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MASTER'S THESIS

Critical thinking in the EFL classroom:

A qualitative study on the definition of critical thinking, and the use of graphic novels in the EFL classroom to develop critical thinking skills

Vilde Marie Skjæveland

Master's in education with English Didactics

Faculty of Education, Arts and Sports

Supervisor: Matthew Scott Landers

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Abstract in English

This thesis investigates how critical thinking is defined and how working with graphic novels in the EFL classroom can develop critical thinking skills. This thesis investigates what aspects that are involved in the process of thinking critically, and what is important to focus on to develop critical thinking. Critical thinking became a part of the Core curriculum in 2020, which says that teaching and training "shall give the pupils understanding of critical and scientific thinking" and "must create an understanding that the methodologies for examining the real world must be adapted to what we want to study and that the choice of methodology influences what we see." (Kunnskapsdirektoratet, 2017). Previous research shows that teachers mostly teach critical thinking with argumentation and source criticism, and it is mostly done in Social Studies, Mathematics, Science, and Religion, but not in the English subject.

To get a better understanding of the term critical thinking, I have done a thematic analysis of two papers, one written by John Dewey (1910), where he writes about thought and reflective thinking. The second is written by Robert Ennis (1985), where he writes about the definition of critical thinking. The results are discussed with a focus on answering the first research question of this thesis. There is a separate discussion chapter that focuses on answering the second research question. In the same chapter, there is an application on how to potentially use *The Giver: Graphic Novel* (Russell, 2019) in the English classroom. The application focuses on how to ask students questions to start a classroom dialog to get longer and more meaningful answers. It also focuses on group activities, where they must reflect and justify their answers. Some activities challenge pupils to stand in ethical dilemmas where they might have to argue for a point of view that they do not support.

The conclusion to the first research question is that the term reflection is extremely important to be able to think critically. Searching for evidence, gaining knowledge, and being open-minded to changing your beliefs are all important to thinking critically. However, critical thinking is hard to define in a short thesis like this, so there is a need for more research in this area. In the second research question, the conclusion is that critical thinking skills can be developed in the English subject. The type of questions we ask pupils, activities we give, and getting pupils aware of their knowledge, play a part in developing critical thinking skills.

Abstract in Norwegian

Denne oppgaven undersøker hvordan kritisk tenkning er definert og hvordan arbeid med grafiske romaner i Engelsk klasserommet kan utvikle kritisk tenkning. Denne oppgaven undersøker hvilke aspekter som er involvert i prosessen med å tenke kritisk, og hva som er viktig å fokusere på for å utvikle kritisk tenkning. Kritisk tenkning ble en del av læreplanen i 2020, som sier at undervisning og opplæring «skal gi elevene forståelse for kritisk og vitenskapelig tenkning» og «skape en forståelse av at metodene for å undersøke virkeligheten må tilpasses det vi ønsker å studere, og at valg av metode påvirker det vi ser.» (Kunnskapsdirektoratet, 2017). Tidligere forskning viser at lærere stort sett underviser kritisk tenkning relatert til argumentasjon og kildekritikk, og at det gjøres mest i samfunnsfag, matematikk, naturfag og religion, men ikke i engelskfaget.

For å få en bedre forståelse av begrepet kritisk tenkning har jeg gjort en tematisk analyse av to artikler, en skrevet av John Dewey (1910), hvor han skriver om tenkning og reflekterende tenkning. Den andre er skrevet av Robert Ennis (1985), hvor han skriver om definisjonen av kritisk tenkning. Resultatene diskuteres med fokus på å besvare det første forskningsspørsmålet i denne oppgaven. Det er et eget diskusjonskapittel som fokuserer på å svare på det andre forskningsspørsmålet. I samme kapittel er det en applikasjon om hvordan du potensielt kan bruke *The Giver: Graphic Novel* (Russell, 2019) i det engelske klasserommet. Applikasjonen fokuserer på hvordan man stiller spørsmål til elevene for å starte en klasseromsdialog for å få lengre og mer meningsfulle svar. Den fokuserer også på gruppeaktiviteter, hvor elevene må reflektere og begrunne svarene sine. Noen aktiviteter utfordrer elevene til å stå i etiske dilemmaer der de kanskje må argumentere for et synspunkt de ikke støtter.

Konklusjonen på det første forskningsspørsmålet er at begrepet refleksjon er ekstremt viktig for å kunne tenke kritisk. Å søke etter bevis, få kunnskap og være åpen for å endre troen din er også viktig å tenke kritisk. Kritisk tenkning er vanskelig å definere i en kort oppgave som dette, så det er behov for mer forskning på dette området. For det andre forskningsspørsmålet er konklusjonen at kritisk tenkning i engelsk faget, kan føre til utviklingen av kritisk tenkning. Typen spørsmål vi stiller elevene, aktiviteter vi gir dem, og bevisstgjøring av egen kunnskap, spiller en rolle i å utvikle kritisk tenkning ferdigheter.

Acknowledgement

Writing this means I finished my MA thesis. This year has challenged me in ways that I have not been challenged before, but it has also taught me a lot about myself and what I am capable of. After many hours of crying, and probably 1000 hours of writing, I finally did it, I finished. This marks the end of my time at HVL, but also a new chapter as a qualified teacher with my future in from of me. I look forward to bringing my knowledge about critical thinking into my work as a teacher.

I want to thank my supervisor Matthew Scott Landers for believing I could write about this topic, but also for all the knowledge he has shared with me. I would not have written my MA about critical thinking if it was not for him. He is the best teacher I have had in my 5 years at HVL. I also want to thank my friends and family for all the support and encouragement they have given me this year. Thank you to all my colleagues at work that has motivated me to write and let me rant when I needed to. The biggest thank you goes to my boyfriend Daniel; I would not have been able to finish this without you. You have been with me every day, you gave me balance, showed me that I need breaks, and sat with me at school till I finished my goals for the day. You are the best study partner a girl could ask for. Thank you for all your love and support. I am looking forward to our next adventure as teachers.

Vilde Marie Skjæveland

Bergen, May 15th, 2024

Table of Contents

List of figures

List of abbreviations

L97 – Læreplanverket av 1997

LK06 – Læreplanverk for kunnskapsløftet 2006

LK20 – Læreplanverket for Kunnskapsløftet 2020

EFL – English as a Foreign Language

FL – Foreign Language

HCTA – Halpern Critical Thinking Assessment.

TA – Thematic Analysis

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

1.1.1. Critical thinking in the curriculum L97 – LK20

In both *L97* and *LK06*, critical thinking has been mentioned in the curriculum, but in the curriculum *LK20*, critical thinking and ethical awareness became a core value. In the curriculum it says that schools shall make pupils become "inquisitive, ask questions, develop scientific and critical thinking and act with ethical awareness" (Kunnskapsdirektoratet, 2017). Even though critical thinking has a bigger spot in the curriculum, many teachers criticize the way it is defined. Their opinion is that the definition is too vague and that there is a lack of knowledge from teachers. Researchers agree that for a school to work with critical thinking, teachers need an understanding of the term (Lindseth, 2022, p 35; Munkebye & Gericke, 2022, p. 26; Ferguson & Krange, 2020, p. 203). This section looks at how critical thinking was defined over the years in the Norwegian curriculum, and if teachers should have a better understanding of the term than they do.

In *L97*, the term "thinking" was more used than the term "critical thinking". *L97* says that education should include training of thought (Nasjonalt læremiddelsenter, 1996). From the *L97* curriculum, critical thinking is defined as testing whether the assumptions for and the individual links in a train of thought hold. Teaching aims to train pupils to combine and to analyze - to develop both imagination and skepticism so that experience can be translated into insight (Nasjonalt læremiddelsenter, 1996, p. 24). Critical thinking is placed under the title: scientific way of working, which links critical thinking to science and not subjects like English. (Nasjonalt læremiddelsenter, 1996, p. 24).

In 2006, when *LK06* came into the schools, it was said that the schools were supposed to stimulate the pupils and apprentices to develop their own learning strategies and ability for critical thinking (Utdanningsdirektoratet, u.d.). *LK06*'s definition was then: "Critical thinking involves testing whether the assumptions for and the individual links in a line of thought holds" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2015a, s. 7, cited in Holmer, 2020, p. 23). This definition is even shorter than the one in L97, it is also very vague and does not tell us what critical thinking really is. In *LK06*, critical thinking was also linked to science, just as it was in *L97*.

In 2020, the new curriculum came out to Norwegian schools and critical thinking and ethical awareness got a spot in the core curriculum. Now critical and scientific thinking are defined as: "applying reason in an inquisitive and systematic way when working with specific practical challenges, phenomena, expressions, and forms of knowledge. The teaching and training must create understanding that the methodologies for examining the real world must be adapted to what we want to study, and that the choice of methodology influences what we see" (Kunnskapsdirektoratet, 2017). Critical thinking has gotten a wider definition, but in several interviews with teachers, they say that the curriculum is not clear in the definition, which makes it hard to work with in school (Lindseth, 2022; Munkebye, E., & Gericke, N.,2022; Reffhaug, et al., 2022). In the curriculum (*LK20*), critical and scientific thinking have the same definition, which makes critical thinking still linked to science. This can be seen in the fact that the competence aims in Social Study and Science and Mathematics explicitly mention critical thinking, but it does not in the English subject. The first time the words "critical" and "thinking" is mentioned in English are in year ten of the curriculum. In a competence aim it says, "explore and describe ways of living, ways of thinking, communication patterns and diversity in the English-speaking world" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020) and this is the only time thinking is mentioned. "Critical" is used twice, the first time in a competence aim: "use sources in a critical and accountable manner" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020), which links critical to source criticism, and not necessarily critical thinking. The second time it is mentioned is meant for teachers assessing their pupil's work. It says the teachers "shall plan and facilitate for the pupils to demonstrate their competence in various ways, including through understanding, reflection, and critical thought, and in various contexts" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020). This refers to teachers also needing critical thinking, but research shows that teachers themselves do not feel like they have enough knowledge about this topic (Lindseth, 2022, Ferguson & Krange, 2020).

Back in 1997, critical thinking was a part of the curriculum, it even had a definition. It was not before *LK20* that it got attention and was talked about in the news and at schools. We could argue that teachers should have known more about critical thinking than they do. It seems like critical thinking has always been problematic to teach. According to the curriculum, critical thinking has the same definition as scientific thinking, but are these terms the same? This is something that will be discussed in this thesis.

1.1.2. Literature in EFL classroom

Research has shown that there is a link between motivation and difficulty in concentration (Harberg & Håkensen, 2024; Blomstad, 202; Byberg & Tybring, 2005). It can be easier to find a topic or book that pupils find interesting than work on grammar. Working with a book that pupils find interesting, can motivate them to read more, and from this, it can increase their reading level (Rimmereide, 2013). Graphic novels can be adapted to probably everyone. Pupils with a higher reading level can read books without pictures, they can also understand the bigger meaning between images and text in graphic novels. Pupils with a lower reading level might not understand all of the text but can understand the meaning of the story by looking at pictures (Rimmereide, 2013). Picturebooks and audiobooks are also an option for the lower reading level pupil. Books bring motivation if they are in the right reading level for the pupil, and the right genre (Rimmereide, 2013, p. 134).

The government is working with a reading project to strengthen pupils reading skills and motivation, where they will, amongst other things, focus on letting pupils practice on reading longer text on paper (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2023). They refer to studies about pupils reading longer text better when they are on paper, compared to digital tools. They also refer to studies about the negative effect reading on screen has on pupils that have a lower reading level. However, working on screen can benefit pupils who struggle with learning (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2023). This is an example of how books can be adapted to the individual learner and their needs.

1.2. Critical thinking skills and dispositions

Critical thinking skills and dispositions are terms this thesis will use. There are different types of critical thinking skills and dispositions that one can acquire, and it is different from researcher to researcher. There is an important difference between disposition and skills. An individual may be aware of which critical thinking skills to use in a given context and may have the capacity to perform well when using these skills (Dwyer, 2017). However, they may not be disposed to use them. For example, a pupil may be willing to use critical thinking skills, but they do not know how to use them (Dwyer, 2017).

Halpern and Butler point out that there are many lists of critical thinking skills apply across a wide variety of contexts. The skills they present are.

1. Reasoning: Drawing Deductively Valid Conclusions

2. The Relationship Between Thought and Language
3. Analyzing Arguments
4. Thinking as Hypothesis Testing
5. Likelihood and Uncertainty (Understanding Probabilities)
6. Decision-Making and Problem-Solving

They also point out that there might be disagreements with this list, but that the skills presented on the list are a good starting place to help students think better (Halpern & Butler, 2019, p. 54)

The Delhi report, adapted from Facione 1990b, shows that the core critical thinking skills are, analysis, evaluation, and inference. What this report does not include but Dwyer argues as being important, is that to be able to apply these skills, it implies a reflective sensibility and the capacity for reflective judgment (Dwyer, 2017). Reflective judgment is a metacognitive process that can support the development and application of critical thinking, particularly in the context of real-world problems. In this process, we reflect upon the information presented and the information we already know, so that we can come up with a logical conclusion (Dwyer, 2017).

Disposition on the other hand "refers to the extent to which an individual is disposed, or inclined, to perform a given thinking skill" (Norris, Reference Norris1992; Valenzuela, Nieto, & Saiz, Reference Valenzuela, Nieto and Saiz2011 cited in Dwyer, 2017). It is also essential to understand "how we think and how we can make out thinking better" in skills settings and everyday life (Siegel, Reference Siegel1999, cited in Dwyer, 2017). Dwyer reveals that the "critical drivers of critical thinking dispositions are inquisitiveness, open-mindedness, and self-efficacy, while the critical thinking dispositions most enhanced by other dispositions were reflection and resourcefulness" (Dwyer, 2017).

1.3. English as a Foreign Language

In Norway, English is registered as a foreign language, but it has started to move closer to becoming a second language. The reason for this is that young adults and children are being more exposed to the language in their everyday lives (Brevik, Vold & Myhill, 2022). 5.1% of Norway's population has a refugee background (Statistisk Sentralbyrå, 2023). For the majority of pupils in a classroom, English becomes their second language; but for many, it is a foreign language. For pupils that come to Norway as a refugee, Norwegian might be their second language and then English becomes their third language. I have chosen to use English as a

foreign language (EFL) in my research questions and my research because it is more inclusive for pupils all over Norway.

1.4. Research question and aim of this study

One of the aims of this study is to investigate how critical thinking is defined. I have chosen to focus on two researchers. John Dewey and Robert H. Ennis. I chose John Dewey because he was the first person to define critical thinking. He is also one of the most well-known persons in education theory. I chose Robert H. Ennis as the second researcher because he claims that the already existing definitions of critical thinking are too vague. However, he faced a lot of criticism from his definition, because it is vague. Ennis is also known for his research in the field of assessing critical thinking in the USA. I want to investigate if there are any similarities between Dewey's and Ennis' definitions.

The second aim of this study is to investigate how critical thinking skills can be developed with the use of graphic novels, in the EFL classroom. I present an application of *The Giver: Graphic Novel* at the end of the thesis to show how one could potentially work with it. *The Giver: Graphic Novel* is only a potential application because I want to give the reader the opportunity to use other novels or picturebooks in the way I use *The Giver*. I wanted to use the graphic novel to show how one could apply English literature in the classroom to potentially develop critical thinking skills, as well as encourage other teachers to use more literature in the English as a foreign language classroom. To be able to answer this I have developed two research questions for this study:

1) How is critical thinking defined within the research field?

2) How can critical thinking skills be developed through the use of graphic novels in the EFL classroom?

These research questions address two different aspects. The first question is directed towards my analysis which is a qualitative thematic analysis. To answer the first question, I will discuss the results from the thematic analysis, with support from previous research. The second research question is more directed toward the literature review chapter. This research question will be answered by discussing previous research. After discussing the second research question, I present a way to work with *The Giver: Graphic novel*. This thesis aims to find out how critical

thinking is defined in the research field, and how it can be applied in the language learning classroom.

1.5. Thematic analysis

To answer my first research question, I have chosen to do a thematic analysis (TA) of two texts. The method I will use is the reflexive thematic analysis by Braun and Clark (2006). This analysis involves six phases. These are: 1) Familiarizing yourself with the dataset; 2) Coding; 3) Generating initial themes; 4) Developing and reviewing themes; 5) Refining, defining, and naming themes; and 6) Writing up (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 4). This method will be explained in more depth in Chapter 3.

1.6. The structure of the thesis

This thesis consists of six chapters. The first chapter introduces the background of this study, why this topic was chosen, and the research question I seek to answer. The second chapter presents this thesis's theoretical framework. In this chapter, the term critical thinking and the issues surrounding it, are discussed. The term metacognition is discussed and defined together with an explanation of how metacognition and critical thinking are connected. Research about graphic novels and how it can used for to critical thinking is also presented in the theoretical chapter. It is in this chapter earlier research and research gaps are laid forth. In chapter three I explain methodical considerations and present the data material. I also explain why I chose the method and why it was the best choice to answer my research question. In the fourth chapter, the result of the analysis is discussed in the best way possible. In the fifth chapter, I will discuss the second research question. This chapter will also present of how to use *The Giver: Graphic Novel* in the classroom to focus on critical thinking. In the concluding chapter, the central finding of this study is summarized, and a conclusion is presented. The sixth chapter also discusses how my findings will enhance English language teaching.

1.7. Implications

Some of the articles and books that are used in this thesis are in Norwegian. I have therefore translated the research to English. For example, the curriculum from *L97* and *LK06* only exist in Norwegian, and I have therefore translated it. Some of the information may have been translated incorrectly, as translating from one language to another may lead to some words or phrases being lost in translation.

2. Literature review

This chapter introduces the process of critical thinking and discusses the issues related to defining critical thinking and its use in the ELT classroom. Firstly, I will present an overview of what scholars say about critical thinking and how it is defined. I will then discuss why we need critical thinking and what it can give to our lives. Continuing, I will go on to what different researchers say about metacognition and how critical thinking and metacognition are connected. Lastly, I will present the use of literature to develop critical thinking skills, continuing with how graphic novels can be used in the classroom and why. At the end of this chapter, both research gaps and potential weaknesses are presented.

2.1. Critical thinking: a problematic definition

The term critical thinking is not an easy term to define. It is a wide area of research, and the definition changes depending on the researcher and area. Teachers in Norway should follow the curriculum from the Norwegian Directorate for Education when teaching. In 2020 the new curriculum *LK20* came out. *LK20* focuses more on critical thinking and ethical awareness than the previous curriculum has. The core curriculum defines critical and scientific thinking as "applying reason in an inquisitive and systematic way when working with specific practical challenges, phenomena, expressions, and forms of knowledge" (Kunnskapsdirektoratet, 2017). This definition is vague and does not explain what critical thinking really is. This opinion is also supported by several researchers like Børresen and Ferrer (Børresen, 2020; Ferrer et al., 2021 cited in Lindseth, 2022, p. 58). Since the definition is so vague and not descriptive enough, it is harder for teachers to know how to implicate and operationalize critical thinking in the classroom.

Going beyond *LK20*, the Oxford Learners Dictionary gives several definitions for the word 'critical'. The adjective is defined to be a way of "expressing disapproval", expressing that something is "important", or "serious/dangerous". Lastly, it is defined as "making careful judgments" (Critical, n.d.). "Making carefull judgments" is the type of 'critical' that can be linked back to education and critical thinking. The noun 'critical thinking' is defined as "the process of analyzing information in order to make a logical decision about the extent to which

you believe something to be true or face" (Critical thinking, n.d.). This definition has been adapted from someone.

The first person to define critical thinking was John Dewey, but it was not his primary term. Dewey used the term 'reflective thinking' or 'reflective thought' instead. He says that reflection can be uncritical or critical. Reflection is an action while critical is an adjective. Dewey is using the term 'critical' when metaphorically showing how a cognitive process like reflection can be critical or uncritical. In the whole first chapter of his book *How We Think* (1910), Dewey explains what the concept of 'thought' is. He differentiates between four kinds of thought. The first type of thought is everything that goes through our minds or is in our heads. The second is the restriction of thinking to what goes beyond direct observation. These are the things we do not directly hear, smell, and touch (Dewey, 1910, p. 3). The third type of thought is going beyond what is directly present. It is limited to beliefs that have some support of evidence. This thought is divided into two different degrees. First, a belief is accepted with almost no evidence or attempt to prove the belief to be true or false (Dewey, 1910, p 1). The second degree, which is also the fourth type of thought, is a thought that results in belief. This belief is deliberately sought and has well-examined evidence as support. (Dewey, 1910, p. 5). The difference between these two types is that for the first one, a thought or idea is to be true or false without almost any degree of evidence. The process of reflection is not present in this thought. In the second degree, one is intentionally searching for evidence to support our hypothesis to be true or false. If a person does not seek and examine the evidence to support their hypothesis, then it is uncritical thinking, which is the minimum of reflection (Dewey, 1920, p. 13). It is in the fourth sense of thinking where reflective thinking comes in. Dewey defines reflective thinking as "active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends, constitutes reflective thought" (Dewey, 1910, p. 6). Dewey claims that knowledge, belief, and truth aim at reflection and that all three of these aspects are involved in a reflective process (Dewey, 1910, p. 5).

Halpern and Butler acknowledge that knowledge is a factor in critical thinking. Their opinion is that no one "cannot think critically about vaccinations, global warming, or any other topic without the underlying knowledge that is relevant. No one can understand current conditions in Western Africa without knowledge of its colonial past, modern-day infrastructures, natural resources, and the threats posed by various diseases." (Halpern & Butler, 2019, p. 53). By

increasing our knowledge about a topic, it helps us make decisions and solve problems, and it gives us a deeper understanding of issues (Halpern & Butler, 2019, p. 53). Tarricone argues that reflection is essential for developing critical ability, and therefore necessary for critical thinking, which supports Dewey's idea about reflective thinking being essential to critical thinking (Tarricone, 2011, p. 33). Continuing, Dewey presents that there are subprocesses in every reflective operation. These subprocesses are: "(a) a state of perplexity, hesitation, doubt; and (b) an act of search or investigation directed toward bringing to light further facts which serve to corroborate or to nullify the suggested belief." (Dewey, 1910, p. 9). He points out the importance of uncertainty because that is what leads to the start of a reflective operation. Another researcher who believes that reflective thinking is essential to critical thinking is Robert H. Ennis.

Robert H. Ennis defines critical thinking as "reasonable reflective thinking focused on deciding what to believe or do" (Ennis, 1993, p. 180). He continues saying that one needs to break up critical thinking into dispositions and abilities. The four dispositions include being open-minded, paying attention to the overall situation, seeking reason, and trying to be well-informed (Ennis, 1985, 48). The three sets of abilities are, clarity-related abilities, inference-related abilities, decision-making, often also called problem-solving ability, and combined with critical thinking disposition, is intended to cover comprehensibly the process of deciding what to believe or do (Ennis, 1985, p. 48). Ennis divides clarity into two categories, elementary and advanced clarification. Elementary clarifications are about 1) analyzing arguments, for example: identifying conclusions and stated reasons. 2) Focusing on a question, for example: identifying or formulating questions. 3) Asking and answering questions of clarification and/or challenge. The type of questions that can be asked for this are: "Why?", "What is your main point?" or "What would be an example?" (Ennis, 1985, p. 46). Inference is about deciding about what to believe or do with the information available to us. This involves amongst other things, explanatory conclusions, and hypotheses, investigating and giving reasonable assumptions (Ennis, 1985, p. 46). Lastly, problem-solving is about strategy and tactics. This is about deciding on an action, defining a problem, formulating alternative solutions and reviewing, according the total situation, and making a decision (Ennis, 1985, p. 46).

Halpern and Butler (2019) introduce a similar idea from Facione and Giancarlo. According to them, critical thinking disposition includes *analyticity* (which can involve valuing reason and evidence-based conclusions), *systematicity* (approaching problems in an organized, focused,

diligent manner), *inquisitiveness* (wanting to be well informed), *open-mindedness* (tolerate that others have different point of views), *critical thinking self-confidence* (trust your own judgment and reasoning), *truth-seeking* (wanting to find out the truth even if it goes against your own belief and opinion) and lastly, *maturity* (involves understanding that there could be more than one correct answer) (Facione, Facione, & Giancarlo, 2000, as cited in, Halpern & Butler, 2019, p. 53 – 54). These researchers have similar dispositions that are involved in critical thinking: for example, being open-minded to new ideas and views, as well as being well-informed.

Diane Halpern has used this definition for many years and defines critical thinking as.

> Critical thinking is the use of those cognitive skills and abilities that increase the probability of a desirable outcome. It is used to describe thinking that is purposeful, reasoned, and goal directed – the kind of thinking involved in solving problems, formulating inferences, calculating likelihoods, and making decisions, when the thinker is using skills that are thoughtful and effective for the particular context and type of thinking task (Halpern, 2014, p. 8 as cited in Halpern & Butler, 2019, p. 53).

This definition is similar to Ennis in a way that they both see the abilities of problem-solving, inference, and decision-making as important. Halpern does not include disposition like Facione and Giancarlo do, which differentiates them. Halpern describes it as "thinking that is purposeful, reasoned and goal directed", which sounds familiar to the fourth type of thought presented by Dewey (Halpern, 2014, p. 8 as cited in Halpern & Butler, 2019, p. 53). A problem with the definitions presented so far is that none of them operationalize critical thinking. Researchers explain what is involved in the term, but they do not give us a process we can follow to become critical thinkers.

Emily Robertson writes about the epistemology of education. Epistemology refers to the part of philosophy that deals with knowledge. Educators aim for their pupils to require knowledge (Robertson, 2009, p. 11). Robertson argues that educators should not abandon the goal of thinking and that thinking requires attention to the social conditions of knowledge (Robertson, 2009, p. 13). A part of being an independent thinker is to understand the relationship between knowledge and power (Robertson, 2009, p. 13). The goal of knowledge is not information per se, but rather, knowledge that is significant and organized in patterns that contribute to perspective and understanding in orienting thought and action (Robertson, 2009, p. 14).

Continuing this idea, the goal of knowledge can be linked to Dewey's idea about reflective thinking. Reflective thinking aims at the type of knowledge that can stand as evidence to the truth. Dewey also claims at reflective thinking aims at the truth, which Robertson argues to be at the core of the educational enterprise, together with justification (Robertson, 2009, p. 14).

Daniel T. Willingham says that "critical thinking consists of seeing both sides of an issue, being open to new evidence that disconfirms your ideas, reasoning dispassionately, demanding that claims be backed by evidence, deducing, and inferring conclusions from available facts, solving problems, and so forth" (Willingham, 2008, p. 21). This definition has similarities to Halpern's definition because they both point out that formulating inferences with the information available is important, as well as problem-solving. However, Willingham and Halpern's definitions have more differences than similarities. Willingham's definition shows similarities to Dewey's fourth type of thought. "Demanding that claims be backed by evidence" is one of the things that divide reflective thinking from uncritical thinking (Willingham, 2008, 21; Dewey, 1910). Willingham also claims that one needs to be "open to new evidence that disconfirms your ideas" (Willingham, 2008, p. 21). This idea is also linked to Dewey because he sees finding the truth as a factor in the process of reflection. Truth is also seen as important for Robertson, but Halpern does not include that in her definition, which could make other definitions "better" than hers.

Willingham points out that knowledge is important in being able to think critically. He says that if a pupil does not have knowledge about several perspectives to a problem, then the pupil cannot think critically about the situation.

> Thus, if you remind a student to "look at an issue from multiple perspectives" often enough, he will learn that he ought to do so, but if he doesn't know much about an issue, he can't think about it from multiple perspectives. You can teach students maxims about how they ought to think, but without background knowledge and practice, they probably will not be able to implement the advice they memorize. Just as it makes no sense to try to teach factual content without giving students opportunities to practice using it, it also makes no sense to try to teach critical thinking devoid of factual content. (Willingham, 2008, p. 21)

He claims that without the knowledge there is no point in teaching critical thinking since the pupil will not be able to think critically anyway. But if one does teach it, one needs to let the

students practice critical thinking in different situations. In that way, students will be able to use their skills in the right situation. However, Willingham does not give us a process that we can follow so that teachers teach what students need to be able to think critically.

Willingham also points out that there are specific types of thinking depending on the subject, for example thinking scientifically. To this type of thinking, he mentions problem-solving as an important factor and explains it as a part of mathematics problems in the classroom (Willingham, 2008, p. 22). Continuing Willingham's idea about being open-minded to new evidence that could disconfirm or confirm our idea, Halpern and Butler discuss that critical thinkers "need to be willing to change their beliefs when evidence and reasoning suggest a different one and to abandon nonproductive strategies" (Halpern & Butler, 2019, p. 54). This claim is not part of Halpern's definition, but maybe it should be because so many other researchers have claimed it to be important in critical thinking. Dewey writes that hunting for additional evidence that is directed to a person's belief is part of reflection. For example, Columbus had to hunt for evidence to show the world that the earth was not flat. The evidence could suggest that what he initially thought was wrong. In this case, Columbus was right and everyone else would have to be open-minded to the new idea. As Dewey says, reflective thinking and the suspense of what the evidence shows can be "somewhat painful" (Dewey, 1910, p. 13). It is the willingness to engage in the challenging work of critical thinking and to persist when the task is difficult (Halpern & Butler, 2019, p. 53).

Researchers criticize other researchers for their definitions before they give their own. Lipman criticizes Ennis's definition and says that is it too vague. Ennis has a short definition but does explain what he means about dispositions and abilities in his article. Ennis points out that many definitions of critical thinking are vague. A word Ennis shows to be too vague is "analysis". This term is vague because by only saying that critical thinking is analysis, we do not know how to do the analysis or what to analyze. The problem is that the term itself is too vague. Research tells us to do something, but they do not give the process of how to do it or something concrete that we can act on. Ennis argues that analyzing a political situation, a chemical substance, part of a book, or an argument, are all different types of analysis. Saying that critical thinking is to analyze, is too vague of a definition because to analyze can be so much and done in so many different ways (Ennis, 1993, p. 179). Lipman argues that critical thinking is about judgment and defines it as skillful, responsible thinking that facilitates good judgment because

(1) it relies upon criteria, (2) is self-correcting, and (3) is sensitive to context (Lipman, 1988, p. 39).

Hatcher criticizes both Ennis and Lipman and other researchers for their definitions of critical thinking. Hatcher finds Lipman's saying "relies upon criteria" too vague because it does not give the reader the criteria he means. He also finds "self-correcting" misleading because he believes the best ideas or criticism does not come from yourself, but from others (Hatcher, 2000, p. 4). Hatcher has come up with ten criteria for making a definition for critical thinking and offers the definition "critical thinking is thinking that attempts to arrive at a judgment only after honestly evaluating alternatives with respect to available evidence and arguments" (Hatcher & Spencer, 2000, p.1 as cited in Hatcher, 2000, p. 5). He argues that the problem with defining critical thinking and why there are so many different definitions is that there are no criteria for how to define it.

Ralph Johnson and Benjamin Hamby claim that the problem is not that there are no good definitions but that there is an overabundance of problematic definitions. Their opinion is that there is nothing to show that the definitions available are equivalent or compatible (Johnson & Hamby, 2015, p. 418). Definitions are different and focus on different aspects but at the same time, they have some of the same trades. That is why it is hard to find the right one. Hatcher and Spencer are one of the few who have tried to define the term with criteria and have come close to a meta-level approach. Johnson and Hamby do believe that the problem in defining critical thinking lies at a meta-problem level. What they put in the term meta-level approach is that when proposing a new definition of 'critical thinking', you first have to make clear what kind of definitions are being offered, and after presenting the definition, show that it satisfies the criteria for a good definition (Johnson & Hamby, 2015, p. 418). They do not actually define critical thinking in their article but rather propose that this discussion could benefit from a move to a meta-level approach (Johnson & Hamby, 2015, p. 418). Johnson and Hamby propose these four criteria for when making a new definition: (1) it would start by saying what is wrong with other definitions, thus opening the door for the proposed definition; (2) it would indicate what type of definition is being offered and state the criteria for a successful definition of that sort; (3) it would then provide the definition; and (4) it would then show that the definition satisfies the criteria. They claim that none of the other definitions of critical thinking satisfies these criteria (Johnson & Hamby, 2015, p. 418 – 419). Another claim they recognize is that since this approach has not been used before as we know of, they believe that theorists that have defined

critical thinking have not been thinking critically about the task of defining (Johnson & Hamby, 2015, p. 419).

2.2. The need for critical thinking skills

Halpern and Butler argue that people with critical thinking skills experience fewer negative life events. Halpern developed the HCTA, Halpern Critical Thinking Assessment. This assessment program was given to college students and adults in the US and some countries in Europe. From the results from the HCTA, students who scored higher on their test reported that they experienced fewer negative life events than the students who scored lower. Halpern is working on determining if critical thinking skills are just helping us make good life choices or whether they predict the occurrence of positive life events. She also points out that further investigation is needed (Halpern & Butler, 2019, p. 61).

If Halpern and Butlers claim is true, then developing critical thinking skills earlier can give pupils a better life when they become adults. Studies like this are giving teachers a reason why we should teach critical thinking. Tørdal writes about LK20 and points out that "being able to think critically is a prerequisite for being able to solve practical challenges in a sensible way, for all science, and for a democratic society to function." (Tørdal, 2020). She also writes that "If you learn to think critically, you are also able to assess information that you encounter both at school and in your free time, for example in social media, in political debates or in marketing." (Tørdal, 2020). According to Tørdal, becoming critical thinkers will help pupils overcome what life gives them. Critical thinking should not only help pupils at school but also in their free time. (Tørdal, 2020).

Halpern and Butler argue that thinking critically prompts better decision-making and that it can predict the life events we experience (Halpern & Butler, 2019, p. 61). Because the research in the "real world" correlates with intelligence, they argue that there has been concurrent and predictive validity from many behaviors, achievements, and experiences. Halpern and Butler also argue that critical thinking may be a better predictor of behavior than intelligence (Halpern & Butler, 2019, p. 61). Boraas states that the lack of critical ability is the cause of failure to solve problems. This statement is in the context of solving real, everyday problems (Tarricone, 2011, p. 33). A person might be intelligent or school-smart, but they might not be able to solve everyday problems. Halpern, Butler, and Borras point out that there is a difference between being intelligent and being able to think critically. Stanovich argues that intelligence tests are

missing critical components of reasoning and rationality (Stanovich, West, & Toplak, 2016 as cited in Halpern & Butler, 2019, p. 62). The problem with these tests is that a school-smart student would score higher on tests than a student who can think critically. In the end, the student with critical thinking skills would solve real and everyday problems better. Lastly, Stanovich states that the future depends on our ability to think critically. This is because the world around us is growing and is becoming more globalized and complex every day. Some researchers think that critical thinking skills fit best for advanced classes and students, but Halpern and Butler suggest that pupils need to learn these skills early to succeed in their future careers and college and to become effective citizens (Halpern and Butler, 2019, p. 55).

2. 3. Metacognition

Willingham argues that critical thinking cannot be taught. People who have tried to teach it believe that it is like riding a bike: when you know it, you know it. According to Willingham, this is not the case (Willingham, 2008, p. 21). Research in the cognitive field has shown that the process of critical thinking is intertwined with the content of thought. A child at three years old can have this set of skills, while a trained scientist may fail at it (Willingham, 2008, p. 21 – 22). What can be taught, is metacognition, which is, in brief, thinking about one's own thoughts (Hackers, 1998 cited in Haukås et al., 2018, p. 12). Metacognition plays a crucial role when it comes to developing critical thinking skills (Rivas et al., 2022, p. 1). John Flavell's definition is one of the most used definitions by researchers. Åsta Haukås (2018) and Pina Tarricone (2011) refer to John Flavell's definition of metacognition, which is "one's knowledge concerning one's own cognitive processes and products, or anything related to them" (John Flavell 1976, p. 232 as cited in Haukås et al., 2018, p. 12; Tarricone, 2011, p. 2). This definition is wider than Hackers' definition, while Hackers' definition might be easier to understand, it is too vague and does not tell us what is involved in the term.

Brown is also a well-known researcher in the metacognition field. His definition is also used by a wide range of researchers. He defines metacognition as one's own knowledge and control of one's own cognitive system (Brown, 1987, p. 66). His definition has similarities to Flavell's, they both point out that it is about our own knowledge about one's own cognitive process. Brown says that it is also about control over our cognitive system, while Flavell argues that it is anything related to it. Brown identifies two main problems with the term metacognition. The first is that it could be difficult to tell apart what is meta- and what is cognitive. The second is that many historical roots come from metacognition (Brown, 1987, p. 66). Tarricone also

identifies the problem of defining metacognition. She says that because metacognition is a 'thorny issue' and any cognition related to knowledge and thinking could be identified as metacognition, it is difficult to come up with an inclusive definition (Tarricone, 2011, p. 4). Because of the long history of the term, there are many different definitions. When deciding what definition to use, I have looked at the researcher's interest and area.

Anita Wenden is one of the first researchers to call attention to the importance of metacognition in language learning and teaching (Haukås et al., 2018, p. 13.). Wenden refers to metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive strategies. Metacognitive knowledge simply refers to knowledge about learning. Wenden refers to Flavell and Wellman's definition that "metacognitive knowledge is the relatively stable information human thinkeres have about their own cognitive process and those of others…" (Wenden, 1998, p. 516). She acknowledges Flavell's three categories of metacognition knowledge: person knowledge, task knowledge, and strategy knowledge (Haukås et al., 2018, p. 13). Personal knowledge refers to the general understanding learners have acquired about human factors related to learning. It also refers to beliefs about their ability to achieve specific learning goals, such as the knowledge and/or skills they need to write in a second language (Wenden, 1998, p. 518). Task knowledge refers to what learners know about why a task is being done, also how this task will help the language learner to improve their writing skills, oral skills, or vocabulary. Task knowledge also includes information about what the task demands, for example, how pupils do the task and the knowledge and skills that are needed for it (Wenden, 1998, p. 518). The last category is strategy knowledge. This refers to the general knowledge we have about what strategies to use and when to use them. It also involves why they are useful and when they are useful. This category can be seen as a subset of task knowledge, but Wenden follows what Favell says and includes it as a separate category. The reason for this is because of the unique role that it plays in the process of learning (Wenden, 1998, p. 519).

Wenden argues that knowledge referred to in foreign language (FL) literature can usually be categorized in one of these three categories. Metacognitive strategies are defined as "general skills through which learners manage, direct, regulate, guide their learning, i.e. planning, monitoring and evaluating" (Wenden, 1998, p. 519). The development of the strategies of planning, monitoring, and evaluating is referred to as self-regulation in the literature on learner autonomy in FL learning. Metacognitive strategies also refer to the intentional use of strategies to control one's own cognition (Haukås et al., 2018, p. 12). Brown notes that metacognitive

strategies and knowledge are two separate and distinct components of the broader notion of metacognition, and they should not be considered similar (Wenden, 1998, p. 519). Wenden underlines that both knowledge and strategies are necessary for learners to solve a task (Haukås et al., 2018, p. 13).

2.3.1. Metacognition's connection to critical thinking

Numerous empirical studies provide evidence and support for the claim that there is a connection between metacognition and critical thinking. Only a few of these studies examine the interaction between critical thinking and metacognition. Even fewer provide a strong basis for their study and subsequent findings (Tarricone, 2011, p. 39). Some research has identified a connection but has not given a specific detailed relationship between metacognition and critical thinking. Research points out that there is "an emphasis on the need for critical thinking to be taught within a real or relevant context, immersed in the content of the subject domain" (Tarricone, 2011, p. 35). What is meant by this is that it is important to teach critical thinking in a context that is relevant and "real" for the pupils. It should also be taught in a specific subject area. Critical thinking should not be abstract or taken away from situations, but it should be taught closely to scenarios and challenges that are relevant to the subject that is taught but also relevant to the pupils' interests. This way, the learning becomes more meaningful and understandable for the pupils. For this to happen, according to Tarricone, it is necessary for a framework to be used, so that the critical thinking process is being enhanced and supported by effective metacognitive and self-regulated processes (Tarricone, 2011, p. 35). This process includes knowledge of cognition and reflection, which refers to the ability and skill to think effectively. Other researchers, like Lipman and Tsai, believe that critical thinking can only be metacognitive when it is an evaluative, reflective process, but also incorporated into a self-regulated process (Tarricone, 2011, p. 35). This goes in hand with Dewey's opinion, that to be able to think critically, a reflective process needs to be present.

Deanne Kuhn gives us a theory connecting critical thinking to metacognition. She presents three categories: (1) metastrategic, (2) metacognitive, and (3) epistemological (Kuhn, 1999, p. 18). Tarricone and Kuhn points out later that there is needed for more theoretical analysis on the connection between metacognition and critical thinking. Tarricone especially point out the relationship to complex problem-solving. She gives us four clear assertions that clearly argue for a connection between metacognition and critical thinking.

1) Knowledge of cognition and reflection and knowledge of regulatory processes of cognition are elements of metacognition in critical thinking.
2) Knowledge, selection and refinement of strategies, and the monitoring and control of inferences through reasoning, are metacognition elements identified in critical thinking.
3) Evaluative, reflective reasoning, self-correction and self-regulatory processes based upon specific criteria and context are supported by scaffolding, especially in complex problems.
4) During problem solving, purposeful reflection involves complex higher-order thinking entailing the identification of beliefs, bias, prejudice, assumptions, epistemological commitments, and reflection. (Tarricone, 2011, p. 38)

The connection between critical thinking and metacognition is essential to the understanding of knowledge. Knowledge in this sense includes our knowledge as a learner, prior knowledge, and knowledge about beliefs and attitudes. The knowledge we gain is especially necessary for complex problem-solving (Tarricone, 2011, p. 41 – 42). Lastly, it is important to point out that critical thinking may not always be metacognitive. This is because to be metacognitive, a purposeful and deliberate reflection must be present (Tarricone, 2011, p. 42).

2.4. Critical thinking connection to literature

Even though Willingham argues that critical thinking cannot be thought, there has been a lot more research on this topic since 2008. Halpern and Butler argue that is it possible to teach critical thinking skills in a way that people are able to apply the skills to situations they have never encountered before. (Halpern and Butler, 2019, p. 54). It would not be critical thinking if the only time pupils could show critical thinking skills was when the same teacher was presenting the same topic and problem. Halpern has developed a model for teaching critical thinking skills. This model includes (1) explicitly teaching critical thinking skills; (2) encouraging a disposition toward thinking critically; (3) using practical activities connected to real life to make transfer more likely to occur; and (4) modeling overt metacognitive monitoring (Halpern and Butler, 2019, p. 56).

D'Angelo (1970) asks the question if critical thinking can be developed through the study of literature. Neff and Collins did a study in a sixth-grade classroom where they aimed to develop critical thinking through the study of literature. They tried to identify critical thinking with the teaching of human compassion and courage through literature, also in the way facts are used

for creative ideas and imaginative thinking (D'Angelo, 1970, p. 634). Neff and Collins claimed that their pupils learned to think critically but D'Angelo argues that one cannot equate critical thinking with imaginative and creative thinking without the process of justification. The pupils had to write down their reactions and feelings from the books they read, but they did not engage in the process of justifying their claims. The pupils were only involved in describing their reactions, not evaluating them. Therefore, the pupils could not have developed critical thinking skills (D'Angelo, 1970, p. 634).

Another scientist has also studied the use of critical thinking on children's literature. Usery had her pupils work with two books, after reading the books they had to act out and explain one of the character's inner feelings. D'Angelo argues that to get children to explain the feelings they experienced while acting something specific is not a form of critical thinking, because the ability to evaluate a situation is not cultivated when one merely identifies with a character and shows the feelings from a story in a role (D'Angelo, 1970, p. 634). Usery studies the application of critical thinking to children's literature. She writes that there are four stages that are essential to the development of critical thinking: perceiving, analyzing predicting, and judging. Perceiving is the "stage of critical thinking where one's awareness of a situation involves an alteration of his perception of it" (D'Angelo, 1970, p. 634). The analyzing stage is involved in separating factors into parts and studying them singularly. The predicting stage encourages children to "select alternative actions which could have been taken by the characters in the stories" (D'Angelo, 1970, p. 634). Lastly, the judging stage involves "developing criteria for making evaluations and then drawing conclusion" (D'Angelo, 1970, p. 634). In D'Angelo's opinion, Usery only uses some of the behaviors in her study, so the pupils could not have developed critical thinking (D'Angelo, 1970, p. 634). D' Angelo argues that critical thinking is not one skill but a term that is used to denote many kinds of skills. Some of these skills are distinguishing a fact from an opinion, discovering fallacious arguments, and evaluating assumptions (D'Angelo, 1970, p. 635). He distinguishes between two basic types of literary books that can be used to develop critical thinking skills. The first type is books that have specific arguments that can be critically analyzed, for example, *The Little Prince* by Saint-Exupéry. The second type is books that describe a situation that either states or suggests claims of facts or judgment of values, for example, *The Prince and the Pauper* by Twain. It should be said that some books might even have both characteristics (D'Angelo, 1970, p. 635). According to how D'Angelo analyzed the two books in his article, I would argue that *The Giver* by Louis Lowery fits under the second category. This is because the novel presents numerous situations

that imply and claim judgments of values different from those in our world. *The Giver: Graphic Novel* is an adaption of the book and fits better with the English level of an average pupil in 5-7 grade in Norway.

2.4.1. Graphic novels in the EFL classroom

Graphic novels are a type of text that includes both words and pictures, often in a book format, instead of a periodical publishing. Graphic novels are usually ncomic but can also be fiction and non-fiction (Murray, 2023). Another characteristic of graphic novels is that they are usually not the original work, but an adaption of another novel. Because it is an adaption, graphic novels can be intended for younger readers (Murray, 2023).

Teachers in the United States have discovered the value of using graphic novels in the classroom. Graphic novels can enable the struggling reader, motivate the reluctant one, and challenge the higher-learner one. Similar to this, graphic novels can also be used to support the weaker L2 learner and the higher-level L2 learner (Bland, 2013, p. 71). Graphic novels can be (1) motivating because their layout with pictures and text can help to follow the story (2) help the reader understand their own world by being invited into a different world (3) helpful for readers who wish to be challenged by a text. Pupils can read more into the interaction with verbal text and pictures, go beyond what the text says, and find a deeper meaning. Lastly (4) they let the advanced reader compare texts critically, for example, the original novel, the graphic novel, and the movie if there is one (Bland, 2013, p. 17 – 72). Working with graphic novels can be adapted for each pupil. Stephen Krashen discovered that readers exposed to graphic novels and comics not only became motivated to read but also achieved the same level of reading competence as those who read other types of texts. (Rimmereide, 2013, p. 133). Using graphic novels in the classroom opens up more literature, and maybe it gets more pupils to read for pleasure, which can be a factor for motivation. This will also improve their reading skills, however, reading graphic novels in itself does not lead to an advanceed language level. The level of language in the books needs to be right for each pupil; it needs to be the right content and the right genre for each reader (Rimmereide, 2013, p. 134).

KriT has published a book that gives concrete examples of how to use critical thinking in a primary school classroom for the curriculum in Norway. They try to break down the definition of critical thinking and find out that it is about reflection and a deeper way of thinking (Jøsok & Svanes, 2022, p. 14). They go beyond *LK20* and look at what researchers say about critical

thinking to get a better understanding of the term. They try to operationalize critical thinking and show that it is possible to do.

In the book, KriT has published, they present how picturebooks can be an entrance into critical thinking. Svanes and Tørnby's examples of using critical thinking with picturebooks can also be used with graphic novels. They point out that ethical dilemmas in novels can be suitable for developing critical thinking. One example of this is, asking pupils if it is okay that the sheep tricks the turkey in the book: *Bæ, bæ, lure lam,* and then continue asking them why or why not? (Svanes & Tørnby, 2022, p. 54). Another way of using books is by putting the pupils in the setting of the character; for example, if working with the book *Pølsetyven*, ask pupils: would you rather steal from your own family, or somebody else, and why? Svanes & Tørnby, 2022, p. 54). These types of conversations would urge pupils to reflect on their answers. How they got their answers and why is more important than the "right" answer (Svanes & Tørnby, 2022, p. 54). Teachers do need to teach students how to justify their answers, just asking a question will not teach them justification. In graphic novels, pictures and text complement each other to tell the whole story. To understand this, close reading is essential (Svanes & Tørnby, 2022, p. 55). Questions that can get pupils to read closer into the text are:

- What do we understand from this text?
- What do the pictures tell us, and do the text and pictures tell us the same thing? (Svanes & Tørnby, 2022, p. 55)

Exploring the narrator's role and their methods can be another way to engage students more deeply with the text. Questions that can be asked for this are:

- Who is telling the story?
- Why do you think the author is using these colors?
- Why do you think the author is using these words or these types of letters? (Svanes & Tørnby, 2022, p. 55).

Using fiction in the classroom creates a critical perspective on the difference between fantasy and reality. Going into a fantasy world can help pupils engage in a book in a different way than non-fiction can do (Svanes & Tørnby, 2022, p. 55).

It is important to know how to phrase yourself when asking questions. Do you want a yes/no answer, then you ask a closed question. If you want a longer answer, you can add "why" after the pupils have answered. To get a fuller answer right away, an open-ended question is better. This type of question is designed to promote "full and meaningful answers" that come from the pupils' own "knowledge, thought, feelings and experiences". An open-ended question encourages pupils to be objective because they are less leading in nature (A Pass Educational Group LLC, 2020). Open-ended questions also invite pupils to a classroom dialogue. By asking pupils follow-up questions like "Why" or "Can you explain your thinking" pupils get the understanding that there is not one correct or wrong answer. This encourages more pupils to join in the conversation (Andersson-Bakken & Heggernes, 2022, p. 45). However, it can be hard to start a good classroom dialogue. Some open-ended questions can lead to pupils believe that the teacher is looking for one correct answer, for example with the question "What do you see?". Instead, you could ask, "What do you see in the picture, and why do you think there is so much red on it?". This question leads to students thinking about what is in the picture and makes them think. This question is also not searching for one specific answer. (Andersson-Bakken & Heggernes, 2022, p. 45-46). That is why follow-up questions are important. The teacher needs to be aware of the functions of the question.

2.5. Earlier Research

There is not a lot of early research from Norway done on critical thinking regarding literature in primary education. The reason for this could be because critical thinking only recently got a bigger spot in the curriculum in Norway. In an interview done by Lindseth in 2022, teachers of Social Studies were asked what their understanding of critical thinking is. One of the interviewees said that the term critical thinking is a vague term with no clear definition in the curriculum (Lindseth, 2022, p. 35). All the interviewees had one thing in common; that everyone thought that critical thinking was a difficult word to define (Lindseth, 2022, p. 58).

In another interview also done in 2022 by Reffhaug, Jegstad, and Andersson-Bakken, it was found that the teachers had different definitions and views on critical thinking. In this interview, the authors link critical thinking to Social Studies, Science, Norwegian, and Religion and Ethics but not to the English subject. The results show that the majority of the teachers mostly used critical thinking with connection to source criticism, argumentation, and perspective diversity as well as being critical to what is on the internet. The reason for this could be because of the lack of knowledge on how to teach critical thinking. It can also be that critical thinking, in

LK20, is linked to scientific thinking, which excludes the other subject. The interviewees were teachers who had worked in the field between two and 21 years and at the time worked in third to seventh grade (Reffhaug et al., 2022, p. 14). Reffhaug, Jegstad, and Andersson-Bakken concluded that teachers in primary school do need more knowledge on what critical thinking is and how it can be operationalized (Reffhaug et al., 2022, p. 17).

Munkebye and Gericke (2022) also researched primary school teachers' understanding of critical thinking. They concluded that when critical thinking was used in the classroom it was focused on skepticism, source criticism, and argumentation. Just as in Reffhaug's interview, there was a limited understanding of the term critical thinking (Munkebye & Gericke, 2022, p. 261).

Ferguson and Krange wanted to promote critical thinking in primary school. Their focus was strategic source evaluation, argumentation, and views of knowledge. They highlight the importance of critical thinking but argue that pupils did not master it. Another problem they highlight is that there is a lack of agreement on how critical thinking is supposed to be taught (Ferguson & Krange, 2020, p. 202). Kjetil Børhaug says that many teachers and pupils connect critical thinking with source criticism, and if that is their understanding of the term, they do not understand the complexity of the term (Børhaug, 2017, p. 9). As other studies have shown above, source criticism is what teachers connect with critical thinking. Matthew Lipman claims that for a school to facilitate the work with critical thinking the teachers also need to have an understanding of the term (Lipman, 1987; Ferguson & Krange, 2020, p. 203).

Reffhaug, Jegstad, and Andersson-Bakken's study is part of a project called KriT that started in 2020 when the new curriculum came out. The still ongoing project's goal is to develop teaching resources for critical thinking based on tested approaches. Teachers, parents, and researchers can put these resources to use. KriT is a project that focuses on several subjects in primary school, based on children's literature and news (Kritisk tenkning i barneskole, 2023.). On the KriT website, there is a list of children's books that have been used in the classroom already. The majority of the books mentioned on the website are Norwegian, which makes my study useful because it discusses and applies critical thinking in the English subject and with the use of graphic novels instead of picturebooks (Kritisk tenkning i barneskolen, u.d.).

2. 6. Research gaps

Earlier research shows that there is a research gap in Norway with the use of English literature to promote critical thinking. KriT is still ongoing and is mainly using Norwegian literature books, much of what is present so far, can be done in the English subject as well (Kritisk tenkning i barneskolen, u.d.). Because this thesis investigates literature in the EFL classroom it contributes to the research gap. Most of the articles that talk about this critical thinking with the use of literature come from international countries such as the US. Writing a thesis about critical thinking and literature that fits the curriculum in Norway, contributes to the research gap. Since critical thinking is a part of the core curriculum, one should be able to integrate it into all subjects.

2. 7. Potential weaknesses

A potential weakness of this study is, that since there is a lot of research on critical thinking to go through, not everything can be mentioned due to time constraints. Because of the length of the study a deeper insight of this topic is needed to get a wider point of view. A weakness is that this study might not go into some important points within critical thinking. This study focuses on some views about the definition of critical thinking and how there are different definitions depending on the topic of research. Another weakness is that the application later in this thesis is not tested in the classroom because of time constraints but could work because of the research behind it.

3. Methodological Considerations

This chapter presents the methodology of this thesis. First, there will be a description of the method and why this method is the right one to answer the research question. Secondly, the texts that have been analyzed are presented with a description of why these texts have been chosen, following a deeper explanation of the method and how the data was analyzed. Lastly, this chapter ends with the strengths and limitations of this study.

3.1. Choice of method

This study tries to find out how critical thinking is defined within the research field. A qualitative thematic analysis (TA) was chosen to be the best method to answer my first research question, "How is critical thinking defined within the research field?". Thematic analysis is a method for "identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clark, 2006, p. 6). This study uses an inductive approach because the themes that are identified are strongly linked to the data themselves. It is also a process of coding where one is not trying to fit into pre-existing coding frames (Braun & Clark, 2006, p. 12). Doing a TA with an inductive approach allows my research question to evolve throughout the coding process if needed (Braun & Clark, 2006, p. 12). Because of the time given, this study is looking for semantic themes in the data. The semantic approach identifies the themes within the explicit or surface meaning, and the analyst does not go beyond what has been written (Braun & Clark, 2006, p. 13). This study aims to identify the terms researchers use when defining and writing about critical thinking. The texts used to answer my research question will be introduced in the next section.

3.2. The data set

The texts that were chosen to be part of this study are two texts that discuss critical thinking and thinking itself. The texts that are used in the thematic analysis are Chapter 1: What is thought? in *How We Think* by John Dewey (1910), and "A Logical Basis for Measuring Critical Thinking Skills" by Robert H. Ennis (1985). The authors of the texts are well-known researchers within the field of critical thinking which makes the texts reliable. John Dewey was an American philosopher and psychologist, well known for his work in education. In his chapter, he writes about the four senses of thought and defines the concepts of reflective thinking. Robert H. Ennis is an academic researcher who has contributed to research on the topic of critical systemic thinking and critical thinking, he has also done research in the field of

assessing critical thinking skills. Many researchers have criticized him a lot for his definition of critical thinking because it is too vague, this is exactly why I choose him. As explained earlier, I want to investigate if there are similarities between Dewey and Ennis' definitions. Ennis claims that there are several sets of skills that need to be involved in the process of becoming a critical thinker, but these skills are not part of the definition itself but contribute to it. That is why this study analyzes one of his texts, so we can get a better picture of what is part of his definitions of critical thinking.

3.3. The analytic process

The data were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis (TA). This study uses the term reflexive TA instead of thematic analysis. This is not only because this is the new term that is now used to talk about the approach of TA but because reflexivity involves the practice of critical reflection on the role of a researcher and the research practice and process. (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 5). Braun and Clarke's six phases of reflexive thematic analysis are 1) Familiarizing yourself with the dataset. 2) Coding. 3) Generating initial themes. 4) Developing and reviewing themes. 5) Refining, defining, and naming themes, and 6) Writing up. It is a method for "developing, analyzing, and interpreting patterns across a qualitative dataset" (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 4). This type of analysis is a method of data analysis rather than a methodology (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 4). The process is not the method itself, but it is surrounded by bigger sets of values, assumptions, and practices, which make up the method (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 6).

When I first started the data familiarization phase of TA, I noticed several potential themes. I clustered it down into seven groups and found six potential themes. In the middle of phase four, I noticed that some themes were overlapping. I went back to my dataset and reviewed my themes and came back with four themes. Writing the theme definitions made the presentation order clear.

3. 4. Methodological strengths and limitations

The limitation of this study is that there should be more texts in the dataset to get a wider sense of the definition that is being explored. Another researcher's opinion would also help with getting a more conclusive answer. A latent approach could also have been done instead of a semantic approach, but because of the timeframe, this was not possible. However, it would be

interesting to see what the results would have shown. The strength of this study is that we get a better sense of how critical thinking has been discussed. It also gives a quick look into if critical thinking is the right word to use. This study also contributes to further and future research on the topic.

4. Analysis, Results, and Discussion

This chapter presents the result of the thematic analysis together with a discussion of the results backed up with research from chapter two. The discussion in this chapter will be directed to the first research question; how is critical thinking defined within the research field? The four themes found in the analysis that were related to my research questions were the following:

(1) *A state of doubt*. This explores the starting process of deciding what to believe and do.
(2) *The need for knowledge.* Without knowledge or being well-informed about a topic, one cannot expect a person to be able to reflect.
(3) *The investigation*. This theme explores the process of bringing light to our beliefs.
(4) *Finding a truth*. The important step is it be willing to change your belief if a truth is found to be different than what we initially believed.

In the next section, I will present the four themes in more depth. The themes are presented in the order of operations.

4.1. A state of doubt

The first theme that emerged when conducting the analysis, is called 'a state of doubt'. 'A state of doubt' is the first subprocess that is involved in every reflective operation (Dewey, 1910, p. 9). This theme explores the first process of deciding what to believe or do. The idea that emerged in this theme is that a thought or a hypothesis prompts reflection. Another point is that the state of doubt a person could stand in is a central factor in reflective thinking. Before any reflective process can start there has to be a state of doubt (Dewey, 1910, p. 9). What is meant by this is that if a researcher is to discover something new, there must be a perplexity, hesitation, or doubt that something might be different from what we think we know (Dewey, 1910, p. 9). This can be called a hypothesis. For example, Isaac Newton had to have a hypothesis about why the apple fell from the tree.

'A state of doubt' is the first step in a reflective operation and without a hypothesis, there cannot be a reflective operation. The reason for this is that without, 'a state of doubt', that something might be different, there will not be anything to reflect upon. John Dewey describes what this type of thought is:

> Thoughts that result in belief have an importance attached to them which leads to reflective thought, to conscious inquiry into the nature, conditions, and bearings of the belief (Dewey, 1910, p. 5).

Dewey's idea is that for reflective thinking to start, there is a need for a thought that leads to a belief or disbelief. This thought is the fourth type of thought explained by Dewey. This type of thought or hypothesis leads a person to investigate the reason for their belief (Dewey, 1910, p. 5). This person will also try to discover how their hypothesis can be true or false, but a hypothesis alone cannot claim a belief. According to Dewey, there must be a reflective process involved before a decision can be made.

> Reflection thus implies that something is believed in (or disbelieved in), not on its own direct account, but through something else which stands as witness, evidence, proof, voucher, warrant; that is, as ground of belief. (Dewey, 1910, p. 8).

What Dewey implies here is that a hypothesis cannot alone be reflective thinking because reflection is a much bigger concept (Dewey, 1910). A hypothesis needs evidence, proof, or warrant to support the grounds of the belief (Halpern & Butler, 2019). A thought that something might be different has to have evidence to show that it can be possible. For example, Isaac Newton had a hypothesis about why apples fell from threes, but for it to be believed, he needed evidence. To get this evidence he had to reflect. As we can see, a hypothesis started the reflective process (Dewey, 1910). Dewey is not the only one with this idea; Robert Ennis has some of the same idea, he claims that there is a need for reflection in the process of deciding what to believe or do, for example:

> Critical thinking is reflective and reasonable thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do. (Ennis, 1985, p. 45)

Ennis believes that critical thinking is reflective thinking, while Dewey believes that reflective thinking can be critical if done correctly (Dewey, 1910; Ennis, 1985). Ennis says that before we can decide if our belief is true or not, a reflective process is needed. It also seems like Ennis has adapted the term "critical thinking" to signal "reflective thinking". Both of these researchers claim that a hypothesis is the first step in starting a reflective process. The reflective process is also needed to find out the results of our hypothesis. Ennis as well as Dewey claims that a

hypothesis alone is not reflective thinking. Ennis claims that reflective thinking is focused on deciding what to believe or do (Ennis, 1985). Dewey claims that reflective thinking must be about finding evidence that supports or contradicts our hypothesis (Dewey, 1910). One can argue that there is a link between these claims. Ennis could have adapted his claim from Dewey, but he is not clear about what is involved in deciding what to believe or do. Focusing on decision what to believe or do, can be about finding the evidence that one needs to support a decision. Ennis and Dewey have similarities in their definitions. Sometimes definitions might mean the same things, but the wording is different, which seems to be the case here. If definitions are read out of context or researchers have a wider explanation that is not included, it could lead to misunderstandings or misperceptions.

Ennis adds to his definition and says that there are certain applications and dispositions that a person needs before the process of deciding what to believe or do, can take place (Ennis, 1985, p. 48). Ennis describes the applications that are involved:

> …The four general sets of abilities that are constitutive of critical thinking are clarity-related abilities…, inference-related abilities, abilities related to establishing a sound basis for inference, and abilities involving in going about decision making in orderly and useful way, often called problem solving…. When combined with the critical thinking dispositions, these four categories are intended to cover comprehensively the process of deciding what to believe or do (Ennis, 1985, p. 48).

Ennis is not alone in presenting these abilities as important in the process of critical thinking. Halpern and Butler argue that the lack of critical ability is the cause of failure to solve problems (Halpern & Butler, 2019, p. 62). Several other researchers have also pointed out that there is a relationship between problem-solving and critical thinking (Tarricone, 2011, p. 38; Facione & Giancarlo, 2000 & Halpern 2014, cited in Halpern & Butler, 2019; Willingham, 2008, p. 21). Before abilities like problem-solving can come into play, a hypothesis must come first. Both texts say that before any reflective thinking process can happen, someone needs to a have hypothesis that they want to prove right or wrong. ‘A state of doubt’ leads to a hypothesis which starts the process of reflective thinking. As we can see, reflective thinking cannot happen alone. There are abilities that a person needs to be able to decide. These applications and dispositions will be looked more into later in the chapter.

4.2. The need for knowledge

The second theme that emerged from the analysis was 'the need for knowledge'. This theme focuses on the importance of knowledge in critical thinking. The idea is that without knowledge about a topic, reflection cannot occur. When a person comes up with a solution to a problem without knowledge of the topic, it can lead to uncritical thinking, which is the minimum of reflection (Dewey, 1910, p. 13). Before one can make a claim, a person needs knowledge about the different points of view of the topic. This theme will therefore show that reflective thinking aims at knowledge. Dewey explains this:

> Even when a child (or a grown-up) has a problem, to urge him to think when he has no prior experiences involving some of the same conditions, is wholly futile. If the suggestion that occurs is at once accepted, we have uncritical thinking, the minimum of reflection. (Dewey, 1910, p. 12 – 13)

For example: a teacher might tell a pupil to think critically about a situation or problem. However, if this pupil does not know about several sides of a problem, there is no use in telling the pupil to think critically. The pupil will not be able to do so without adequate knowledge. Willingham presents the idea that we can teach pupils everything we know about thinking and how to think, but without adequate knowledge about a topic, a pupil cannot think critically even if they try (Willingham, 2008, p. 21). Willingham supports Dewey's idea and shows that reflective thinking cannot occur without knowledge. Without knowledge, reflection is not present (Halpern & Butler, 2019, p. 53).

Ennis mentions four types of dispositions that are involved in thinking critically:

> The list of dispositions includes such things as being open-minded, paying attention to the total situation, seeking reasons, and trying to be well-informed. (Ennis, 1985, p. 48).

Two of the dispositions can be directly linked to knowledge. The first one is being "well-informed". Ennis argues that to be able to think critically, being well-informed is crucial. Dewey as well as other researchers say that a reflective process cannot occur before we have gained knowledge (Dewey, 1910; Willingham, 2008; Halpern & Butler, 2019). Facione and Giancarlo argue that it is not about being well-informed but about wanting to be well-informed (Halpern & Butler, 2019). If we are not well-informed enough, we need to seek more information.

The second disposition that can be linked to knowledge is "seeking reasons". For example, Isaac Newton had to find the reason why the apples fell from the tree. Finding the reason and being well-informed seem to go hand in hand with each other. Facione, Giancarlo, Halpern, and Butler (2019) refer to reasoning and argue that it is about making good judgment and drawing conclusions. When we are well-informed about a topic, we can come up with a conclusion that is reasoned and justified.

Teachers aim for their pupils to acquire knowledge, knowledge about the world surrounding them, and knowledge about the subjects they are teaching. If we have more knowledge about several topics and different points of view, it is easier to come up with a decision. Dewey points out that there is a difference between information and knowledge:

> The imaginative stories poured forth by children possess all degrees of internal congruity; some are disjointed, some are articulated. When connected, they simulate reflective thought; indeed, they usually occur in minds of logical capacity. These imaginative enterprises often precede thinking of the close-knit type and prepare the way for it. But they do not aim at *knowledge, at belief about facts or in truths;* and thereby they are marked off from reflective thought. (Dewey, 1910, p. 3).

Children come to school with many stories to tell, but not all the information in these stories is correct. Teachers, therefore, need to teach students that there is a difference between information and knowledge. We need to be critical of the information we get and make sure it is knowledge. A story does not aim at knowledge before we can prove what is said.

Ennis believes that there is another approach to acquiring knowledge. He says that:

> …one *infers* a decision, the whole *problem-solving* process requiring emphasis on *clarity* and the critical thinking *dispositions*. All of this takes place in a context of interaction with *others*. This four-fold analysis of the ability is involved in arriving at a decision about belief or action... (Ennis, p. 1985, p. 48).

Ennis believes that when a person has acquired these four abilities categories, 1) inference, 2) clarity, 3) problem-solving, and 4) critical thinking disposition, they are able to come up with a

decision about their belief. These abilities in total are supposed to give you enough knowledge to come up with a decision or action (Ennis, 1985). For Ennis it seems that just acquiring knowledge about a topic itself is not enough; there are more factors involved. It can be argued that these abilities are involved in the whole of the reflective process. Before deciding, a person needs to check if they have acquired the abilities or not. A person might have acquired an ability but if they have not been taught how to use it, there is no point in having the ability, since you cannot put it in use. This theme tried to show that knowledge is part of the reflective thinking process and key to thinking critically. Dewey and Ennis agree that knowledge is critical to the reflective thinking process. Without knowledge, we cannot argue for something to be true or false. Knowledge seems to be a critical factor in critical thinking because one cannot understand any topics or problems without the underlying knowledge (Halpern & Butler, 2019, p 53). Knowledge serves the purpose of giving clarity to a belief. It gives evidence to those seeking answers, to validate if the hypothesis is true or false.

4.3. The investigation

The third theme found in the analysis was 'the investigation'. This theme explores the process of bringing light to our beliefs. The idea is that in a reflective thinking process, a person needs some kind of evidence to support their hypothesis. To be able to find knowledge, there has to be an investigation, where evidence is found. After coming up with a hypothesis, an investigation is needed to bring light to the problem (Dewey, 1910, p. 9). This could be trying and failing in experimenting, or it could mean going over the different solutions available and finding the best one. Dewey calls this process a subprocess in a reflective operation.

> Further consideration at once reveals certain subprocesses which are involved in every reflective operation. These are: (a) a state of perplexity, hesitation, doubt; and (b) an act of search or investigation directed toward bringing to light further facts which serve to corroborate or to nullify the suggested belief (Dewey, 1910, p. 9).

It is in the investigation process that we search for evidence that supports or opposes our hypothesis. According to Dewey, this is a process that comes later in reflection. Before an investigation can start, a hypothesis needs to be set, which we have already discussed. This investigation cannot just be searching for anything, it has to be directed toward the hypothesis (Dewey, 1910). The reason is because we want to find out if our hypothesis is true or false. To

do that, the investigation needs to be focused on that and not anything else. Dewey believes that this subprocess is directly linked to reflection. He explains it like this:

> …to reflect, means to hunt for additional evidence, for new data, that will develop the suggestion, and will either, as we say, bear it out or else make obvious its absurdity and irrelevance. (Dewey, 1910, p. 13)

As we can see from what Dewey says, reflective thinking aims at evidence. Hatcher includes evidence in his definition of critical thinking but points out that it is about the available evidence (Hatcher 2000, p. 5). This is more concrete wording, which has been pointed out by several researchers as being important in a definition (Lipman, 1988; Ennis 1985; Hatcher, 2000).

When searching for evidence to bring light upon our belief, we might find out that the results are different than the hypothesis. For example, if a person is at a crossroad where they must decide what road to take, the person needs to investigate which road is the best decision. They might believe that the shortest road is the best because it is the shortest, but why? The longest road has fewer obstacles and could be the best choice. The idea that emerges is that in a reflective thinking process, a person cannot decide without a search for evidence. The search might even lead to a discovery of the opposite of what you were looking for (Willingham, 2008).

This brings us back to the abilities that Ennis believes must be evident in deciding.

> …The four general sets of abilities that are constitutive of critical thinking are clarity-related abilities…, inference-related abilities, abilities related to establishing a sound basis for inference, and abilities involving in going about decision making in orderly and useful way, often called problem solving…. (Ennis, 1985, p. 48).

Two abilities that are relevant for this theme are, “clarity-related abilities” and “problem-solving”. To investigate or search for evidence, we want to make our belief clear to others and ourselves so that they understand what our belief is. In the term “clarity”, Ennis refers among other things to the way one asks and answers questions. He means that when answering and asking questions you need to be clear about what you say. Asking ‘Why?’ after an answer gives a longer and more clear answer (Andersson-Bakken & Heggernes, 2022, p. 45). Ennis also refers to “clarity” when defining terms, for example, analysis. This is so we understand what is

meant by the term (Ennis, 1985, p. 46). “Critical thinking self-confidence” is a term used by Facione and Giancarlo, which is about trusting your own judgment and reasoning (Halpern & Butler, 2019, p. 53). By trusting your own judgment and reasoning, it is easier to make a clear and reliable argument for other people so that they understand and trust you. Justification is argued to be at the core of educational enterprise (Robertson, 2009). By asking follow-up questions like ‘why?’, you are asking pupils to justify their answers, and that makes their ideas clearer (Andersson-Bakken & Heggernes, 2022). Ennis does not use the word justifications, but “clarity-related abilities”, which can be argued to be the same as justification. Teachers have tried to teach critical thinking skills, but they fail in getting pupils to justify their reasons. Because pupils do not evaluate and justify their claims, critical thinking cannot be developed (D’Angelo, 1970).

The second ability is problem-solving. This ability can also be linked to critical thinking. Some researchers include problem-solving in their definition of critical thinking, however, some do not (Halpern & Butler, 2019, p. 53; Willingham, 2008, p. 2). A reason could be that it depends on the topic the researcher is writing in. For example, Willingham uses problem-solving in his definition but also links it to scientific thinking (Willingham, 2008, p. 22). Facione and Giancarlo do not have problem-solving as part of their definition. They have *maturity* has a disposition. Maturity is about understanding that there could be more than one correct answer (Halpern & Butler, 2019, p. 53). Since several topics use critical thinking, the terms in the definition depend on the subject in use. Sometimes there is only one correct answer: for example, in mathematics (Willingham, 2008, p. 21). But there could be several correct answers when working with for example literature, which means that we cannot use the same definition in these two subjects. LK20 mixes critical thinking and scientific thinking into one definition, but according to Willingham, the definition would change a little depending on the subject.

4.4. Finding a truth

The last theme discovered in this analysis was ‘finding a truth’. This theme explores the idea that sometimes we might have to change our belief because of the evidence. What this theme is trying to show is that when the truth is discovered, the person returns to reflect on the original hypothesis. Turning back to the hypothesis allows reflecting on the original thought with the evidence in hand. An idea that was discovered in the analysis was the willingness to change our belief. One disposition that Ennis points out is to be “open-minded”. This is an idea that is shown in the analysis to be important for a person in a reflective operation:

> The list of dispositions includes such things as being open-minded, paying attention to the total situation, seeking reasons, and trying to be well-informed (Ennis, 1985, p. 48).

The disposition "open-minded" is important in deciding what to believe and do because what you want to find might not be the truth you were seeking. Being open-minded can refer to the ability to view different points of view. To be open-minded could even make you change your belief because what you hear is convincing enough to change it. This is a disposition several researchers either put in their definition, or they include it in their articles. Without being open-minded people cannot think critically (Willingham, 2008, 21; Ennis, 1985; Dewey, 1910; Halpern & Butler, 2019, p. 53 – 54). These researchers view being open-minded as the ability to change their beliefs from what the evidence shows.

Facione and Giancarlo see open-mindedness as the ability to tolerate that others have different points of view (Halpern & Butler, 2019, p. 53 – 54). Facione and Giancarlo's point is important for critical thinking because being able to accept that others have different opinions even though they might not be right is a good skill to have. Defining what is meant with "open-minded" in a definition like Facione and Giancarlo do, is smart, that way there is no confusion about what is meant.

One ability that was found in the analysis as being important was "inference-related ability".

> The four general sets of abilities that are constitutive of critical thinking are clarity-related abilities*...,* inference-related abilities, abilities related to establishing a sound basis for inference, and abilities involving in going about decision making in orderly and useful way, often called problem solving. (Ennis, 1985, p. 48)

Inference-related ability is the ability to reach a decision or belief that something is true or false with the information we have available to us. Sometimes we might not have all the information we need. For example, the government might not have it available to us. It could also be that the school cannot access some websites, or some books are not in the school library. It is therefore an important ability to have (Willingham, 2008, p. 21; Halpern & Butler, 2019, p. 53). The monitoring and control of inferences through reasoning is also a metacognition element

that is identified in critical thinking (Tarricone, 2011, p. 38). This links critical thinking and metacognition.

Dewey claims that finding a truth is the hard part of reflective thinking, he explains it to be "somewhat painful" because the outcome might not come out the way you want (Dewey, 1910, p. 13).

> Reflective thinking is always more or less troublesome because it involves overcoming the inertia that inclines one to accept suggestions at their face value; it involves willingness to endure a condition of mental unrest and disturbance (Dewey, 1910, p. 13).

It can be hard to let go of a belief that was true for so long. For example, when the world was discovered to be round instead of flat, changing our belief to the truth had to be difficult for many. If we cannot realize that we are wrong, there is no point in reflecting or finding the truth. Without being able to change our beliefs, how can we move forward to a better world with more knowledge?

Roberson argues that truth is one of the core elements of educational enterprise (Roberson, 2009, p. 14). Teachers should teach the truth and teach how pupils can find out the truth. Pupils should not always trust everything they are being told. Therefore, teachers need to teach pupils how they find the truth. Dewey shows too how Columbus believed that the world was round instead of flat. His belief was going against anyone's belief. Because of what Columbus discovered with evidence and knowledge, many men changed their beliefs.

> The consequences of a belief upon other beliefs and upon behavior may be so important, then, that men are forced to consider the grounds or reasons of their belief and its logical consequences. (Dewey, 1910, p. 5)

One can see today that even though evidence shows that the world is round, many people still do not believe that this is true. These people are not able to reflect and are not looking critically at the truth. The people who did believe the world was round changed their beliefs because of the evidence Columbus presented. This shows the power of finding out the truth. Teachers should train pupils to become independent thinkers. Teaching them to find the truth, is linking

them to knowledge, and knowledge is power (Roberson, 2009). However, one cannot find a truth without the other processes in reflection. Finding a truth seems to be the last step in a reflective process. This theme tried to show that both Ennis and Dewey see the truth as an important factor in reflective thinking. Without being able to change our beliefs after finding the truth, one is not able to think critically.

5. Discussion and Application

This chapter presents the discussion of the second research question in this thesis. This chapter also presents an application of *The Giver: Graphic Novel,* where it shows how its potential could be used in the classroom to develop critical thinking skills. These two things together will answer my second research question.

> "How can critical thinking skills be developed through the use of graphic novels in the EFL classroom?"

To be able to answer this question I will apply research from the literature review, discuss what is said about literature in the EFL classroom, and how critical thinking is linked to literature. This chapter is divided into two parts, first the discussion, and second the application. The chapter ends with a short description of the considerations.

5.1. Discussion

5.1.1. The role of critical thinking in school

Research shows that teachers in Norway focus on critical thinking mostly in Social Studies, Science, Norwegian, and Religion and Ethics. It is mainly being taught in linked to source criticism, argumentation, and skepticism (Raffhaug et al., 2022; Lindseth, 2022). Ferguson and Krange (2022) tried to focus on source evaluation, argumentation, and views of knowledge. They discovered that the pupils did not seem to master critical thinking. Critical thinking is not something that can be taught like a normal subject. Children down to three years old can engage in critical thinking, while a trained scientist can fail at doing it. Some teachers think it is like riding a bike when you know it, you know it, but this is not the case (Willingham, 2008, p. 21 – 22). Maybe this is where teachers fail, they think they can just teach it. The people that have tried teaching it, fail. Halpern and Butler argue that there are critical thinking skills that can be taught, while Willingham argues that we cannot teach critical thinking. To be able to think critically we have to understand our own cognition.

The problem with not being able to teach critical thinking probably lies in schools and teachers' knowledge about it. For a school to be able to work with critical thinking, the teacher needs to have an understanding of the term (Lipman, 1987). Børhaug is worried that teachers' and pupils' understanding of the term is only linked to source criticism, and that is why they do not

understand the complexity of the term. (Bjørhaug, 2017, p. 9). Some of the problems here lie in the way LK20 formulates the definition and competence aims for different subjects. For example, in year 10 in the English subject, pupils have to be able to use sources in a critical and accountable manner (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020). LK20 links critical thinking to source criticism, but critical thinking is so much more.

LK20 has critical thinking as a core value, which means that it is supposed to be a component in every subject. English is not one of the most used subjects to teach critical thinking. One of the reasons for this could be that "critical" or "thinking" specifically is not mentioned in the competence aims for the subject in years 1-7. It is only first measured in year 10. One of the places it is mentioned is under the title "Assessment of coursework". It says: "The teacher shall plan and facilitate for the pupils to demonstrate their competence in various ways, including through understanding, reflection, and critical thought, and in various contexts." (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020). Research shows that many teachers do not understand the complexity of the term and many teachers link critical thinking with source criticism. One can then ask ourselves, are teachers able to assess coursework critically and reflectively? Halpern and Butler argue that critical thinking skills can be taught to younger grades, it would only benefit their future to start early. Therefore, critical thinking should not firstly be mentioned in year 10 English. Critical thinking can be taught earlier and with the use of literature.

KriT gives lesson plans about teaching critical thinking with children's literature. A few of these lesson plans are in English with English literature (Kritisk tenkning i barneskole, n.d.). Giving out lesson plans on critical thinking with the use of literature shows teachers that it is possible to teach critical thinking in other ways than source criticism. Using fiction in the classroom can also create a critical perspective with pupils about the difference between fantasy and reality. Going into a fantasy world could engage pupils differently than non-fiction can. Fiction can create motivation because it is different from what they are used to, and it lets them escape to a different world. It is also possible to adapt to different English levels, which is more inclusive (Svanes & Tørnby, 2022, p. 55; Bland, 2013). Research from the US shows that when students develop critical thinking skills, they can make better life choices (Halpern & Butler, 2019).

Teachers have to get their pupils ready to face the world. Halpern and Buter present some critical thinking skills that will help pupils become better thinkers and make better choices. These skills are:

1. Reasoning: Drawing Deductively Valid Conclusions
2. The Relationship Between Thought and Language
3. Analyzing Arguments
4. Thinking as Hypothesis Testing
5. Likelihood and Uncertainty (Understanding Probabilities)
6. Decision-Making and Problem-Solving

Diana Halpern created a critical thinking assessment program (HCTA), that has been given to college students in the US. The results show that students who got higher on their test reported that they experienced fewer negative life events than those who scored lower on their tests results. As mentioned earlier Halpern is working on determining if critical thinking skills are just helping us make good life choices, or whether they predict the occurrence of positive life events (Halpern & Butler, 2019, p. 61). Even though these tests were done with college students and adults, there is no reason to not start teaching critical thinking earlier. Halpern and Butler argue that it should be taught earlier because it will make them become effective citizens. As well as succeed in their future because they make better life choices (Halpern & Butler, 2019). Tørdal (2020) argues that with critical thinking, pupils will have help solving practical challenges in a sensible way. These challenges do not need to be mathematic equations or scientific experiments. Practical challenges can be challenges they face in their everyday life. However, learning how to use it in the classroom and getting pupils to understand that they can use these skills outside of school too might be more challenging. Tørdal points out that when developing critical thinking, pupils understand that what they learn in school is also connected to their everyday lives. This is because they can assess information differently.

5.1.2 Metacognition's role

Willingham (2008) says that critical thinking cannot be taught, but we can teach metacognition. Metacognition plays a causal role in developing critical thinking skills (Rivas et al., 2022, p. 1). Research shows that there is a link between critical thinking and metacognition. Some also argue that there should be more research done about the connection (Tarricone, 2011). Tarricone points out that there should be a connection to complex problem-solving and gives four clear assertions that argue for a connection between metacognition and critical thinking. These four are; 1) Knowledge of cognition and reflection and knowledge of regulatory processes of cognition. These are elements of metacognition involved in critical thinking. 2) Knowledge, selection, and refinement of strategies, as well as the monitoring and control of

inferences through reasoning. These are also metacognition elements identified in critical thinking. 3) Evaluative, reflective reasoning, self-correction, and self-regulatory processes based upon specific criteria and context. These elements are supported by scaffolding, especially in complex problems. The last one is 4) during problem-solving, purposeful reflection involves complex higher-order thinking entailing the identification of beliefs, bias, prejudice, assumptions, epistemological commitments, and reflection (Tarricone, 2011, p. 38). Tarricone shows that there is a clear connection between critical thinking and metacognition. However, critical thinking can only be metacognitive when it is an evaluative, reflective process, which means that critical thinking is not metacognitive if a purposeful and deliberate reflection is not present (Tarricone, 2011, p. 42). This links back to Dewey's fourth type of thought, which leads to reflective thinking, if a belief is deliberately sought and has well-examined evidence as support, it can lead to reflective thinking (Dewey, 1910). Since critical thinking seems to be problematic to teach, metacognition might be easier. The relationship between critical thinking and metacognition is essential to understanding knowledge.

Similar to critical thinking, metacognition is a term that researchers find challenging to define. Some define it as, thinking about our own thought, while some define it as a reflection on cognition (Haukås et al., 2018, p. 12). These two definitions are some of the same but in different wording, they are also very short and do not explain the complexity of metacognition. Brown's definition points more to knowledge and control over our own cognition (Brown, 1987, p. 66). John Flavell has a similar definition to Brown, but while Brown says that metacognition is about control of one's own cognitive system, Flavell says that it is knowledge about anything related to our cognition. Both definitions have the same idea, which is that we need to understand and have knowledge about our own cognitive system.

John Flavell gives three categories to understand metacognition better, which Wenden links to language, learning, and teaching. The first category is personal knowledge. Personal knowledge is the general knowledge that learners gain from human factors, which involves learning. This also refers to what our pupils believe about their own ability to learn something and the skills they need to write in a second language (Wenden, 1998). When our pupils become aware of what they know and their ability to learn, they are working on understanding their own cognitive system. For example, pupils learn in different ways. One learns by reading English texts, while another learns by just listening to English texts. By teaching in different ways, pupils can find their way of learning. However, pupils also need task knowledge.

The second category is task knowledge. Task knowledge refers to what learners know about why they are doing a specific task, and why this task is helpful to improve their language skills. Task knowledge is also about giving the pupils the information and skills they need to complete the task (Wenden, 1998, p. 518). This type of knowledge is something that, in my experience, is practiced a lot in school. Student teachers are also being taught at university that telling our pupils why a task is being done gives them meaning and motivation. These two categories cannot alone help a pupil solve a task and build on their metacognition. Pupils also need the last category, strategy knowledge (Wenden, 1998).

Strategy knowledge is the last category John Flavell presents. Strategy knowledge refers to the general knowledge learners have about what strategies to use to be able to solve a task. As well as being able to be able to solve a task with the strategies. It is also about why these strategies are useful. Strategy knowledge is defined as, "general skills through which learners manage, direct, regulate, guide their learning, i.e. planning, monitoring and evaluating" (Wenden, 1998, p. 519). These skills are referred to as self-regulation, where pupils can evaluate and plan their own learning. This skill can also allow learners to have better control over their own cognition. Strategy knowledge might be the hardest for teachers to teach pupils because pupils can rely a lot on their friends and to not want do make the wrong decision. However, strategy knowledge involves becoming an independent thinker and becoming ready to face the world, which is one of the goals of schools and teachers.

One of the dispositions Facione and Giancarlo present is *maturity,* which involves understanding that there could be more than one correct answer (Halpern & Butler, 2019, p. 53 – 54). Getting pupils to understand that their answer might be wrong because there are different solutions to a problem, might help them practice strategy knowledge. Wenden points out that for a learner to solve a task, all three categories are necessary (Haukås et al., 2018, p. 13). Instead of teachers focusing on teaching critical thinking, teachers could focus on these categories within metacognition. These categories are more concrete about what pupils need to learn; and while learning it, critical thinking skills can be developed.

5.1.3 Graphic novels in the EFL classroom

Pupil's English levels are increasing. Some of the reasons for this could be technology, gaming and the world becoming more globalized. Research shows that pupils struggle with motivation

and concentration and that there is a connection here (Harberg & Håkensen, 2024; Blomstad, 202; Byberg & Tybring, 2005). Pupils that start first grade can already speak English and have a good English vocabulary. This was not the case 20 years ago. We need to evolve with time and therefore teach at the English level pupils are at. How can we do that with graphic novels?

A graphic novel is a type of text that has both words and pictures and is formatted as a book. It can be fiction or non-fiction and is usually an adaptation of the original work. Young readers are also most of the time the intended reader, which is why graphic novels fit for primary school pupils (Murray, 2023). A graphic novel enables the struggling reader, motivates the reluctant one and, challenges the high-level learner (Bland, 2013, p. 71). A picturebook can do much the same, but in some ways, it cannot challenge the high-level learner in the same way as a graphic novel. For example, the pupils read more into the interaction between the verbal text and pictures, and they go beyond what the text says to find a deeper meaning. Pupils can also compare texts; for example, the original text and the graphic novel, or the graphic novel and the movie, if there is one (Bland, 2013, p. 71 – 72). A struggling reader needs graphics to motivate them to follow the story. The text in a graphic novel is most of the time short and the images explain some of the meaning in the story. Because one can adapt to different levels, many teachers in the US have found the use of graphic novels in the EFL classroom a great success. (Bland, 2013, p. 71). For a pupil who cannot concentrate while reading a lot of text, the graphics help them follow the story. Going into a fantasy world also helps pupils engage in a book in a different way than non-fiction can do (Svanes & Tørnby, 2022, p. 55).

There are other benefits to the use of graphic novels. One is motivation. By being able to adapt to different skill levels and different pupils' needs, a graphic novel can motivate pupils to read more beside school. Pupils reading level and language levels can also improve because they are reading more (Rimmereide, 2013, p. 133). Another benefit is that graphic novels help pupils understand their emotions and situations that are happening in their lives besides school (Bland, 2013, p. 71 – 72). Pupils can escape into a different world that addresses a problem they might face. It is also easier for a pupil to understand a problem in a novel when the story is told from a young character's point of view, instead of an adult character.

For all of this to work, the level of language in the book needs to be right for each pupil. The content also has to be interesting and motivating, and the genre has to fit (Rimmereide, 2013, p. 134). With a class of 20 pupils, this could be challenging, and a book might not spike

everyone's interest. A graphic novel may not always be the best and only type of book to use in the classroom, but it is a type of book that could spike more pupil interest.

5.1.4. Literature and critical thinking

Teachers in the US have tried to teach critical thinking through children's literature. D'Angelo (1970) writes about teachers who have tried but failed. What most of them are missing in their teaching is justification and evaluation. D'Angelo argues that some of the skills that are involved in critical thinking are, distinguishing a fact from an opinion, discovering fallacious arguments, and evaluating assumptions (D'Angelo, 1970, p. 635). D'Angelo argues two types of literature can be used to teach critical thinking. The first type is books that have specific arguments that can be critically analyzed. The second type is books that describe a situation that either states or suggests claims of facts or judgment of values. Some books might even have both these characteristics (D'Angelo, 1970, p. 635). I argue that *The Giver: Graphic Novel* fits under the second category and can therefore be used to develop critical thinking. Using fiction in the classroom creates a critical perspective for the pupils about what the difference is between fantasy and reality.

Emilia Andersson-Bakken and Sissil Lea Heggernes write about how classroom dialogue can promote critical thinking. It is essential how teachers ask questions to promote the classroom dialogue and how they invite pupils to think. However, it can be demanding to start a good dialogue (Andersson-Bakken & Heggernes, 2022, p. 45). The most normal is to divide between open-ended questions and closed questions. Open-ended questions invite too classroom dialogue and encourage longer and fuller answers that are more meaningful (Andersson-Bakken & Heggernes, 2022; A Pass Educational Group LLC, 2020). If you want pupils to reflect and justify their answers, the follow-up question is important. This is also essential in a good classroom dialogue and reveals pupils' critical thinking skills. If teachers follow up on pupils' answers, it shows how it is relevant for to conversation, it can engage other students to join in the conversations (Andersson-Bakken & Heggernes, 2022, p. 46; A Pass Educational Group LLC, 2020). If teachers want a yes/no answer, they can ask closed questions. However, these types of questions do not let pupils reflect and justify their answers because pupils believe that there is a right and wrong answer (A Pass Educational Group LLC, 2020). If a closed question is asked, one could follow up with, for example, "Why do you think so?", or "Are there other explanations?". This way you would get a longer and meaningful answer. (Andersson-Bakken & Heggernes, 2022, p. 47; A Pass Educational Group LLC, 2020).

Ingvill Krogstad Svanes and Hilde Tørnby point out that ethical dilemmas can be suitable for developing critical thinking. Children know to some extent what is right and wrong, they learn this from a very young age. Questions about ethical dilemmas encourage pupils to reflect and justify, and it shows that reasoning and argumentation are more important than the "correct answer". For example, pupils are asked if it is okay that the sheep tricks the turkey in the book: *Bæ, bæ, lure lam*? why? Or why not (Svanes & Tørnby, 2022, p. 54). The first question can seem like there is one correct answer, but with the follow-up question, pupils are invited into a classroom dialogue. Another way to ask a question is by putting the pupils in the situation of the novel. Pupils can also imagine themselves in a situation, either the situation of the character in the book, or the person writing the novel. This could get pupils more engaged in the texts. Questions that can be asked in this situation are: "Who is telling the story?", or "Why are they using these words or these types of letters, etc.?" (Svanes & Tørnby, 2022, p. 55). Younger pupils still like to play and do roleplay. By putting them in a situation with a made-up character, they might reflect on the situation differently than if they just talked about it. After the role-play, the teacher invites to a classroom dialogue to talk about the situation.

Ethical dilemmas are not the only type of questions that can be asked for developing critical thinking. High-level learners can go deeper into the text and look at the bigger picture. Questions that can be asked then are:

- What does the text tell us?
- What does the pictures tell us?
- Does the text and pictures tell us the same thing?
- Why is the page blue instead of red?
- Why is one character much bigger than another?

(Svanes & Tørnby, 2022, p. 55).

These questions open up for pupils to reflect upon why a decision is made in a book. However, these questions cannot make pupils develop critical thinking skills right away, but students start to learn how to evaluate and justify their answers. As Robertson says, justification is one of the core elements of educational enterprise. This is one step in the right direction (Robertson, 2009, p. 14).

If the teachers do not understand the purpose of asking open-ended questions, pupils will not get anything out of being asked about ethical dilemmas, the style, etc. Becoming a critical thinker cannot happen with only one lesson (Willingham, 2008). This is something that must be worked on several times over longer periods.

5.2. Application

This section will be an application of *The Giver: Graphic Novel*. With research from chapter two and the discussion above, I present a way to work with the novel that promotes critical thinking. The application of the novel is meant for grades 5-7 but can be adjusted for younger pupils. Because of the length of *The Giver: Graphic Novel*, this lesson plan has to be conducted over several lessons.

5.2.1. Background

The Giver: Graphic Novel (2019) is an adaption from the original work *The Giver,* written in 1993. In the novel, we meet a boy called Jonas. We get to follow him on his journey in turning 12 years old, and the event that follows. Jonas lives in a "perfect" community, where everything is provided to the people, and nothing is missing. They live a comfortable life. When a child turns 12, they get assigned to a job that they will work with for the rest of their lives. Jonas is assigned to become the next Receiver of Memory. He starts working with The Giver which gives him memories about the past. Jonas starts to understand that his perfect community is not so perfect after all. The community lives under "Sameness". This means that there are no colors, no hills, no difference in skin shade, no hunger, no pain, no love, and there is climate control. Jonas is not happy living in "Sameness" knowing that there is more to life than the community. The reader gets to follow all the ups and downs that happen to him after he becomes The Receiver of Memory. Is Jonas able to leave Sameness after all?

5.2.2. Pre-reading

Before starting the work with *The Giver: Graphic Novel,* there should be some preparations. By having preparations beforehand, the lesson should give a greater learning outcome. First of all, the pupils should have some background knowledge about graphic novels. Use one lesson to teach them different types of terms related to graphic novels, for example: panel, frame, gutter, graphic weight, etc. By promoting knowledge about their own cognition, and giving

pupils the skills they need to do a task, you are promoting strategy knowledge (Haukås, 2018). Secondly, the teacher should get the classroom ready for out-loud reading. Find pillows, mats, and chairs, so that they are comfortable. Make a presentation where you put in pictures of the chapters you are working on. This way pupils can choose to follow the text while you are reading or just look at the pictures. I would recommend the teachers to read the chapter they will teach beforehand.

Before reading for the pupils, show the pupils the front page of the novel. Following this, you can ask questions such as:

- What do you think this book is about?
- What does the cover tell you?
- What do the colors tell you?
- Is there anything specific you notice with the cover?

These open-ended questions invited the pupils to conversations. Remember to ask follow-up questions. This promotes classroom dialogue between pupils and encourages more pupils to join the conversation (Andersson-Bakken & Heggernes, 2022). For each class, present the goal of the day. This way you promote task knowledge. Pupils will become aware of the task they are going to do and why they are doing it (Haukås, 2018).

5.2.3. Inter-reading

To be able to get through the novel and use the opportunities throughout the book that invite too classroom dialogue, I have selected to use planned stops in this lesson plan. The teacher starts to read out loud and stops at selected pages where there is an invitation to classroom dialogue. The planned stops and example questions are shown in the appendix. Under each planned stop, open-ended questions with follow-up questions are presented. These questions are focused on:

- Open-ended questions
- Open-ended questions about ethical dilemmas
- Scenarios where pupils imagine themselves in other situations
- Questions about the style choices of the author

According to previous research, these types of open-ended questions invite too classroom dialogue. What is important to remember, is to ask follow-up questions. This way you promote reflection and teach them to justify their answers (Svanes & Tørnby, 2022; Andersson-Bakken & Heggernes, 2022; A Pass Educational Group LLC, 2020). A stop to explain words should also be considered.

There are activities one could do in the classroom during and after reading the book that promote critical thinking. Below are some examples of such activities. Most of the activities are group activities, but they can also be done individually. The reason for group activities is that working in groups promotes conversations and being able to see others' points of view (Andersson-Bakken & Heggernes, 2022).

1. Debate 1:

This is an activity that can be done under ways of reading the novel. Divide the class into groups of four. Two of the pupils will discuss pros and two will discuss cons of different situations. First, they will work together in pairs and make an argument. When this is done, each group of four will present their debate. The situations that can be given are:

a) Pros or cons of having emotions.
b) Pros and cons of living in Sameness.
c) Pros and cons of only having two children, one boy and one girl.
d) Pros and cons of release.

This activity explores the ethical dilemmas presented in the novel and gets pupils to reflect upon the different points of view. It also makes them stand up for something they might think is wrong but also gets them to understand other views. This activity can be done several times, maybe some opinions chang when reading further in the novel.

2. Debate 2:

This activity can be done while still reading the novel. This explores the ethical dilemmas presented in the story. Divide the class into groups, assigning each group a different perspective from the novel (e.g., the Elders, Jonas, the Giver, Lilly, mother, father, ect.). Have each group present arguments defending their assigned perspective on a key issue from the novel, such as the suppression of emotions, the importance of memory, or the concept of Sameness. This encourages pupils to understand and articulate different viewpoints.

3. Visual Analysis and Interpretation

This activity is about analyzing how visual elements influence understanding of the story. Divide the class into groups. Ask the groups to select a series of panels from the graphic novel that presents a critical moment in the story. Have them analyze how the author uses color, framing, perspective, and facial expressions to convey themes or emotions that add to the story. Each group will present their findings, discussing how the visual interpretation adds depth to the narrative. Pupils also have to justify their answers because this is key to critical thinking. This activity can be done both after the novel is read but also as you go for each reading stop. Some chapters might have more to analyze than others.

4. Theme-Based Scavenger Hunt

This activity is about identifying and analyzing themes represented in the graphic novel. Altogether as a class create a list of themes from the novel (e.g., freedom vs. control, the role of memory, individuality). Divide the class into groups where the groups are asked to find visual representations of these themes in the graphic novel. They must explain why they chose each image and how it represents the theme, which helps foster a deeper understanding of the story's messages. The teacher can choose to either print out sections of the novel that they can choose from or make a presentation that she shares with the class where they can find pictures. This activity could be done in between reading stops as well as at the end.

5. Alternative Ending

This activity has to be done after the whole novel is read. After discussing the ending of the graphic novel, divide the class into groups where each group works together to create an alternative ending. They can choose to present this as a short comic strip, a written narrative, or a storyboard. Encourage them to think about how their ending addresses unresolved questions or themes in the story. This activity can also be done individually instead of in groups.

5.2.4. Post-reading

The teacher should end each class with a joint class summary where they talk about what the goal for the class was and what they have learned. They can also talk about what they think will happen next in the novel. Ending each class with a class summary will help the teacher visualize if there are any learning outcomes. It will also help pupils become aware of what the goal of the class was and if they reached it.

5.3. Considerations

Since this lesson plan has not been attempted in the classroom with pupils, the total duration of the lesson will be difficult to predict. Some days teachers might only want to read for the pupils and ask questions with no extra work. Some days teachers might read less and do more group work. Given the variation in class sizes, there might not be enough themes to explore for the debates, but there could be several groups debating the same themes.

6. Conclusion

This thesis has investigated how critical thinking is defined within the research area, as well as how working with graphic novels in the EFL classroom could develop critical thinking skills. This last chapter will conclude the thesis by giving an overview of the central finding and explaining how this thesis has answered my research questions. Lastly, it will discuss how this study has enhanced English language teaching.

6.1. Critical thinking – a problematic definition

The first research question of this study aimed to investigate; how is critical thinking defined within the research field? Whilst the research in the literature review shows that there are many ways to define critical thinking, it also shows that the definition changes depending on the research topic. Johnson and Hamby (2015) criticize how vague definitions in the field are. However, the different definitions do have similarities.

The findings in the TA highlights that reflection is essential to being able to think critically. Reflection is a cognitive process that can be both critical and uncritical. If we reflect correctly, we are able to think critically. To be able to understand how critical thinking is defined, we need to understand the process of reflection. Before a reflective process can start, a hypothesis or an idea about discovering something new has to occur (Halpern & Butler, 2019; Ennis, 1985; Dewey, 1910). However, a hypothesis alone is not reflection.

The findings suggest that knowledge is an important aspect of the reflective process. A person needs knowledge about all the points of view about the topic in the hypothesis. One of the dispositions that Ennis highlights as a part of being able to think critically, is ‘well-informed’. Dewey points out that there is a difference between being ‘well-informed’ and having ‘knowledge’ because not all information is knowledge. To make a decision without looking at different points of view, is not reflection; it is uncritical thinking (Willingham, 2008; Halpern & Butler, 2019; Dewey, 1910). We need the underlying knowledge to be able to understand a topic. You can teach students everything about how to think, but without background knowledge and practice, they will not be able to implement critical thinking. To be able to find knowledge that can be used to support our hypothesis, there must be an investigation.

The investigation is intended to bring light to our hypothesis. It is directed to either confirm or contradict the hypothesis (Dewey, 1910). Searching for evidence can be about testing different hypotheses to check what works and not. The investigating can also be about reading up on the subject and gaining knowledge. When we have adequate knowledge about a topic, one is able to come up with a conclusion that is reasoned and justified.

Inference is a term that is mentioned by several researchers. Inference is about reaching a decision with the information we have available to us. Sometimes we do not have all the information available for different reasons. Researchers like Lipman and Ennis point out that it is important to be concrete in the phrasing of words, for example using "available evidence" instead of "evidence" or defining analysis instead of just writing "analysis". This way it is easier for the reader to understand what to do. (Lipman, 1988; Ennis 1985; Hatcher, 2000). Ennis believes that we need to be clear in our definitions. Clarity-related ability is a term Ennis believes is important to be able to think critically. Asking clear questions gives better answers, and asking follow-up questions gives longer and clearer answers (Ennis, 1985; Andersson-Bakken & Heggernes, 2022, p. 45). A better word to use instead of clarity-related abilities, related to questions, would be justifications. Roberson (2009) says that justification is the core of educational enterprise. Facione, Giancarlo, and D'Angelo say that critical thinking is not present before you justify your decision and reason (Halpern &Butler, 2019; D'Angelo, 1970). Therefore, justification should be a part of the definition of critical thinking, which is not the case in LK20.

Ennis (1985) shows that problem-solving is one ability that is needed in being able to decide what to believe or do. Halpern also uses this term in their definition. However, the TA links problem-solving to scientific thinking and shows that critical thinking has different definitions depending on the subject it is used in. Willingham (2008) says that problem-solving is about finding one correct answer and therefore argues that it should not be part of critical thinking. Facione and Giancarlo have *maturity* has a disposition. Maturity is about understanding that there could be more than one correct answer (Halpern & Butler, 2019, p. 53). LK20 uses the same definition for scientific and critical thinking, but there should be two different definitions.

The last step in a reflective process is the truth. Being able to change our beliefs is crucial in reflection and critical thinking. How we respond to the truth shows if we are able to reflect or not. Open-minded is a much-used term in the definition of critical thinking. The TA shows that

if you are not able to change your belief when the evidence contradicts the belief, you are not reflecting. Open-minded can mean that you change your belief when the truth is presented, but it can also mean tolerating that others have different point-of-views (Willingham, 2008, 21; Ennis, 1985; Dewey, 1910; Halpern & Butler, 2019, p. 53 – 54). Dewey claims that changing our beliefs can be one of the hardest things to do and somewhat painful (Dewey, 1910). However, it is also one of the most important skills. Without being able to change our belief after finding the truth, there is no point in discovering something new. Therefore, the skill of being open-minded should be a part of the definition of critical thinking.

The thematic analysis suggests that Ennis has adapted the term reflection from Dewey. He says that critical thinking is reflective thinking, while Dewey says that reflection can be critical or uncritical. This study has shown that reflection is crucial to being able to think critically. Critical thinking is about reflecting. I have come up with a model from the results in the TA and the discussion, that shows how the reflective process works. This model is presented as Figure 1. Figure 1 is trying to give a better view of what is involved in a reflective process that leads to critical thinking. Pupils have to practice critical thinking and reflection in different situations and scenarios. By practicing, pupils are able to use reflection in both school and at home (Willingham, 2008).

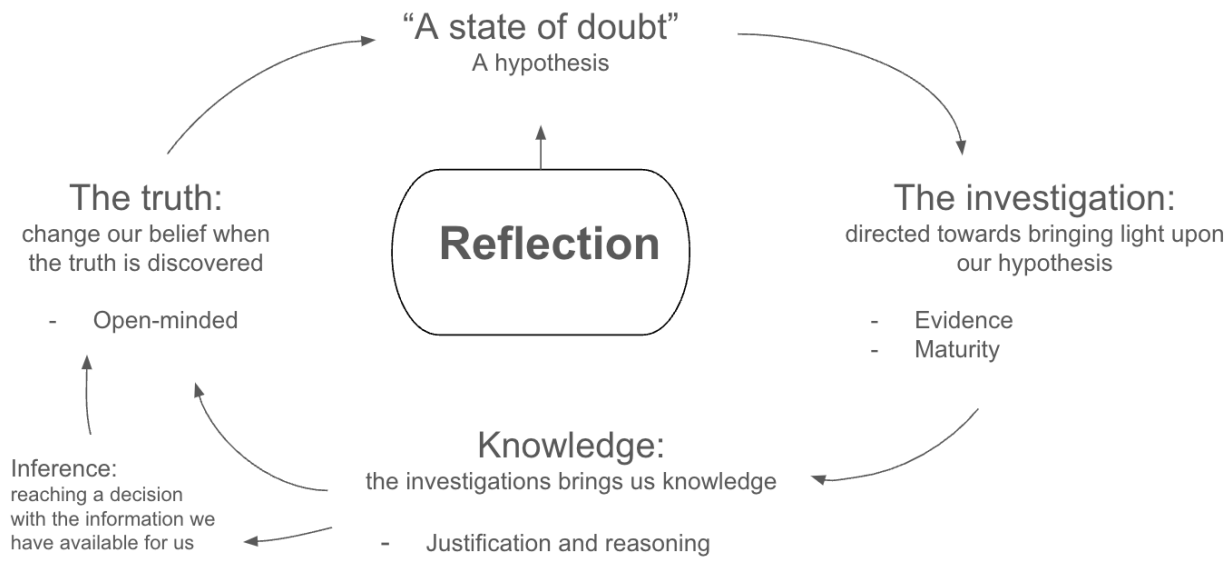

Figure 1: The Reflective Process

6.2. Graphic novels in the EFL classroom

The second research question aimed to investigate; how can critical thinking skills be developed through the use of graphic novels in the EFL classroom? Previous research from the literature review shows that teachers lack knowledge about teaching critical thinking. Teachers need a better understanding of the term other than source criticism because critical thinking is more complex than that. Research also shows that there is a lack of critical thinking in LK20, especially in English. Schools and teachers do not have enough knowledge about critical thinking and how it can be taught with the use of literature in the English subject. KriT is working on critical thinking in the English subject, which means researchers see the lack in the research field (Kritisk tenkning i barneskolen, 2023). Teaching critical thinking correctly could give pupils positive benefits later in life. One could work more specifically on pupils' metacognition, instead of focusing on critical thinking, to make them better thinkers. When pupils become more aware of their own cognitive process, teachers can start working on critical thinking skills. However, remember that critical thinking is not metacognitive if a purposeful and deliberate reflection is not present. The reflective process has to be present. Anita Wenden presented the different types of knowledge within language learning. She shows very specifically what personal knowledge, task knowledge, and strategy knowledge involves, which could be easier for teachers to apply in the classroom (Haukås et al., 2018). All three; personal, task, and strategy knowledge has to be present to help a pupil solve a task.

From the research presented in the literature review, literature could be helpful for pupils who struggle with motivation and concentration. A graphic novel can spike more pupil interest, motivate reluctant pupils, and be adapted to different English language levels. The text and pictures make it easier for low-level students to understand the story. The pictures help the reluctant learner to focus on the story and the high-level learner can go deeper and analyze how text and pictures connect and find a deeper meaning. Literature can be used to develop critical thinking skills, but it has to be the correct type of book. The books that research shows are good for building critical thinking skills are books that have specific arguments that can be critically analyzed and books that describe a situation that either states or suggests claims of facts or judgment of values (D'Angelo, 1970, p. 635). *The Giver: Graphic Novel* fits under D'Angelo's second category of novels that can promote critical thinking. Classroom dialogue can promote critical thinking, but the way questions are asked is essential. The questions need to promote reflective and justified answers. It can be challenging to ask the right type of questions. Open-ended questions invite to a classroom dialogue, and by asking follow-up questions, you show

pupils that you are interested in listening to their opinions. This can lead to more pupils joining in the conversation. Asking pupils follow-up questions, like «Why? », leads to justified answers. Questions about ethical dilemmas can also promote critical thinking. These types of questions encourage pupils to reflect and justify their answers. Teachers have to understand the purpose of asking pupils questions and follow-up questions. If they do not, pupils will not get anything out of it.

The application of *The Giver: Graphic Novel* shows how open-ended questions, follow-up questions, questions about style, and ethical dilemmas, can be asked for different situations in the novel. Pupils get to work with skills like reasoning, the relationship between thought and language, making arguments, thinking, and problem-solving. They have to identify how they feel about the situation Jonas is in, and they have to identify how they think Jonas is feeling in the novel. In debate 1 they are forced to look at the world differently, and it challenges them to fight for something they care about. It also challenges them to fight for something they believe is wrong. In debate 2, pupils also have to put themselves in the position of the other character. This can put them in an ethical situation of what is right and wrong, and it might challenge their own opinions and beliefs. The 3rd activity, visual analysis, and interpretation lets pupils analyze how colors and facial expressions work together with the text. In this activity, pupils have to justify their answer which is a central part of critical thinking. In the theme-based scavenger hunt, pupils must explain the choices they make, this activity helps foster a deeper understanding of the story's messages. In the last activity, pupils have to make up an alternative ending. The ending in *The Giver: Graphic Novel* is very open and can be interpreted in many different ways, and it allows pupils to address the unresolved questions. This allows them to reflect upon what happened to Jonas, and what happened to the community. All the activities are group-based where dialogue is present. The activities also make them justify and reflect on their answers which is a step closer to making them critical thinkers.

6.3. Research field

This thesis contributes to the research of critical thinking with the use of literature in the EFL classroom. There is still not enough research about this in Norway and this thesis is one step in the right direction. This thesis has shown how critical thinking is defined by researchers in the field, and what terms should be part of the definition. It has also gained more insights into how to use critical thinking in the classroom with the use of graphic novels.

6.4. English language teaching

This study enhances English language teaching because it gives more research about developing critical thinking and how to work with it in the classroom. This thesis also enhances English teaching because it gives more activities to do in the classroom. It gives a new insight into critical thinking and LK20, and why LK20 should separate critical and scientific thinking. Research shows that many teachers struggle with how to teach in other ways than argumentation and source criticism. The application of this thesis is a step closer to helping teachers make their pupils become reflective, independent thinkers. Since I have not tried these activities out, they might not work for every class, and they might need to be changed. Teachers could take inspiration from the activities and change them so that they work for their class and other novels.

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Appendix

Planned stops while reading The Giver: Graphic Novel

Stop at page 10.

"How would you have explained the feeling that Jonas is feeling about December and why?" "In what way is it important to be specific about your emotions and why?" "Why do you think the family units can only have two children, one boy and one girl, and why?

Page 20.

"How do you feel about someone else making a decision about what you are going to work with for the rest of your life?" "What do you think about the rule of not riding a bike before you turn nine years old?" "Put yourself in Lilly's situation, how would you feel if The Elders says on the speaker in front of everyone at school that you need to fix your hair and why?" Have you noticed something with the pictures in the novel, what colors are they? What did Jonas see when he was throwing the apple around with Ash? How do you think Jonas is feeling when he is 'different' then the rest of the children because of his eye color and why?" Why do you think that different is bad in this community?"

Page 32.

"Would you like to do volunteer hours after school instead of football, handball or other activities, why or why not?" "Why do you think they say, 'thank you for your dream' to each other every day?" "What effect does the pills have?" "

Page 50.

"Would you like to have the same birthday as everybody else?" "Do you think you are ready to start a job now?" "Why cannot two people have the same name?"

Page 56.

"How do you think Jonas is feeling now and why?" "Why does everybody say, 'we accept your apology' at the same time, and why?"

Page 68.

“What do you think happened to the other Receiver of Memory?” What do you think The Giver is going to do with Jonas?” “Why do you think he does not know what a sled is, or the world is?”

Page 82

“What do you think about Sameness, do you like it, or do you like our world better, and why?” “How do you think the world would be if we did not see colors, for example for a person that is colorblind?” “How do you think Jonas is feeling now and why?”

Page 92.

“What are the benefits of not needing to choose the color of your clothes?” “Is it safer to live in Sameness, why or why not?”

Page 102.

“Have you felt pain before, what happened then?” “How do you think Jonas is feeling since the this is his first-time feeling pain?” “If one person could remove all the bad memories you guys have and keep it for themselves, would you say yes?” “Is that fair, why or why not?” “How is Jonas able to give a memory to Gabe but was not able to give a memory to Lilly?” “

Page 108.

This chapter is about war. If they have student in their class that has experienced war before, the teacher should cinder talking to the student before reading this chapter out loud if bed memories will come back. This chapter can also be skipped. If you are not skipping this chapter, these questions can be asked “How do you think The Giver is feeling before and after giving the memory away, and why? “What do you think the red color is representing?”

Page 118.

“Why is Christmas a good memory?” “What does the colors give to the story in this chapter?” “Why do you think The Elders removed love?” “Do you think *Love* is a meaningless word, why or why not?” “Is it okay for Jonas to lie to his parents?” “It is okay for us to lie to our parents, why or why not?” “What do you think will happen when Jonas stops taking his pills?”

Page 132.

“Put yourself in Jonas’s situation, how would you feel when everybody is playing war, and you have a bad memory about war, but they will not stop playing?” “Do you remember what color eyes Rosemary had?” “What do you think happens when someone is released, for example Rosemary?” “What do you think The Giver is thinking about?”

Page 150.

“What do you think release now compared to earlier?” “Why do you think crying is not allowed in the community?” “Does the pills effect their emotions?”

Page 176.

“It is right that Jonas leaves the community so that everyone gets the memories from the past?” “Why do you think we see colors now?” “Would you have left the community, why or why not”? “Is Jonas right for taking Gabe with him?” “What do you think happened in the end, did they escape or not?”