discussion skills, but also simultaneously acquired intercultural knowledge. The audio recordings displayed that the learners, when discussing the book, acquired geographical information, such as the location of South Africa and Johannesburg, the specific place where the story is set. Moreover, the students had to take into account historical references with regard to the individual and social consequences of the apartheid regime, as well as the election of the first black president and the changes it led to. Thus, the students gained insight into the importance of free elections in a democracy. They also discussed the issues of human rights and equality for all races. These topics meet the requirements of The Norwegian Knowledge Promotions' guidelines in that they use literature to promote knowledge, understanding and respect for other cultures (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2013). Employing literature circles also meets the goal to increase the learners' "insight into other people's living conditions, outlook on life and cultural expression, thus opening doors to the many countries and cultures that use English" (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, English subject curriculum, 2013).

As highlighted in 2.5.1, Byram's model of intercultural communicative competence involves linguistic, sociolinguistic, and discourse competence (Byram, 1997, p. 48; 2006, p. 118). The present study shows that the students express intercultural competence regarding all these elements: they use a variety of vocabulary (linguistic competence), they apply language forms in a social setting in order to exchange their reading experiences (sociolinguistic competence), and they use various strategies to interpret and discuss the descriptions of political, social and cultural conditions in South Africa (discourse competence). Thus, the students' understanding of democracy and citizenship is composed of a variety of competences. Byram argues that in our economically and politically interdependent world, "education for citizenship has to take a wider perspective, involving engagement with people of other forms of life or cultures, and with their language and language games" (2006, p. 127). This, Byram argues, is why language teaching must aim to include both linguistic and intercultural competence. The findings in this study show that literature circles, based on a picturebook addressing the issue of apartheid in South Africa, may be beneficial in developing both linguistic and intercultural competence. By discussing how apartheid is portrayed in a picturebook, the learners have the opportunity to understand and become aware of people's life situations, values and challenges in a culture other than their own.

During the LC session the students were not just reproducing the book's content. When they prepared for the LC discussions, they had to choose what to say and how to construct their own understanding of the story and its historical context. Also, through participating in literature circles, the students moved from creating an individual reading response to a social context where they created meaning together.

Literature circles make room for both individual reflection and sharing of thoughts. In the individual task, the students are supported by the role cards in their interaction with the text. In the group discussion that followed, the students are supported by each other. In this way the students learn cooperatively with one another while they share their reading experiences, and thus have the opportunity to grow as learners. The LC-method allows the students to form small communities where creative and autonomous learning processes can emerge. Interestingly enough, in their answers to the questionnaire several students themselves highlighted the way the LC helped them to understand and learn from each other as a reason for enjoying this method.

The findings discussed in 4.1, show that the students used their language skills actively to express their understanding of race, human rights, apartheid and segregation, and

also the significance of the election of the first black president. Moreover, they expressed their empathy and emotions regarding racial discrimination experienced by characters of the book. From the perspective of Byram's ICC model, the findings show that the students' use of vocabulary relevant to the theme helped them to engage in discussion with fellow students about the political, social and cultural conditions in South Africa. They utilized words specifically taken from *The Soccer Fence* as well as vocabulary the class had worked with during the learning unit as a whole. This shows that LC can serve as a method for the students to practice relevant vocabulary in a context focusing on a specific topic.

As a whole, the LC discussions seemed to support the development of the student's intercultural competence by offering learning conditions which include opportunities to practice reading, oral and social skills while working with the intercultural topics of *The Soccer Fence*. However, some students in this study claimed that they wished they had more time to read the book in order to increase their understanding. These statements are worth noting, because they have important implications for teaching. To ensure the students' understanding and LC participation, it is necessary to give the students enough time to read and respond to the book before they enter the group discussion.

5.1.2 The use of the role cards as part of reading responses

The findings of this study reveal that using role cards adapted to the book's content helped the students to observe and analyze the text more thoroughly. In addition, the students' written reading responses prepared prior to the group discussions, made the reading more focused. The responses served to generate and shape the learners' thoughts. The audio recordings, teacher interviews and student questionnaire all confirm this. This corresponds with the intention of the role cards: to help the students to focus their reading and to express their reading experiences in their group, as highlighted in chapter 2 (Daniels, 2002, p. 99). By encouraging the students to approach the text with a specific focus and with their prior knowledge activated, Daniels argues, the students will recall more and increase their comprehension (2002, p. 99).

The role sheets proved to be a useful tool for the students in the reading phase, serving as a preparation for the discussion, and as a helpful way to start the literature discussion. The written reader response prepared ahead of the discussion, ensured that all the students could contribute to it. Thus, the responses functioned as a way of thinking aloud on paper during the

reading process. Accordingly, the individual role cards made it easier for the students to share their thoughts and responses with their group.

However, it should be noted that this way of reading a book may limit the students experience. By guiding them to focus on specific elements in a text, one consequently deemphasizes other elements. Therefore, one might ask if the use of role cards, deprives the students of the experience of reading a book with an open, unbiased mind. Daniels points out the concern that the role cards may lead to a mechanical, restricted discussion rather than a free-flowing discussion about a text (2002, p. 100). This is to some extent evident in the present study. The data revealed that the role cards did not enable the students to talk freely about the book. In this study, what initiated the discussion were rather the teacher-prepared questions.

According to Daniels, the initial design of the role cards is intended to create positive interdependence among the students by assigning clearly defined, open-ended tasks and interlocking roles to stimulate free flowing natural discussion with a cognitive purpose (Daniels, 2002, p. 99). In the present study, this interdependence, in terms of reacting to and encouraging each other's reading responses, was lacking from the first part of the discussion. Some students shared useful reading responses, but because no one asked follow-up questions, the students did not explore these responses further, and thus missed an opportunity to reflect and draw on each other's responses. One reason may be the students' lack of experience with literature circles. Alternatively, the students were not instructed clearly enough as to the value of asking each other elaborative questions. It should also be borne in mind that the students were using their second language, and consequently they may have felt uncertain about how to talk about these kinds of questions in English.

Preparing the students for the group discussion by using role cards led the learners to develop their own opinions and thoughts as a response to the text before entering the discussion. As pointed to in 4.2.1, this is in accordance with reader response theories, which emphasize the reader's active role in the meaning-making process. In her theory Rosenblatt points to "the reader's contribution in the two-way 'transactional' relationship with the text" (1995, p. ix). Similarly, in the present study, the role cards tailored to the specific picturebook guided the students and encouraged them to "go deeper" into their interactions with the text and.

However, as highlighted in chapter 4.1.1, the findings show that the students did not consider or relate the apartheid policy to various possible kinds of discrimination in other

societies, including their own. This suggests the need to design role cards which can help the students connect intercultural issues to their own reality and thus contribute to the development of the students' critical cultural awareness. According to Byram (2006, 117) this competence includes the ability to evaluate critically practices and perspectives in one's own as well as in other cultures and countries.

5.1.3 Need for teacher support to challenge students' perspectives

The present study reveals that, during the first part of the discussion, the students do not challenge each other's viewpoints or pose critical questions based on the information in the role cards, although they examine, explore, analyse, and consider apartheid and human rights to a greater extent in the light of *The Soccer Fence*. The teacher-prepared discussion questions functioned as a scaffold, which enabled the students to discuss the topic more critically.

As seen in chapter 2, Thein, Guise and Sloan (2011) claim that increased teacher participation is needed to challenge the students' perspectives when reading multicultural and political texts. They suggest that when teaching multicultural and political texts, teachers should offer more scaffolding by joining the student-directed literature circles and providing students with discussion tools that "elicit critical rather than personal responses" (p. 23). In accordance with this argumentation, the present study found that teacher participation through the discussion questions enabled the students to explore the topic and the book in greater depth and evoked reflective responses regarding multicultural issues. This highlights the need for clarification of literature circles' discussion practises, to permit students and teachers respectively to become familiar with this way of sharing reading responses. The aim should be to internalize the principle that each group member has an obligation to contribute to the discussion.

5.2 How can literature circles promote oral student discussion about apartheid?

5.2.1 Improvised dialogue

As mentioned in the theory chapter, Waade and Zondag (2018) argue that oral skills in English should be practiced in a social setting in order to stimulate an *improvised dialogue*. This was not achieved by the role cards alone since the students did not engage in oral

discussion. The sharing of reading responses activated five to six individual monologues and ended up functioning more like a preparation for the student discussion than a discussion in itself. However, the study's findings also show that when the students started using the teacher prepared questions, they engaged in improvised dialogues as defined by Waade and Zondag (2018). The dialogues in this part of the LC discussion exemplify that the statements from each participant build upon those of the others and help students create understanding in a fellowship context. Thus, this part of the student-led discussion allowed for social constructivist negotiation, indicating that learning processes and intercultural understanding are reinforced due to interaction in the group.

5.2.2 Leadership roles in literature circles discussions

In his original proposal of role cards in literature circles, Daniels includes a “discussion director”, who is given the responsibility of convening the group, running the conversations and making sure that every group member is given the opportunity to talk (2002, p.104). In his latter edition, Daniels pointed out the problematic and asymmetrical elements of this role (2002, p. 104). He found that this role tended to make the group members too dependent on the discussion director to run the conversation and stimulate the discussion, in addition to being an “inadvertent licence” for one student to dominate the discussion.

In the present project, to see how a “leaderless” LC would function, a discussion director was not included in each group, students took on this responsibility on their own. As noted in the findings chapter, one student in each group took on the role as self appointed leader, being in charge of getting the discussion started. However, during the discussions, other students also took on a leadership role, in particular regarding initiatives to ensure that all group members were encouraged to take part in the discussion. Moreover, the leader role of keeping the discussion on topic or taking the initiative to develop a statement, proved to alternate among group members. Thus, the group discussions seem to have generated multiple leadership roles.

As shown in 4.2.1, the various leader roles, which seemed to occur in turn among some of the students, included the ability to initiate conversations, to address all group members several times and to adapt the language by simplifying the English vocabulary used, or by speaking Norwegian. The interchangeable leader roles, turned out to be very important for the functioning of the discussion by ensuring comprehension by everybody in the group.

The study shows that students at this age-level are able to include fellow students and to lead the discussion on their own without specific guidance. The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (2013) highlights that listening, speaking, conversing and applying suitable communication strategies are part of oral communication and important skills the learners need to develop. The findings in this study imply that LC as a teaching method offers the students opportunities to take on various active roles as listeners, speakers and leaders in the EFL classroom.

5.2.3 Oral activity related to the negotiation of meaning

The findings showed that almost all students contributed significantly to the negotiations of meaning and understanding of the book and apartheid. In the teacher interviews, one teacher remarked that the oral activity in the literature circle was much higher than usual, and that students who normally do not speak aloud in the English classes participated in the LC discussion. Increased oral student response due to use of peer-led discussion is confirmed by other research (e.g. Almasi, 1995). Although increased oral activity in itself does not necessarily say anything about the quality of the conversations or the learning outcomes, the audio recordings confirm that the students stuck to the topics in question throughout the discussion. This indicates that the small-group format of literature circles guided by with teacher-prepared discussion questions, may stimulate learners to take part in oral discussion about apartheid and human rights.

During the discussion part of the literature circle, the students looked back into the text and helped each other in finding terms and expressions in English and clarifying uncertainties. Thus, discussion seemed to support the students' language learning as well as understanding. This valuable second reading of a text intertwined, with a literature conversation is, as Aase claims (2005, p. 106), an essential part of the process of teaching literature. Consequently, a small group discussion centered around a literary text, may help learners expand their minds. As Daniels points out, this is the main intention of literature circles (2002, p. x). In addition, the fact that students are actively participating in small groups in order to share and develop knowledge, is also a central element within social constructivist theory.

Daniels (2002) argues that, because LC is student centered, the LC method gives students opportunities to interact, learn and create understanding through discussions with their peers. In this study, several answers in the questionnaire suggest that the students learned from fellow students during the discussion and that they enjoyed listening to others'

viewpoints. The students say that they appreciated how the roles made them bring various aspects of the book into the discussion and how they could share their opinion with the group. The fact that the students' highlight how they learned from others by discussing, shows that this method helped students become aware of how they could be each others' learning resources. This important aspect highlights the value of student-led discussion during LC. However, this study did not find evidence that the students in a wider sense were able to challenge each other's thinking about the specific topics related to human rights issues. The study can therefore not conclude whether or not the students seem to reach new comprehension levels on this topic by sharing their individual reading responses.

5.2.4 The teacher's role in student-led discussion

Even though the small-group format invited all of the students to use their voices and gave them a chance to think and express their opinions, they were not capable of asking each other challenging questions, or questioning elements of the texts and the topic independently. To do so, the students were dependent on the teacher's voice, in this case through the teacher-prepared discussion questions. Thus, the follow-up questions provided by the teacher did not limit the students' responses, but rather sparked the students' discussion and sharing of thoughts. This suggests an important implication for teaching. Although the ultimate goal for LC, a completely student-led discussion in which the students challenge each other by questioning fellow students' responses, may be hard to achieve, especially without extensive training. Therefore, on the way to more advanced student-driven discussions, there is a need for the teacher's voice, in one form or another, to help the students lift the discussion to a level of critical thinking - where the potential for learning and development is considerable.

5.3 How does the picturebook medium serve as a basis for student discussion in literature circles?

5.3.1 Understanding apartheid through a verbal-visual narrative

The findings indicate that the use of a picturebook in LC may function as a type of adapted education, because the mixture of verbal and visual information seems to provide the necessary scaffolding structure some EFL students would need. Thus, for students with a limited English vocabulary, the reading of the images may have served as a support for their

understanding of the verbal text. However, the book's verbal-visual content may also have motivated and challenged advanced students. In the picturebook medium, the iconotext, that is the interplay between text and images, may involve multiple ways of interactions. Text and images may support each other, but may also complement, enhance and contradict each other (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001, 12). Thus, the combination of two modes of representation, the visual and the verbal, may offer various possibilities for interpretations, and contribute to enhance all students' visual as well as verbal literacy. The findings in this study reveal how the reading of both text and pictures in *The Soccer Fence* deepens the students' understanding, regardless of their previous literacy and language skills.

As pointed out by Bland (2016), many contemporary picturebooks deal with the topic of diversity and intercultural issues, and she argues that picturebooks on these themes have a great potential to enhance EFL students' intercultural competence. Moreover, Bland underscores how the ideological dimensions of language education can be taught through the use of picturebooks telling stories of diversity, multiculturalism, and minorities (p. 42). This point of view is relevant to the present study's research question about how the picturebook medium may serve as a basis for LC discussions. The findings suggest that the verbal-visual narrative of *The Soccer Fence* gives the learners insight into important historical events and everyday living experiences in the South African society.

Bland also highlights the crucial role that images have in the storytelling of picturebooks (2016, p. 46). The pictures "provide gripping access to empathic characters as well as individualised cultural details" and "thus involve the affective dimension of children's learning" (p. 46). In the present study, student statements about their reactions while studying the book, indicate that the book triggered both their emotions and thoughts: "I felt pain when I read the book"; "I felt that the story was sad"; "I thought that the book was interesting". The two teachers being interviewed, reported similar reactions during the LC discussion they conducted. One teacher overheard the following remark by one of his students: "it wasn't until I saw the pictures I understood how it actually were [sic]". As pointed to in 4.1.1, the findings in this study exemplify Rosenblatt's postulate that aesthetic readings of literature may stimulate the students' imagination and empathy by enabling them to experience how words can "make them see and hear and feel and think" (Rosenblatt, 1994, p. 40). In the case of the present study, this applies to how words and pictures, respectively, proved to generate sensuous and empathetic reading responses in the students.

The students were using information from both the illustrations and the text when they discussed the topic. Thus, the verbal-visual story helped them, not only to become emotionally involved, but also to understand the historical events referred to in the book. Bland emphasizes how “the pictures may transform into dynamic mental images that remain in the reader’s repertoire of experience, anchoring ideas, concepts and feelings along with new language - increasing retention of both the language and the message” (2016, p. 46). Bland goes on to point out how picturebooks addressing serious themes “can make breadth and depth of understanding achievable” (2016, p. 46). The present study seems to confirm this conclusion.

This study does not specifically measure what the students learned by reading a picturebook compared to non-illustrated or more sparsely illustrated texts. However, student comments from the data material revealed that they liked the LC way of working with the picturebook. In addition, the interviewed teachers experienced that their students were motivated and engaged. This indicates that the picturebook medium can be a motivating and accessible way of learning about a topic. Teacher comments that a larger number of students than usual spoke during the discussion, suggest that using a picturebook as a gateway to learn about and to discuss the issue of apartheid, may have had an impact. However, this study has not investigated whether increased student engagement is the result of the picturebook medium as such, although the importance of the book’s verbal-visual format is implied in the students’ comments on and interpretation of *The Soccer Fence*.

As noted by Dolan, a multicultural picturebook will not in itself promote intercultural learning (2014, p. 40). Dolan stresses the importance of teacher guidance and the fact that, “to maximize the opportunities for promoting intercultural understanding”, enquiry-based learning should be used (2014, p. 40). Dolan’s statement implies the significance of the teachers’ role in guiding the students when reading verbal-visual narratives on multicultural issues.

5.3.2 Picturebook literacy in EFL-education

The process of reading picturebooks may be related to literacy studies. As pointed out by Arizpe, Farrar and McAdam, picturebook studies and literacy studies “have much in common and a great deal to offer each other” (2018, p. 371). They argue that knowledge about picturebooks can potentially develop into an understanding of “how to code, decode and make meaning across a range of modes” (p. 377). Moreover, Arizpe et al. emphasize that it is

important for teachers to view picturebook readings as a way to encourage “critical reflection on literature, language, and related social literacies” (p. 377). This perspective entails an understanding of literacy skills related to social-constructivist learning theories, a view made explicit by the authors’ in their explanation of literacy competences as “a social practice embedded in a cultural context” (p. 372). The understanding of literacy skills as framed by a social and cultural context is interesting in relation to LC practices involving picturebook readings. How do the students develop and practice visual and linguistic literacy skills while reading and discussing a picturebook? This question is further developed in the discussion to follow.

As argued earlier, the study findings reveal that the students needed the teacher-prepared discussion questions to help them focus on specific illustrations, and to encourage them to reflect upon how the visual images may convey information about the topic of apartheid and human rights. The students were not immediately capable of reading the book as a picturebook by themselves, in terms of using both text and pictures as meaningful elements and sources of information. This finding indicates that in order to fully take advantage of the potential and benefits of picturebook readings, is necessary to increase learners’ awareness of how to interpret relations between words and images.

Guided by the teacher-prepared questions, the learners were able to analyze specific pictures in the book and to use this information to articulate their understanding of apartheid. Examples are their interpretation of colors as a means to describe living conditions, their understanding of the fence as a visual symbol of separation, and their perception of how the image of a black and white boy holding hands, illustrates a united nation. Moreover, the students interpreted the characters’ changing facial expressions as representing various emotions. These observations confirm how the images became part of the students’ meaning-making process while they were reading and discussing the picturebook. In a narrative picturebook, words and images alike contribute to the story telling. Thus, in many ways, the students’ observations illustrate Nussbaum’s statement that narrative art can enable us to see “that circumstances shape not only people’s possibilities for action, but also their aspirations and desires, hopes and fears” (1997, p. 88). Ultimately, we may conclude that the students displayed an ability to investigate how the picturebook’s images, as well as the text, convey meaning related to multicultural issues. Moreover, the students’ negotiations of meaning may be viewed as examples of visual and verbal literacy practices. However, in order to help the

students observe the book's illustrations as well as the text, one must include specific role cards and/or specific guiding questions.

The audio recordings and the teacher interviews in the data material, indicate that most learners clearly experienced the picturebook as engaging. Furthermore, the excerpts from the student discussions, as accounted for in 4.3.1, suggest that the students' observations of both visual and verbal elements contributed to their understanding of social issues during apartheid. Consequently, the use of *The Soccer Fence* as a basis for the LC conversations, gave the students an opportunity to investigate the given text as a *picturebook*, including the experience of how the book's images convey multicultural elements.

As referred to in 4.3.1, one student explicitly states that the text alone included enough information (and that the pictures were unnecessary). However, this contradicts a comment made by the same student later in the discussion, where he elaborates on the image of a black and a white boy holding hands by the end of the book. Thus, perhaps not aware of it himself, the student used both picture and text to interpret information. This indicates that he lacked an awareness of the significance of the interrelationships of verbal and visual modes. This student's reactions underscore the need for learners to have varied reading experiences with picturebooks in order to fully benefit from the medium's multimodal potential.

Birketveit and Williams stress the importance of ensuring a rich environment of literature for learners in the EFL classroom (2013, p. 7). In their view this should include both traditional literary genres, as well as multimodal texts like picturebooks, graphic novels and films. In her chapter on picturebook in this volume, Birketveit emphasizes that picturebooks "draw on and develop learner's graphic as well as verbal skills and thus meet the requirements of the new understanding of literacy" (2013, p. 17). Moreover, she argues that picture books are highly useful teaching tools both at primary and secondary levels (p. 47). This is also highlighted by Yoon et. al. (2010), who claim that picturebooks are increasingly used not only in elementary classes, but more often at higher grades as well. The choice of reading a picturebook for this project was intended to provide the 10th graders with reading experiences with the potential to promote verbal as well as visual literacy.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The aims of the present project were to explore how literature circles could be used in the EFL classroom to teach cultural knowledge about South Africa and to promote oral discussion among the students. In addition, the project investigated how a picturebook could be used to learn about the topic in question.

6.1 Promoting intercultural competence

A principal question explored in the study, is whether the use of literature circles would support the students in developing intercultural competence. The investigated LC practice included reading and discussing *The Soccer Fence*, a picturebook depicting people's lives in South Africa in the period before and after Nelson Mandela was elected president. The results showed that the learners would cooperate to access and investigate the apartheid issue and the change to democracy, and thereby helped each other to construct cultural knowledge about the South African society. The study also found that the students were engaged in the experiences of the picturebook's main character, a Johannesburg township boy. Their engagement demonstrated their willingness to relate to a character's life in a society vastly different from their own. Thus, the LC approach seemed to promote the students' intercultural competence, a central aim the English subject curriculum.

Although, no single method of teaching literature is able to develop intercultural competence alone, the present study highlights the importance of including communicative learning strategies that allow the students to share ideas and discuss intercultural topics. The findings revealed that the LC method, which allows for social interaction in group discussions, may be a beneficial way of engaging the students in intercultural issues.

6.2 Elevating oral competence

The study also demonstrated how the literature circles method may promote oral competences. The LC approach, supported by reading roles and structured discussions, encouraged the students to share their reading experiences, to discuss, and to negotiate opinions. Thus, they were guided, not only to practice, but also to develop their oral competences in English. This included the chance to practice vocabulary relevant to the topics

of human rights, racial segregation and the transition to democracy in South Africa. Not surprisingly, some students had a wider vocabulary than others. However, the discussions reveal that all the students were willing to support each other in the process of understanding and practicing specific words and expressions.

6.3 Developing picturebook reading competence

Another finding included student reactions to the experience of using a picturebook as reading material. Several student comments highlighted to the significance of the visual images during their reading. The illustrations of houses and surroundings in the township, in contrast to the white neighborhood served to add to the students' understanding of the segregation policy. In addition, the depictions of facial expressions and body postures contributed to the students' identification with the main character's feelings and experiences. Thus, the LC method served as a catalyst to engagement with images as aesthetic and meaning making components. As a whole, the study indicated that the role cards and the teacher prepared questions motivated the students to explore artistic expressions, both in visual and verbal modes, and instructed them how to "read" these expressions.

6.4 Encouraging engagement and learning motivation

Responses in the student questionnaire and the teacher interviews revealed that the literature circle method was regarded as a welcomed alternative to other more common teaching practices, and contributed to motivate the students to work on the topic. However, in order to activate the students' critical thinking skills, the learners needed teachers who were involved, either as a discussion partner or by providing carefully prepared discussion questions. The study showed the necessity of carefully designed guidelines to enable the students to explore, understand, and discuss the intercultural aspects of the picturebook.

6.5 Further research on literature circle methods

The present study has discussed the use of LC to teach thematic issues and develop intercultural competence in the EFL classroom. Further research is required to provide more knowledge about the LC method in EFL education. One approach would be to investigate extent to which classroom dynamics changes when student leadership roles are introduced in LC discussions. Another angle would be to explore whether extensive LC practice in the EFL

classroom could result in students sharing more reading experiences. Another interesting topic would be to investigate how students in lower secondary school meet and make use of picturebooks for learning about cultural issues.

Several options are available for developing literature circles focusing in specific topics, not least concerning topics related to ethical issues. For example, due to the increasing attention being paid to humans' impact on nature, the LC method may be tailored to discuss literary works on environmental and ecological topics. Sustainable development is one of three interdisciplinary topics in the *Core curriculum – values and principles for primary and secondary education of the Norwegian school* (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017, p. 16). The LC-method could be one way for the students to approach this topic.

In general, literature circles have to be *situated*, that is adapted to the actual context with regard to time, place and topic. There is a need to design literature circles as a means to discuss literary works across various genres and media. Today, the concept of literature does not imply only written texts, but may include combinations of words, images, sound or other modes. Moreover, various digital media and platforms have expanded the field of literary genres and expressions. Research on LC practices designed for discussions of intermedial texts should therefore be a significant focus in the research field.

This thesis has investigated the use of LC in a framework of lower secondary students' EFL classroom. However, the LC method has a potential to be used in various school subjects and may be adapted to meet the needs of several age groups. Literary works span a variety of topics, and literature may well be employed as a resource for other school subjects. Consequently, LC could be used as a method in various teaching units. A broad scope of LC research would add to the knowledge and understanding of the applicability of this method in a wider educational context.

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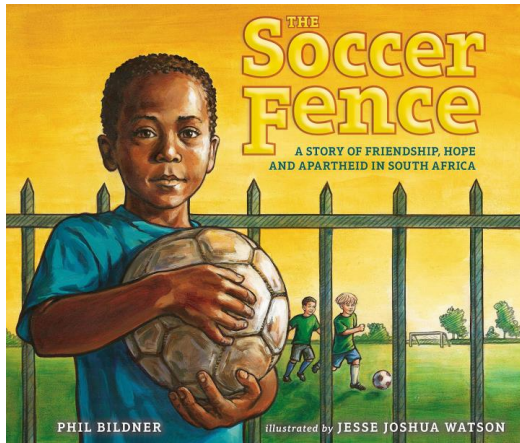
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Appendices

Appendix 1

Forespørsel om deltakelse i forskningsprosjektet "Bruk av litteratursirkler til å fremme muntlig kommunikasjon og interkulturell kompetanse i engelskfaget"



Bakgrunn og formål

Dette forskningsprosjektet er en del av mitt mastergradsstudium i undervisningsvitenskap med fordypning i engelsk, ved Høgskulen på Vestlandet. Formålet med prosjektet er å undersøke hvordan bruk av litteratursirkler (gruppediskusjon knyttet til lesing av en bok) i engelskundervisningen kan fremme muntlig kommunikasjon og interkulturell kompetanse blant elever i engelskfaget. Elevene skal i løpet av høstsemesteret i 10. klasse jobbe med temaet menneskerettigheter, raseskille i USA og apartheidregimet i Sør-Afrika. Som del av undervisningen vil elevene lese skjønnlitterære bøker knyttet til emnet (*Rosa* og *The Soccer Fence*). Litteratursirkler vil bli benyttet som metode ved lesning av bøkene. Det aktuelle forskningsprosjektet ønsker å innhente opplysninger knyttet til lesingen av *The Soccer Fence*. Prosjektet ønsker å finne ut på hvilken måte elevene deltar og reflekterer i diskusjon knyttet til skjønnlitterær tekst om emnet ved bruk av litteratursirkel.

Prosjektet har følgende problemstilling: "Hvordan kan bruk av litteratursirkler i engelskfaget fremme elevdiskusjon og refleksjon knyttet til kulturelle og sosiale forhold?" (How can literature circles promote student discussion and reflection upon cultural and social issues in a L2 classroom?)

Resultatene av forskningsprosjektet vil også bli benyttet til å forbedre undervisning i engelskfaget.

Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?

Du får spørsmål om deltakelse i prosjektet fordi du har en elev i 10.klasse ved skolen som i løpet av høsten skal arbeide med temaet menneskerettigheter, raseskillet i USA og apartheid i Sør-Afrika i engelskfaget. Samtlige elever i klassen mottar forespørsel om å delta i prosjektet.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?

Hvis du velger at barnet ditt deltar i prosjektet, innebærer det at det tas lydopptak av ditt barns deltakelse i en gruppediskusjon knyttet til lesing av en bok. Lydopptakene blir anonymisert og informasjonen vil ikke kunne spores til den enkelte elev. Videre innebærer deltakelse at eleven fyller ut et spørreskjema i etterkant. Spørreskjemaet inneholder spørsmål om elevens opplevelse av å være med i en litteratursirkel. Svarene fra spørreskjemaet blir anonymisert. Jeg vil også gjøre notater underveis i gruppediskusjonene. Det vil være opplysninger om hvordan gruppen snakker sammen om boken som er lest.

Deltakelse i prosjektet innebærer ikke ekstra arbeid for elevene da metoden litteratursirkel og refleksjon gjennom spørreskjema i etterkant er en del av undervisningen. Hvis du ikke ønsker at barnet ditt skal delta i studien, vil han/hun delta i undervisningen som de andre elevene uten å bli observert, og svarene fra spørreundersøkelsen blir ikke registrert.

Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger

Vi vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene vi har fortalt om i dette skrivet. Vi behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket. Det er bare jeg og min veileder som vil ha tilgang til notater som blir gjort. Disse lagres på sikre steder underveis i prosjektet, og slettes når prosjektet er ferdig, mai 2019. Lydopptakene av gruppediskusjonen bli lagret på sikkert område, der bare jeg og veileder har tilgang. Deltakerne vil bli anonymiserte, og gis fiktive navn, slik at det ikke er mulig å gjenkjenne personer i masteroppgaven.

Dine rettigheter

Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:

- innsyn i hvilke personopplysninger som er registrert om deg,
- å få rettet personopplysninger om deg,
- få slettet personopplysninger om deg,
- få utlevert en kopi av dine personopplysninger (dataportabilitet), og
- å sende klage til personvernombudet eller Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger.

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra Høgskulen på Vestlandet har NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Det er frivillig å delta

Det er frivillig å delta i studien, og ditt barn kan når som helst trekke samtykke uten å oppgi noen grunn ved å kontakte prosjektansvarlig. Det vil ikke få noen innvirkning på deres forhold til meg som lærer, eller andre ved skolen, dersom han/hun ikke vil delta i studien, eller senere velger å trekke seg.

Dersom du har spørsmål til studien, ta kontakt med student Runa Bjørlo Schwebs, telefon 98 03 18 33 og e-post: Runa.Schwebs@bergen.kommune.no, eller veileder Zoltan Varga 55 58 55 17 og e-post zoltan.varga@hvl.no.

Med vennlig hilsen

Zoltan Varga	Runa Bjørlo Schwebs
Prosjektansvarlig	Student

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om studien og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til at mitt barn:

- deltar

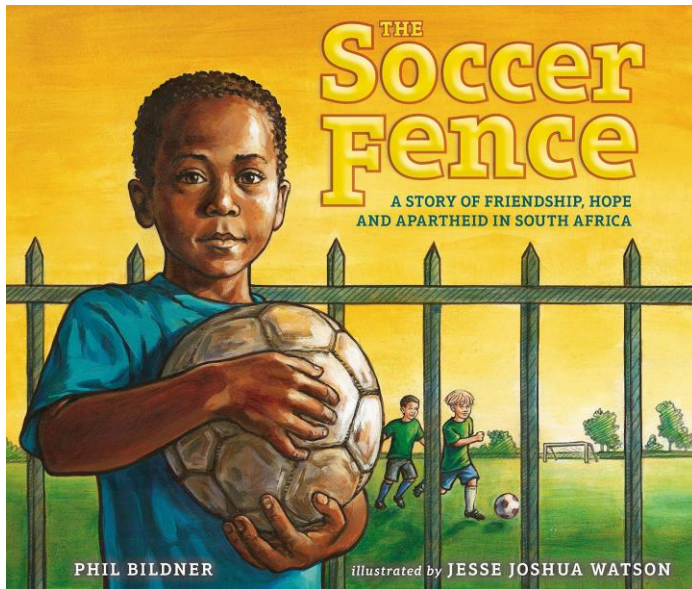
Jeg samtykker til at opplysninger behandles frem til prosjektet er avsluttet, mai 2019.

(Signert av foresatt, dato)

(Signert av elev, dato)

Appendix 2

Forespørsel om deltakelse i forskningsprosjektet ”Bruk av litteratursirkler til å fremme muntlig kommunikasjon og interkulturell kompetanse i engelskfaget”



Bakgrunn og formål

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Resultatene av forskningsprosjektet vil også bli benyttet til å forbedre undervisning i engelskfaget.

Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?

Du får spørsmål om deltakelse i prosjektet fordi du underviser i 10.klasse ved skolen som i løpet av høsten skal arbeide med temaet menneskerettigheter, raseskillet i USA og apartheid i Sør-Afrika i engelskfaget og har brukt litteratursirkel som metode i undervisningen.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?

Hvis du velger å delta i prosjektet, innebærer det at du gjennomfører et intervju med spørsmål knyttet til undervisningen din. Intervjuet blir anonymisert og informasjonen vil ikke kunne spores til den enkelte.

Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger

Vi vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene vi har fortalt om i dette skrivet. Vi behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket. Det er bare jeg og min veileder som vil ha tilgang til notater som blir gjort. Disse lagres på sikre steder underveis i prosjektet, og slettes når prosjektet er ferdig, mai 2019.

Dine rettigheter

Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:

-innsyn i hvilke personopplysninger som er registrert om deg,

-å få rettet personopplysninger om deg,

-få slettet personopplysninger om deg,

-få utlevert en kopi av dine personopplysninger (dataportabilitet), og

-å sende klage til personvernombudet eller Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger.

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra Høgskulen på Vestlandet har NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Det er frivillig å delta

Det er frivillig å delta i studien, og du kan når som helst trekke samtykke uten å oppgi noen grunn ved å kontakte prosjektansvarlig. Det vil ikke få noen innvirkning på ditt forhold

til meg som lærer, eller andre ved skolen, dersom du ikke vil delta i studien, eller senere velger å trekke deg.

Dersom du har spørsmål til studien, ta kontakt med student Runa Bjørlo Schwebs, telefon 98 03 18 33 og e-post: Runa.Schwebs@bergen.kommune.no, eller veileder Zoltan Varga 55 58 55 17 og e-post zoltan.varga@hvl.no.

Med vennlig hilsen

Zoltan Varga Runa Bjørlo Schwebs

Prosjektansvarlig Student

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om studien og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til å

- deltar

Jeg samtykker til at opplysninger behandles frem til prosjektet er avsluttet, mai 2019.

(Signert, dato)

Appendix 3

Questionnaire questions - reflections upon participation in literature circles

During the past weeks you have worked on the topic of human rights, racial segregation in the USA and the apartheid regime in South Africa. We read two fiction books about the topic: *Rosa* and *The Soccer Fence*. The following questions will ask you about your experience of using literature circles when reading these books.

Du velger om du svarer på norsk eller engelsk, alt etter hva du er komfortabel med.

Which role did you have during the literature circle (Word Wizard, Questioner, Connector, Literary luminary or Illustrator?)

Did this role help you in your reading of *The Soccer Fence*? Why/why not?

Did the literature circle help your understanding of the topic of human rights and the apartheid regime? Why/why not?

When doing literature circles in class, we first read the book, then you wrote your own reading response, then you participated in a group discussion. Did this structure help you understand the topic/book and share your thoughts about it? Why/why not?

Did the preparations you did with your specific role help you participate orally in the discussion? (e.i. you knew what to look for, writing your own reading response) Why/why not?

Did the different roles in your group help your group discuss the topic of apartheid and human rights? Why/why not?

Did you enjoy this way of learning about the topic? Why/why not?

Do you want to use literature circles when reading books in class in the future? Why/why not?

Do you have any other thoughts you want to share about his project?

Thank you for your answers!

Appendix 4

Reader response sheet

Name:	Role: Character explorer
Book:	Theme:
<p>Focus on the main character of the story. Find examples from the book of how he/she is described in both words and images (personality/feelings/appearance /thoughts). Find a description of the character that makes especially impression on you and explain why. If I was this person I would feel/think/act.....</p>	
<p>I thought... I liked... I wonder... I felt...</p>	
<p>List favorite/important pages, quotes, scenes, interesting or unknown words:</p>	

Reader response sheet

Name:	Role: Scene setter
Book:	Theme:
<p>Focus on the setting of the story Where/when does the story take place? Choose <i>one</i> double spread and explore how the setting is described throughout the book in both pictures and words? How is the topic of apartheid described through the setting? (find examples from the text + look carefully at the pictures)</p>	
<p>I thought... I liked... I wonder... I felt...</p>	
<p>List favorite/important pages, quotes, scenes, interesting or unknown words:</p>	

Reader response sheet

Name:	Role: Word Wizard
Book:	Theme:

<p>Focus on the vocabulary of the text. Find words related to the topic of apartheid. Explain the words: Why are they important to the topic?(discuss the significance of the words): Do you find something in the illustrations that might help explain the words (the meaning/relevance)? Why did you choose these words?</p>
<p>I thought... I liked... I wonder... I felt...</p>
<p>List favorite/important pages, quotes, scenes, interesting or unknown words:</p>

Reader response sheet

Name:	Role: Text and image explorer
Book:	Theme
<p>Focus on the combination of text and image. Choose <i>one</i> double spread from the book and comment on: What does the picture tell? What does the text tell? Does the text tell something the pictures do not, and the other way around? Why did you choose this double spread?</p>	
<p>I thought... I liked... I wonder... I felt...</p>	
<p>List favorite/important pages, quotes, scenes, interesting or unknown words:</p>	

Reader response sheet

Name:	Role: The connector
Book:	Theme:
<p>Focus on connecting the book. How is the book connected to the topic of human rights? How is the book connected to history/relevance today? How is the book connected to experiences in your life/other people's lives? How is the book connected to news/things you have heard in the media?</p>	
<p>I thought... I liked... I wonder... I felt...</p>	
<p>List favorite/important pages, quotes, scenes, interesting or unknown words:</p>	

Appendix 5

Teacher-prepared questions about *The Soccer Fence*

What can you say about the main character of this story?

- Find p. 15-16 (orange-green pages). Compare the boys on the orange page to the boys on the green page. What differences do you notice? . Are there any similarities? What do these differences tell you about values and different life styles of children in South Africa?
- Look at p. 27-28 (yellow background). In what way does this picture illustrate how sports help unite and create hope for people?
- On p. 13-14 (orange pages) it says “Today, we celebrate liberty!”. What do you think is meant by this?
- On p. 13-14 (orange pages) we find the front pages of three different newspapers. In what way do these tell about an important historical event in the history of South Africa?
- What impact did Nelson Mandela have on all of Africa?
- When reading this book, what information do we get about values and different life styles of children in South Africa?
- What pictures/texts illustrate apartheid/separateness and what pictures/text illustrate hope and a united people? Why?

Appendix 6

Appendix 6

Meldeskjema NSD, 726828

Hvilke personopplysninger skal du behandle?

- Navn (også ved signatur/samtykke)
- Lydopptak av personer

Type opplysninger

Skal du behandle særlige kategorier personopplysninger eller personopplysninger om straffedommer eller lovovertridelser?

Nei

Prosjektinformasjon

Prosjekttittel

Use of Literature Circles to promote Oral Communication and Cultural Knowledge
Exploring the issues of apartheid and human rights through literature circles

Prosjektbeskrivelse

Formålet med prosjektet er å undersøke hvordan bruk av litteratursirkler (gruppediskusjon knyttet til lesing av en bok) i engelskundervisningen kan fremme muntlig kommunikasjon og interkulturell kompetanse blant elever i engelskfaget.

Prosjektet ønsker å finne ut på hvilken måte elevene deltar og reflekterer i diskusjon knyttet til skjønnlitterær tekst om emnet ved bruk av metoden litteratursirkel.

Prosjektet har følgende problemstilling: "Hvordan kan bruk av litteratursirkler i engelskfaget fremme elevdiskusjon og refleksjon knyttet til kulturelle og sosiale forhold?" (How can literature circles promote student discussion and reflection upon cultural and social issues in a L2 classroom?)

Prosjektet innebærer at det tas lydopptak av elevenes deltakelse i en gruppediskusjon knyttet til lesing av en bok og fyller ut et spørreskjema i etterkant. Spørreskjemaet inneholder spørsmål om elevens opplevelse av å være med i en litteratursirkel. Det vil også bli gjort feltnotater i tilknytning til gruppediskusjonen. I tillegg vil det bli foretatt intervju med lærere som har gjennomført litteratursirkel.

Fagfelt

Humaniora

Dersom opplysningene skal behandles til andre formål enn behandlingen for dette prosjektet, beskriv hvilke

Opplysningene vil også bli brukt til å forbedre engelskundervisning ved den aktuelle skolen.

Begrunn behovet for å behandle personopplysningene

Lydopptak er nødvendig i dette prosjektet for å få en helhetlig og detaljert oversikt over elevenes dialog og meningsutveksling tilknyttet litteratursirkelen. Feltnotater blir gjort for å kunne registrere dynamikken elevene imellom under litteratursirkelen. Innhenting av opplysninger gjennom spørreskjema gjøres for å få innsikt i elevenes opplevelse av å være med i litteratursirkelen. Intervju med lærere benyttes for å få innblikk i lærerens opplevelse av hvordan denne metoden fungerte.

Ekstern finansiering

Type prosjekt

Studentprosjekt, masterstudium

Kontaktinformasjon, student

Runa Bjørlo Schwebs, runa.schwebs@bergen.kommune.no, tlf: 98031833

Behandlingsansvar

Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon

Høgskulen på Vestlandet / Fakultet for lærerutdanning, kultur og idrett / Institutt for språk, litteratur, matematikk og tolkning

Prosjektansvarlig (vitenskapelig ansatt/veileder eller stipendiat)

Zoltan Varga, zoltan.varga@hvl.no, tlf: 55585517

Skal behandlingsansvaret deles med andre institusjoner (felles behandlingsansvarlige)?

Nei

Utvalg 1

Beskriv utvalget

21 elever i 10.klasse i engelskfaget

Rekruttering eller trekking av utvalget

Elevene er rekruttert fra egen skole

Alder

15 - 16

116

Inngår det voksne (18 år +) i utvalget som ikke kan samtykke selv?

Nei

Personopplysninger for utvalg 1

- Navn (også ved signatur/samtykke)
- Lydopptak av personer

Hvordan samler du inn data fra utvalg 1?

Papirbasert spørreskjema

Vedlegg

[Questionnaire \(1\).pdf](#)

Grunnlag for å behandle alminnelige kategorier av personopplysninger

Samtykke (art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a)

Hvem samtykker for barn under 16 år?

Foreldre/foresatte

Hvem samtykker for ungdom 16 og 17 år?

Foreldre/foresatte

Deltakende observasjon

Grunnlag for å behandle alminnelige kategorier av personopplysninger

Samtykke (art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a)

Hvem samtykker for barn under 16 år?

Foreldre/foresatte

Hvem samtykker for ungdom 16 og 17 år?

Foreldre/foresatte

Informasjon for utvalg 1

Informerer du utvalget om behandlingen av opplysningene?

Ja

Hvordan?

Skriftlig informasjon (papir eller elektronisk)

Informasjonsskriv

[Informasjonsskriv til elever og foresatte.pdf](#)

Utvalg 2

Beskriv utvalget

Lærere som har gjennomført litterstursirkel

Rekruttering eller trekking av utvalget

Lærerne som har undervist utvalg 1

Alder

22 - 60

Inngår det voksne (18 år +) i utvalget som ikke kan samtykke selv?

Nei

Personopplysninger for utvalg 2

- Navn (også ved signatur/samtykke)

Hvordan samler du inn data fra utvalg 2?

Personlig intervju

Vedlegg

[Interview guide teachers.pdf](#)

Grunnlag for å behandle alminnelige kategorier av personopplysninger

Samtykke (art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a)

Informasjon for utvalg 2

Informerer du utvalget om behandlingen av opplysningene?

Ja

Hvordan?

Skriftlig informasjon (papir eller elektronisk)

Informasjonsskriv

[Lærer - Forespørsel om deltakelse i forskningsprosjektet.pdf](#)

Tredjepersoner

Skal du behandle personopplysninger om tredjepersoner?

Nei

Dokumentasjon

Hvordan dokumenteres samtykkene?

- Manuelt (papir)

Hvordan kan samtykket trekkes tilbake?

Deltakerne kan når som helst trekke sitt samtykke ved å ta kontakt med prosjektansvarlig slik det er opplyst om i informasjonsskrivet.

Hvordan kan de registrerte få innsyn, rettet eller slettet opplysninger om seg selv?

De registrerte kan få innsyn, rettet eller slettet opplysninger om seg selv ved å kontakte prosjektansvarlig. Opplysninger knyttet til papirbasert spørreskjema kan deltakerne få tilgang til ved å få en kopi. Deltakerne kan få tilgang til lydopptak ved å lese transkripsjonen.

Totalt antall registrerte i prosjektet

1-99

Tillatelser

Skal du innhente følgende godkjenninger eller tillatelser for prosjektet?

Behandling

Hvor behandles opplysningene?

- Mobile enheter tilhørende behandlingsansvarlig institusjon

Hvem behandler/har tilgang til opplysningene?

- Prosjektansvarlig
- Student (studentprosjekt)

Tilgjengeliggjøres opplysningene utenfor EU/EØS til en tredjestat eller internasjonal organisasjon?

Nei

Sikkerhet

Oppbevares personopplysningene atskilt fra øvrige data (kodenøkkel)?

Ja

Hvilke tekniske og fysiske tiltak sikrer personopplysningene?

- Opplysningene anonymiseres

Varighet

Prosjektperiode

01.09.2018 - 31.05.2019

Skal data med personopplysninger oppbevares utover prosjektperioden?

Nei, alle data slettes innen prosjektslutt

Vil de registrerte kunne identifiseres (direkte eller indirekte) i oppgave/avhandling/øvrige publikasjoner fra prosjektet?

Nei

Tilleggsopplysninger

119

Deltakerne i utvalg 2 blir muntlig informert i forkant av intervjuet om at de ikke skal gi opplysninger om tredjepersoner, verken elever eller lærere, som kan identifiseres.

Appendix 7

Transcripts

Date: 16.11.18

Audio recordings group 1, 5 students: A, B, C; D, E

Student A: My role is character explorer, and the main characters' name is Hector and he has dark skin and brown eyes and he has a lot of dreams and he likes soccer and it seems like he wants equal rights because he wants to play soccer with the other kids. And a description of the character...here!...ehhmm...this one (finds a double spread in the book and reads). One day I whispered I am going to play on the field just like that. And this made an impression on me because it shows that he dreams big and seems a bit worried that he can't play with them. And if I was this person I would feel a bit sad to be ignored and left out so many times by the other kids. But I would be really happy when I got to play. And I thought it was a nice book and I liked the ending that everything turned out okay. I wonder how it must feel to be discriminated just because of my skin. And I felt pain when I read the book.

Student B: Okey, thank you. Torgeir is next.

Student C: I had the text and image explorer. The first picture shows me how bad they had it but still they manage to be happy over what they have and how they have it. And the second picture showed me that the white kids had it much better than the colored kids and they have more rights than the black ones. The fourth picture shows me that they are celebrating and this one shows me that the boy is left behind while the kids are playing football. The text tells something that the pictures do not, and the other way around. The text says the most and the pictures say at the same time, the only thing it doesn't say that it weren't exactly free when Nelson Mandela was freed in 1990. Ehh, I chose were the boys playing football, happy while it is gone and cannot play. I thought it could have a little bit more info about everything. I like that the pictures show most of what the text did. And I wonder how it was to be under that time. And I felt it was quite said about how kids could play.

Student B: Okey, thank you. I can go next I guess. So purpose is to focus on connecting the book as the role of the connector. First questions was: *How is the book connected to the topic of human rights?*. The book relates to football to the way towards abolishment. The book shares hope and dreams of Hector to play. But the dreams were accepted after South Africa were free of apartheid. *How is the book connected to history/relevance today?* The book tells the story of South Africa and the story of a black boy who wants to play football. Yet the story becomes, no covers the most important parts of the nation's story. *How is the book connected to your life/other peoples life?* This book is about relating football to the many stories of apartheid. This is a fictional book about an actual event. The story of this book may be connected to a story of another child and to apartheid. Hehehe. *How is the book connected to the news/things you have heard in the media?* The book covers how they get to vote, the book connects how they wait (reads again), how they elect Nelson Mandela as the first black president of South Africa. The book tells us how Bafana Bafana won the

ACP (sjekk) and how it united a broken country...a divided country. So *I thought* the book portrayed the story of apartheid in a very interesting way through football and a kid. *I liked* how it all played out and I liked the ending. The story played well with the history of what actually happened in South Africa and *I wonder* how this would happen while in the middle of apartheid in the real world. *I felt* overwhelmed with gratefulness for Mandela and soccer at the end. And to *list favorite/important pages, quotes, scenes, interesting or unknown words*: There was a quote in the book at the end that said: But when Bafana Bafana went on their historic and improbable run, those thirty million blacks - and a reborn nation - found a reason to believe (quote from 'a Little bit of History'-section at the end). Ehh, ja, Dora.

Student D: I am the word wizard, I my job is to focus on the vocabulary of the text. I found some words that were related to the topic of apartheid. First one is freed, liberty, and ANC hero who was Nelson Mandela who became the president...first African...nei...first president...nei (struggles to find the correct word)

Student B: first black

Student D: First black president in South Africa. In 1994. And I found freedom and justice and vote because non-white had the rights to vote after the regime...apartheid ended. And then I found dream is celebrated at the end.

Student B: That's good.

Student D: And these words were important to the topic because ehhm, it tells us ehhm how the people felt and their journey to history to racial segregation. And I did find some illustrations that might help explain the words. But the words say a lot for themselves, but some illustrations like Hector and Chris play together shows that there are no more separation between races. I chose these words because I felt they were related to the topic, it suits the topic very well. And *I thought* it was a great story which combined history with fiction. *I liked* the ending as well because it show that there are no more difference between colored people and white people. And *I wonder* how it felt like that the racial segregation ended because this for sure a little bit different and weird in so many years were separated and then united...like does it ever happen at all? And I felt that the story was said in the end and it was..no...it was a good ending. And my favorite scene was when Hector and Chris play together.

Student (E):And we wrote tiny, so it is hard to read if there is some stuttery.

Student B: Yes...Arthur...?

Student E: Yes, I was the scene setter I was going to find out were the book...ehh.. where the story took place. I found the story took place around 1990s, which is plus minus 5 years, in South Africa. On the page I chose there is a lighter setting than in the earlier pages because the picture is of the 1994 African Cup of Nations...or in 1996 it was maybe. Where the white kid and the black kid stood up in their seats with their right fist up in the air. They found a common thing they both liked instead of racism. Ehh...on the pages I chose, the apartheid isn't described as a huge thing because the black kid and the white kid doesn't act like apartheid was anything. I believe the reason for this is that football is the sport that unites the people...or united the people of South Africa. And football was the thing they had in common. Ehh. *I thought* that the books was interesting and *I liked* the middle and *I wonder* how it went with Hector.

Student B: Okay....

Student A: Done?

Student B: That's it for us I guess. Then we'll....

Student E:..we'll go

Student B: ...start with the papers...

Student A: I want to...

Student E: Calm down!

Student A: Hehe

Student B: Heidi starts I guess.

Student A: Yes, I am a kid.

Student E: Yes we know

Student A: What pictures/texts illustrate apartheid/separateness and what pictures/text illustrate hope and a united people? Why?

Student E: This one is apartheid. Because you see all the black people in the background going to job, work and the white ones are like...

Student C: ...just playing

Student E: ...just playing football or soccer

Student B: What page is this?

Student E: That one. black kid just standing there staring on the people.

Student C: His name is Hector.

Student E: yes. He is behind the fence.

Student C: question mark. Bad

Student E: Are we through with this?

Student B: Wait.

Student C: Did we find....

Student B: We have to find the one with the hope.

Student E: The one with the hope is where...this one.

Student B: Where they stand on the seat on the football stadium.

Student C: And we have the happy ending as well. I can't find it.

Student B: And this is because, you know, on the last picture blacks and whites were seperated but here they are all united in one place cheering for the same thing.

Student E: Okay, so next one. Let's go.

Student B: Look at p. 27-28, the one with the yellow background. In what way does this picture illustrate how sports help unite and create hope for people?

Student C: Which page?

Student D: How can we know which page?

Student B: That one. Yes *In what way does this picture illustrate how sports help unite and create hope for people?* As you can see the picture the people celebrating these people of all races. You can see black and whites celebrate together because a team united them.

Student D: This guy looks Mexican.

Student B: All these people are united because of the team and they have hope that they can become better but they had hope that their team Bafana Bafana can win and they did so.

Student E: ...and this shows hope because the black and the whites are in the same place not against each other or seperated.

Student D: Look how close they are.

Student E: Yeah. Hector and Chris?

Student D: Maybe before they were like...juuh

Student E: But now they are like Bafana Bafana yeah, best friends.

Student B: On p. 13-14 (orange pages) it says "Today, we celebrate liberty!". What do you think is meant by this?

Student E: This one?

Student B: Yeah

Student E: I think that

Student D: Wait, what's the question?

Student E: It says that "*Today, we celebrate liberty!*". What do you think is meant by this? I think that what they mean about this is that because Nelson Mandela was elected as the first black president

Student D:..and he won.

Student E: yeah he won. They printed it in the campaign. He was the first black president in South Africa they maybe meant that that would be a liberty of the black people and the end of apartheid.

Student B: Oh yeah right. Because they could vote. They got their liberty so they were celebrating that they could vote.

Student D: you are talking too much.

Student E: yes

Student D: you are saying all the good stuff.

Student A: it is my turn.

Student E: Tormod, you need to talk now.

Student A: On p. 13-14 (orange pages) we find the front pages of three different newspapers. In what way do these tell about an important historical event in the history of South Africa?

Student C: I say it shows the election and that Nelson Mandela is starting to win the poll for being the president for South Africa and that he finally wins and then give them equally rights. I think that this can be an important historical event because for the first time it was a black president or a black president candidate up against a white one and then if the white one won the black would have more rights and more...ja...

Student E: And the newspapers tell the story. First they tell the people that they need to vote, then we see that NAC leads with Mandela at the front and then it says that he won.

Student B?: That is kind of the three stages of the election.

Student E: yeah.

Student A. Alright, I have question. Doesn't he look a bit like a panda?

(Laughter from the other students)

Student A: He does.

Student C: In what way?

Student A: just look at his face (laughs)

Student E: Are you bullying the first black president of South Africa?

Student D: yes she does.

Student C: That is not good.

Student E: It is very racist.

Student A: it a black panda.

Student E: very bad.

Student B: What impact did Nelson Mandela have on all of Africa?

Student A: Hmm?

Student B: What impact did Nelson Mandela have on all of Africa?

Student C: everyone got along and...not at first but then he planned a cup and sport united people.

Student E: I think the impact is that he can show everyone that ehhe that everyone can have equal rights if they fight hard enough and stay together.

Student B: just in South Africa he united a country that was divided because of race and apartheid and racial biloss (?)

Student D: jeg tar neste (speaks in Norwegian).

Student A: Find p. 15-16 (orange-green pages). Is it this one?

Student E: yes it is this one.

Student A: Compare the boys on the orange page to the boys on the green page. What differences do you notice?

Student B: The boys on the green page has football shoes while the boys on the orange page has....

Student E: ...barely shoes

Student B: ...no shoes at all

Student A: ...barefoot. And the balls.....

Student B: the ball...the boys in the green page has better football than the boys in the orange. They had an actual field to play on with green grass while the orange just had sand and stones and sticks.

Student A: And if you see in the back there is a nice house here and townships here.

Student B: yeah and they have an actual fence, opposed to the black guys.

Student E: just some sticks

Student B: and rope

Student E: or wire and sticks

Student A: But you guys started talking before I had read all the questions. (laughs).

Student E: That's okay

Student A: Are there any similarities? What do these differences tell you about values and different life styles of children in South Africa?

Student B: Are you finished now?

Student A: yeah

Student E: They all play football, That's a similarity.

Student B: They are...there are three kids on each page. They both had a ball.

Student A: They're all smiling

Student B: yeah, they're all having fun doing what they do.

Student E: There are houses on both of the pages, but not the same quality

Student B: yeah

Student E: there are fences but not the same quality here

Student B: similarities...they are in groups of three, playing, having fun together

Student E: with a football

Student B: ...with a football, so yeah

Student E: next question

Student B: ehh..When reading this book, what information do we get about values and different life styles of children in South Africa?

Student B: the black and colored they have worse quality of houses and land

Student E: opposed to values....and...I forgot the question. Read it out loud.

Student B: what information do we get about values and different....

Student A: lifestyles

Student E: lifestyles. As you can see on the green page the white kids are much more privileged and have much more stuff than the black kids on the left but they're all pretty happy on this pages but there are different in quality between them.

Student B: next.

Student A: I can.

Student B: no. you calm down

Student E: What can you say about the main character of this story?

Student A: I can say something. His name is Hector.

Student E: He is black
Student A: Sounds a bit racist.
Student E: yeah, but that's true.
Student C: non-white
Student A: he has dark color of his skin
Student E: His black
Student A: ...(laughs)thought you say his fat
(everyone laughs)
Student E: no his B-L-A-C-K
Student B: he is skinny, likes football, wants to join the more privileged kids, the non-blacks.
Student E: he has hopes and dreams to play football with them.
Students B: the blacks...the white guys.
Student C: Yeah, I agree.
Student B: Are we done now?
Student C: I think so.
Student B: yes we are.

Date: 16.11.18

Audio recordings group 2, 5 students: A, B, C; D, E, (F)

Student A: Hvem er word wizard? (speaks in Norwegian)
Student D: okay. Multiracial...I discovered...very weird....but yes...but racial is a thing that has more than one race that like in the book they said that at the end I think. It was here somewhere that they chose when Nelson Mandela got elected for president he became the....
Student A: du kan si det på norsk.
Student D: neinei
Student E: det står jo på engelsk
Student D: there were more than one race that was controlling the country
Student E: Nice
Student D: the teammates are very important because they all have to play on the same team because they all divided country when and then....yeah..in 1996 there were African Cup of Nations and then the cup got the country reunited. *Why are they important to the topic?* because all people are equal no matter what....no matter the race or the color of your skin. It doesn't mean that a white person can't be teammate with a black person. *Do you find something in the illustrations that would help you explain the words/their meanings/relevance?* The picture of the white boy and the black boy raise their fist. This one (shows the picture) It shows that a black boy and a white boy can be teammates even though they have different color on their skin. Because they belong to the same nation and flag. And....*why I chose these words...*because they have meaning behind them.
Student A: Okay. Who's next?
Student B: Brage
Student A: ka har du?
Student E: (unclear sound)
Student A: Okay, Malin da.

Student B: Meg?

Student A: yes

Student B: eh...I have character explorer. I can begin with Hector which is the main character. And I have chosen to write about that he is a good kid, and this one (shows a picture) I think and the picture tell he was. He is lonely. He was a bit lonely at the upstart while he tried to say hi, but the others were not listening. And he has blond hair and brown eyes and he has a sister and he likes football. And then we have the blond boy. He has blond hair and wears orange t-shirt, he has brown eyes and his name is Chris. He likes football and he is nice and friendly and this is how I chose to describe the character this is what made especially impression on me. With Hector it was at the football game, he was so into it and happy and shouted when they scored the goal. and that means that he is a great and happy kid...boy...who likes football and he is very happy in a way. If I was this person I would feel that they only ignore him on the picture then they scream hi two times. But they both like me in the same way not like me in the same way. And I thought that it was sweet when Hector and Chris play football together in the last picture.

Student C: Okey. I have the role as the scene setter. This story likes happen in South Africa in about 1993 to 1996 ish because it's like before Nelson Mandela is chosen president but also when Bafana Bafana wins the African National Cup. the action takes place in a Johannesburg township and like the fence decide where the black people live to be like separated from the whites. and the...I chose a double spread. I chose this one. The task is like describe how the setting is described through the book with both pictures and words. so here it is...Hector his standing outside like the fence and he wants to play with this boys who are inside the fence and his like "Can I play" and "I wanna play" but they completely ignore him and I think they like classifies the whites they were so much better than every black person so it felt like he was not included, it was just like shut out. And I also feel like the fence is a symbol of the separation of between the black persons and the white persons. And like the topic of apartheid described like through the setting is well they completely ignore him, they act like he is invisible, pretend he isn't there and when he was there his mother was also like don't make any trouble. so like the punishment for the blacks who made trouble was still so much worse than for the white ones. Ehhm, so that was basically all I had to say. So....Martha, you're up.

Student A: So I am the connector and I think the book is connected to the topic of human rights because the book included both things, racial segregation and at the end apartheid was abolished in South Africa. and this is a possible story and it could have happened in the past. And that's way the book is connected to history today. And maybe a boy in the 1990's actually experienced this or not exactly like the book explained it, but a similar situation. and we don't know if it happened, but it is possible. And it is a relevant story about a black kid while apartheid was going. and black and white people were separated and they could not play together and I wonder if the white boy was afraid to answer the black boy, because he didn't want to get in any trouble for talking to him. Like in this picture he, Hector was standing outside the fence asking if he could play with the white boys, but they didn't answer him and just kept playing and maybe they're having. The last page eh...the last page were they play football together maybe that is a symbol that apartheid was over and finally black and white people could be together without consequences.

Student C: Do you have anything to say? I know you lost your reader response sheet. But do you have anything?

Student E: Nei ikkje en drit.

Student C: Are we just going to start with these questions then.

Student D: I just have something to say. I am the word wizard and my job was to focus on the vocabulary of the text.

Student C: Yes. Should we get the questions. First question: Find p. 15-16 (orange-green pages). Compare the boys on the orange page to the boys on the green page. What differences do you notice? . Are there any similarities? What do these differences tell you about values and different life styles of children in South Africa?

Student C: That the page.

Student B: Compare the boys on the orange page to the boys on the green page. What differences do you notice? . Are there any similarities? What do these differences tell you about values and different life styles of children in South Africa?

Student D: Who wants to start?

Student A: I'll start. Like the boys on the orange page they play football and they're happy and all, but the environment is like so much worse. And there's like a crappy fence and muddy and dry and orange and the houses are not the best quality, while on the other side here the boys are still happy and all and they have nice shoes and nice clothes. Everything is green, there is a nice fence, a nice house and they're at a green park, where they could play with a proper football while were the black, who have less rights, probably less money as well. And one of the boys owns a pair of shoes. and they have, like earlier described, like an egg formed ball. It just says a little bit about how they lived like worse life than the white people. Anyone else?

Student C: At the orange picture you can see that the boy is wearing a normal coat that they usually wear but the white boys wear...and white socks, and shoes, but the black kids are, they're not wearing shoes at all. Their football is kinda old and bad and I think it is not enough air in this ball and they're not playing in a soccer field just in the garden, I don't not, like in the streets.

Student A: Anyone else?

Student D: Yeah. I agree with you too because the....team have football jersey, football shoes and socks and proper football butthey don't even have shoes probably,.....they play outside the house/street, because they can't

Student A: E or F, do you have anything to say?

Student E: Dokker har faen sagt alt.

Student A: Okey, next question. What can you say about the main character of this story? C, do you want to start?

Student C: yes, Okey. well I think he is a good kid that he is lovely, but in the start, if you see in the picture, you see he is alone, and nobody's with him. He has no shoes and is dirty. Well he has a sister who is, they are very close, and they they're together, but when he tries to going to these three boys with the football, they don't see him, and I think he just tries and tries when he tries because...he tries to get their attention but they don't give him one so he come along the next day but..... even the second day so guess he is a bit lonely andfriends he can play with. And they have all proper shoes they can play with and so I think he is a good kid so...but in the end he play with the ones who have the same clothes and the same. So I think he's, I think he likes football to.

Student A: yeah, I agree with you. I think he's like ten years old and that he loves football but then its like he does quite understand why the white people just completely ignore him. If you go to here, you can see his face. His like he wants to join in and to me it looks like does understand why he can't join in.

Student C: yeah

Student A: and yeah, so except that I think you said it about everything. Noone got anything else to say?

Student C: E or B?

Student E: yes

Student B: yes, mam. I think Hector is not really understand what's going on in the apartheid because it doesn't seem like it is affecting him that much.

Student A: But I think that this was like after the apartheid was abolished because it was still some like left. Or do you agree? Well, how long did this last for? You know Nelson Mandela was chosen as a president in 1994, and they won the football series in 1996.

Student B: Now you see here he's not selected yet, it is just 1990. He was elected in 1994.

Student A: Okay, I did not notice that.

(laughter)

Student B: Yeah, next question.

Student D: wait.

Student B: Do you guys have anything to say? Yes.

Student D: He looks very poor and it is very bad for him because he is poor and the white kids are rich. ehhh..I think dress good with good intentions not really easy to do in football

Student B: Yeah

Student D: but they just completely ignore him. And he still does not understand that his...yeah....he is different from them because he is black and they are white.

Student B: yeah

Student D: and he's poor and they're wealthy and rich.

Student B: Okey, should we get the next question? E?

Student A: When reading this book, what information do we get about values and different life styles of children in South Africa?

Student B: D, do you want to answer that?

Student D: it seem like the white kids are normal, or like not normal in terms of how rich but the black kids seem like they do not have that much money, I don't no, maybe that's way they live in the(uklar lyd)

Student B: C, do you want to way something?

Student A: It is pretty obvious that the lifestyles are different and you can see that by the clothes they are wearing and where they are playing football and their appearance and....yeah it is obvious that the black kids are poor and the white kids are rich.

Student B: Yeah, next?

Student A: What pictures/texts illustrate apartheid/separateness and what pictures/text illustrate hope and a united people? Why?

Student D: The one that is green and orange kinda of symbols...ehhh...

Student A: Jeg skjønnte ikke det.

Student D: kind of illustrates apartheid, apartheid because again he's black and they white and they can play together they have different color of their skin. Then you get to the....African Cup....

Student B: game

Student D: yeah, Cup of Nations. Then they're kind of reunited by football and it's really nice because football can unite all nations. You can clearly see on this page they're holding their hands up, they're like becoming friends.

Student B: That's a good answer.

Student A: yeah

Student D: next. How about....

Student B: E, do you want to say something?
Student D: Maybe you should say something?
Student B: Yes E, English
Student B: Okey, we have a comment about....
Student A: E, speak to....
Student E: no
Student D: E, E, det står at noe som illustrerer apartheid
(They all speak unclear Norwegian)
Student A: In the purple page you can see they are...the newspaper it says end of apartheid
question mark. And that symbols hope and that apartheid was abolished
Student E: den er blå
(They all speak Norwegian)
Student C: it's purple. Hvilken farge er drue?
Student D: noe som symboliserer apartheid.
Student D: on the page in front here you can clearly see apartheid because they are poor
Student E: and they're black
Student D: yeah and they're outside. If they had been white they would have been inside.
Student A: Rich and they have a house
Student D: Tv. And a big house or a mansion
Student A: yeah, they would have been inside or...
Student D: yeah, and not one TV for one, two, three, four, five, six, eight people.
Student A: Next
Student B: Okay, next, C?
Student A: What impact did Nelson Mandela have on all of Africa? Anybody?
Student C: He gave hope to everybody.
Student A: Yeah, I agree.
Student D: and he loved sports, which says in the book. And football. And again, can I say it?
It is a very nice way to.....ka heter det på norsk? Connect the nation. Because they
were very divided and then they got to the final and won the African Cup of Nations
and then they kind of became teammates. Yes, anyone else? About how he made an
impact?
Student B: A, did you have comment?
Student D: I think that it is really good that you he went to prison for 27 years just to
make...or...he suffered so other people could....
Student A: yeah, and I think that when he was in prison they believed in him and he was
going to get out, so he could help them and save them.
Student B: Okey, next question.
Student C: Look at p. 27-28 (yellow background). In what way does this picture illustrate how
sports help unite and create hope for people? I feel like it illustrates it like in South
Africa can make everything together, black or white, because it is there like countries
football team so blacks and whites can celebrate together and their proud of what their
country had done together, so that reunites them through that.
Student D: yeah, exactly what you said three times.
Student B: And by playing and watching football, they have, black and white people have a
thing in common. So they can all be friends and talk about it. Playing.
Student D: It is the biggest word(?) in the worlds, so it is.....it's a way that reunites and divide
people or nation. Ekkje vi ferdig da
Student B: yes, we have one more question right here. You wanna read it?
Student D: On p. 13-14 (orange pages) it says "Today, we celebrate liberty!"

Student A: This one?

E: Nelson Mandela (sings)

Student A: Den avisgreiene

Student D: *it says "Today, we celebrate liberty!". What do you think is meant by this?* They are saying that Nelson Mandela is out of prison and then they can celebrate liberty because he brought freedom from apartheid and...

Student B: they can vote on who

Student D: who they want as president

Student B: yes, who they want as president and they can vote on Nelson because he is out of prison.

Student E: Nelson Mandela (sings)

Student D: yeah, because he went to prison for 27 years for his people

Student B: and now he can be president

Student B: Anyone else wants to say something?

Student C: people has a saying and the can vote and kind of chose what president they want instead of just not having a saying it all.

Student D: yeah, because he is not one people...or not one person...no not one race leading the country anymore. It is the whole nation or the whole country and...

Student A: yeah, and they know that when Nelson Mandela is president he will be fair and treat the people right and people's right happen so they are free because the president is black....

Student D: are we finished now?

Student B: I think we're done.

Student E: Nelson Mandela (sings)