

# Master Thesis

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“How can the use of authentic literature promote the development of reading literacy in English among eighth-graders in Norway?”

## Acknowledgements

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Katrine Briksdal

*“I believe that today more than ever a book should be sought after even if it has only one great page in it. We must search for fragments, splinters, toenails, anything that has ore in it, anything that is capable of resuscitating the body and the soul.”*

– Henry Miller

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## Abstract

This thesis is based on a research conducted in a Norwegian school class of eighth-graders. The topic question is: *how can the use of authentic literature promote the development of reading literacy in English among eighth-graders in Norway?* The aim of the thesis was to explore the benefits of reading authentic literature in the English language classroom. The research was conducted in a Norwegian eighth-grade classroom. The case study included 9 informants in addition to the English teacher, and the empirical material was collected from classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and the informants' interactive chat logs. The English teacher carried out a reading project in the classroom according to my guidance. The lesson included a reading session, activities related to the text, and discussions among the students, at last the informants participated in an interactive chat activity immediately after the reading session was completed. When the reading session and the reading activities had ended, I conducted the interviews. I selected the text *The Star* (1951), from Alasdair Gray's rich variety of short stories. The short story is included in the text collection *Short Stories for Creative Language Classrooms* (1993) by Collie and Slater. This is a text mainly aimed at English speaking adolescents. The students' age, their cognitive levels, the length of the text as well as the plot, were elements I considered when I chose this particular reading material.

My field work generated much information which I processed and analysed in order to answer my research question. The findings showed that authentic literature creates curiosity, enhances reading literacy, and promotes a certain learning outcome for young Norwegian learners of English. I could deduce these evidences based on the utterances the nine student informants and the teacher informant gave in the study, in addition to the empirical material the observation part yielded. Although these texts are not facilitated and adjusted to fit learners of English as a second language, I still conclude that such texts are valuable for reading in the foreign language classroom if the teaching design is adapted to reach young Norwegian students. The theoretical foundation for the thesis is strongly connected to the personal relation between the reader and the text, and the role of the reader is emphasized. I have also stressed the importance of introducing suitable reading material, and I have found out that the teaching design matters. The learning outcome by reading extensive literature was traced in all categories of my findings.

# 1 Introduction

This thesis has been completed on the background of the debate on whether authentic literature should be brought into the English-as-a-second-language classroom (ESL)<sup>1</sup> in addition to adapted texts. I carried out the field work among young Norwegian students at the age of 13. I directed the study towards reading literacy among young Norwegian learners of English, and the research question was designed to search for findings which could support or invalidate the value of reading authentic literature in the ESL classroom. The topic question which is the foundation for my study is: *how can the use of authentic literature promote the development of reading literacy in English among eighth-graders in Norway?*

The objectives of the study were aimed to search for findings which would support the benefits of introducing authentic literature for young readers of foreign language. There have been arguments against employing authentic literature in the second language classroom beneath university level. This debate has been addressed by scholars, such as Widdowson (1982), Kramsch (1993), and Collie and Slater (1987). I will elaborate on this debate in the theory chapter of the thesis. However, recent research has pointed towards the opposite, revealing that reading authentic literature shows good effect, even among young learners of English. Hasselgreen, Drew and Sørheim have published recent studies regarding the young language learner, which indicate that even very young learners of foreign language take advantage of extensive literature in the ESL classroom (Hasselgreen, Drew & Sørheim, 2012). My study supports the argumentation for introducing authentic literature to the young learners of English.

The empirical material was gathered through a case study I carried out in a Norwegian classroom. I selected nine informants and their teacher of English from an 8<sup>th</sup> grade in a rural school, and the data material was derived from three qualitative data types: observations in class, documents based on interactive chat logs, and semi-structured interviews. A reading activity, which I designed, characterized the case study, and the English teacher carried out the study in the classroom. This reading activity contained one pre-activity which the teacher informant carried out to create expectation and curiosity for the text. Immediately after the pre-activity, the teacher conducted a reading session. In the midst of the reading session, the teacher included an adjective activity in order to focus on the protagonist's mood, and the reading session was followed by discussions in class. I observed the complete activity; then I interpreted and analyzed the observation, and employed this as a part of my empirical material. Immediately after the reading activity, I asked the nine informants to carry out an interactive chat, designed for the study. The student informants completed the chat shortly after the reading activity, closely followed by the semi-structured interviews in target groups containing three informants in each group. The data collection consisted of observation in class, four chat logs, and semi-structured interviews of ten informants, nine students, and one teacher.

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<sup>1</sup>Refers to the study of, or use of English by nonnative speakers.

The theoretical approach which was the foundation for the thesis can be summed up as follows: Louise Rosenblatt was an important contributor to the reader-response theory which investigates the relation between the text and the reader (Rosenblatt, 1994). This theory supports the findings in my study regarding literacy among young Norwegian readers of English. Further theoretical support was also employed by Kramsch who stresses the communicative advantages and cultural insight that the teaching of literature gives (Kramsch, 1993). These theories will be further described later in the thesis.

The methodological approach I chose is based on the hermeneutical tradition. I included the interpretation of written material as well as oral utterances in the field work and analyzed it in order to get as reliable and valid data as possible. I carried out the case study by observation, interpretation of written material and utterances in addition to semi-structured interviews. I chose the hermeneutical approach because the research question *how can the use of authentic literature promote the development of reading literacy in English among eighth-graders in Norway?* is suitable for being studied through qualitative methods. The key concept in my research question is “reading literacy”. I will, in my theory chapter, first elaborate on what this concept means and then introduce my interpretation of the definition through a Model of Reading Literacy which I designed to categorize my findings (Figure 1).

## **1.1 The challenge of reading authentic literature**

I have asked myself the question whether reading authentic literature is important for learning English and whether it should be brought into the ESL classroom. I have concluded that literature is indeed valuable for many aspects of learning, such as text involvement, learning form and structure as well as cultural insight. I realize that literary texts which are not adapted for textbooks are more of a challenge for the students as well as the teachers. There is no vocabulary list integrated at the end of the text, the language is not adapted and adjusted to fit into the Norwegian teaching lesson, and it has no tasks and activities connected to make comprehension easier for the students. Nevertheless, I have experienced that additional literature gives extensive benefits which are not available in the textbooks. The encounter with authentic language is valuable for language learning as well as text involvement. The joy of reading is enhanced by reading “real” literature even though the text may be more challenging than textbook material. I have also experienced that it is important to present literary text with awareness. The text must be understandable even though the language level is higher, the plot must not be too complex, and the teacher must employ pedagogical methods in order to evoke curiosity and interest. This background led me to investigate the effect of authentic literature in the classroom, and I carried out a study based on this hypothesis.

My research aims are to investigate how authentic English literature can promote reading literacy among young students of a foreign language in Norway. The study is designed to discuss whether extensive, authentic literature in English can enhance Norwegian eighth-graders’ reading literacy. There is a strong connection between reading and learning: it

demands understanding and involvement in order to achieve mastery. My thesis will, therefore, emphasize these aspects of the term “reading literacy”: structure and form, text involvement, and cultural insight. I place my research in the ongoing debate which deals with the introduction of authentic literature for young learners of English. I have explored arguments for and against the use of literature in the ESL classroom and discussed these through theory and the findings generated by the case study I used as my research design. My upcoming theory chapter will elaborate on the theoretical foundation for my study and introduce research on the use of authentic literature in the ESL classroom. First, I will elaborate on the term “reading literacy” and introduce how I have combined the elements of the definition with elements of reading outcome in a Model of Reading Literacy (Figure 1), which I manufactured, and then I will employ relevant theory which supports my study.

### **1.1.2 The structure of the thesis**

The further progress of the thesis will process the theoretical foundation for my findings. The theoretical basis I have chosen is closely connected to the term “reading literacy” which I have processed in a Model of Reading Literacy (Figure 1). The theoretical material is mainly based on the reader’s unique response to the text (Rosenblatt, 1994), and the outcome of reading extensive literature in the ESL classroom. Literature researchers, such as Collie and Slater (2009), Kramsch (1993), Rosenblatt (1994, 1995), Vestli (2008), researchers in Hasselgreen et al. (2012) and Widdowson (1982), have contributed to my theoretical approach and supported my research question.

The next step, which follows the theory chapter, will state the methodological approach I have chosen. I chose the hermeneutical approach to answer my topic question because it yielded the most valid evidence for my research. The method chapter will clarify the use of target groups and explain the methods I employed in the field work, such as observations, chat sessions, and semi-structured interviews. I will continue the thesis with my analysis, discussion, and end result. This part of the thesis shows what impact my findings have on the Model of Reading Literacy (Figure 1), and furthermore, it shows how I have reached an answer to my research question. The thesis ends with my conclusion which states and sums up the complete process, and connects my field work to my research question. I have now reached the theoretical part of the thesis.



## 2 Theory

In this chapter, I will state the theoretical approach I have chosen as a foundation for the discussion part of this thesis. A central topic in my research is investigating how the Norwegian students in my informant group responded to the question whether authentic literature in English is of any importance for generating reading literacy among young Norwegian learners of English. The theoretical basis will also open up for a discussion on whether introducing authentic literature in the ESL classroom will be suitable, or meaningless. The thesis will also stress the role of the teaching design and emphasize the relation between the reader and the text, because I find these aspects to be of significance concerning reading literacy. I will carry on the theory chapter by discussing the term “reading literacy” and introduce the term by placing it into a model manufactured to illuminate the different parts of the term (Figure 1). Researches who have contributed to this field have introduced different angles of reading in foreign language and presented different theories of how to teach literature. I will present some researchers, such as Collie and Slater (2009), Kramsch (1993), Rosenblatt (1994, 2005), Vestli (2008), study collections by Hasselgreen et al. (2012), and Widdowson (1982). The theoretical foundation for my study will introduce the change in the Norwegian curriculum, Kunnskapsløftet (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2006, revised 2009), hereafter referred to as Kunnskapsløftet, regarding literature, and furthermore, I will illuminate Rosenblatt’s theories concerning the reader’s relation to the text (Rosenblatt 1994, 2005), and I will look into the young learner of English’ reading outcome by Hasselgreen et al. (2012) and Kramsch (1993).

### 2.1 Approaching the theoretical foundation

As a teacher of English and as a researcher, I have been concerned about reading literacy among young students. This thesis has integrated the term “reading literacy” as a key concept, and I will, therefore, approach the research question based on the definition manufactured by OECD. OECD<sup>2</sup> refers to reading literacy as it is defined in PISA<sup>3</sup>, “the ability to understand, use and reflect on written texts in order to achieve one’s goals, to develop one’s knowledge and potential, and to participate effectively in society” (OECD, 2002).

My research question whether reading authentic literature in the foreign language classroom will stimulate reading literacy among young readers of foreign language has directed me to seek for relevant literature to complete the field work. The choice I made regarding reading material was based on typical youth literature. The chosen short story *The Star* (Collie and Slater, 1993) was written by Alasdair Gray in 1951, and I find this particular text suitable for

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<sup>2</sup>Organisation for economic cooperation and development

<sup>3</sup> Programme for International Student Assessment

young people as well as adults. I have discussed textual material, teaching design as well as the reader's role in this part of the thesis. I have chosen to elaborate on some literary critics and researchers who support the use of literature in the classroom. At the same time I also open up for discussing challenges and difficulties regarding the use of authentic literature in the ESL classroom. The first element to be processed in this chapter is the term "reading literacy".

### 2.1.1 Characteristics of reading literacy

I have chosen to elaborate the PISA definition of reading literacy by breaking it up into smaller units and placing the parts into a model. The units will then be combined with characteristics which I interpret as parts of reading literacy and reading outcome in general, namely text involvement, learning form and structure, and cultural insight as mentioned above. Reading literacy contains more than these three categories, but I choose to emphasize these because of the limitations of the thesis topic. I have divided the definition into three units and combined these with reading characteristics generated in my study. The definition of reading literacy is parted into the following three units:

- understand , use and reflect on written texts
- develop one's knowledge and potential
- participate effectively in society

This Model of Reading Literacy shows how I have categorized my choice of reading components and combined it with the units of reading literacy.

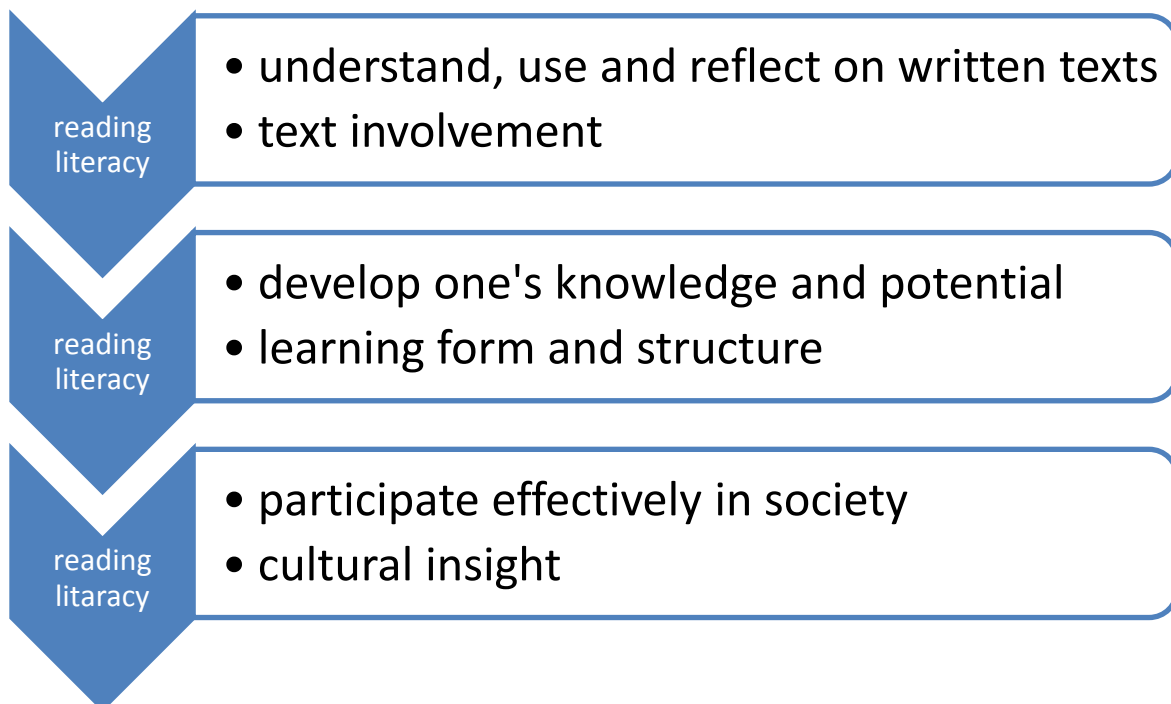


Figure 1: Model of Reading Literacy

I designed this model in order to organize the categories of the term “reading literacy”, and I combined these categories with the units of reading literacy as it is introduced in my field work. These three elements are all traced in the interview guide (appendix list), which I used as a foundation for the case study. I found these elements, and the combination of them, to be useful in search for evidence of reading literacy among young Norwegian learners of English. The Model of Reading Literacy will be processed in the methodology chapter of the thesis, as well as in the discussion part. This model can be used as a foundation for assessment of reading literacy.

### **2.1.2 How to enhance reading literacy among young learners of English**

The young learner of foreign language has got much attention by language researchers regarding communicative competence, but the effect of extensive reading has, to some extent, been left to older students of foreign language (Widdowson, 1982; Collie and Slater, 1987). Norwegian schools tend to emphasize short extracts or short texts for young learners of English. According to Hellekjær (2008), reading skills in Norwegian schools are poor because of the failing reading education. Hellekjær’s findings show that young Norwegian students read very little additional literature in English, whereas their reading material is quite limited to textbooks. This is, according to Hellekjær, a result of the current national curriculum which does not demand extensive reading. The traditional textbook teaching is recognized by vocabulary training and reading with focus on words and structure instead of reading with fluency. This reading strategy contributed to the poor Norwegian results in the PISA testing, according to Hellekjær (2008). Hellekjær points to the serious consequences of such poor reading skills in English, which follows the student into higher education as well. He concludes that lack of additional English reading material in Norwegian schools leads to deprivation of suitable reading strategies among Norwegian students. However, his study showed that students who read literature in their spare time managed better in testing situations, and their reading literacy was higher than their no-reading co-students (Hellekjær, 2008).

The direction is gradually turning, however, and some recent researches regarding the introduction of literature to young learners of English, have been published by Hasselgreen et al. (2012). The field work presented in their anthology of language teaching research has generated some findings that support the idea of employing extensive literature in addition to the textbook material to young learners. I will discuss some.

Included in the anthology of study collections by Hasselgreen et al. (2012) is the article by Birketveit and Rimemreide *Does reading stories enhance language learning?*, which introduces a case study of an extensive reading project. The study involved a class of 11-year-old students who were told to read as many authentic books as possible among 70 picture books and illustrated books. The students were asked to write diaries connected to the books during and after the project. The study aimed to generate findings which illuminated a potential joy of reading, use of diaries, actual language learning, and pupil’s perception of their own language learning. The study was designed to meet the challenge of strengthening

reading and writing skills among young learners of English, and the challenge of reading beyond the textbook, and stimulate each student's capacity. The findings in the study showed that "reading self-selected authentic books had an impact on the pupils' motivation" (Hasselgreen et al., 2012, p. 48). Furthermore, it showed that the reading project had impact on the students' writing development and overall language development. The researchers concluded that reading stories enhance language learning, whereas writing diaries has not the same effect. Birketveit and Rimmereide claim that reading extensive authentic literature has such strong impact on students' language learning that if tight budget force schools to choose between course books or widening the school library by authentic books in a foreign language, one should choose the latter (as cited in Hasselgreen et al., 2012).

How to approach teaching of reading in Norwegian schools is challenging for the language teacher. Some elements have to be considered, such as the students' age, their mastery of the English language as well as their cognitive level. Hasselgreen et al. (2012) have included a study conducted by Charboneau which will enlighten the reading instruction in the ESL classroom (as cited in Hasselgreen et al., 2012). Charboneau's research investigated whether traditional reading instruction has another effect on reading literacy than the untraditional. Charboneau used Hellekjær's theories as a support when she carried out her study. The findings showed that using a textbook as a reading instruction is not necessarily less effective than other approaches, yet the methodology matters, and the usage of the texts is of significance for reading literacy. This means that nontraditional methods, such as working in discussion groups, may be enhancing the reading experience. The outcome of Charboneau's study revealed that traditional methods and reliance on textbook reading still seem to be the main approach in Norwegian primary schools. Charboneau concluded that teaching of EFL<sup>4</sup> reading in Norwegian primary school can be strengthened in many ways by employing untraditional literacy approaches and extensive reading (as cited in Hasselgreen et al., 2012). Her assertions could be traced in my study, because I sensed the interest and anticipation in my field work during the pre-activities and the reading design, which was quite unfamiliar to these informants. When the informants got to underline words which characterized joy and sadness, it was clear to me that their interest was elicited. During the interviews some of the informants claimed that they liked this different way of approaching a text.

According to Hellekjær's research concerning reading literacy among young learners of English, there is a strong textbook tradition in Norwegian primary school. Hellekjær points out some drawbacks in Norwegian reading instruction, such as reading for details and reading for direct translation into Norwegian, and lack of extensive reading, which is additional material. Hellekjær claims that intensive reading, which is reading for translation and learning the vocabulary, makes the reading less efficient (Hellekjær, 2008). I will later in the thesis relate to Charboneau's study to support my own findings which revealed that the teaching design matters when reading literacy is to be acquired. The informants claimed that the text gave more meaning to them as they got to discuss the content and chat about the plot. Moreover they found the text easier to comprehend as the teacher introduced a pre-reading activity prior to the reading. These findings made me look at the reader's experience. What is

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<sup>4</sup> English as a foreign language

going on in the reader's mind as he embarks in the book? My next chapter will shed light on this process. I will now elaborate on the first element in the Model of Reading Literacy (Figure 1): how do young readers understand, use and reflect on a written text by involving in the literary work?

## **2.2. Understand, use and reflect on written texts - text involvement**

I will in this chapter explain and elaborate on the intentions of my Model of Reading Literacy (Figure 1), and I will discuss the categories through some theoretical angles. The first category, "understand, use and reflect on written texts", may be interpreted as involvement in the text. What does it mean to understand a written text? I claim that the text must be addressed in several angles, which are interaction between the plot and the reader, interaction between the protagonist/ characters and the reader as well as linguistic understanding. In order to gain understanding of these areas, textual involvement is demanded. "Use and reflect on written texts" is also listed as a part of reading literacy. I will point to Rosenblatt's theory regarding the reader's literary experience (Rosenblatt, 1995). Understanding a text is defined by the relation between the text and the reader, according to Rosenblatt. She explains this relation as highly personal and emphasizes the importance of observing the child's entrance into the printed page of a book. She underlines that the teacher should be aware of this relation and make sure that the young reader is emotionally ready to meet the challenge of encountering literary texts. Rosenblatt explains this text involvement as follows:

Those who think of language as simply a self-contained set of signs linked to sounds ignore the essential third element, the human being who must make the linkage between them if there is indeed to be a meaningful word. Language is socially evolved, but it is always constituted by individuals, with their particular histories. It is easy to observe how the beginning reader draws on past experience of life and language to elicit meaning from the printed words, and it is possible to see how through these words he recognizes past experience to attain new understanding (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 25).

I interpret this citation as an essential part of reading literacy regarding the reader's relation to the text. The experience of reading contributes to the young reader's individual development. What does it mean to use and reflect on texts? A written text may be processed in various manners; it can be read to get an overview or brief information like a time table or a recipe. On the other hand, some texts are meant to embark deeply into, in order to interact with the plot and the characters. These two elements of reading will be further processed later in this chapter. When I address the expression "use and reflect on written texts" in this thesis, I have mainly chosen to focus on the reading strategy which refers to the deep reading experience connected to literary texts, because of the limitations of the thesis topic and the angle of the study which included a fictive short story.

I have chosen to process text involvement as a part of the reading literacy, and I will explore how text involvement influences the reading experience, and furthermore, the reading literacy. I have placed text involvement in the category “use and reflect on written texts” because it is closely connected to close reading and reflection. When the reader gets the opportunity to embark in the plot and get to know the characters, he needs to use the text as a foundation for interaction. According to Rosenblatt, text involvement is understanding, arousing emotions, and curiosity. Using a written text as a material for involvement demands relation between the text and the reader, moreover it demands that the reader brings his past experiences into the text, his knowledge and expectations. Rosenblatt is concerned with the process between the text and the reader, and I will elaborate on the reader’s relation to the text in the next chapter of the thesis (Rosenblatt, 1995).

### **2.2.1 The reader’s relationship to the text**

Rosenblatt published her literary theory regarding the relationship between the reader and the text in 1994. She introduced the term “transactional theory” which refers to a reciprocal interaction between the reader and the text. This literary criticism applies to the reader in particular and is aimed to reach teachers of literature as well as literary critics or any reader in general. The reading transaction is a process going on between the reader and the text, both parts with a mutual impact on each other. She presents her work like this:

This book centers, then, on the reader’s contribution in the two-way, ‘transactional’ relationship with the text. Critics and literary theorists, who have traditionally lavished attention on authors and texts, have only recently begun to recognize the reader (Rosenblatt, 1994, preface).

Rosenblatt mentions “the invisible reader” to illuminate this theory. The relation between the reader and the author has for a long time been given little or no attention. Even though the reader and the author were mentioned by Plato and Aristotle, it was merely to point at the reader as “the audience”. The reader has not been given an active role; he was rather seen as a passive listener. The past few years have shown a change in focus towards the reader, however, he is more often given a proactive role; some of the focus has changed from the written work of art, which was placed on a pedestal, to the reaction of the reader (Rosenblatt, 1994).

Rosenblatt initially introduced the term “efferent and aesthetic reading” (Rosenblatt, 1994, 2005). This means that in order to get the reader to respond to a text aesthetically, he has to address the complexity of reading a text and meet the challenges he is given. The aesthetic stance is not necessarily always chosen by the reader; he simply responds to the meaning in the text, moreover he is a participant as he brings his attitude, emotion, experiences, and expectation into the reading. Efferent reading, on the other hand, is characterized by reading for a purpose, for instance, factual texts. I will go deeper into these terms later in this chapter. The pre-activity in my case study showed that the readers aroused curiosity about the text. They managed to bring their own experiences into the reading by participating in the pre-

activity. The informants allowed themselves to get involved, get ready, and prepare for the reading. The informants took part in the activity; they claimed that they looked forward to embark into the text because of the pre-activity which was designed to prepare students for further reading.

Active involvement in reading demands an active reader. Interpretation, emotional engagement, intellectual approach as well as personal growth will not take place unless the reader is present and engaged. The reader's relation to the text must to some extent be defined by himself, nevertheless, when a literary text is brought into the classroom for aesthetic reading, the teacher needs to be aware of the readers, the text, and the relation between them. The classroom consists of a number of students, each of them an individual reader. How to support the reading experience for each reader is a challenge the language teacher must address. Efferent reading is necessary in school, in order to learn structures, forms, and manuals, nevertheless, aesthetic reading gives the learner valuable knowledge as well, and the relation between the text and the reader must be given space in the classroom. My young informants' perception of the characters and the protagonist in particular, showed that they managed to get involved in the plot and understand cultural features. Some of my respondents regarded the protagonist as selfish, while others perceived him as sad, lonely and caring. The process going on in these young readers' minds showed that the relation between the reader and the text is highly personal.

How can one describe the relationship between the reader and the author? Normally the writer's point of view has been emphasized, as he seeks to communicate to his reader through the text. Even though the writer who claims that he has no concern for the reader, but writes solely to himself, actually writes to communicate to a reader, namely himself. No matter what point of view is being stressed, the text inevitably is a piece of document which generates communication between the reader and the text (Rosenblatt, 2005). In my study, the young readers managed to get involved in the text, most likely because of the protagonist's young age. Alasdair Gray, the author of the short story, chose to view the plot through the eyes of an adolescent boy, which gave the readers opportunity to get involved closer and get a relationship with the main character because of the concurrent age. During the observation part of the case study, I noticed the class discussing the character's age, his relation to the adults in his life, and their view on the supernatural event taking place. They saw these elements through their own young eyes and managed to identify with the protagonist. What do these findings tell us about the author Alasdair Gray? To what extent has he been able to create a relationship with the readers by giving life to a young, lonely boy? The case study I carried out indicates that the author has been able to interact with the reader through the choice of protagonist. He has managed to talk directly to the young readers by the design of plot and the choice of language. How to create interaction between the author and the reader is investigated by Kramsch (1993). I will briefly illuminate her view on reading.

Silential reading is mentioned by Kramsch, and it seems to be a rather lonely and passive process observed from the outside. Silential reading refers to "reading between the lines" and understanding the unsaid meaning. My study proved that this process is not necessarily a lonely interaction, however. The students seemed to be able to get involved in the plot and

identify with the protagonist. They discussed the text, worked with activities, and talked in chat rooms. The reading process was active, it revealed a deep interaction between the reader and the text, and it seemed to be a vital, personal experience. Close reading of the text gave the students the opportunity to seek meaning and take value of the plot. I deduced these conclusions by the observation part of the case study and during the chat session in particular.

When young Norwegian learners of English read literature in the target language, reading literacy is strengthened. I claim that the threshold of reading will be lowered for these readers when literature is brought into the classroom. How do teachers of English in Norwegian schools address the reading discipline within the teaching of English? Clearly Kunnskapsløftet provides the opportunity to choose extensive literature in English, yet recent research shows that many Norwegian ESL teachers still tend to rely on the course book (Hellekjær, 2008). I will discuss this topic in the section of the controversy of using extensive literature in the classroom further ahead in the thesis. However, in order to understand the readers' relation to the text, I will now look into the process of reading and introduce some theoretical aspects of the term reading.

### **2.2.2 What is reading?**

Reading is a complex process going on in the reader's mind. Many elements are taking place when the reader reads, such as decoding of language, plot involvement, cultural insight, learning outcome, and motivation, to mention some. I will elaborate on the reading process by introducing a report, drawn up by Andreassen, in the journal *Fra tekst til språk* (2009). Her research is rooted in Hellekjær's studies regarding reading literacy in the ESL classroom (as cited in Andreassen, 2009). She claims that reading is a cognitive process which is defined by the reader who creates meaning in combination with the text. This process is characterized partly by decoding letters, words, and sentences, known as "bottom-up processing", and partly by processing the text by supplying knowledge about language and text, known as "top-down processing". The reader will additionally include knowledge regarding the topic he reads, which is called "knowledge of the world".

The article illuminates the importance of decoding the language rapidly without hindrance. The reader's memory can store a certain amount of information; if the concentration is interrupted, the reading process will come to a halt, and the reader may forget the content. These findings are evidence of the importance of providing suitable reading material for the young learner. It is also necessary for the reader to widen his vocabulary level continuously, and if the reader holds some information about the content already, the reading process will run smoother. If the reader is familiar with textual structure and has some pre-knowledge about the topic, he can easily conclude and gain comprehension of the plot even though he lacks vocabulary. Some of the informants in my study claimed that they could understand the content although some of the words were unknown to them. I interpret such utterances as a token of an encounter with suitable reading material.



Strong readers are characterized by an analyzing approach to the text. The reader will compare the content with his own pre-knowledge about the topic and analyze the elements in coherence with each other. This reading strategy promotes the reader's knowledge, plot involvement, and overall reading literacy. Weak readers, on the other hand, will be characterized by decoding words and sentences in the reading process, and not being aware of suitable reading strategies which are adapted to their own cognitive level (Andreassen, 2009). During the observation part of my study, these characteristics were verified. I could clearly see that some readers were preoccupied with translation and understanding of sentences, while the strong readers were easily spotted by their understanding of the unsaid, their involvement in the plot, and their comprehension of the protagonist's mind. This discovery leads me to discuss another level of the reading concept, namely reading second language texts. How does that reading process differ from reading in your mother tongue? I will continue referring to Andreassen (2009).

When young learners read a text in a foreign language, additional challenges will occur. When a Norwegian learner of English addresses an English written text, he will realize that the phonetical system differs from the Norwegian, the words are not pronounced as they are written and the spelling is challenging because of the unfamiliar structures. Nevertheless, the main challenge for a Norwegian young reader of English is lack of vocabulary. In order to understand a literary text in the target language, it demands that 98 – 99 % of the words are recognized (as cited in Andreassen, 2009). It will be crucial that vocabulary training starts as soon as possible in Norwegian primary school and follows the students systematically until he graduates from upper secondary school. Reading strategies must, therefore, be implemented systematically in school. Reading literature is such an effective measure in developing strong readers that it should be implemented from early stage in school, and foreign language literature must also be a natural contribution along with Norwegian texts (Andreassen, 2009). My study showed that unfamiliar words were understood by the content, and even weak readers of English could conclude that they had learned new words by reading the unfamiliar text, although they could not express which one(s). The informants claimed that the text was more of a challenge because of the difficult language level as well as lack of an integrated vocabulary list. Yet, the comprehension was easy to overcome thanks to the pre-reading activity, the reading strategy, which helped them to understand the character and the plot, and the discussion part after the reading session.

When I decided to carry out this thesis based on reading experiences among adolescents in Norwegian secondary school, the foundation was the exploration of how reading extensive literature may stimulate reading literacy among Norwegian young learners of English. Investigation of the reading process and the reader-response activity gave information about the value of English literature in the Norwegian secondary classroom which enlightened my view on reading authentic literature. I realized that although the threshold of reading extensive literature was more of a challenge for the teacher as well as the learner, it led to a learning outcome which was fruitful and enjoyable for the informants. The overall impression expressed that learning had taken place, regarding vocabulary, grammar, and textual understanding.

The definition of reading affects several areas, such as the reader's response, the reading experience, the values the reader brings into the reading, reading styles, acquiring different competences, and gaining motivation, to mention some. Second language literature has obviously a higher threshold compared to reading material in your own mother tongue; therefore, the reading process may hold different distinctive features. Reading is more than understanding words or interpreting a text according to rules drawn by literary critics and researchers. Involvement in the plot and interaction with the characters is a personal process going on inside the reader. Reading is all about the relationship between the reader and the text; it refers to reading skills, language skills, comprehension, cultural insight, and involvement. In the next chapter I will define the reading process among students reading foreign language literature. The literature researchers Rosenblatt (1994, 2005) and Kramersch (1993) are concerned about the reading process going on in the reader's mind. In order to illuminate the concept of reading, I will present their theories regarding the reader and the relationship between the reader and the text.

### **2.2.3 Taking an aesthetic stance to the text**

The joy of reading has been focused on as a motivation factor by researchers of literature, but I will point only at one of them, Kramersch, who argues for using literature in the second language classroom (Kramersch, 1993). She mentions two methods of reading: efferent and aesthetic reading, which I referred to earlier in the thesis (see 2.2.1). These terms were first introduced by Rosenblatt, whose theories I will look into later in this chapter (Rosenblatt, 1994). Efferent reading gives information about the content itself and is efficient when the content is all we need. Aesthetic reading, on the other hand, gives us information about the unsaid, the deeper meaning hidden between the lines. Aesthetic reading is closely connected to literature like short-stories, novels, poems, lyrics, etc. Kramersch raises the question whether aesthetic reading differs in different languages because of the cultural pre-knowledge the reader possesses (Kramersch, 1993). Kramersch's theory supports the findings in my study which were revealed when the chat session took place after the reading process. I will elaborate on the aesthetic and efferent reading styles which I found evidence for in my study; the findings will be processed in the analysis part of the thesis. I concluded that in order to stimulate reading literacy for a young learner, it is an advantage to get involved in the text and embark into the meaning of the plot. I will now look into the reader's involvement and address the text and the reader as a whole.

### **2.2.4 The reader's involvement in the text**

My next section will focus on the main respondent in the thesis, namely the reader himself. The reader's involvement in the text, his relationship to the plot and the characters, his interpretation, and the relation to the author defines who he is. I will emphasize on some scholars' view regarding the reader and compare the findings in my study.

Kramersch is inspired by Rosenblatt who introduced the terms “aesthetic” and “efferent reading”. She chose the term “efferent”, derived from the Latin word “efferre”, which means “to carry away”, to explain the way the reader quickly reads through a text in order to get some specific information.<sup>5</sup> Aesthetic reading, on the other hand, focuses on what happens during the reading event (Rosenblatt, 1994). The relation between the reader and the text is emphasized; the attention is faced towards the content, the focus is headed against the experience of reading. Since the case study, which founded this research, was based on a fictional literary text, I choose to focus mainly on the reading for aesthetic purposes, although I will claim that reading in a foreign language inevitably demands efferent reading to some extent as well. Kramersch asserts that aesthetic reading will give the reader multiple layers of meaning which will emerge from the text. The reader’s personal experience of the text will characterize the response, and the relationship between the text and the reader is established through the reader’s personal response (Kramersch, 1993). This personal experience will influence the second language educator’s teaching design somehow.

Choosing a text to read in the classroom must be done with awareness, though. Kramersch lists some criteria for selecting suitable reading material:

- Does the text lend itself more to an efferent or an aesthetic kind of reading?
  - Is the narrative structure predictable or unpredictable?
  - Are the cultural allusions clear or unclear to foreign readers?
  - Are the silences in the text understandable to foreign readers?
- (Kramersch, 1993, p. 138)

What do these questions illustrate? I will elaborate on each point according to my experience as an English teacher and as a researcher, drawing up this thesis. My field work was carried out in a foreign language classroom, which means that the text would have to be simultaneously handled in an aesthetical and efferent way. The informants did not read the text in their mother tongue, therefore the reading itself would inevitably demand some kind of linguistic interpretation, which is characterized by efferent reading. How to balance the foreign language literary reading experience between efferent and aesthetic reading depends on the choice of material and teaching design. This balance must be taken into consideration as the teacher introduces the text to the ESL classroom. I believe that aesthetic reading should be stressed in order to arouse motivation and interest for reading, and furthermore, enhance reading literacy. My study has, to some extent, supported this view.

Some authors use narrative structures to create movement in the plot. I understand narrative structure, or story form, as organizing of facts, ideas, concepts, etc. in a coherent and meaningful way. It is the tool that enables us to bring textual content and meaning together to make knowledge more fully meaningful to the student. This tool may be predictable or unpredictable. The narrative voice can be the force that leads the reader into the plot and enables him to get involved in the text, or it may be the voice that creates distance and leads the reader away from textual involvement. I chose to introduce a text which is recognized by a

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<sup>5</sup> This may be an article, a recipe or a manual. One example she uses to illustrate efferent reading is “the mother, whose child has swallowed poisonous liquid, frantically reading the label of the bottle to discover the antidote to be administered” (Rosenblatt, 1994, p. 24). She reads out of practical use only.

strong and coherent narrative structure for my informants because I believe that foreign language learners, rather inexperienced as second language readers, will reach the best outcome by such a tool. The clear, predictable narrative voice will contribute to make the readers comfortable and safe when they embark upon the foreign language literary text.

Cultural differences may be an inflamed area to approach when the teacher is supposed to choose suitable reading material in the foreign language. The author belongs to a foreign country, he is recognized by his cultural background, his language is characterized by his mother tongue, and he has written his material to aim a certain group of readers, not necessarily the foreign language readers. Cultural traits will inevitably be encountered in authentic texts, moreover they should be blessed. Allusions, or hidden citations, such as, “et barn er drept i Betlehem” would immediately be understood by a Norwegian student because of the well-known Christmas carol “Et barn er født i Betlehem” (2009). It is not clear, however, whether a Norwegian adolescent student would comprehend an allusion such as, “A gun! A gun! My kingdom for a gun!”, and relate it to Shakespeare’s play Richard III’s “A horse, A horse! My kingdom for a horse!” (1994). Nevertheless, such traits must be processed with awareness, and the teacher should always make sure that cultural allusions are understood by the young readers. The teaching design will matter when the area of cultural understanding is to be approached.

When Kramersch mentions the silences in the text, she refers to the unsaid, or the meaning hidden between the lines. It is not necessarily obvious to the young reader that hints or textual suggestions may contain meaning. Kramersch mentions silential reading which refers to this kind of textual comprehension. I assert that silential reading matters for the text involvement, therefore the teaching design should consider these silences. Such reading is more of a challenge to the foreign language reader because he would have to give attention to the language as well as the content (Kramersch, 1993). Yet, I will claim that it is not a good solution to introduce literary texts of less intellectual challenge, even though the reader reads in the target language. Involvement demands understanding, identifying, cultural insight, and authentic language comprehension which will be very hard to reach if the literary level is below the reader’s own cognitive state. Reading a text aimed for a lower cognitive level will dissolve motivation for reading, not enhance it, this is my statement.

These criteria for selecting suitable reading material were taken into consideration as I was choosing the text for my field work. I needed to be aware of the informants and their qualifications for reading that exact text. Reading in the target language is demanding for young Norwegian students and even more of a challenge when the text is authentic. Nevertheless, seeking proper reading material to fit the young learner of English, demands some kind of knowledge about the reader himself. The relation between the reader and the text had to be considered when I should trace the level of reading literacy among the informants. In my next chapter I will discuss the reading process.

### **2.2.5 The personal reading process**

Reading is indeed a highly personal experience, as I have stated earlier in the thesis. I will now illuminate the reading process taking place in the young reader's mind and discuss whether reading literacy can be stimulated through this process. Each reader brings himself into the reading and gives the text his own value and interpretation. How the text is evoked in each individual depends on the reader's own literary experience. Rosenblatt cites Walter Pater to emphasize "the first step" of the evocation:

What is this song or picture...to me? What effect does it really produce on me? Does it give me pleasure? And if so, what degree of pleasure? How is my nature modified by its presence, and under its influence? The answers to these questions are the original facts with which the aesthetic critic has to do, and, as in the study of light, of morals, of number, one must realise such primary data for one's self, or not at all (as cited in Rosenblatt, 1994, p. 131).

This statement raises the question to whom the literature is produced, for what purpose, and what is the background for writing literature? Pater realizes that the first step for him as a literary critic is actually the first experience for him as a reader (as cited in Rosenblatt, 1994). My assertion is, like Rosenblatt's, there is no such thing as a generic reader or one particular reading method that can be applied to all readers (Rosenblatt, 1994).

When we bring the theory of transactional reading into the classroom (see 2.2.1), it is necessary to consider the students' expectations, as a literary text is introduced. I will stress the text I used in my research, Alasdair Gray's short story *The Star* (appendix list) as an example. The story is aimed towards young people, yet the universal feature makes it readable for all readers. We may use the expression introduced by Vestlie "kidult" to describe this text, which means "literature suitable for kids and adults" (Vestlie, 2008). The short story is centred about a young boy, Cameron, a lonely person, probably belonging to lower middle-class. He sees a star falling down in the backyard, picks it up and keeps it. He touches and looks at the star every time he feels sad and lonely, it gives him comfort. One day he decided to bring the star to school, and he couldn't resist the urge to pick it up and keep it in his fist. The teacher got angry and demanded him to put it back into his bag, assuming it was a marble. Cameron refused, put the star in his mouth and swallowed. He then became one of the stars (as cited in Collie and Slater, 1993).

This story is quite complex for a Norwegian upper secondary student to approach because of the hidden symbolic features and the literary effects employed in the text. Nevertheless, I chose this particular text, in addition to several reasons, on the background of the personal relation it may yield for the reader. The reader can be able to put his own experiences into the transaction with the text, like loneliness, depression, yearning, anxiety, and so on. The reader has also got the possibility to interpret the plot as he wishes because of the unsettled ending. This possibility of independent interpretation clearly generated frustration among some of the informants in the target groups, yet it became easier as the activities connected to the text gave way for a deeper comprehension. However, as the informants got to chat and discuss the text, it opened up for acknowledgement of different opinions. Whether one should bring extensive literature into the classroom is a comprehensive question in this thesis altogether.

### 2.2.6 Why is extensive reading important?

Involvement in the literary text is closely connected to aesthetic reading and necessary in order to enhance reading literacy. Rosenblatt has analysed the challenge of literature and the literary experience (Rosenblatt, 2005). I will discuss some of her ideas regarding this topic to illuminate my assertions. She claims that the literary experience is present no matter age or cognitive level. Teachers who teach adolescents need to be aware of the students' past experiences and language, in the same way as primary school teachers do. She claims:

Like the beginning reader, the adolescent needs to encounter literature for which he possesses the intellectual, emotional, and experiential equipment. He, too, must draw on his past experience with life and language as the raw materials out of which to shape the new experience symbolized on the page (Rosenblatt, 2005, p. 25).

This statement is to be interpreted as the relation between the text and the reader. Rosenblatt's theory is supported by Kramersch (1993) who also stresses the pre-knowledge the reader brings to the text. Kramersch refers to this already existing knowledge as "schemata", which is the experiences and the knowledge all readers possess (Kramersch, 1993). I believe this relation between the reader and the text to be the key for arousing motivation for reading foreign language literature and textual involvement, and furthermore, for promoting the reading literacy. Who are supposed to create meaning in the text, if not the reader himself? The authorial voice is given by the author, but interpreted by the reader; therefore, the reader needs to seek for meaning within himself and in the text. Reading is a process taking place in the reader's mind; the teacher's responsibility is to facilitate the teaching design in such manner that this process can stimulate meaning for the reader. Although the teacher possesses knowledge and basic facts about the literary work introduced in the classroom, there will be a process, consciously or unconsciously, that takes place in the reader's mind, which the teacher will not be able to control completely. "The poem or the novel or the play exist in the transaction that goes on between the reader and text" (Rosenblatt, 2005, p. 27). Rosenblatt names this process "transactional theory" which I interpret as a mutually shaping exchange between reader and text. This relation contributes to shape each other; the text and the reader are assimilated, such as the text shapes the reader as the reader shapes the text.

The teacher will encounter a rather demanding task as he embarks into this process. He must be aware of the group of students to whom he introduces the literature; he must be aware of his teaching design and facilitate a meaningful reading process. I believe these aspects to be of importance in order to stimulate for text involvement and furthermore to enhance reading literacy. How to prepare the students for evoking the literary experience from the text will be demanding for a teacher of literature in the mother tongue, for the second language teacher it will be even more of a challenge. The students need to process the foreign language as well as the plot. It will be possible to motivate for these challenges, however, by evoking the meaning from the written text. Rosenblatt stresses the relation between the reader and the text and claims that understanding a literary text is a personal experience. She refers to the teacher of literature as a facilitator of the reading process and criticizes the traditional view on teaching literature as follows, "The teacher is concerned with making the student "see" what in the

work of literature has made others deem significant. Whether the student himself “feels” this is an entirely different question and one that is rarely considered” (Rosenblatt, 2005, p. 56).

My view regarding the young reader’s reading process is focused on his own reading experience. Learning and reading about literature is not enough to get true involvement, the reader needs to feel the literature as well, and therefore the teacher must enable the students to discover this experience. How is it possible to combine these two areas of understanding literature: the student’s own literary experience and interpretation, and the teaching plan which is structured by the syllabus? I believe that seizing the literary experience depends on several elements. Knowledge of literary history, authors, and literary periods is of importance as the student is supposed to develop his understanding of the literary work, but this knowledge is useless if the reader is deprived of the reading experience which is to be evoked inside his mind. Literary teaching is supposed to stimulate this reading experience, not make the student turn away from it (Rosenblatt, 2005).

When the teacher wants to invite the students to bring their experiences and emotions into the text, he needs to make the reader get in touch with his own reading response and to be able to put aside his own experiences and interpretations to clear the path for the reader he is responsible for instructing. The gap between the reader’s reaction to the text and the teacher’s perception may be destructive for the student’s reading experience. Rosenblatt explains this gap as follows:

In many cases there is an unbridged gulf between anything the student might actually feel about the book and what the teacher, from the point of view of accepted critical attitudes and his adult sense of life, thinks the pupil should notice. This often leads the student to consider literature something academic, remote from his own present concerns and needs. He recognizes a traditional aura about literature but discards it when his school days are past. (We all know the student who says, “But I have had Shakespeare”, as though it were something to suffer through and forget, like the measles) (Rosenblatt, 2005, p. 59).

Avoiding such an attitude from former students must be of highest priority for the literature teacher, of course. Thus, awareness of textual involvement on the young reader’s own terms must be the key answer on how to deprive the students of foundation for uttering such statements. I have now introduced the theories regarding the literary experience, yet the description of the reader himself should also be of interest as we interpret the relation between the text and the reader. My next chapter will, therefore, shed light on the reader.

### **2.2.7 Defining the reader**

The reader’s relation to the text is the foundation for literary evoking. This chapter will point to the reader and his position regarding the text. I will mainly focus on aesthetic reading when I give the reader attention in the thesis. Kramsch has pointed at the importance of adjusting and facilitating the text for the reading in the foreign language classroom. In order to get the desired response, the teacher would need to examine his own response as a reader. The teacher needs to reflect upon such questions as, “what is it that touches me in the text?”, “why

do I like to read this?”, “what is it that I don’t like?” Personal experiences, aesthetic pleasure or intellectual satisfaction should not be ignored; furthermore, Kramsch asserts that a teacher should never be indifferent to the literature he teaches in class (Kramsch, 1993).

My personal view regarding the young reader is founded in my experience as a teacher of English as well as a teacher of Norwegian literature. I realize that the joy of reading is very much based on the personal relation between the text and the reader, even a young reader has something to bring to the text. The reader who really involves in the text is often recognized by the freedom he gets from the teacher to read independently and attach his own interpretation to the reading process. The reader-response theory recognizes the reader as an active agent who creates “life” to the literary work and fulfils its meaning through his own interpretation. During my practice as a teacher in secondary school, I have integrated “free reading” in addition to the structured literature teaching. I experienced that the student takes pleasure in playing an active part in his own reading process, he likes to discuss his personal interpretation and he enjoys sharing his own experiences which he has associated by identifying with one of the characters in the text. I have, therefore, concluded that the personal relation between the reader and the text is highly important, and the reader is very much an active participant in his own reading experience.

The term “model reader” was introduced by Umberto Eco in 1981, and processed in Goring, Hawthorn & Mitchell (2010). His assertion is that the author needs to make sure that his textual interpretations are shared with the reader, which means that “the Model Reader must be able to deal with the expressions in the same way the author deals interpretatively with them” (as cited in Goring et al., 2010, p. 161). The reader should hereby be understood as a part of the text, as an inter-textual interpretative participant, although he is simultaneously external to the text. What is then the ideal reader? The ideal or optimal reader is characterized by knowledge. This means that the reader possesses knowledge or experiences which make it possible for him to understand and get the optimal value of the text he is reading (Goring et al., 2010). The ideal reader is not universal, though he may be ideal for a given text, yet he may not be ideal for another text. When I interpret the readers among my informants, I can conclude that I may find the ideal reader for Alaisdair Gray’s *The Star*, but some may not be ideal readers of this particular text at all. On the other hand, an ideal reader of *The Star* may not be an ideal reader of a novel by Charles Dickens for instance.

I will refer to these terms as I define the readers in my group. I assert that it is impossible to categorize the reader into one term only, as he must simultaneously belong to more than one type of reader, therefore the reading process must differ depending on time, purpose, and textual material. I will include the definition of the target group readers in my chapter on analysis. I have now reached the part of the thesis which processes the second element in my Model of Reading Literacy (Figure 1), namely developing one’s knowledge and potential by learning form and structure.

### **2.3 Develop one’s knowledge and potential – learning form and structure**



The second category I have listed in the Model of Reading Literacy (Figure 1) is the component “develop one’s knowledge and potential”. I have chosen to combine this definition with learning form and structure. I have processed this element of reading outcome in the study. First of all, I will look into what knowledge and potential is to be interpreted as and how it can be developed by reading. The term “knowledge” is wide; therefore, I have narrowed it to language learning, such as form and structure. The informants in my study mentioned the adjectives in the text as very useful for understanding the plot, which indicates a certain learning outcome regarding form and structure. Although it was hard for the student informants to express clearly what they had learned, they could definitely state that learning had taken place by reading the text and focusing on the adjectives in two paragraphs. To emphasize my findings, I will introduce Hæge Hestnes’ view in the article Grammar-to-go (Hestnes, 2011). She points at the artificial division between teaching grammar and teaching language and literature in Norwegian schools. She also claims that Norwegian teachers of English tend to use Norwegian language when they instruct grammar in the ESL classroom. To address the challenge of using the English language for teaching all aspects of the subject, she presents some examples in her article. By using a short poem by Spike Milligan *Today I saw a little worm*, she managed to include all the five language skills listed in Kunnskapsløftet: reading, writing, listening, speaking, and conversing in the teaching. By introducing the poem and focusing on its grammatical structure, she integrated grammar instead of parting it from the reading experience (Hestnes, 2011).

My opinion is coherent with Hestnes’. It is necessary for the young learner of English to get insight in form and structure of the English language. By parting grammar from language, however, there is a possibility that the learner regards the grammar lectures as pointless and finds it difficult to see the link between the disciplines. Poetry may be a good angle to address this challenge, as Hestnes illuminates, or literary texts in general can be a very useful material as such. My study reveals evidence of grammar competence gained through the adjective activity during the reading session. Although the student informants were not able to explain clearly what exactly they had learned, they uttered that some learning had taken place regarding language structure. There was also evidence of vocabulary enhancing through the reading session. Some of the informants uttered, *Although I didn’t understand the word, I could still understand through the content*, another informant said, *The text was difficult, but I could understand because the story made sense*. These utterances gave me insight in a learning outcome which was not intentional. Developing one’s potential has a wide scope of interpretation. I will narrow the term to comprehension of language structures and understanding written texts. When I introduce literary texts into the classroom, the learner gets the opportunity to develop and socialize by internalizing linguistic structures. I conclude that the young learner of English who widens his level of vocabulary and manages to use the language fluently by reading literature has developed his potential for oral communication as well as comprehension of written texts.

### 2.3.1 Approaching form and structure through literature

My perception of enhancing reading literacy by reading authentic literature is supported by Widdowson (1982). He stresses the additional advantage by including literature in the foreign language classroom because of the possibility of teaching form and structure through literary texts. Compared to traditional textbook teaching, it is a different angle and a different approach to grammar and form, but nevertheless a useful one. Widdowson asserts that the texts presented in textbooks are constructed literature; furthermore, he calls it pseudo-literature. He claims that textbook literature has replaced the real literature, namely the authentic literature (Widdowson, 1982). I agree that teaching form and structure will be more meaningful if it is embedded in authentic texts. I have realized during my own experience as a language teacher in Norwegian secondary school that using literature as an entrance for instructing grammar and structure is very effective. Furthermore, I have observed in this field work that even though the students read the text for aesthetical purpose, they ended up learning a particular linguistic structure as additional learning. My experience has revealed that approaching form and structure through literature has a stronger motivational effect than teaching form and structure isolated from the context. Using literature as an additional method will benefit the learning outcome because of the motivational side effect. My study will elaborate on this part of learning in the analysis part of the thesis.

Widdowson defends the use of literature in the classroom by pointing out the creativeness in the fictional writing style. He illuminates the arguments against the inclusion of literature which has not to do with the purpose, rather than the process of learning. “Thus it is pointed out that literature is potentially disruptive influence in the well-ordered world of the carefully controlled language course” (Widdowson, 1982, p. 204). Nevertheless, the deprivation of control and disruption of structure is meeting the real life, it is meeting the real language, and it is meeting the real meaning, according to Widdowson. He claims that altering literature in order to address the demands of teaching form and structure aligns with deprivation of the real experience. Language learning should not depend on structured and manufactured texts, rather than real literature which fosters interest and creativity in the second language learner. My study supports Widdowson’s opinion regarding the use of texts which are not adjusted. The student informants as well as the teacher informant claimed that the excitement was taken care of, although there was no vocabulary list integrated, they managed to get involved, even though they did not understand all the words. My teacher informant claimed that the students could manage to understand and get involved in the text thanks to the reading activities which were attached to the reading. He concluded that the “real” language managed to arouse emotions and involvement among the young readers. Hence, we concluded that the real language reflects the real world.

Many scholars and linguists argue for using authentic literature in the classroom. Kramsch is one of many. By using literature in the second language classroom, the teacher opens up to many aspects, such as communicative skills, cultural competence as well as social insight. All of these elements are to be incorporated in reading literacy, as I illuminated in the Model of Reading Literacy (Figure 1) initially in the thesis. I will elaborate on these statements in my

chapter on methodology and analysis, but first of all I will introduce Kramersch's theories regarding the role literature plays to enhance communicative skills.

### 2.3.2 Supporting communicative skills by reading literature

Kramersch stresses the communicative advantages by teaching literature in the ESL classroom. This leads to the question: "what is literature and how should it be used in the classroom?" Teachers have a wide selection of texts to use, but it must be done with awareness. The teacher should never be indifferent to the literature he or she is using in the classroom (Kramersch, 1993). Kramersch emphasizes the theories of Hunfeld (1990) to enlighten the communicative field in language learning. Hunfeld asks the question, "What does the foreign language *mean* for the foreign language learner?" (as cited in Kramersch, 1993). His arguments are rooted in several directions; his view on learning language is uttered as follows:

but it also means being able to compare one's own world of language with that of others, to broaden one's experience with language and language use, to insert some uncertainty into ways of speaking one had hitherto taken for granted; it means border crossing, blockade disturbance, to sum up; it means 'acquiring a new way of viewing the world' (as cited in Kramersch, 1993, p. 183).

I interpret this utterance as an approach to deeper understanding of the world around you by interacting with literature. Reading literature holds more than learning language, it also provides cultural understanding. When the young reader compares languages and dares to address the foreign language, a new world of insight will open up. Linguistic features contain much information about culture, social characteristics and emotional characteristics. Idiomatic expressions, dialects, and sociolects tell the reader something about the characters, the setting, religion and rites, to mention some elements. To interpret and understand literature in a foreign language is highly suitable through the hermeneutical approach. Kramersch refers to Hunfeld to explain the hermeneutical approach regarding comparison of literature (Kramersch, 1993).

"This hermeneutical approach is understood by the metacommunication and hands-on experience" (as cited in Kramersch, 1993, p. 183). Furthermore, he explains, "the hermeneutical principle is neither to adopt, nor reject the thinking of others, but to relate to one's own" (as cited in Kramersch, 1993, p. 184). This perception was visible when I carried out the study among the Norwegian eighth-grade informants. The setting in the text was probably located in Scotland, the protagonist was placed in a poor working class society and the atmosphere was rather melancholic. These elements were quite different and unfamiliar to the informants' daily life, yet they read the text with enthusiasm and interest. Reading authentic literature means comparison and analysis and will, therefore, contribute to insight just by being read. The hermeneutical principles will be further processed in the methodology chapter of the thesis. I will now introduce the third element of the Model of Reading Literacy (Figure 1): *how to gain cultural insight by reading literature and furthermore aim to participate effectively in society.*

## 2.4 Participate effectively in society – cultural insight

The last element in my Model of Reading Literacy (Figure 1) was centered on the cultural aspect of reading. The part of the definition of reading literacy which concerns participation in society is connected to culture and literature, which is also reflected in Kunnskapsløftet (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2006). This part of the theory chapter will elaborate on the element of the definition of reading literacy which concerns cultural insight. I will look into how cultural competence can be stimulated by reading authentic literature.

The unit participate effectively in society was derived from the definition of reading literacy and integrated in the Model of Reading Literacy (Figure 1). In order to understand and participate in the society one lives in, it is necessary to be able to master reading. How can literature contribute? I have chosen to combine participation in society with cultural insight and connect literary experiences to this category. I claim that literature gives insight in society; moreover it gives the reader the possibility to get to know a different set of belief, a different language which holds cultural characteristics, and a mindset which differs from one's own. By reading authentic literature in the target language, the foreign language reader has a wide scope of cultural features to learn from. Literary texts in the target language contain stories which have an unfamiliar setting, foreign language, unknown rites and religion as well as a foreign tradition. By involving in such plots, the Norwegian reader will widen his cultural horizon and be able to understand the society he lives in as well as the society he reads about. Such knowledge will assist the reader to become a world citizen and be able to achieve his goals, as mentioned in the PISA definition of reading literacy.

To elaborate on this statement I have chosen to lean on Kramersch who claims that literature and culture are inseparable (Kramersch, 1993). She emphasizes the value of authenticity in written texts, thus it “was created to fulfill some social purpose in the language community in which it was produced” (as cited in Kramersch, 1993, p. 175). Why should the ESL teacher introduce the young learner to the target culture by using written texts? Kramersch concludes as follows:

For the written word slows down the process of communication. It fosters reflection and critical stance vis-à-vis one's own and the foreign meaning. Students have more time to make the distinction between the conventional voice of foreign speech community and the particular voice of the author. Through aesthetic reading, they have the opportunity to dissociate their response as a member of their speech community and their response as an individual with unique life experience (Kramersch, 1993, p. 175).

According to my informants, they could easily relate to the protagonist's life and feelings, although his background was quite different from their own. One of the informant claimed that the text was easier to understand when the teacher gave them activities to embark in, and she could understand the protagonist's difficulties. She said that she noticed that his teacher

was strict and mean, and she reacted to that. I interpret such utterance as a token of cultural insight because the reflection reveals that she was not accustomed to a strict and disciplined school system as described in the text. Kramsch (1993) introduced the term “the third place” to illustrate the cultural insight the learner of foreign language gets through the encounter with the target language culture. She explained this as a stage between the learner’s own culture and the foreign culture he approaches by reading authentic texts in the target language. At this stage the learner creates his own meaning which can be altered and modified constantly. How to address “the third place” may be a challenge for the ESL teacher, but he needs to be aware of his own culture in order to approach a foreign one, according to Kramsch (1993). “The third place” may be recognized by a poem which gives meaning for the reader in various ways, it may be an untranslatable phrase which enables the reader to view the foreign language culture from another angle, yet “the third place” is a personal place for each individual learner (Kramsch, 1993). I have searched for traces of “the third place” in the discussion part of the thesis. My next chapter will discuss how cultural competence can be stimulated through literature.

#### **2.4.1 Stimulating cultural competence**

Cultural competence is included as a discipline integrated in Kunnskapsløftet (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2006), along with literature and society. Could this fusion be interesting for gaining cultural insight through literature? I will lead you to the local curriculum for the rural school which I referred to earlier in the thesis (appendix list), in order to look into the cultural part, which is called “kultur og daglegliv” (“culture and daily life”, my translation). It states that the student should possess insight in living conditions, mindset, and set of value in the different cultures in the English speaking world. Furthermore, the student at the secondary level is supposed to know of food traditions, passages, festivals and ceremonies, religious practice, sports, music, attitudes, and views etc. The local curriculum also stresses the insight in cultural diversities, and the student is supposed to be able to understand the link between society and culture. How to comprehend historical events and how to connect these to cultural contexts are also stated as an objective. My next paragraph will introduce how cultural competence can be stimulated by authentic literature.

The short story *The Star*, which is the reading material for my study, expresses some cultural aspects which are quite understandable for adolescents. The protagonist’s background and social level gives away his view on the world and his perception of it. How can Norwegian students relate to a different cultural view than their own? How can they understand a way of living beyond their own borders? Is it possible that literature can open up to this unfamiliar insight? Scholars, such as Rosenblatt and Collie & Slater, confirm that it can. As the reader identifies with the characters in the text, it becomes clear that the experiences he brings into the text will be enhanced by this identification factor (Rosenblatt, 2005; Collie & Slater, 1987). My study revealed cultural insight among the informants by the way they described the protagonist and managed to place him in a different social context than their own. My observation revealed that the young Norwegian students understood the unfamiliar setting,

they accepted supernatural happenings and they managed to discuss the emotional hints hidden between the lines. I have introduced three different categories of the definition of reading literacy and substantiated these through relevant theory. I have now reached the last part of the theory chapter, which is the debate of using extensive literature in the ESL classroom.

## **2.5 The debate on using literature in the classroom**

Using literature in the foreign language classroom has always raised debate among teachers as well as scholars and students. This debate has been carried on by scholars, such as Widdowson (1982) and Kramsch (1993). The debate has not been very distinct in Norway, though, because the National curricula throughout the last decades have integrated a literature part, although it is combined with two other disciplines. Kunnskapsløftet has integrated a section named "kultur, samfunn og litteratur" ("Culture, Society and Literature", my translation). An objective attached to this section is connected to the student's reading skill, "Mål for opplæringen er at eleven skal kunne - lese og drøfte et representativt utvalg litterære tekster fra sjangrene dikt, novelle, roman og skuespill fra den engelskspråklige verden" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2006).

Teachers address a stressful workday; therefore it may be tempting to focus on textbooks, owing to the fact that lack of time may be a barrier. The debate regarding the use of additional material, such as literary texts, in the foreign language classroom has been quite constant. Some of the arguments against the use of literature have been, according to Widdowson (1982), Kramsch (1993) and Collie & Slater (1987) as follows:

- It is time consuming
- It is hard to approach for young learners of foreign language
- It is difficult to make it understandable to pre-university students
- There is no practical usage
- It is difficult to get motivated students by using literature.

These attitudes are currently recognizable among Norwegian teachers of English. Hellekjær (2008) concludes based on his studies that the status of reading in English is rather low in Norway, hence the poor reading literacy among Norwegian students. He points to the fact that additional literature is deprived the young learner of English, and Norwegian teachers of English avoid instruction of reading strategies. Moreover, his study implies that there is little attention among Norwegian teachers regarding this problem, and many teachers are not aware of the new demands in the syllabus concerning reading as a basic skill (Hellekjær, 2008). What does this study mean? The lack of extensive reading in English may be interpreted in several directions. Some questions which can be raised based on Hellekjær's study could be: Do teachers of English face limited time to read authentic literature? Do teachers of English find authentic literature pointless to add to in their ESL classroom? Do teachers of English

find authentic literature to be too much of a challenge for the young learner of English? If the answer is “yes” to these questions, I will conclude that the young learner of English is deprived of valuable methods to achieve higher reading literacy, if authentic literature is avoided in the ESL classroom. Nevertheless, whatever the reason is for avoiding authentic literature in the classroom, research still shows that reading extensive literature is of high value in order to raise reading literacy among the Norwegian young learners of English (Hellekjær, 2008).

However, my study shows implications of learning outcome by reading thanks to the motivation the students get by using authentic literature in the classroom. My nine informants gave evidence of interest and understanding of an unknown authentic text. Their utterances were further supported by their language teacher. He claimed that the students learned new words although a glossary list was not given as homework or compulsory task to learn. Some of my informants claimed that the text was difficult, yet understandable when the teacher asked questions and made the students discuss the plot in class. It was also clear that activities attached to the text made the students interact and involve in the text. I concluded that reading literacy was stimulated, even though the young informants were given a challenge which was quite demanding for some of them because of their young age. I also deduced that the teaching design mattered as the literary text was introduced to the Norwegian learners of English. I will state reasons for these assertions later in this thesis, integrated in the analysis part.

Kunnskapsløftet (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2006) has introduced some changes regarding the use of literature in the ESL classroom. Even though the curriculum opens up for teaching literature, it is also possible to decrease the literary part from the lesson plans without any consequences because of the undefined suggestions. Vestli has manufactured an article regarding this topic which illuminates my view concerning the decrease of literature in Norwegian ESL classrooms (Vestli, 2008). I will introduce her thoughts regarding these assertions later in this chapter. I will also further refer to the local curriculum manufactured in a Norwegian rural secondary school which illuminates how one can process the rather open frame of Kunnskapsløftet. Although extensive reading has been regarded as valuable material, according to former school syllabuses in Norway, there may be traces of a change in the current curriculum. Literature is embedded in the curriculum, yet it seems like the competence aims concerning literature can be challenging to address for the ESL teacher. My next chapter will look further into this change.

### **2.5.1 Kunnskapsløftet - decrease of literature?**

The National Curriculum’s structure of main areas, mentioned initially in the theory chapter, differs from the previous curricula in Norway because of the integration of the literary part into two other disciplines, namely society and culture. Addressing this change, without losing too much of the literary part, is a challenge for teachers of English in Norway. In order to facilitate the aims of competence in Kunnskapsløftet to the Norwegian school system, Norwegian schools manufactured local curricula within the range of two years. I will

introduce the local curriculum for secondary level produced by a rural Norwegian school, in order to enlighten this work and display a random variety (appendix list). This school has differentiated the aims into three levels to cover all students; these are easy, medium and high level.

The literary part mentions William Shakespeare, Roald Dahl, Ernest Hemingway, J.K Rowling, and James Joyce as relevant authors. This curriculum also includes musical poets, such as Bob Dylan, Sting, The Beatles, Simon and Garfunkel, and Dire Straits, as relevant material. The use of verbs in this particular local curriculum ranges from “know of”, “comprehend”, “recognize” to “interpret”. These verbs are supposed to cover the comprehension level of English literature that the student is supposed to hold as they graduate from secondary level. The change compared to former national curricula in Norway is quite obvious; I will support this statement by the article written by Vestli (2008). However, this particular Norwegian school has managed to include and define authors and artists who are relevant and suitable for each level of students.

Vestli’s article integrated in Fokus på språk (2008) points to the fact that there has been a decrease in the literature part in the current National Curriculum in Norway (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2006). Vestli asserts that the literary discipline has been explicitly mentioned in former National curricula, such as L97, which listed concrete names of authors and titles. The language part has now been summed up to include concepts as culture, cultural competence, insight in foreign cultures, cultural views and values. This indicated that second language learning promotes individual growth, general education as well as linguistic development. She continues the debate by pointing to literary texts which attends to crucial competence aims, moreover fundamental skills, and authentic language which are promoted by reading suitable literature (Vestli, 2008).

Vestli stresses the fact that Kunnskapsløftet (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2006) does not necessarily obstruct the possibility for reading literature, but she asks how it is possible to include additional reading material in day-to-day activities in school, given the decrease of the status of literature as a discipline. The didactical approach to literature has in all regards been neglected, according to Vestli (2008). She claims that literature science has been placed into higher education, more or less canonical oriented, which creates a distance to the practice field in school (Vestli, 2008). I will look into how these assertions support my study.

The field work I carried out demanded awareness of the choice of material. The short story *The Star* by Alasdair Gray (appendix list) was chosen partly because of the informants’ cognitive level which I assessed to be suitable for this text, I also regarded the plot as proper material, and the cultural traits were recognizable for these informants. I assessed this particular text as suitable, and it would not create distance to the readers by its form and expressions. The length (565 words) should not be too hard to overcome for an average Norwegian adolescent. Vestli stresses the choice of additional authentic material as motivating for students. It represents variation from the textbook, and thanks to its authentic content, it makes the target language and the target language culture vivid (Vestli, 2008). My field work supports these assertions, and I will elaborate deeper on these statements in the



analysis part of the thesis. I will now explain how the selection of literature matters for the learning outcome.

### **2.5.2 The selection of reading material**

In order to meet the literary needs of the young Norwegian reader of English, the material must be selected well. Collie and Slater (1993) suggest that additional literary material is very useful for the language classroom. This particular text collection provides alternatives for working with short stories, novels, plays, lyrics, and poetry which could enhance any classroom. These kinds of texts are useful for learning, whether they are used in pre-school or lower or upper- secondary level. Literary texts are supposed to give insight and reflection; and furthermore, the readers are expected to get involved and get knowledge by reading. One part of the teacher's job will be adjusting the literary texts according to the age and cognitive level. Collie and Slater (1993) give some examples of activities attached to the literary texts, which are very useful. Some of these activities were used as foundation for my study. In order to choose relevant and suitable literature for adolescents, the schools have traditionally had an idea of introducing cultivated and canonized reading material which is meant to shape and adjust the young mind. During my work as a literature teacher, I hold the attitude that reading should be facilitated to reach the student in order to evoke interest and make him interact with the text based on his own premises. Rosenblatt elaborates on this idea; she asserts that the student should be met where he is at the given moment:

If a segment of our youth today take an almost completely negative stance toward the adult world, this may be because they have encountered in literature classrooms, as elsewhere, materials consistently irrelevant to their own concerns and needs. Above all, the adolescent should have a wide range of alternative experiences in works that speak to him as he now is (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 199).

The basic view of the young reader, as a valuable reader, should be the foundation for all selection of reading material in the second language classroom. Although choosing suitable literature in English is challenging, it is not surmountable to facilitate material which gives meaning as well as insight. What must be considered in order to meet Norwegian eighth-graders' needs regarding English language literature? I claim that the text must create interest as well as meaning for the young mind. Those factors were considered as I chose the text for my study.

Language teachers tend to look for literary texts that can be implemented into the language activities by a low-threshold approach. I assert that literary texts must be adapted to fit the level it is supposed to meet, given they are authentic. Literary texts are supposed to motivate students and simultaneously give challenge and learning outcome. Several genres can be read in order to give the student a deep reading experience; poems, short- stories, musical texts, novels, picture books, comics, and fairy tales, to mention some. The texts are not altered and adjusted in order to fit into the textbook and term plans, which most likely will stimulate motivation for reading. According to recent research, reading real literature is motivating and

creates interest; it yields feelings and captures the readers just by being read. How can such texts contribute to enhance reading literacy among young learners of English? Birketveit and Rimmereide (2012) carried out a study aimed to meet the challenge of strengthening the basic skills of reading and writing. The case study focused on reading extensive literature, beyond the course book, yet possible to master for each student. The reading material was self-selected, so it could meet each student's level of competence. In addition to the reading, the case study also included a diary writing activity. The findings revealed that the informant's motivation was enhanced; the language competences were strengthened although the informants were not aware of it. The study also gave evidence of writing improvement, which was connected to strengthened reading skills. The study concluded that story reading enhanced language learning, and reading and writing diaries gave way for self-awareness about their own language learning development (Birketveit & Rimmereide, 2012). Such findings, which generate evidence of strengthened reading literacy thanks to extensive reading, lead me to introduce researchers of literature who have investigated how literature may be taught to young learners.

### **2.5.3 Bringing the target language literature into the ESL classroom**

Now I intend to discuss the reading material which is to be brought into the foreign language classroom, in order to stimulate reading literacy for the young learner of English. How should the teacher select? What should he select? How can he teach literature in such a manner that it opens up for true involvement? I will hereby point to the article written by Vestli (2008). The Norwegian tradition regarding foreign language literature in the classroom has mainly focused on the literary canon, according to Vestli. The article claims that there is a gap between the canon literatures versus literature in the classroom; therefore we need to bring literary texts down from the pedestal, and into the classroom. The target group needs to get in touch with literature in the ESL classroom because of the motivation factor literature possesses as an inherent value. Vestli points to the numerous advantages readers of authentic literature will experience, like variation from the textbook, identification possibility, differentiated teaching, and varied teaching methods, creative expressions connected to textual material, oral and written activities as well as ICT based tasks (Vestli, 2008).

How can the ESL teacher contribute to bringing the practice-close literature into the classroom and making it vivid for the target group? Vestli argues for conducting activities linked to the reading material, in order to exploit the huge potential innate in literature. To support her theories, I will now explain how I carried out the reading project and present the activities I used to enhance the reading process. My aim was to create interest and curiosity prior to the reading process; furthermore, I wanted to generate comprehension as well as a personal relation to the text for each informant in the target group. When I analysed my findings I detected evidence of cultural insight, insight in form and structure and textual involvement, as I have categorized the Model of Reading Literacy (Figure 1). I also detected evidence of motivation.

I picked the selected text, *The Star* by Alasdair Gray, from a collection of texts by Collie and Slater (1993). This text has got a relatively advanced vocabulary which this particular target group of informants found challenging, and furthermore, the Scottish accent and the idiomatic expressions are also incorporated in the text. The language is quite symbolic, therefore complex for Norwegian students to comprehend. Although *The Star* is rather a short text, the literary features are quite advanced and not obvious to these young Norwegian readers. Yet, I chose this particular text because it represented something different than adjusted course book material. This particular text has a level which is quite challenging for an average Norwegian eighth-grader; therefore, I assessed it to be suitable for giving answer to my research topic, which is whether authentic literature can enhance reading literacy in English for young ESL students. The text has integrated metaphors, symbolic language, and quite advanced vocabulary level. The question whether this kind of “real” literature of authentic language can promote reading literacy was to be tested in my study. This kind of literary text is also demanding for the language teacher, his awareness of teaching design must be strengthened. I claim that literature is a suitable tool in order to generate vocabulary which will cover our thoughts. Our unconscious mind is probably extensive; therefore, it is not easy to discover suitable language to cover what is going on in our mind. I believe that authentic literature can be helpful for the young learner of English as he is supposed to fill in all his vocabulary gaps throughout his schooldays. I will display some findings which support my assertions in the discussion chapter of the thesis.

#### **2.5.4 Organizing the theoretical foundation**

To sum up the theory chapter, I initially introduced the chapter by giving reasons for my choices followed by an explanation of how the research topic was manufactured. The next step I introduced was the term “reading literacy”. I placed the definition into a model (Figure 1) and parted the definition into three categories: text involvement, learning form and structure, and cultural insight. The theory chapter was then divided into these three main areas of reading literacy. Text involvement deals about the reader’s relationship to the text, the reading process, and the reader’s role. The model (Figure 1) is suitable for organizing the different elements of reading literacy as well as a tool for assessing the reader’s reading process. I included Rosenblatt’s view on the reader and the experiences he brings to literature in the theory chapter (Rosenblatt, 2005). Through her theories, I managed to look into the reading process and understand the relation between the reader and the text in my study. In order to define what reading is, I also chose Hellekjær (2008) as foundation, who in addition to Rosenblatt (1994, 2005) and Kramsch (1993), has had much overall impact on this thesis. Rosenblatt’s transactional theory (1994) which states the mutual impact between the reader and the text was illuminated in this chapter.

The second category in my Model of Reading Literacy (Figure 1) is learning form and structure by reading. Widdowson (1982) has contributed to this research field and was, therefore, placed into this part of my thesis, in addition to Hestnes (2011) who has introduced a method of teaching poetry for approaching grammar and form. The next step in the theory

part was cultural insight by reading literature. I employed researchers, such as Kramsch (1993), Rosenblatt (1994, 2005), and Collie and Slater (2009), in order to illuminate these aspects of reading literacy. The reader himself, given his role as the main respondent, has got much attention in this thesis. The reader's involvement, his cultural insight, and the relation between the text and the reader have been processed.

The last section of the theory chapter was admitted to the debate of using authentic literature in the ESL classroom. Vestli (2008), among others, has pointed to the decrease of literature in the Norwegian National Curriculum; therefore, I chose to introduce her view on literature in the ESL classroom (Vestli, 2008). She pointed to the importance of taking the canon literature down from the pedestal and of using suitable literature for the young learner of English. The last step I made was introducing the National Curriculum in Norway (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2006) and presenting a local syllabus (appendix list) drawn up based on this document. I discussed the changes that have taken place in the current curriculum compared to earlier editions. The theoretical material I have chosen to support my research is mainly based on the reader's relation to the text. The nine young informants in my study represent an average young Norwegian reader of foreign language, and their reading experience was of highest priority in order to answer my research question.

### 3 Method

This part of the thesis introduces the process ranged from the topic choice to the end result. This part will first of all include the study itself and outline of the project. Secondly, choice of design and research method will be introduced and explained. I carried out the data collection through ten qualitative semi-structured interviews, four chat dialogues and observation. The scientific approach I chose was the hermeneutical perspective, and I carried out a case study in order to get valid data for my research (Johannessen, Tufte & Christoffersen, 2010). My field work will be elaborated on and discussed through theoretical views, and attached to my Model of Reading Literacy (Figure 1).

During the planning stage, I manufactured a topic question and relevant questions, adapted to my research and informants. I made some choices regarding my design and research method. During the process I was aware of my role as a researcher regarding ethics and personal protection of the informants. I obtained permission to carry out the research from Datatilsynet (Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS) and got consent to observe and interview the informants at the age of 13 by their parents (appendix list). When the observation, the interviews, and the interactive chat process were completed, I transcribed, analysed, and discussed my empirical material.

#### 3.1 The study – outline of the project

This chapter will clarify and explain the study and the empirical material, which are foundation for my findings. The study was carried out in a secondary school among eighth-graders in Norway. The teacher carried through a teaching plan covering two lessons, where the reading activity was the central part. The English teacher read the chosen text, *The Star* written by Alasdair Gray, aloud in class, after conducting two pre-reading activities. The teacher made a pause during the reading activity, in order to carry out a task connected to the literary text. I observed constantly during this part of the field work. This part of the study was conducted in the class, which consisted of 23 students, including the informant group. I connected the chosen pre-activity directly to the title *The Star*. Collie and Slater (1993) have prepared a task which is suitable for creating curiosity regarding the given text, “What thoughts go through your mind when you gaze up at the star-filled sky on a clear night? Look at the star and then talk about your experiences with someone else in the class” (Collie and Slater, 1993, p. 3). I employed the task exactly as it is introduced by Collie and Slater. The activity was followed up with an additional task, “draw a star, write one word that you connect to the starry night” (Collie and Slater, 1993, p. 3). Such pre-activities are supposed to make the student prepare for the text and give a foundation for further reading, and furthermore, they provide the possibility for a personal relation between each reader and the text when the student brings his personal word with him into the reading. Such activities tally

with Rosenblatt's idea of the reader's response to literature and focus on his own experience of the text. She is concerned about what the reader himself brings to the text, therefore activities like the one mentioned above will give the reader a good possibility to get a spontaneous response to the short story (Rosenblatt, 2005).

In the middle of the reading process, the teacher asked the students to underline the adjectives in a given paragraph, using a chosen colour. The same instruction was given for the next paragraph, but with another colour this time. When the task was completed, the teacher asked the students to give their impression of the underlined words. The students realized at this moment that the first paragraph had words which were linked to sadness and negative feelings, and the second paragraph was characterized by the opposite, namely positive, happy words. The teacher and the students discussed these findings.

I will now present the activities which took place in the classroom. The teacher introduced the reading session by an activity. Some of the students mainly spoke Norwegian during this session, but most of the dialogue took place in English. They got to write one word which they associated with the starry night. This pre-activity was meant to create motivation for the text they were about to read. The words which appeared during this activity were used as foundation for reflection during the interviews (appendix list). I will present a selection of words produced by the students, which illustrates this activity as a whole: awesome, amazed, calm, free, amazing, alive, fantastic, and tired. Afterwards the class got the possibility to explain their choices.

The next pre-activity was quite simple. The teacher read the first and the last sentence; the pupils then got the chance to guess what the text was all about. The activity was meant to spark the interest, and the interaction and level of oral activity rose in class. I made the teacher carry out the reading session himself; this decision was made because of the different cognitive level in the class. I wanted to make sure everybody could understand the text and overcome potential language challenges. To get into depth of the plot, the teacher carried out the activity during the reading session. He made the informants notice the adjectives in a particular paragraph, in order to comprehend a change in atmosphere within the protagonist's mood, as mentioned above.

As the reading session was completed, the students prepared for dialogues through interactive chat. I designed these four questions for the chat discussion:

- Choose one line in the text you liked in particular. Explain your choice.
- What can you say regarding the relationship between Cameron and his parents, his brother, his teacher? Can you give examples to explain your statements?
- How do you think Cameron is as a person? Can you give examples from the text to explain?
- If you found a star, who would you tell?

The informants were grouped into pairs, and one group included three pupils, they spent two lessons in order to carry out this particular task. They used the class' Facebook profile and its integrated chat room. I observed the interaction constantly, without interrupting the activity. I was now ready to introduce the semi-structured interviews to the selected informants. The following chapters will identify and explain the study. I will start by introducing the hermeneutical approach.

### **3.1.1 Hermeneutical approach**

What is hermeneutics, and how does this approach affect my study? Firstly, I will clarify the term hermeneutics, and secondly I will show how it is included in the study. Baldick (1990) defines hermeneutics as the theory of interpretation aimed towards overall problems attached to comprehension of the text's meaning (Baldick, 1990). I chose to apply qualitative tools of research to address the PISA definition of reading literacy because of the interpretative content. The hermeneutical approach was suitable in order to interpret fragments of utterances in relation to the holistic understanding, and vice versa. This process is known as the hermeneutical circle (Johannessen et al., 2010).

The founders of hermeneutical tradition, stemming from Germany, are Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768 – 1834) and Wilhelm Dilthey (1833- 1911). According to Goring et al. (2010), we owe the concept of the hermeneutical circle to these researchers, yet it was Dilthey who gave it its name (Goring et al., 2010). Hermeneutics is closely connected to interpretation and understanding. Hermeneutical tradition within the discipline of foreign language learning has a wide scope. The question of interpreting and understanding written documents is a question of understanding the whole by understanding its parts and vice versa, hence the term “hermeneutical circle” (Goring et al., 2010).

Schleiermacher has been a significant contributor regarding hermeneutical tradition within language research. He changed the hermeneutical tradition, which initially consisted of textual interpretation, to include comprehension of all kind of utterances and texts through interpretation. This is to be understood as language comprehension, as well as interpretation of utterances and written statements (as cited in Goring et al., 2010). My study is connected to hermeneutics as follows; the written material was produced through chat logs in addition to transcribed semi-structured qualitative interviews. In order to interpret this written material, I used hermeneutical approach as a tool. I also included the observation part in the hermeneutical interpretation. I categorized elements which were placed into its context and interpreted according to the hermeneutical principles as described above.

The three units of reading components which I categorized in my Model of Reading Literacy (Figure 1), text involvement, learning form and structure, and cultural insight, are recognized by interpretation and translation (Johannessen et al., 2010). I see these terms as closely connected to hermeneutics because reading a literary text in the target language demands understanding. In order to understand a text written in a foreign language, the reader needs to

translate. First and foremost, he will have to translate the foreign language, and then he will have to translate cultural traits which are not necessarily understandable in the mother tongue.

During the observation of the study, I interpreted the informants' utterances as well as their written material. How to understand informants of this age demands awareness and comprehension of their cognitive level as well as their linguistic level. The observation in class gave me insight of the young students understanding and involvement in the text. The hermeneutical approach refers to an interpretive process, including written, verbal, and nonverbal communication, which my study all contains. The observation part gave information about the informants' understanding of the text. During the discussion part and the activity, I managed to clarify how the informants understood the different layers in the plot. Some of the informants were active during the discussion part and managed to embark into the text, and revealed understanding of the protagonist's living condition by interaction. When I interpreted this interaction, I employed the hermeneutical approach in such manner as to understand utterances and interpret these in coherence with the overall data material. I read and interpreted the chat logs according to the written material produced by the informants. The interaction among the informants could tell quite much about the mental process the informants went through. Hermeneutical approach seeks to interpret meaning from the text, which gave me possibility to understand how the informants comprehended the plot and the characters. I will support this statement further in the analysis part of the thesis.

I looked into how hermeneutical approach has been used in order to interpret language input. As the informants interacted through chat, I sought to interpret through their chat logs whether the dialogues could reveal understanding of language and content, moreover I sought to find evidence of text involvement. This approach was chosen to interpret the written material available, in addition to observation in class and interviews. Because of limited time and limited access to informants, I considered these data types to be most useful for my research. I chose to carry out some kind of action research in class because it would suit my topic question and give the best result for this particular study. The hermeneutical approach is closely connected to my Model of Reading Literacy (Figure 1) because of the combination of interpretative elements. I will look further into this assertion in the discussion part of the thesis. My next chapter will present my choice of design.

### **3.1.2 Choice of case study as design**

The study I have carried out is based on observation of a Norwegian eighth-grade class; I conducted semi-structured interviews of nine students in the class in addition to one semi-structured interview of the English teacher in the same class. I also included chat logs in the field work, which strengthened the empirical material. When I had completed the empirical research, I made some choices in order to get the best possible answer to my topic question. The research design I have chosen is case study, and my research is supported by a hermeneutical approach to interpret the data material as presented above. I will now introduce the design I applied to approach my research and clarify the impact this design had on my study.



As I chose this approach, I was aware of the phenomenon I observed, namely the stimulation of reading literacy among young Norwegian learners of English. I carried out the study according to qualitative method, therefore case study is a suitable design because I sought to describe and comprehend a phenomenon taking place in the classroom. Robert K. Yin refers to case study as an empirical research which studies a certain phenomenon in its real context because the border between the phenomenon and the context is unclear (as cited in Johannessen et al., 2010). Furthermore, Johannessen et al. (2010) explain case study as a collection of information generated through a single case or a multiple choice of cases. My study was limited to one case. A case study design requires analysis of meaning; therefore, the researcher seeks to understand the content of data material. The interpretation includes utterances which were expressed during the observation part, written material produced by chat logs, and information given through the interviews.<sup>6</sup> This material was interpreted with purpose to understand the informant's meaning and thoughts about the text *The Star*. I carried out the case study over a relatively short span of time; ten school lessons were used for the study.

Firstly, I addressed my notes which I produced during the observation in class as the reading session took place. Secondly, I studied the chat logs produced by the informants, and lastly, I transcribed and read the interviews I had conducted among the ten informants. According to Yin, case study has five stages:

1. research question
2. theoretical assertions
3. analysis of categories/ units
4. the logical coherence between data and assumptions
5. Criteria for the findings (as cited in Johannessen et al., 2010).

I analyzed my data material according to these stages as follows: the research question was introduced by the interrogative word: *how*, in order to define the case design: *how can the use of authentic literature promote the development of reading literacy in English among eighth-graders in Norway?* Questions like these are recognized by qualitative methods and are suitable for case study design research.

The theoretical approach was based in the research question; therefore, I constructed a Model of Reading Literacy to elaborate on the PISA definition (Figure 1). The reader-response theory founded a basis for the study because of the significance of the reader himself. Rosenblatt's theory states that the individual creates his own meaning through a "transaction" with the text, based on personal experience. One can deduce that each interpretation is subjective and unique because all readers bring their own emotions, concerns, individual

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<sup>6</sup> Chat is in this thesis to be understood as an interactive dialogue between two or more participants through a chat room in the internet. Facebook functioned as a tool in this study.

experiences, and knowledge into their reading (Rosenblatt, 1994). As I defined the analysis units, I was aware of the context the informants belonged to. The informants were Norwegian eighth-grade students, chosen as a representative selection, their teacher of English was also included, and the setting was the ESL classroom. I conducted the interviews in target groups; I will explain and elaborate on the reason for these choices later in the thesis. Yin defines case studies as descriptive or theoretical based. I chose to conduct the study based on theoretical assumptions. This choice was made because of the broad theoretical foundation I had available (Johannessen et al., 2010).

When I reached the stage of interpretation of the findings, I analyzed my empirical material based on the theoretical foundation for my thesis. I looked at the findings and interpreted against my theoretical assumptions. I identified the empirical material, reduced and processed it analytically. When the interpretation was completed, I condensed the material and investigated the essential part, which gave answer to my question. At the end of the analysis part, I summarized and completed the analysis of data. This part of the analysis organized the empirical material and enlightened my research question.

I needed to understand how English authentic literature can stimulate the reading literacy among young learners of English. I also wanted to investigate whether the educator's teaching design may affect the learning outcome. As a result I chose hermeneutical approach because of the exact outcome this design can display. I was concerned about the meaning and the content in the analysis; therefore, the data had to be read interpretatively. I sought to understand the meaning behind the data material, the content of the empirical material that appeared during the interviews, in addition to the observation which also was significant for my interpretation of the data. The hermeneutical circle is starting point for interpretation of meaningful units. In order to explain my empirical material, I needed to understand the units in coherence with the complete data material. The material must be interpreted and understood as a part of the whole, and vice versa. Hermeneutical approach is recognized by qualitative analysis. It is identified by processing the different parts of the material, illuminated in coherence of other parts; moreover it must also be processed as a whole impression of the complete data material (Johannessen et al., 2010). Hermeneutical tradition emphasizes interpretation through motion between units and the whole as described above. This method emphasizes "units of meaning" in a text by reading it with some kind of unlimited attention. My study is based on my informants' interpretation of the text, their thoughts, and meanings are stressed, and therefore the choice of design was based on this foundation. The hermeneutical approach is also visible in my Model of Reading Literacy (Figure 1), which I will discuss in the analysis chapter of the thesis.

### **3.1.3 Searching for elements of meaning**

When the first stage was done, I identified elements of my data material in order to classify and deduce meaningful information. This stage assisted my search for interpretation of smaller elements in the chat-log and the transcribed interviews. This work gave me a clearer

overview of my material, and helped me to facilitate the interpretation part. The categories I used for classification were:

- enjoyment of the text and cultural understanding
- comprehension of the text regarding form and structure
- description of the characters
- teaching design
- level of involvement

When the categories were described, I interpreted more thorough, and came up with results that could be connected to my topic question. As the preliminary results were completed, I abstracted meaning from the data material. The material was now reduced to a text consisting of meaningful elements, with my interpretations according to my comprehension of the reading literacy (Figure 1). At last the stage of summarizing was reached. I investigated the first material and tallied with the interpreted material I was now left with. I realized that when the material was sorted and analyzed, the topic question was answered according to the intentions, several angles were illuminated and the patterns were identified. My next chapter will clarify and reflect upon the selection of informants and how they were approached by observation, interactive chat and interviews.

### **3.2 Addressing the informants**

Although the selection of informants was limited to nine in addition to the English teacher, I also got permission to observe the class as a whole. First of all, I will clarify the foundation for my selection; secondly, I will elaborate on the different data material which characterizes my study.

I selected the informants as a random selection, all of them belonging to a Norwegian 8<sup>th</sup> grade in a small Norwegian rural school. The group of informants represented the whole class regarding cognitive level and ranged from the lowest to the highest grade on the scale of marks. This choice of informants generated a representative selection which was my aim for this study. I needed to get the appropriate number of informants which gave me the possibility of carrying out interviews until no new information was revealed. This aim was reachable although I could not manage to process a large group of informants. I chose to carry out the interviews by grouping the informants into structured target groups of three informants in each unit. I conducted these target group interviews within a range of three weeks, immediately after the action research and the chat were completed. Limited time and access to the respondents were the main reasons for my choice of conducting group interviews; however, the aspect of creating security among the informants was also contributing to this choice. These informants have been classmates for almost a year, some of them for 8 years, therefore they feel safe together, which could take the pressure off in the unfamiliar situation

of being objects of research. Johannessen et al. (2010) refer to small target groups as mini groups. They mention some advantages by using mini groups, such as:

- it is easier to get access to few respondents by using mini groups;
- each respondent gets more time to talk;
- for some people it will be easier to open up and talk freely in smaller units;
- it is easier to discuss sensitive topics, or involve emotionally among few co-respondents;
- it is easier to discuss complicated topics in small groups;
- it is easier to get detailed information and personal view in mini groups (Johannessen et al., 2010).

These aspects were all considered as I organized the mini groups of three respondents in each group. Their teacher of English assisted as I manufactured the groups. The weakness of conducting group interviews was obviously the influence the informants had on each other. I realized during some of the interviews that the respondent answered approximately the same as the classmate, just adding some comments or reflections. I asked some follow-up questions, however, which revealed that the respondent could add information and go into depth in the utterance; I realized that semi-structured interviews (see 3.2.4) within mini groups had advantages by their loose structure. Some of the students gave additional information as the interviews carried on. These discoveries may indicate the strength of group interview and qualitative semi-structured interviews. The weakness of interviewing a group involves a part of the strength, in fact. Safety within the group is an advantage, yet there is also a risk of creating an unsafe environment among the informants because a young informant may feel uncomfortable by sharing his opinion among peers. Johannessen et al. (2010) warn against the use of target groups if the topic is very sensitive, related to personal hygiene, for instance. If the aim is to obtain a personal response, which should not be influenced by others, target groups should be avoided. Complex mental topics, such as grief, will not be appropriate to discuss among other people, and furthermore, if many topics are to be discussed, group interviews may not be suitable. If the informants do not feel safe in the target group, some may give an incorrect answer in fear of standing out (Johannessen et al., 2010). My next chapter will discuss how the method of target group influenced my study.

### **3.2.1 Target group as a tool**

Target group interviews are mentioned and discussed in Johannessen et al. (2010); and furthermore, pros and cons of conducting interviews in groups are processed. Target group interviews are successful as a tool for generating valuable information enhanced by the group dynamic. This method is also suitable if the researcher needs to get insight in the way the informants affect each other, or if width of information is more important than depth. Valuable information can also be gained through sharing and comparison of meaning among the informants. There are advantages of working in target groups; such as the benefits of investigating emotional topics. Some people will feel comfortable by discussing their opinion

and meaning in target group, moreover a conversation may take place, which will benefit the researcher's study. A loose structure can kindle exchange of ideas among the informants and get the discussion running, moreover brainstorming is also a keyword mentioned as a tool for reaching solutions to a problem (Johannessen et al., 2010).

I made my choice of using target group interviews for my study because of practical considerations, but I had also other purposes for this choice. Each group consisted of no more than three informants, because I needed each informant to express his answers clearly, and not be prevented to come up with their thoughts and opinions. These informants knew each other quite well; some of them had been classmates since first grade. As I assessed the situation, I concluded that the informants would feel safer if they could be interviewed together instead of being left in a setting alone with me, an unfamiliar researcher, therefore, they could be able to express themselves more freely. The semi-structured interviews gave way for a flexible discussion and exchange of ideas among the informants in the mini target groups.

The mini target groups, within which I conducted the interviews, were suitable for structured dialogues with possibility for follow-up questions, as described above. If the group is randomly structured, the researcher may encounter a problem of meeting uncomfortable informants in the group. This problem may be solved in different ways; I sought support from their teacher, who knew the group well. He managed to assist my work concerning the structure of the groups. I found his assistance to be most helpful as I experienced that the interviews were conducted without obstacles. One weakness in structuring the groups could be potential language barriers. The informants were randomly selected, ranging through the entire scale of grades. Their cognitive level was quite unequal, as well as the reading and writing skills. I considered this inequality in the group as a hindrance for conducting the interviews in the target language; therefore, I chose to carry out this part of the field work using the Norwegian language.

My intention during the planning phase was to select a group of informants who represented an average Norwegian school class. I wanted a representative selection to strengthen the data's validity and reliability. The field work would not obtain as much value by a homogeny group of informants because of the danger of one-sided reflection of the material. The nine informants in this study were characterized by diversity in cognitive level, language level as well as their reading and writing skills, I regard this diversity as strength for my data foundation. I feared that if the group was constructed by involving too many informants, it could be a danger of not getting hold of each informant's voice and meaning as clearly as I possibly could. These relatively small groups made it easy to organize the interviews and control the structure. Interviewing in groups might be quite demanding for the researcher, but the ESL teacher's assistance helped me to avoid unfortunate group dynamics as mentioned above. To sum up, I will conclude that I found the advantages to be stronger than the disadvantages of using mini target groups. I will point to the sensitive topic which was discussed, the interaction among the informants which led to fruitful discussion and exchange of meaning in the group. I will also stress the opportunity I got to study the affect each informant had on each other, and the access I got to the whole range of empirical material the informants possessed.

I chose to combine different approaches in order to strengthen the empirical material. In addition to the data gathered by semi-structured qualitative interviews, I used observation as foundation for my data material. Johannessen et al. (2010) describe direct observation as “descriptions of human activity, behaviour or actions, in addition to human interaction and organizational processes” (Johannessen et al., 2010, p. 117). I chose to observe the class and the informants because of the information it would give regarding social interaction, understanding, and involvement in the activities. Being present in the middle of the activity, which characterizes case studies, gave me the opportunity to listen, comprehend, and interpret the activity going on in the class. I realize that some informants may not always utter the real truth during interviews because of the unfamiliar situation they are involved in. Some may be nervous, and adolescents who are accustomed to school-life are used to produce the “correct” answer and wait for the key solution. In order to give the right utterance, they may try to manufacture “the answer that the researcher wants”. If the researcher combines interviews with direct observation, he will have the opportunity of being placed in the natural setting and get the true information (Johannessen et al., 2010). My next chapter will introduce the observation part of the study and elaborate on the students’ interaction during the lessons.

### **3.2.2 Observation of the reader’s response to the literary work**

I noticed various kinds of activities during the observation. The dialogues among the classmates and utterances connected to the reading and the activities revealed additional information which was not visible in the interviews or in the chat dialogues. I observed directly and interpreted the utterances according to the activities taking place in the classroom. Utterances among the students, utterances in plenary session, and involvement in the reading activities showed how the students interacted and involved in the reading session. The observation was a valuable contribution to my empirical material. I perceived the field by listening, experiencing, and watching (Johannessen et al., 2010). The kind of observation that allowed me to perceive the classmates’ informal dialogues, questions posed to the teacher, and body language is impossible to get through planned interviews and written chat logs. I count this empirical material as important for my study. I never interacted during the observation part because I needed the setting to be as natural as possible and reflect the real life in this particular classroom. In order to validate these data, I used a voice recorder, and I transcribed the material it generated. When this part was done, I was ready to introduce the dialogue part among the informants, by using interactive chat. My next chapter will enlighten how this teaching design influenced my study.

### **3.2.3 Dialogues by chat**

In order to document data of such informal dialogues, interactive chat is a suitable tool. These students were accustomed to use chat as a tool for learning, and social media is quite often integrated in their school work. I was told that this particular class has their own Facebook profile, designed for interaction, giving and receiving messages among students and teachers,

as well as a tool for publishing school related material. This information affected my choice of using the Facebook integrated chat room as a tool for discussing the text. The questions were designed to make the informants penetrate into the layers of the plot and discuss according to their opinion and emotions. I was aware of Rosenblatt's reader-response theory as the questions were drawn up, because I wanted the informants to bring their own emotions into the reading (Rosenblatt, 2005).

The questions were few, yet they demanded involvement. Firstly, I asked the informants to choose a line in the text that moved them somehow and give reasons for their choices. Secondly, I instructed the informants to explain the protagonist's relation to his family and teacher. Thirdly, they discussed the protagonist's personality, and lastly, I asked them to get involved in the plot by integrating their own person in it, "If you found a star, who would you tell?" This question challenged the informants to accept a supernatural phenomenon, in the same way as the protagonist did. The interpretation of written material produced by young informants will challenge the researcher by its content. Adolescents tend to express themselves in a simple manner; therefore, the interpretation can be complicated to address. Nevertheless, these dialogues gave me valuable material for interpretation; it was a good door opener for me as a researcher in order to see how the informants understood the plot and the protagonist's emotions. This data material revealed useful information which, to some extent, fulfilled the different aspects in my Model of Reading Literacy (Figure 1). I will discuss this involvement further in the discussion part of the thesis. My next chapter will discuss the use of semi-structured interviews.

### **3.2.4 Semi-structured interviews**

The interviews were qualitative and semi- structured (appendix list). Kvale & Brinkmann (2009) characterize the qualitative research interview as a dialogue with structure and a purpose. The structure is processed according to the respondents. The interviewer poses the questions and follows up the respond from the informant. The interviewer is in charge and responsible for the interview situation, therefore, the two participants are not equal regarding the research situation. The purpose is to understand or describe something, and the interview is characterized more as a dialogue rather than a question-answer setting (as cited in Johannessen et al., 2010).

According to Johannessen et al. (2010), the distinction is drawn between structured, semi-structured or open interviews. Semi-structured interviews are characterized by dialogue between the researcher and the respondent and belong to qualitative research method. The interviews are mainly structured and planned prior to the accomplishment, yet the structure gives way for additional questions and supportive comments. I chose this approach because of the flexibility it provides. I regard this particular group of informants, given their age, to be more adjusted and accustomed to such kind of discussion. These types of questions demanded a looser structure because I wanted to give the informants an opportunity to reflect, and this reflection could be more transparent by semi-structured interviews rather than structured interviews which are characterized by a tight structure and adapted to quantitative methods

(Johannessen et al., 2010). The semi-structured interviews are led by the researcher, but may give an opportunity of creating a dialogue among the informants and the researcher, which makes the output more flexible. My next paragraph will enlighten the interview guide (appendix list) and state the reasons for employing a semi-structured direction for my study.

Qualitative interviews demand awareness of language, expressions, choice of words as well as approach to the topic. The questions need to be meaningful in order to generate adequate answers. The researcher must be conscious about the information he needs and accurate when he designs the questions (Johannessen et al., 2010). I was aware of these aspects as I manufactured the interview. Johannessen et al. (2010) give some advice regarding the design of interview guide. I will list some which were relevant for my design:

- Encourage for reflection on the topic through support questions, such as “what do you mean by that?”, “Can you explain?”, “How did you experience..?”
  - Encourage the informant to give detailed answers by asking directly; ask, for example, “How do you do this..?” or open up for elaboration by asking him to describe specific episodes.
  - Follow up answers by transforming notions into words and expressions which the respondent can answer without danger of misinterpretation, such as “what did you do when you felt the fear inside of you? Ask for detailed answers.
  - Ask for long and detailed answers, show interest by encouraging utterances and ask for examples. Nevertheless, avoid nodding or revealing agreement in any way.
  - Listen actively; do not plan your next question as you listen to the respondent(s), give response.
  - Make sure to structure the questions, feel free to repeat important words, and pause a bit to make the informant continue.
  - Observe body language, you need to perceive the respondent’s mood, like boredom, anger, drowsiness, shyness or bashfulness.
  - Use descriptive questions *what* and *who*, avoid *why*.
- (Patton 1990; as cited in Johannessen et al., 2010, p. 143)

During the interview stage in the field work, I made sure that the respondents were prepared to some extent; the questions were quite open so that it could be possible to generate reflection and communication within the target group. I asked the respondents follow-up questions, or I asked them to elaborate or give examples. Their statements were seriously considered, and I gave them time to respond properly. I made sure that the communication between me and the respondents was clear and understandable. The language was adjusted, and I designed the questions operatively so that potential misunderstandings were cleared. These precautions made the interviews easy to conduct.

I completed the student informant’s interviews before I interviewed the language teacher. I interviewed the teacher isolated from the students because of the design of the interview guide (appendix list). This was a natural choice because the questions aimed for the teacher were designed to approach the teacher’s experience of the learning outcome in the class, as well as his perception of the reading activity. I needed to get his pedagogical



attitude clearly expressed. I was ready to start the transcription work when the interviews were completed. My next chapter will introduce the transcription of my data material.

### **3.2.5 Transcription of data**

When I had completed the field work, the transcription part was imminent. Transcription means transforming the oral interview into written format. When the interview is a written document, it is more available for analysing (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The structure I drew up during the transcription indicated the start of my analysis. Simultaneously as I listened to the tape recorder I had used to tape the interviews, I quoted precisely what the ten respondents said. Moreover I took down pausing, sighs, muttering, laughter, and all kind of emotional expressions. I also used a system to indicate who of the informants possessed the utterings, because I should not doubt this as I started the analysing part. The transcription of the ten interviews generated approximately fifty pages of text. I started the transcription very soon after the interviews were completed in order to remember the atmosphere during this field work. When the interviews were transcribed, I started the analysis part of my work. The analysis is located later in my thesis. This part of my work was mainly based on Yin's five stages of case study analysis as I have elaborated earlier in the thesis (as cited in Johannessen et al., 2010). I will now discuss my role as a researcher.

### **3.3 The researcher's role**

The most important tool for collection of data is the researcher himself (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). My first priority was gaining trust from the informants; I needed them to feel confident and safe. I assured that I would process the information they gave in a highly confidential manner. During the interviews it was important that I appeared as a serious researcher, who treated the informants properly, approached them seriously and never patronized them. It was obvious that the informants should talk freely without any kind of interruptions, and they should not experience that I posed leading questions of any kind. During the interviews I took notes in addition to tape recording, in case I needed to ask follow-up questions after the dialogue. This method allowed me to listen carefully without having to interrupt the informant's story. Johannessen et al. (2010) explain ethics in relation between people, which is human interaction. Ethics may also indicate concrete actions and the way people affect each other. Ethical consideration occurs in particular when the researcher is in direct interaction with the informants, particularly in connection to data collection, by direct observation, during interviews or by experiments (Johannessen et al., 2010).

I was constantly aware of my role as a researcher, and I placed my ethical principles high all through the field work. Most of the informants were eager to talk, and the interviews were structured relatively well. Nevertheless, I realized that some of the informants were quite silent and reluctant to talk much. This reserved attitude could be a result of the diverse level of comprehension and lack of insight in the task, in addition to the uncertainty the unfamiliar situation they were placed in caused. I will come back to these challenges in my paragraph about strength and weaknesses. However, I also realized that some of the informants felt proud and lucky to be included in the study, which they also expressed clearly. Obviously they perceived themselves as participants in an important field work. I tried to encourage all the informants, and I expressed my gratitude for their participation.

### **3.3.1 Ethical principles**

My role was obviously influenced by the ethical principles which the researcher is obliged to follow. Johannessen et al. (2010) state these directions clearly as a responsibility which is invariable. The researcher's ethical foundation is to be obeyed throughout the complete research process (Johannessen et al., 2010). When I asked the parents for their permission to observe and interview their children (appendix list), I made sure to introduce the project as clearly as possible, and I stressed that participation was voluntary. I reassured the informants and their parents that I would annihilate the recorded material, when the thesis was completed, and guaranteed that the informants would not be identified. My study was introduced to the students and the parents in this class quite early in the process, also the students who did not participate in the study were guaranteed anonymity, and my pledge of secrecy was clearly stressed. Johannessen et al. (2010) emphasize the importance of openness, such as clear information regarding the research prior to the field work. The informants must be ensured that they are not to be identified (Johannessen et al., 2010). I obeyed these principles all through the study.

Prior to the study, I informed the students about the research and explained clearly what they participated in. I explained the importance of the informant's utterances and approached the class with humility. I explained to them what identification and anonymity means and emphasized that the project was completely safe for all to be a part of. I tried to appear inoffensive and make a safe and good relation to the students at the moment I stepped into their classroom. I was aware that I was a guest and tried to make all the students understand that this was my role in their classroom. It was clearly an advantage that I knew their English teacher quite well; he assisted me when I needed to get an overview of the students. I made some effort in understanding the setting and getting to know the class in general and the nine informants in particular. I made the setting anonymous by not identifying the school's name or mentioning the area it is located in (Johannessen et al., 2010).

### **3.4 Strength and weakness – validity, reliability and generalization**

This chapter will state the validity and reliability of the empirical material. Validity is characterized by the utterance's trustworthiness. Have I investigated what I stated in the starting point of the thesis (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009)? I measured the study's validity by the transcription of each interview which was done word by word. I did all the transcription work by myself, which contributed to secure the data's validity. I conducted each interview according to similar structure, which also strengthened the validity. By asking follow-up questions and giving the informants chance to elaborate on the utterances, I will claim that the data's trustworthiness was further supported. After the ending of each interview, I gave all of the informants the opportunity of commenting or elaborating on the interview session. When I made sure that the questions were understood by each informant, I also contributed to strengthen the validity of data. Validity of data is also characterized by the informant's trustworthiness. I considered all of my nine informants as very serious regarding the task they were given, moreover, by asking for the English teacher's assistance of selecting informants, I felt very sure that the group was very suitable for the study. My understanding of a trustworthy group of informants was supported by their utterances which I regarded as reflected and well considered, and furthermore, I perceived their non-verbal language to appear as a token of serious participation in the study.

During the analysis part of the thesis it was important for me to present valid description of the findings, so that the readers could examine that I had investigated what I had actually stated that I should investigate. As I considered the study, when it was completed, I looked at the weaknesses closely. The observation part of the study was the first step and perhaps the phase where the informants were most sensitive. When they received a stranger in the classroom, it probably evoked curiosity and perhaps some kind of shyness they would not possess otherwise. This shyness could result in some kind of reluctance of commenting and participating in the class activity, especially in the beginning of the study. It was difficult for me to measure and prove this because I did not know this class very well before I entered the classroom. I could perceive some change of atmosphere as the lesson moved on, however, and it did not take long before the students in the class interacted as a Norwegian average school class would do. The English teacher confirmed my perception; therefore, I assess the data not to be seriously weakened by my presence in the class.

The next phase was the interactive chat part; this was obviously a challenge for some informants. Two of the respondents explained that they had writing problems, and they did not enjoy writing tasks. Nevertheless, all of the informants participated in the activity and completed all of the questions they were introduced to. As I interpreted the chat logs, I realized that such challenges could be of hindrance for the free communication between the informants. The weakness by the written material was evened up by the additional data types of observation and interviews, however. This research gives no foundation for

generalization, except for the ten informants the study is based on. Yet, it is possible to argue on a general basis by pointing to my findings. Similar studies can enhance my empirical material and strengthen my data. The informants were selected randomly and will reflect an average Norwegian eighth-grade school class; therefore, my findings can be transferable to similar situations (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

To sum up the methodology chapter of the thesis, I started by introducing the outline of the project. The choice of design and research method was presented in the next part, where I also included and explained my choices regarding the case study. Furthermore I explained the method illuminated by my Model of Reading Literacy (Figure 1) and elaborated on elements of meaning in my findings. The hermeneutical approach I used for my study was explained, and I elaborated on how it affected my study. How I addressed the informants and the observation part of the study was my next section of the thesis, followed by an introduction of how I manufactured and processed the target groups. At last, I gave an explanation of how I transcribed the data, my role as the researcher, and the ethical principles which made the base for the field work. The methodology chapter ended with my view on the data's strength and weaknesses; furthermore, I explained the validity and reliability of data and presented how I see the generalization of my study. I had now reached the analysis and discussion part of my study. My next chapter in the thesis will process this part of the research.

## **4 Empirical results, analysis and discussion**

I have by drawing up this thesis realized that reading prose fiction gives the students an input which differs from manufactured texts embedded in the course books. I will now look into the analysis part and interpret the empirical material I was left with when the study was completed. The observation document, the transcribed interviews, and the informant produced chat logs are foundation for this part of the thesis. I have chosen to organize the results, my analysis and my discussion together. The hermeneutical approach which characterizes my research, gives way for this combination due to the interpretative foundation. I will in this chapter discuss my findings and place them in the categories drawn up in the Model of Reading Literacy (Figure 1).

### **4.1 Analyzing reading literacy**

The first impression of the informants in the classroom was clearly pointed towards a genuine interest of the plot; this impression was in particular obvious during the discussion part and the word/ adjective activity. One of the informants claimed that she could understand the content much clearer when she took part in this activity; furthermore, she enjoyed the text more when she understood the content. My empirical material revealed, to some extent, that my assertion of literature as foundation for enhancing reading literacy is reliable. As I studied the data material further and placed it into categories of text involvement, form and structure, and cultural competence, according to my Model of Reading Literacy (Figure 1), I interpreted the informants' utterances and written material. These interpretations were foundation for my analysis of data and led to my conclusion.

During the first phase of the interpretation, I investigated the observation part of the study. The reading session sparked interest immediately, the students were eager to start. This immediate interest could be kindled by the new situation of hosting a researcher in the classroom; some of the whispering dialogues among the students in class could point in that direction. This class was not accustomed to this kind of reading activity; therefore, the interest could also be linked to this new situation taking place. I deduced that the immediate interest for the reading lesson could also be attached to the teaching design. The teacher mentioned the author Alasdair Gray, yet he did not introduce him or in any way focus on him. The reading was the starting point, and the focus was directed towards that. My first impression of the study is based on these main areas; interest was sparked by the new situation of a researcher present, as well as the unfamiliar reading activities and the curiosity of the text itself. The chat logs were also interpreted according to the hermeneutical approach. I got an overall impression of the material, which revealed understanding of the text. My further interpretation of the empirical material was done according to hermeneutical principles, as mentioned above.

Reading a literary text may seem simple, until we reach a part where we do not understand. This may be idiomatic expressions, words with a meaning different from what the reader expects to meet, unfamiliar terms, and symbolic features. These obstacles demand a need of understanding and interpretation, and hermeneutical explanation was a part of the solution for my nine student informants. The hermeneutical circle is to be understood as the mutual shaping and understanding between the units and the whole (Goring et al., 2010), as I explained in the methodology chapter. Clearly my Model of Reading Literacy (Figure 1) is a part of such interpretation because the target language culture must be understood by its parts, in order to understand the total picture. When the informants were supposed to complete the adjective activity during the reading session, they had to focus on pieces of the text in order to understand linguistic features as well as gaining involvement in the text and relate to the plot. The informants needed to understand pieces of the protagonist's culture in order to understand the complete plot. Based on these interpretations, I claim that these elements which I can connect to the Model of Reading Literacy (Figure 1) are to be characterized as a hermeneutical approach. I have now reached the part where I study the three different units, which I derived from the term "reading literacy", and the interpretation of how my findings affect these. The first category I listed in my Model of Reading Literacy was text involvement (Figure 1).

#### **4.1.1 Text involvement**

The students claimed that they got the chance to involve their feelings by reading the given text, and it was asserted that even though additional reading material is complicated, it stimulated and motivated for learning in a different way than using the textbook. According to my Model of Reading Literacy, I found the three categories to be valid for my data material to some extent. Reading literacy in English was parted into units of text involvement, learning form and structure, and cultural insight (Figure 1).

My aim was to get insight in a sphere where I normally do not get access to very often, not even in my profession as an English teacher. Even though the teachers introduce literary texts for the students on a regular basis, we tend to look for the student's understanding of the text rather than their emotional approach to it. Some of the arguments against the use of literature in the foreign language have been the challenge of involving in a difficult text not adjusted for the foreign speaking student, this assumption has been discussed and addressed by several scholars as mentioned in this thesis, such as Vestli, (2008), Hellekjær, (2008), Collie and Slater (1987), and Widdowson (1982). To test these arguments, I discussed the level of difficulty with my informants and made them talk about how they got involved in the plot. Some of the utterances supported my view of textual involvement, also among young learners of English; I will display some collected material from the interview data:

*-This text was a bit more difficult than the texts we read in the textbooks, yet I managed to get involved and understand when I concentrated on the reading process.*

*-I learned a lot when we talked about the text after reading it, and it was fun when we worked with the activities linked to the text.*

*-I learn even more by reading additional authentic literature, than reading the textbook because such texts are a bit more challenging to read. I liked the part where we talked about the content best, it was exciting, and it made me want to read even more. This particular text was more exciting than reading the textbook.*

These utterances gave me additional insight in how these young learners of English manage to comprehend and get involved emotionally in the authentic text. The girl, who said that it was fun when they worked with activities linked to the text, was encouraged by the other informants in that particular target group. They nodded and murmured *mhm* when she uttered this sentence. I understood this to be an immediate reaction; therefore, I regard it as reliable data for my empirical material. These utterances indicate various evidences; the teaching design matters, the discussion part attached to the text matters, and the content matters. All of these statements are supported by scholars of literature, such as Rosenblatt (1994, 2005) and Kramersch (1993). Kramersch argues for using literature in the language classroom by pointing to the effect of the writer's voice: "Literature's ability to represent the particular voice of a writer among the many voices of his or her community and thus to appeal to the particular in the reader" (Kramersch, 1993, p. 131).

Furthermore, Kramersch refers to J.H. Miller to explain how literature will detect the learner's voice:

Foreign language learners have to be exposed to different types of text, from the most conventional to the most particular, but if they are eventually to find their own voice in the foreign language and culture. Literary texts can offer them models of particularity and opportunities for the dialogic negotiation of meaning (as cited in Kramersch, 1993, p. 131).

My findings gave evidence of interaction between the reader and the text which can be revealed through suitable teaching of literary texts, activities can promote such interaction if the teaching is carried out with awareness of the student's age and cognitive level. I regard the pre-reading activity to be fruitful for the students' relation to the text, and it contributed to discovery of their own voice in the reading process. As I observed the student's reaction in the discussion part of the project, I understood that most of the students needed the interaction between the teacher and the class, among themselves, and between themselves and the author. Utterances in the class revealed that this part of the teaching design was necessary to comprehend the layers in the text, as well as the language traits.

The observation part of the field work gave some useful information. During the adjective activity I discovered different findings. Although some expressed a sense of hopelessness because the adjectives were hard to understand, the situation came to a turning point as the interaction between the students gave results, and they understood the words through the dialogue in class. Some of the students gave examples of how the words could be interpreted and how they affected the atmosphere in the text. I interpret these utterances as evidence of mastery, and I realized that the interaction got the class above the hindrances of language barriers. In the end, the teacher read the text without halting, some of the immediate

utterances revealed interest for the plot, like, *-what happened to Cameron?* or, *-did he die?* One student asked *-what did he actually swallow?* The interaction showed curiosity, some students asked if there was more to the story, they obviously wanted an answer. The informants managed to discuss the protagonist's feelings and attitude based on the reading session. I, therefore, concluded that the text was suitable for this specific age, although it was not adapted to fit Norwegian students of second language in particular. When I observed the reading project, I interpreted the interaction in class and found that the students were eager to solve the activity tasks given during the reading process. They obviously wanted to perform the task well, yet the teacher had to give assistance to some students who found this particular activity difficult.

At this stage I reflected upon the ambivalence whether Norwegian students should be given authentic literary texts in the target language at such a young age, because of the struggle some of the students experienced. This is a returning dilemma every second language teacher will have to face as authentic reading texts are to be included in the lesson. I will bear this dilemma throughout the thesis. Nevertheless, they seemed to be focused and interested, and they asked questions about the plot. Although it was clear to me that this kind of text was a bit of a challenge for most of the students at this stage, it did not seem to deprive them of curiosity and interest. Based on the observation part of the field work, I owe that interest to the pre-activity, the adjective activity halfway in the project, and the discussion part, and oral interaction attached to the reading session. I will refer to Charboneau's study to support my findings, which points to the problem of limited language variation and vocabulary in lower level textbooks. She claims that "The variation in learners' needs could be better met using a larger variety of texts..." (as cited in Hasselgreen et al., 2012, p. 63). Furthermore, she refers to the usage of texts as such:

..using non-traditional methods, such as working in small discussion groups to improve differentiation by providing more opportunities for pupils to speak and discuss the texts and ask questions when they do not understand the text or vocabulary (as cited in Hasselgreen, 2012, p. 63).

At the end of the reading session, the teacher read the text as a whole. At this stage it seemed that the students were interested to get the "answer". They discussed the plot eagerly, and many expressed enjoyment, frustration, and curiosity because of the unsolved ending of the plot. I interpreted this interaction in the classroom to be an evidence of textual involvement among the young eighth-graders in this class. Collie and Slater (1987) refer to teaching authentic literature in the classroom as helpful in the language learning process because of the personal involvement it fosters in readers. They claim that textbook material must concentrate on a rule-based system of language acquisition, whereas literature enables the readers to alter the attention beyond the mechanical teaching system to exploration of a literary text. The reader will be "drawn into" the plot and manage to learn language by personal involvement (Collie and Slater, 1987).

My study shows that the reader's involvement was possible to identify and document by the empirical material generated by the interviews among the student respondents, as well as the teacher respondent. One girl referred to the protagonist like this: *-I had an image of Cameron*



*in my head, I felt sorry for him, I think he was lonely. This was not stated clearly in the text, yet I could understand it as I read.* Other utterances in the target groups supported this girl's statement regarding the aesthetic reading: *-I felt I could get involved in the plot, I liked reading the text, it was fun.* Another respondent reflected: *-It felt more exciting reading this text compared to the textbook. It was fun, and I wanted to read even more.* One boy supported this statement: *-I got an image of the protagonist in my head; I think I was able to understand his problems.*

These utterances gave me the opportunity to get insight in the relation between the reader and the text, to some extent. Although the text was quite challenging, it was obvious that it had given the informants some kind of experience and made them get involved somehow. What kind of experience each of the nine informants were left with could be possible to examine, but I did not get the chance to investigate these structures because of the limited extent of this thesis. Nevertheless, it is clear that the evocation of literature which is mentioned by Rosenblatt (2005) can apply to my findings. She explains the literary experience as the reader's entrance into the printed page. This entrance should be observed and prepared by the teacher so that the child is emotionally ready to meet the challenge of this entrance. Rosenblatt describes this entrance as follows:

A novel or poem or play remains merely inkspots on paper until a reader transforms them into a set of meaningful symbols. The literary work exists in the live circuit set up between the reader and the text: the reader infuses intellectual and emotional meanings into the pattern of verbal symbols, and those symbols channel his thoughts and feelings (2005, p. 24).

The relation between the reader and the text must be the main objective in aesthetic reading, no matter what kind of reader or what kind of reading material the study includes. I asked my informants during the interviews to point to one trait by the text they enjoyed. I will refer to further findings in my study to enlighten the reader's involvement in the text; one of the informants explained her interpretation as follows: *-I liked the text because it showed me how other people can be like.* Another informant supported: *-I liked the ending, it was surprising because he swallowed the star.* The third respondent in this particular target group claimed that he liked that the text was a bit difficult to understand, but still it was meaningful for him. In order to follow up these utterances, I made the conversation go on by discussing the reading activities. The informants clearly benefitted from the activities and engaged in the reading even deeper thanks to the interaction in class. Some of the informants expressed that it was easier to understand the plot when the teacher made them work with it. One boy explained it like this: *-the first time we read it, I did not understand completely. Yet, after reading it over again and talking about it in class, and working with it, I understood better. I understood the start better than the ending. I couldn't understand why he swallowed the star, but I liked talking about it.*

Involvement may be characterized by emphatic feelings for the protagonist. The readers in the informant group managed to explain their perception of Cameron, the protagonist in the short story. Most of the informants saw him as a lonely boy, ignored by his parents. Some of the informants expressed their feelings as they described him: *-he is a lonely person, who is left alone much of the time. I feel sorry for him.* Another utterance reveals involvement as well: *-I*

*cannot understand why his parents don't care more for their son, it is sad.* One boy reflected over his loneliness: *-...he was lonely and left out, maybe that is the reason why he was quite curious and explored things all the time.* One girl reflected over his behavior like this:

*-I can manage to understand how he felt, and what it was like to be him, I believe that he was scared, maybe he is afraid of his parents at home, and he is careful all the time. Still I think he is smart, and he got a special relationship to the star.*

Another informant saw him like this: *-he was caring and understanding and he was proud because he had found the star. I can understand him.* I interpret these utterances to be independently thought through, and not influenced by the teacher or the study itself. The informants summed up the reading session with utterances like: *- I understood the text quite well, if I met difficult words or sentences, I could understand by the content.* Another informant expressed: *-I liked to read this text, although the language was more challenging than the course book, it became clearer as we discussed the content in the classroom after reading.*

These utterances explain that reading unknown foreign literature in the classroom may lead to some challenges, yet the benefit is more rewarding thanks to the reading experience and the deep understanding of the text. It shows that the selection of texts must be taken into consideration, and the teacher must be aware of the group of students he is teaching. I claim that the teacher's influence and the teaching design on the student's textual involvement mattered in order to make the students get involved in the plot. I will discuss the teacher and the student's role later in this chapter.

Kramsch' theory of silential reading, as I described in the theoretical chapter, was obvious in the study (Kramsch, 1993). The students' dialogues during the interactive chat session showed that the text triggered emotions and understanding of the "hidden" meaning. I will display some examples of the informants' utterances selected from the interactive chat session. This selection of interactive chat utterances is collected from the part where they were asked to pick a line from the text and explain why they chose the particular line. One of the "chat-pairs" reflected like this:

*-The star shone white and blue, making the space around him like a cave in an iceberg. - I like this line because I can feel how it looks inside this iceberg, and he sees this in the star... His classmate replied as follows: -He looked through the flake's crystal lattice into an ocean of glittering blue-black waves under a sky full of huge galaxies. I liked this line because it describes the beauty of the star.*

These utterances give a clear indication of aesthetic reading and "silential understanding" of the plot. The students got the task of choosing one line in particular and explaining reasons for their choices. The task gave them an opportunity of approaching the text aesthetically and a close, personal relation between the reader and the text was established. The other "chat-pairs" reflected in a similar way, they all chose a line and explained their choices independently.

To sum up the part about the Model of Reading Literacy (Figure 1) which includes text involvement, I will start with the young readers. What kinds of readers were involved in the study? My informants were all interested to join the field work; they seemed to be eager and curious. According to the teacher, they were all interested in reading, Norwegian literature was the main reading material, but also English books were to be found in their desks. They were all adolescents; therefore, they read literature which was suitable for their area of interest. As an additional remark, I can reveal that their head teacher is very interested in reading literature herself, and she is a real book lover. This information was known to me prior to this research, yet I did not let it influence my choice of informants. Nevertheless, I could sense that these informants were used to reading in class, and literary texts were well known to them. I did not investigate a possible effect this background could have on this particular target group, because limitation of the thesis made it impossible to go into depth of this area.

I conclude this chapter by illuminating the reader's involvement. It was clear to me that all of the informants managed to embark into the text, understand the protagonist's feelings and feel empathy for him, although some of the informants found the language to be challenging. Some of the informants had some comprehension difficulties regarding the language and the plot, but understood clearly when the teacher facilitated the text, processed discussion and reflection through pre-activities, during the reading process and after the reading was completed. I also illuminated the teacher's role as a reading instructor. The interactive chat section which followed the reading session seemed in particular to be sparkling reflection to a great extent. When the informants got to chat about the protagonist and comment on his situation, they were eager and determined. When I observed this part of the field work, I noticed that all of the informants wrote systematically, and they were not distracted. The documented chat logs, which I referred to above, confirmed this impression; the level of reflection was very high, everybody managed to give an impression of the protagonist and describe the setting and the plot according to their own interpretation. During the discussion part in class, some of the informants expressed frustration because of the unsettled ending, yet it seemed that this frustration ended when the informants got to discuss possible solutions with each other through the interactive chats. This part of the field work seemed to be the sequence when they truly got to identify with the protagonist, and bring their experiences and feelings into the plot. I will bring forth some of the dialogues selected from the interactive chat logs to support this claim; I label the informants by numbers to keep the material organized. The question was: "How will you describe Cameron?"

Informant 1: *- I believe that he is kind and caring.*

Informant 2: *- I think he is a weirdo, you can't eat a star, he probably dreamt it all.*

Informant 9: *- I agree he was crazy.*

Informant 3: *- I think Cameron is special, but he is nice and caring.*

Informant 4: *- Yes, he is quiet.*

Informant 5: *-Cameron is lonely, but he is a good friend with the star.*

Informant 6: *-I agree, but it is strange that he can be friend to a star.*

Informant 7: *-Cameron is a special person.*

Informant 8: *-Yes, he can talk to a star.*

The chat log material also revealed further involvement. When I asked the informants to mention a person to whom they would share the secret with if they found a star, each of them answered by the name of a friend or a family member. I interpret these answers to be total acceptance of the supernatural phenomena, and a token of involvement in the plot and the protagonist's situation. The informants also reflected over the protagonist's distant relation to his family, and all of them uttered sentences of compassion because of his loneliness. Is it possible that the interactive chat managed to generate deep reflection thanks to the interactive chat room's specific design? I reflected upon this as I observed the informants while they were seated by the computers and used their Facebook-integrated chat room. They did not need to express themselves orally, they could talk about their feelings and meanings without interruption, and they could think about their utterances and modify if they needed to alter anything. I did not ask the informants to verify or falsify my reflections; nevertheless, I kept it in mind all through this part of the field work. My next chapter will look into the field work which refers to acquisition of communicative skills by reading literature, which is the next category in my Model of Reading Literacy (Figure 1).

#### **4.1.2 Learning form and structure by reading literature**

My study provides evidence of "additional learning" as an outcome of reading authentic literature. The interview guide involved questions which could generate evidence of potential acquisition of vocabulary and grammar by reading literature. The informants reflected and discussed the topic. It seemed to point in one direction, they could understand the new words by the content, but it was difficult to single out exactly what new vocabulary they had acquired. Some of the utterances, revealed during the interviews, will enlighten my findings. One informant said: *-I know for sure I learnt new words, although I can't remember which ones now.* Another informant reflected like this: *the text was quite challenging, and there were no vocabulary lists at the bottom page like the textbooks include, yet it was not too hard because I could understand by the context.* Some of the informants managed to talk about the use of vocabulary in the text, and compared it with their course books. One of the informants reflected like this: *-I like to learn by activities in class, it is better than learning by heart. Reading text of fiction like this works fine because we can see how the words are used in a real context.*

These utterances reveal a clear understanding of an unknown authentic text, not aimed towards Norwegian students. The informants had an idea that they had widened the vocabulary level, although they could not point out exactly what kind of words they had integrated. It seemed like the knowledge was integrated without a clear awareness of it. One

boy in the group discussed how he enhanced his vocabulary level; he had an idea of the outcome he was left with after working with new vocabulary:

*-I like to learn by reading the textbook, because it is easier when the translated words are to be found at the end of the text, and I can figure out by myself. I like to write the words and learn them; it is good when we can explore our own way of learning. Literary texts like this; "The Star", does not provide translation of words, yet it is fun to read anyway. It is more interesting because the language is different than the textbook material. I believe it is closer to the way English speaking people really talk.*

One of the informants was quite silent during the interview phase; he expressed himself through body language though, by nodding his head, using acceptance utterances like; *-mhm* or short remarks like *-yes* or *-no*. He stated that he had some problems understanding, but managed to keep up thanks to the activities and the discussion part after the reading. His idea of language acquisition through reading was supported by his idea of the text:

*-I understood many words in the text, but some were new to me. The teacher explained unfamiliar words, and then I understood the meaning in the text. It was easier when we talked about the text, and the teacher explained. I liked this story.*

Widdowson (1982) claims that the texts that are presented in textbooks are created literature; he calls it pseudo-literature. He claims that textbook literature has replaced the real literature, namely the authentic literature (Widdowson, 1982). The findings in my study can support Widdowson's assertion, because my informants were able to recognize the difference between "real" language and facilitated language. This particular short story incorporated in my study is representative for introducing authentic language in particular thanks to the distinct Scottish expressions like: "A'm gawn out", "see you're no long then", or "I cannae, sir" (Collie and Slater, 1993). These unfamiliar expressions did not seem to be of hindrance for understanding the text however. In fact, authentic language like this may even be a source of approaching "the third place" for the young ESL reader (Kramsch, 1993). These sociolect featured utterances may reveal cultural insight by its informal characteristic and bring the readers closer to the protagonist's own world. However I did not go further into these reflections in the field work, because of the limited extent of the thesis.

One of the activities connected to the reading session took place during the reading. In the middle of the texts, the students were asked to underline all the adjectives in two paragraphs, using a different color for each paragraph. When the task was completed, the teacher asked them to examine whether the atmosphere in the plot had changed somehow and discuss the findings. During the field work, I did not aim to investigate the potential linguistic benefits of that particular activity, yet I discovered that some of the informants discussed the words and got aware of the language structure hidden in this activity. Some of the utterances revealed this:

*-I tried to think about what kind of words were adjectives, and what words were something else. It was an instructive activity for me.*

*-I realized the meaning by this activity, the words were supposed to change from gloomy to happy, because it was how Cameron changed. I also understood that the adjectives have another form characterized by – er ending. It was nice to see that.*

To sum up my findings, I claim that my empirical material align with theorists of literature who I have chosen to support my study: Collie and Slater (1987), Widdowson (1982), Rosenblatt (1994, 2005), and Kramsch (1993), who claim that reading authentic literature is more of a challenge for the learner, but the outcome may be even better thanks to the encounter with “real” language. Collie and Slater mention the value of authentic literature as: “genuine and undistorted, and can be managed in the classroom context” (Collie and Slater, 1987, p. 3). Kramsch refers to Breen (1985) when she explains the student’s encounter with authentic language, “the learner will re-define any text against his own priorities, precisely because he is a learner, and in this respect the learner is not any different from any other language user” (as cited in Kramsch, 1993, p. 182). Rosenblatt is concerned about the reader’s response and what readers bring to the text. Understanding the language is comprehension of the intellectual and emotional force in the learner. “...for to understand a word is to see implications in a context significant for human beings” (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 105).

When the respondents in the target groups discussed the language in the text, it was obvious that it was a challenge to them. Nevertheless, it was clear that the teacher’s role as a language teacher and a reading teacher, in addition to the activities attached to the reading session evoked interest and curiosity, and made the text understandable for the learners. The observation revealed that the pre-activity created a desire to come up with a word which covered their thoughts about the starry sky. The learners were also eager to solve the adjective task, and many seemed to acquire new vocabulary during that specific activity. As an additional benefit, the reading itself, the involvement in the plot, and the discussion gave way for learning formal structures as well, although this was an unintended outcome. I will now discuss the last element in the Model of Reading Literacy (Figure 1), cultural insight and participation in society.

#### **4.1.3 Cultural insight**

The last category in my Model of Reading Literacy (Figure 1) involves cultural understanding by reading literature in the ESL classroom. The field work gave evidence of such understanding to some extent. My immediate reaction as I entered the classroom was the interest the students showed as the text was introduced to them. Many of the learners liked to read and looked forward to the lesson. This was also the teacher’s impression. The text is written by Alasdair Gray, a Scottish author. The protagonist, Cameron, is almost the only person the reader gets to know by getting involved in the plot. Cameron is not particularly standing out compared to the group of readers in the study, yet his social background is quite unfamiliar to the informants in this study. He seems to be quite poor, his living conditions are not of familiar Norwegian standards, and he seems to have a detached relationship to his family. These perceptions are not clearly stated in the text, but are revealed through

interpretation of the plot. I examined my field work too see whether there were any traces of cultural insight by reading and comprehending the text *The Star* (Collie and Slater, 1993).

The informants discussed Cameron and his situation as follows: *-I found it surprising that he absolutely did not have anybody who cared about him, not even his family.* One of the informants managed to describe how she understood the text: *-I learnt that there are many different people in the world, and people do things differently, and they live differently. People differ from each other in our world.* Another informant explained: *-Cameron was different in a way, it is hard to explain, but he is one of a kind.* This informant explained during the chat activity that he enjoyed the reading, and furthermore, he described the text as *something else* which I interpret as something else than his own familiar surroundings.

Culture is integrated as a part of the national curriculum in Norway combined with insight in society and literature. What is cultural competence? This question has to be looked into, in order to investigate whether the informants have gained cultural insight by this study. Kramersch uses Rosenblatt's concept of aesthetic and efferent reading when she introduces cultural insight by reading literature (Kramersch, 1993). Efferent reading gives information about the content itself and is efficient when the content is all we need. Aesthetic reading on the other hand, gives us information about the unsaid, the deeper meaning hidden between the lines. Aesthetic reading is closely connected to literature like short stories, novels, poems, lyrics, etc. as mentioned earlier in the thesis. Kramersch raises the question whether aesthetic reading differs according to the different languages because of the cultural pre-knowledge the reader possesses (Kramersch, 1993). This theory supports the idea that cultural competence is attached to literature and will be expanded by reading foreign literature connected to the target country, in addition to your own.

Kramersch emphasizes the pre-knowledge every reader possesses. She names this pre-knowledge "schemata", as I mentioned in the theory chapter (Kramersch, 1993). I believe that the foreign language teacher needs to take this "schemata" into consideration as he teaches literature. One question the teacher must ask is whether background information should be given before or after introducing the text. I believe that it all depends on the topic, the genre, and the learning objectives, which must all be included in the decision. I chose to let the teacher introduce a pre-activity in order to stimulate the students schemata and bring forth the already existing cultural knowledge they hold. Is it possible that the different schemata the students possess will be beneficial when they experience and get involved in a literary text? I believe so. Cultural understanding of literature is an aspect to consider as the teacher brings literature into the ESL classroom. Sharing the knowledge that already exists in the classroom may be valuable. How can the teacher take advantage of the variety of schemata? One way of working with literature is using pre-activities and post-activities such as my study does. The second language teacher, who chooses to give the students the advantage of reading, will have to consider how to introduce this additional material.

Kramersch is one among many scholars who talks about culture in literature. She uses the expression "the third place", which I introduced in the theory chapter, in order to describe the encounter between the target language culture and the reader's own culture. This place is not

static, whereas it is constantly in motion. “The third place” is hidden in the text and will be discovered by the readers as the learning process develops. When the reader meets the target language culture in the text, and therefore can reach a cultural understanding as a prolonging of his own culture, he has met “the third place”, the area between the two cultures (Kramersch, 1993). By using authentic literature in the second language classroom, the chance of leading the students to a deeper understanding of the cultural aspect increases. Everybody possesses pre-knowledge, or schemata, that will influence the reading process. Maybe it is impossible to completely understand the target language culture for a foreign language learner. Maybe it is not even necessary to get this absolute understanding; therefore, “the third place” will always exist, no matter what (Kramersch, 1993).

What was then the outcome of this category among my informants? I will go into the observation part, the chat logs and the interview process to seek for traces of “the third place”. One boy claimed that it was hard to understand the end of the text, but he managed to reach for understanding by himself: *-I did not understand why he swallowed the star, and why he did not obey the teacher. He just grabbed the star and swallowed it. It was peculiar, but I liked to read it anyway.* I understand this to be an approach towards *the third place*. He managed to approach the plot with an open mind and accepted the ending although he did not comprehend the content at first. He accepted that Cameron differed from himself.

Another informant answered quite similarly regarding comprehension of the plot: *- It was a strange thing, this star. The end of the story was very surprising. It means that you have to find your own conclusion, and try to understand what happened by yourself.* I interpret this utterance as an evidence of approaching “the third place”. The informants had difficulties understanding Cameron’s behavior, and yet they tried to reach understanding through the reading process and by participating in the given activities. They created their own meaning, and managed to approach the unfamiliar culture they were introduced to through the reading.

One of the informants said that people are different and that we all differ from each other in this world. Discussion, interactive chats, and interviews stimulated reflection and helped the informants reach cultural insight. Kramersch introduced the term “silential reading” which means paying attention not only to what is said, but also to what is unsaid (Kramersch, 1993). The informants in my study managed to see aspects which were not stated in the text, yet they interpreted the information beneath the layers of meaning. This process is even harder for the foreign language reader, Kramersch mentions it as reading between the lines, “Understanding a text’s silences is the most difficult task for the foreign language reader, for the decision of the author to leave things unsaid is based on his or her confidence that the readers will be able to read between the lines” (Kramersch, 1993, p. 128).

To sum up this element of the cultural part of the Model of Reading Literacy (Figure 1), I assert that stimulating cultural competence by reading authentic literature demands awareness of choice of text material. Moreover it demands awareness of the readers and the teaching design of which the text is introduced. Reading a text in a foreign language demands more of the reader than reading in the mother tongue. It includes both efferent and aesthetic reading (Kramersch, 1993). I realized during the field work that the informants managed to read



“between the lines” in order to understand a character quite far from their own cultural background. Silential reading is hard for any adolescent reader and even more of a challenge for the young second language learner reading in the target language. Nevertheless, I can document traces of cultural insight among the informants in the target group. The informants managed to see that Cameron was poor and lonely, although this was not stated directly in the text. They discussed his behavior and his personal characteristics by the hidden meaning and the “unsaid” information in the plot. The informants pre-knowledge influenced the cultural insight and supplemented the understanding of the plot and the characters in the story. What the reader brings into the text is a personal matter, and it makes the reading experience personal. I have now explored and discussed the findings in my field work, and placed it into the three units in my Model of Reading Literacy (Figure 1), I will now move on to the part where I discuss the teacher’s role and the reader’s role, before I conclude the thesis.

## **4.2 The relation between the reading-teacher and the young readers**

I claim it is the teacher’s duty to assist the young reader of English to achieve personal involvement in the authentic text. The teacher needs to possess some kind of knowledge about the reader and the process which is going on as the student acquires the literary experience. Rosenblatt refers to the process of helping the student understanding literature like this:

In this vital sense, understanding of even one word demands a framework of ideas about humankind, nature and society. With like inevitability, the task of helping the student understand a work of literature as a whole involves the context of the student’s past experience as well as the historical, social and ethical context into which he must fit the particular work (Rosenblatt, 2005, p. 106-107).

My following two chapters will explore the role of the teacher and the students within the reading experience.

### **4.2.1 The teacher’s role**

The teacher informant knew the class well and managed to create good interaction between himself and the students, all through the field work he participated in. He made sure that everybody managed to comprehend the text, and he was aware of his role as a reading teacher. He carried out my instructions as planned, and he prepared well prior to the study. The informants’ utterings generated clear evidence of the teacher’s importance as a facilitator of the literary experience. They all stated that the text was clearer to them when the teacher explained difficult parts and gave them activities to embark in.

I will now illuminate how the teacher of English perceived a possible involvement in the text and the plot. He claimed that most of the students in the class managed to comprehend the

plot and could get involved in the reading session. Yet, he stressed the fact that this comprehension depended on the activities and discussion part to a great extent. He described the text as quite easy to impart, he needed to get involved in the text himself and was prepared to assist the students if they needed guidance. He regarded the text to be easy and smooth for teaching. When I asked him whether he found the pre-activity meaningful for involvement and for stimulating the students' intellectual level, he reflected like this:

*-I believed the text to be useful for the students' reflection. They managed to try something new, they thought about the text and reflected. They got their mind set on the plot, prepared for the text reading, and got ideas and expectations regarding the upcoming activity.*

The teacher also emphasized the importance of discussing the descriptions in the text. He claimed that the descriptions contributed to create a certain atmosphere in the text. He could not bring any examples, yet he felt sure that the students benefitted by the descriptions of the protagonist and the setting.

During the reading process I observed that the teacher and the students interacted frequently, the discussion was constant. The teacher thought about whether the informants managed to express feelings and emotions during the reading:

*-The informants got to express emotions when they chatted about the text after the reading session. They discussed meanings and perceptions they had obtained as they involved in the text. Some of the informants had some difficulties expressing these in the target language though, but all of them managed to express some evidence of involvement and emotional empathy.*

The language teacher continued his reflection concerning the use of literature in the ESL classroom:

*-Using authentic literary texts compared to the textbook will maybe promote the perception of entering a world close to reality. I see that the textbook material is adjusted and aimed towards that specific group of pupils; it may be suitable for some of the pupils, yet others may not get the challenge they need by just reading textbook material. I believe that pupils, who manage to get through the layers in the text and get a wide understanding, will benefit from reading authentic material such as this text, "The Star".*

The teacher informant and I discussed the teacher's role connected to this study, and I asked him whether he was able to get involved in the reading material. I chose to integrate this topic in my interview guide because of the significant role of the teacher regarding challenging texts. In order to introduce authentic literature into the second language classroom, I claim that it is important that the teacher gets involved and regards himself as a reading-teacher. Kramersch claims that the teacher should never be indifferent to the literature he or she is teaching; moreover she compares the difficulties in expression, interpretation, and negotiation of meaning to oral communication. She asserts that the exploration of written texts should be even deeper than oral communication. "For the written word slows down the process of communication. It fosters reflection and critical stance vis-à-vis one's own and the foreign meaning" (Kramersch, 1993, p. 175). She is supported by Rosenblatt who mentions the

literature teacher's responsibility and need for awareness. He needs to understand what the reader brings into the reading experience from past experience and language; this does not only apply to younger reader, yet also adolescent readers:

The teacher of literature, then, seeks to help specific human beings discover the satisfaction of literature. Teaching becomes a matter of improving the individual's capacity to evoke meaning from the text by leading him to reflect self-critically on his process (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 25-26).

Based on this background, I let my informant teacher express his opinion as a literature teacher:

*-Authentic, additional reading material is more of a challenge for me as a teacher, compared to textbook adjusted texts. When I teach authentic texts it demands more of me as a teacher, I need to read thoroughly and make up my own meaning prior to introducing it to the students. I like variation in teaching material; therefore, I prefer both textbook material and authentic literature. The textbook provides much quality material as well; given you possess a good textbook of course.*

The teacher has to address his young readers, and I will in my next chapter introduce the readers in my study.

#### **4.2.2 The informants' role as readers**

Included in my chapter of theory, I mentioned the different kinds of readers which have been illuminated through reader-response criticism (as cited in Goring et al., 2010). I will look at the terms which are listed in my theory section under "defining the reader" (see 2.2.7). My informants were Norwegian adolescents reading a text in a foreign language, which is English. The language barriers were present, yet not insurmountable, thanks to English syllabus integrated in Norwegian schools from 1<sup>st</sup> class. This background made it possible to introduce a short story in English for these readers.

The model reader (as cited in Goring et al., 2010) is expected to hold the textual codes, the author possesses, himself. Eco describes this reading response to be intra-textual such as the reader is characterized in the text himself. The model reader engages in the text and imposes his own expectations as he reads. My empirical material revealed this perception to be relevant, especially during the adjective activity which was included in the reading session. When the respondents interpreted the text, according to the words they underlined, the meaning was clearer to them: One informant said:

*-I thought that there were many conclusions we could deduce, and it was possible to comprehend the story. I could understand the protagonist through this activity, and it gave us a better understanding of the plot. Another informant claimed: -I felt the text got more fluency and meaning. The activity showed how the plot was meant to be.*

I interpreted these utterances to be evidence of the model reader, as the respondents communicated with the text possibly in the same way as the author probably had intended it to. I realized that the respondents managed to recognize features which they could identify with, just by getting involved in the text and the protagonist. All of the informants understood the young boy's loneliness and his urge for having a friend, even if it was nothing more than a star. As adolescent readers, they were able to understand the layers in the text which referred to the protagonist's mind. The young readers in my informant group accepted that it could be possible to find a star, pick it up in your back yard, put it in your pocket and even swallow it. Although some of the informants claimed that the protagonist *was crazy* when he swallowed the star, and that he probably imagined the whole situation, they managed to read the text as it was meant to be read. All of the informants accepted the absurd happening taking place in Cameron's garden, they even discussed by interactive chat who they would share the secret with if they should find a star themselves.

I claim that all the readers in my study were model readers for this text because of their personal response to the plot. They responded to the text individually and brought their own emotions and perceptions into it. So, did I detect ideal readers among the young informants? I will claim that although some of the readers found the text to be quite a challenge, they all managed to overcome the struggles thanks to the facilitated teaching design. During the observation part, I noticed that the informants were interested and eager to discuss the content, and they all possessed some kind of knowledge which eventually made them get the optimal value of the text. The ideal readers were not obvious in the beginning of the reading session, but they emerged as the reading activities progressed. The chat logs supported these findings even further, and finally the interviews revealed that all of the nine informants understood the text and included their own meaning into it. The teacher informant supported the findings even further. I found evidence in my empirical material which revealed that all of the informants got involved in the text. I could deduce this conclusion because they characterized the protagonist, understood the setting, comprehended the foreign language, interpreted the symbolic structures and discussed the plot. I could deduce that the teaching design contributed to define the readers in this target group, as well as the choice of text. These findings gave me evidence of both model readers and ideal readers among the informants. I found traces of such readers in all categories in the Model of Reading Literacy (Figure 1).

I personally believe that we can create model readers and ideal readers in all stages of a child's development. Even a small child can create meaning and respond to the different elements in the text if the conditions for reading are facilitated. I claim based on the empirical evidences that literary texts for children and teenagers can generate model readers and ideal readers as well as advanced texts aimed for adults. The last chapter in the discussion part of my thesis will shed light on the Model of Reading Literacy (Figure 1), which I initially introduced in the theory chapter.

#### **4.2.3 Discussion of the Model of Reading Literacy**

I introduced the Model of Reading Literacy (Figure 1) as a starting point for this thesis. The empirical material generated much information which I can attach to the model. I found evidence of text involvement, form and structure, as well as cultural insight in my empirical material. Based on my study, I can deduce that the Model of Reading Literacy shows that the selected elements in the definition drawn up by OECD (2002) can be combined with my chosen categories of reading. I attached these elements together: understand, use and reflect on written text, to text involvement, and develop one's knowledge and potential, to learning form and structure, and lastly participate effectively in society, to cultural insight. I claim that these combinations are useful for understanding and interpreting the term "reading literacy", moreover I realized that these combinations made it easier for me to understand the young readers' approach to the foreign language text they were given. In order to understand and address the young reader's reading literacy, these combinations can be useful for the reading-teacher as well as the reader himself. By placing the term "reading literacy" into these components, I claim that I made the empirical material organized, and the model can, therefore, be of guidance for the ESL teacher when he introduces authentic literature to the young reader of English. If the ESL teacher is aware of the model's combination and manages to focus on each unit, it may be used as foundation for assessment of reading literacy as well as awareness of the students' reading experience. The model's combination makes it possible for the teacher and the reader to comprehend the reading structure and manage to assess the different units of reading literacy, to some extent. I have now reached the last part of the thesis, the conclusion

## 5 Conclusion

I carried out a case study to explore whether reading authentic English literature can stimulate reading literacy among young Norwegian readers of English. My starting point was founded in the change that had taken place regarding the limited space literature had had in the current national curriculum in Norway. According to sources I have used as a basis for the thesis, I can conclude that Kunnskapsløftet (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2006) gives the possibility of reading extensive literature for the Norwegian secondary student, yet it seems that the undefined suggestions make it possible for the ESL teacher to eradicate additional literature and rely on the textbooks instead (Hellekjær, 2008; Vestli, 2008). Based on this research, I assert that the young Norwegian student must depend on the teacher's interest of introducing literature into the ESL classroom, which is a pitfall and a weakness in the curriculum.

Another starting point for the study was rooted in my belief that reading authentic target language literature stimulates the reading literacy in English among young learners of English in secondary school. My data collection was carried out among nine Norwegian eighth-graders from a rural school in Norway, and I included their teacher of English in the study as well. The interviews were carried out in three mini target groups, consisting of three informants in each group. I found case study to be the most suitable research design for my study, and qualitative semi-structured interviews were fit for this particular field of work thanks to the flexibility it provides. I also included observations and chat sessions into the field work, in order to obtain empirical material that could be as reliable as possible. I first observed the whole class during two lessons, then nine informants carried out an interactive chat session for discussing the plot, and finally, I conducted the interviews.

My findings pointed in more than one direction. I found that reading unknown, authentic literature in English is demanding for an average Norwegian pupil. Moreover, I realized that the teacher's teaching design is of great importance in order to achieve a satisfactory outcome of the reading, in order to enhance reading literacy. However, the informants' utterances proved that although the text was more of a challenge than addressing textbook material, the young readers found reading authentic literature interesting, and they even wanted to read more. I found traces of reading literacy among my informants in all three categories of reading literacy (Figure 1).

Reading "real" literature in the target language, not aimed to fit Norwegian classrooms is demanding. The students must attend to both aesthetic and efferent reading in order to comprehend the text, the language alone may be challenging, and the foreign culture can be a hindrance for understanding. Nevertheless, my field work generated evidence of motivation, curiosity, language comprehension, cultural insight, and text involvement, although the text was difficult for some of my informants. A teaching design, facilitated to fit the young learner of English, made a real difference. I regard the language teacher as a teacher of form and structure, a cultural imparter as well as a reading-teacher. He must be aware of the student's cognitive level, the reading material as well as his teaching design. The student is not a blank

sheet as he enters the reading session, his pre-knowledge and past experiences are part of his reading literacy. What the reader brings to the text is of importance, it is personal, and therefore all reading is a personal experience. My study proved that the informants understood the plot and the protagonist differently. They reflected through discussion and reading activities, and they managed to get past language barriers as they got involved in the plot. It was clear to me that the activities and the dialogue in the classroom were most helpful in order to create understanding for both the language and the plot. I observed that motivation for reading is created by the text itself. These findings are significant because of the informants' young age.

When I shall look critically at my own study, I will start with the Model of Reading Literacy, which I drew up based on OECD's interpretation, "Reading literacy is defined in PISA as the ability to understand, use and reflect on written texts in order to achieve one's goals, to develop one's knowledge and potential, and to participate effectively in society" (OECD, 2002). I categorized this definition into three parts, which is "understand, use and reflect on written texts, "develop one's knowledge and potential, and at last "participate effectively in society". I then combined these three categories with my interpretation of it, the first was connected to "text involvement", the next "learning form and structure", and the third category was linked to "cultural insight" (Figure 1).

This model's weakness is the lack of the part which states: "achieve one's goal". This part of the definition was not included in the model, mostly because this thesis had to be limited, but also because the perspective of achieving one's goal will be very demanding to include in a study consisting of such young informants. Another critical view regarding my study will be the textual material I used for the field work. The text was rather short, and only two school lessons were spent in order to complete the reading session. This is a rather short span of time, therefore the informants managed to keep the interest and motivation. The outcome could have been different if the text was longer, like a novel, for instance, but because of the limited extent of this thesis, I made the choices as described. The model is based on the definition of reading literacy constructed of OECD (2002). This connection may yield another weakness of the model because of the definition which is connected to factual based reading more than fictional reading. I claim that students who read fiction texts will get insight in society and culture, nevertheless the definition of reading literacy lends itself to efferent reading more than aesthetic reading. However, this thesis is mostly based on aesthetic reading rather than efferent, which detects a weakness, because the reading concepts are closely connected to the Model of Reading Literacy (Figure 1). This weakness can be visible in the analysis part of the field work as well.

My conclusions are based on the field work I carried out, supported by my own experience as teacher of English in secondary school in Norway. The study proved my idea of reading additional authentic literature not adjusted for Norwegian learners of English as a valuable contribution for creating motivation for reading and enhancing the young foreign language learners' reading literacy in English. I have observed that reading literature gives more than just strengthened reading literacy; furthermore, it provides joy, involvement, cultural insight, and language competence. Reading foreign language literature is demanding for the language

teacher as well as the students, but the outcome will be of highest value if necessary considerations are taken care of. I will conclude that my findings should inspire the national curriculum, and moreover the local syllabuses produced in Norwegian schools ought to give ESL literature extended space. My conclusions should inspire the teacher and the reader as well. The teacher possesses great responsibility as he introduces additional literature into the classroom, he must approach the text and the reader with respect, and most of all, he must be aware of the reading process and selection of reading material. The young reader will have to get involved in the plot, and overcome some challenges in order to benefit from reading authentic literature. These challenges are characterized by language barriers, cultural differences and the choice of reading material. Nevertheless, I assert that these challenges can be addressed by suitable reading material and a facilitated teaching design. I claim that any reader is a unique reader, whether it is a literary critic reading Dostojevskij, or a child reading a picture book. The literary experience is valuable, special and exceptional in any case.



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A star had fallen beyond the horizon, in Canada perhaps. (He had an aunt in Canada.) The second was nearer, just beyond the iron works, so he was not surprised when the third fell into the backyard. A flash of gold light lit the walls of the enclosing tenements and he heard a low musical chord. The light turned deep red and went out, and he knew that somewhere below a star was cooling in the night air. Turning from the window he saw that no-one else had noticed. At the table his father, thoughtfully frowning, filled in a football coupon, his mother continued ironing under the pulley with its row of underwear. He said in a small voice, 'A'm gawn out.'

His mother said, 'See you're no' long then.'

He slipped through the lobby and onto the stairhead, banging the door after him.

The stairs were cold and coldly lit at each landing by a weak electric bulb. He hurried down three flights to the black silent yard and began hunting backward and forward, combing with his fingers the lank grass round the base of the clothes-pole. He found it in the midden on a decayed cabbage leaf. It was smooth and round, the size of a glass marble, and it shone with a light which made it seem to rest on a precious bit of green and yellow velvet. He picked it up. It was warm and filled his cupped palm with a ruby glow. He put it in his pocket and went back upstairs.

That night in bed he had a closer look. He slept with his brother who was not easily wakened. Wriggling carefully far down under the sheets, he opened his palm and gazed. The star shone white and blue, making the space around him like a cave in an iceberg. He brought it close to his eye. In its depth was the pattern of a snow-flake, the grandest thing he



had ever seen. He looked through the flake's crystal lattice into an ocean of glittering blue-black waves under a sky full of huge galaxies. He heard a remote lulling sound like the sound in a sea-shell, and fell asleep with the star safely clenched in his hand.

He enjoyed it for nearly two weeks, gazing at it each night below the sheets, sometimes seeing the snow-flake, sometimes a flower, jewel, moon or landscape. At first he kept it hidden during the day but soon took to carrying it about with him; the smooth rounded gentle warmth in his pocket gave comfort when he felt insulted or neglected.

At school one afternoon he decided to take a quick look. He was at the back of the classroom in a desk by himself. The teacher was among the boys at the front row and all heads were bowed over books. Quickly he brought out the star and looked. It contained an aloof eye with a cool green pupil which dimmed and trembled as if seen through water.

'What have you there, Cameron?'

He shuddered and shut his hand.

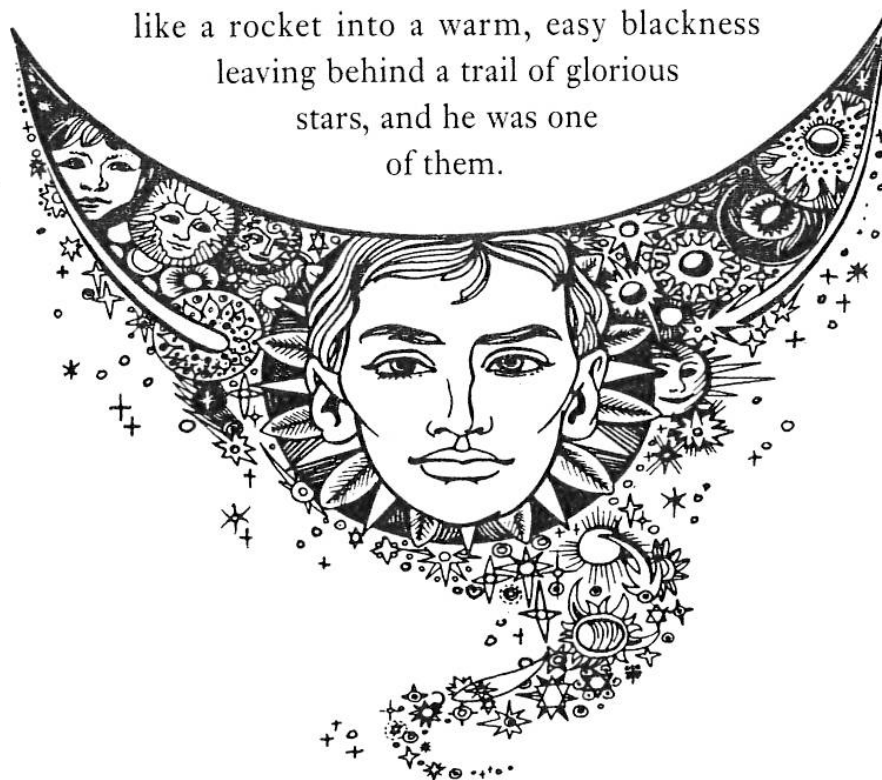
'Marbles are for the playground, not the classroom. You'd better give it to me.'

'I cannae, sir.'

'I don't tolerate disobedience, Cameron. Give me that thing.'

The boy saw the teacher's face above him, the mouth opening and shutting under a clipped moustache. Suddenly he knew what to do and put the star in his mouth and swallowed. As the warmth sank toward

his heart he felt relaxed and at ease. The teacher's face moved into the distance. Teacher, classroom, world receded like a rocket into a warm, easy blackness leaving behind a trail of glorious stars, and he was one of them.



## Appendix 2

## Lokal læreplan i engelsk, kultur, samfunn og litteratur for 8.-10. trinn

<i>Kultur, samfunn og litteratur</i> UNGDOMSSSTEGET, 8.-10. KLASSE			
	<i>Trinn 1</i>	<i>Trinn 2</i>	<i>Trinn 3</i>
Kultur/ daglegliv	Kjenne til kulturelle trekk og særtrekk i engelsktalende land.  Vere i stand til å gjenkjenne spesielle særtrekk ved landet som t.d. nasjonalsongen og klesdrakt. Og liknande.	Kunne trekke ut og kjenne att særpreget ved menneske i ulike engelsktalende land, som t.d. mattradisjonar, fest og seremoniar, sport . og liknade.	Ha innsikt i levemåte, tankegods og verdisett til ulike dei ulike kulturane i engelsktalende land.  Kjenne til og ha innsikt i mattradisjonar, høgtider, fest og seremoniar, religiøs utøving, sport, musikk, lynne og liknande.  Ha innsikt i dei kulturelle forskjellane og vere i stand til å sjå samanheng mellom samfunnsforhold og kultur.
Historie	Kjenne til dei historiske hovudtrekka til urinnvånarar og etniske menneskegrupper i engelsktalende land.  Kjenne til noko av historia og opprinnelsen til dei ulike engelsktalende områda i verda	Kunne vere i stand til å forstå og kjenne att historiske trekk til dei ulike menneskegruppene i engelsktalende land.  Kunne setje historiske hendingar inn i sin samanheng og forstå fortid og samtid ut i frå desse.  Ha kunnskap om historia og opprinnelsen til dei ulike engelsktalende områda, og vite noko om korleis dei første kulturane vart danna.	Ha innsikt i og forståing for historia til urinnvånarar og etniske folkegrupper i engelsktalende land, og vere i stand til å trekke historiske hendingar inn i desse landa si samtid.  Kunne forstå og setje historiske hendingar inn i ei politisk og kulturell samanheng, og kunne dra denne kunnskapen inn i landet si samtid.
Geografi	Vite kvar dei ulike engelsktalende områda i verda er på kartet, og kjenne til nokre sentrale geografiske trekk som	Kjenne til geografisk plassering av dei ulike engelsktalende landa, og kunne plassere dei viktigaste geografiske	Ha innsikt i geografisk plassering av engelsktalende område, og kunne vere i stand til å knyte dette opp mot

	<p>store fjellrekkjer, verdshav, elvar og skogområde.</p> <p>Ha særleg fokus på: USA, United Kingdom, Oseania,</p>	<p>kjennemerka (hav, elvar, fjell, skog, og liknande.)</p> <p>Kjenne til dei geografiske særtrekka til dei ulike landa/ områda.</p>	<p>historie og kulturelle forhold.</p> <p>Ha innsikt i den påverknaden religion/ kultur har i dei ulike geografiske områda, og vere i stand til å forstå konfliktane som har kome i stand pga geografiske og kulturelle forhold.</p>
Litteratur	<p>Kjenne til dei viktigaste engelsktalande forfattarane og verka deira. T.d: William Shakespeare, Roald Dahl, Ernest Hemingway, J.K Rowling, James Joyce etc.</p> <p>Kjenne til nokre musikkpoetar/ grupper som t.d: Bob Dylan, Sting, The Beatles,</p>	<p>Kunne biografien til dei viktigaste engelsktalande forfattarane og musikkpoetane.</p> <p>Eleven skal også kjenne att noko av arbeidet deira, og ha lest t.d noveller og romanar/ bøker av Roald Dahl, William Shakespeare, Ernest Hemingway. M.a. eleven skal også kjenne til musikk av t.d: The Beatles, Simon and Garfunkle, Sting, Dire Straits e.t.c</p>	<p>Ha innsikt i og kunne tolke litterære tekstar på eit relativ avansert engelsk.</p> <p>Eleven skal kunne noko av bakgrunn og biografi av engelsktalande forfattarar og musikkpoetar.</p>
Urfolk	<p>Kjenne til og kunne plassere urfolk i dei engelsktalande områda geografisk.</p> <p>Kjenne til Aborigines i Oseania og Indianarane i Amerika, og vite noko om historie og levekåra til desse folkegruppene i dag</p>	<p>Kjenne og forstå bakgrunn og historie til dei ulike urfolka i engelsktalande område.</p> <p>Forstå og trekke linjer til andre urfolk rundt om i verda, t.d. vårt eige samefolk.</p>	<p>Forståing for bakgrunn og historie til urfolka i verda. Ha innsikt i kultur, litteratur, musikk og kunst til urinnvånargrupper.</p> <p>Vere i stand til å forstå og trekke linjer til andre urfolk rundt om i verda, t.d. vårt eige samefolk.</p> <p>Vere i stand til å samtale om dette temaet og vise innsikt i kulturelle trekk til urinnvånarane.</p>
dialektar	Vite om ulike språklege variasjonar innanfor det engelske språket.	Vere i stand til å kjenne att engelsk og amerikansk språk, og også gjenkjenne australsk og irsk og skotske variantar. Eleven	Vere i stand til å skilje engelsk og amerikansk språk, og også gjenkjenne australsk og irsk og skotske

		skal kunne skilje nokre av desse språklege variantane..	<p>variantar.</p> <p>Eleven skal også vite noko om den historiske bakgrunnen for dei ulike språklege variantane.</p> <p>Vere i stand til å kunne uttrykke nokre av desse språklege variantane.</p>
Politikk	Kjenne til nokre av konfliktane i dei engelsktalande områda, og kunne samtale om dette på eit enkelt nivå.	Vere i stand til å vite om og forstå dei ulike konfliktane i dei engelsktalande områda. Eleven skal kjenne til forløpet for desse konfliktene spesielt: Nord Irland, Borgerrettskampen i USA; Apartheid i Sør Afrika, Vietnamkrigen, verdskrigane, etc.	<p>Ha innsikt i og forståing for bakgrunn og årsaker til desse konfliktane: Nord Irland, Borgerrettskampen i USA, Apartheid i Sør Afrika, Vietnamkrigen. Verdskrigane. Etc.</p> <p>Eleven skal på grunnlag av denne kunnskapen også forstå dei politiske tilhøve i desse landa i dag.</p>
	Kjenne til og kunne seie noko om andre politiske tema som: rasisme, miljøvern lov og rett, fattigdomsproblem, helse og religiøse forhold.	Kjenne til og kunne samtale om andre politiske tema som: rasisme, miljøvern lov og rett, fattigdomsproblem, helse og religiøse forhold.	Ha innsikt i andre politiske tema som: rasisme, miljøvern, lov og rett, fattigdomsproblem, helse, religiøse forhold, og kunne vere i stand til å samtale og skrive om dette på eit avansert engelsk språk.
	Vere i stand til å tilegne seg vokabular som høver til temaet, og kunne nytte det i samtale.	Vere i stand til å tilegne seg vokabular som høver til temaet, og kunne nytte det i samtale.	Vere i stand til å uttrykke sjølvstendige meiningar rundt desse temaa.



## Appendix 3

### Interview guides

#### Intervjuspørsmål retta mot elevinformant

- Kva likte du med teksten? Kan du nemne ein ting?
- Var det noko med teksten du ikkje forstod? Kan du nemne ein ting?
- Kan du skildre hovudpersonen? Bruk 2-3 adjektiv som du meiner passar.
- Kva for nye ord lærte du? Kan du nemne 3?
- Korleis lærer du nye ord på engelsk? Skrive dei ned? Glosearch? Nemn ein metode.
- Korleis lærer du nye ord best? Lesetekstar som dette, eller læreboka? Kan du gje eksempel?
- Klarte du å samtale om innhaldet? Aldri? Av og til? Ofte?
- Kva skreiv på stjerna di? Kan du forklare kvifor?
- No skal vil eg du skal tenke på leseøkta. Forstod du innhaldet? Når forstod du mest? (starten, midtdelen, avslutninga)?
- Kva tenkte du på/ opplevde du då du streka under adjektiva i teksten? Kan du gje nokre eksempel?
  
- Opplevde du at novella overraska deg på nokon måte? Kan du gje eksempel.
- Kunne du "leve deg inn i teksten"? Kan du gje eksempel
- Er det skilnad på å arbeide med slike litterære tekstar i klasserommet i forhold til læreboktekstane? Kan du gje eksempel?
- Opplevde du at teksten vekte kjensler hos deg? Kan du gje eksempel?
- Opplevde du at du lærte noko ved å lese denne teksten? Kan du gje eksempel?
- Opplevde du at du reagerte på teksten? (vekte den kjensler hos deg?)
  
- Er det noko skilnad i måten du reagerer på læreboktekstane i forhold til slike litterære tekstar? Kan du gje eksempel?

#### Intervjuspørsmål retta mot faglærer i engelsk

- Opplevde du at denne teksten var tilgjengelig for målgruppa? (stor grad, middels grad, i liten grad)
- Korleis opplevde du å formidle denne teksten for elevgruppa? (vanskelig, middels, lett)
- Likte du å undervise teksten? Kan du grunngje?
- Pre – aktiviteten: Var denne aktiviteten meningsfull for å stimulere elevane sitt intellektuelle nivå? kan du grunngje?
- Var pre – aktiviteten meningsfull for tileigning av vokabular? Kan du grunngje?

- Var pre – aktiviteten meningsfull for å stimulere undring og forventning til leseteksten? Kan du gje eksempel?
- Opplevde du at adjektivtesten undervegs i leseprosessen viste elevane endring i sinnsstemning til hovudpersonen? ja – nei. Kan du grunngje?
- Opplevde du at skildringane i teksten stimulerte elevane til å forstå handling og karakterane i teksten? Kan du grunngje?
- Opplevde du nokon gong undervegs i prosjektet at elevane klarte å uttrykke tankar og kjensler dei opplevde? Kan du grunngje?
- Er det nokon skilnad på å bruke tekstar som denne novella i forhold til læreboktekster tilpassa norske elevar? Tenk på desse felta: involvering i teksten, vokabularinnlæring, evne til å setje ord på kjensler og reaksjonar, nysgjerrigheit og undring retta mot teksten. Kan du gje eksempel?
- Korleis er det lettast for deg som lærar å involvere deg i stoffet: ved elevtilpassa tekstar, eller autentisk litteratur? Kan du gje eksempel?
- Kan du nemne nokre fordelar og ulemper med å bruke tekstar som “The Star” i framandspråkklasserommet?

## Appendix 4

### Permission of Participation

Eg søkjer hermed om løyve til å intervju nokre av elevane i 8. klasse til eit forskingsprosjekt i samband med mitt masterstudium. Eg vil forske ut i frå ei hypotese om at lesing av engelsk litteratur fremjar læring for ungdomsskuleelevar. Studia vil verte gjennomført etter følgjande struktur:

- Ein kort engelsk tekst (novelle retta mot ungdom) vil bli lest i klassen
- Lærar vil gjennomføre nokre aktivitetar knytt til teksten
- Det vil bli samtalt om teksten i klassen
- Elevane vil samtale om teksten seg imellom via interaktiv chat. Denne samtaledelen vil vere uformell, men likevel styrt og overvaka av lærar
- I etterkant av studia vil eg intervju ni av elevane og engelsklæraren. Elevane vil bli plukka ut som eit representativt utval, og inviterte til å delta.

**Forskaren:** Eg vil observere leseaktiviteten og kommunikasjonen i klassen. Intervjua vil også bli tatt opp på band og analyserte i etterkant. Eg vil vere til stade under heile studia. Studia vil verte gjennomført i midten av mars, og ti skuletimar vert nytta til dette føremålet.

**Føremål:** Eg har eit sterkt engasjement for leseglede og litteratur i skulen. Denne undersøkinga vil eg gjennomføre fordi eg vil prøve ut ein teori eg har om at lesing av skjønnlitteratur fremjar læring og danning på fleire plan. Eg meiner at litteratur fremjar motivasjon og leseglede hos elevane, og derfor ønskjer eg å gå meir i djupna på dette temaet. Eg vil nytte lesing, interaktiv chat og samtalelogg som datagrunnlag for studia. Eg hevdar at denne studia er meiningsfull og viktig fordi eg meiner at litteratur er kjelde til språkkunnskap. Mitt syn på bruk av litteratur i klasserommet er utgangspunkt for studia.

**Personvern:** Alle opptak og data som inneheld opplysningar om studia vil verte sletta etter at oppgåva er levert. I avhandlinga vil alle involverte personar verte anonymiserte og vil ikkje vere mogleg å kjenne att. Eg er som forskar og lærar sjølvstendig underlagt streng teieplikt, det angår også dei elevane som ikkje deltek i studia. Eg må understreke at det er frivillig å delta, både for eleven og for de som føresette, men eg set svært stor pris på samarbeid. De kan når som helst trekke dykk frå undersøkinga, utan å gje opp grunn. Det vert berre registrert opplysningar om dei som samtykker til å delta. Ethiske retningslinjer er alltid viktig ved all forskning, men særleg når barn er informantar. De som føresette kan vere trygge på at barna dykkar vert ivaretekne på aller beste måte.

Eg håper de vil bidra med og gje løyve til å la borna dykkar delta i denne undersøkinga, og i så tilfelle vil eg gjerne ha tilbakemelding med underskrift. Prosjektet vert levert i 2013.

På førehand takk.

Med venleg helsing

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Rettleiar: Hæge Hestnes. Førstelektor i engelsk fagdidaktikk ved program for lærerutdanning , Universitetet i Trondheim, NTNU

Eg/ vi gjev hermed løyve til at barnet vårt: \_\_\_\_\_

kan få delta ei eit forskingsprosjekt utført av mastergradstudent ved NTNU Katrine Briksdal.

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