

Vera Brandeggen

Teaching Trans Young Adult Literature in the EFL Classroom

A Qualitative Study on Teachers' Perspectives

Master's thesis in Primary and Lower Secondary Teacher Education
for Years 5-10

Supervisor: Libe García Zarranz

May 2023

Vera Brandeggen

Teaching Trans Young Adult Literature in the EFL Classroom

A Qualitative Study on Teachers' Perspectives

Master's thesis in Primary and Lower Secondary Teacher Education
for Years 5-10

Supervisor: Libe García Zarranz

May 2023

Norwegian University of Science and Technology

Faculty of Social and Educational Sciences

Department of Teacher Education



Norwegian University of
Science and Technology

Abstract

This MA thesis aims to research EFL teachers' experiences and attitudes towards including trans young adult (YA) literature in the English subject in lower-secondary schools in Norway. I have also examined how including trans YA literature can contribute to creating a more inclusive environment. With time, our society has become more diverse (Clark et al.,2020). However, trans and other people that identify within the LGBTQ+ community are still a marginalized group, often subjected to scrutiny (Berberick, 2018). While familiarizing myself with the topic for this thesis, I found that the research on trans representation in the school system was scarce, not only in Norway but internationally as well (Keenan & Suárez, 2021). Drawing from trans studies in education and inclusive pedagogies, I have analyzed and discussed teachers' opportunities, experiences, and challenges when teaching trans YA literature. To do so, I have conducted three semi-structured interviews with lower-secondary EFL teachers in Norway. I have also conducted a survey with thirteen respondents who are all EFL teachers ranging in all school levels. In addition, I have analyzed and discussed *When the Moon Was Ours* by Anna-Marie McLemore (2016), a trans YA novel that offers a complex representation of trans identity and trans life. I have analyzed the interviews, questionnaires, and the fictional text using thematic analysis, mapping themes, such as teachers' attitudes and emotions teaching trans YA literature, and teachers' training and support to implement inclusive pedagogies. The aim of the interviews and questionnaire was to research current EFL teachers' attitudes, experiences, and potential challenges towards implementing trans representation into their classrooms. I also decided to expand the data to include a fictional text, because I wanted to provide an example that embodies the complexities that exist within trans lives and experiences to contribute to the discourse on including trans literature in education. In my research, I have found that whilst the majority of teachers are positive and see the benefits of implementing trans representation, very few have consciously done so. The findings further show that there is a lack in teachers' training on implementing gender diversity representation, and this seems to be a challenge when faced with ethical dilemmas and how to deal with questions and critique from students or parents. However, there is a broad agreement among the teachers in this study and the literature that representation of all kinds of human experience, including trans people, is beneficial to all students and needs political support as well as knowledgeable teachers with support from school administrators.

Keywords: Trans studies in education; trans YA literature; inclusive pedagogies; teachers' attitudes and emotions

Sammendrag

Målet med denne masteroppgaven er å undersøke læreres erfaringer og holdninger angående inkludering av trans ungdomslitteratur i det engelske faget i ungdomsskolen. Jeg vil også se nærmere på hvordan inkludering av trans ungdomslitteratur kan bidra til å skape et mer inkluderende miljø. Med tiden har samfunnet vårt blitt mer mangfoldig, som illustrert i (). Derimot er trans, og andre mennesker som identifiserer seg innen LHBT+ samfunnet, fortsatt en marginalisert gruppe, som ofte er offer for granskning. Mens jeg gjorde meg kjent med emnet for masteroppgaven, fant jeg at forskning rundt trans representasjon i utdanningssystemet var knapp, ikke bare i Norge, men også internasjonalt. I lys av forskning på trans studier i utdanningssystemet og inkluderende pedagogikk analyserer og diskuterer jeg læreres muligheter, erfaringer og utfordringer med å undervise trans ungdomslitteratur. For å gjøre det har jeg gjennomført tre semistrukturerte intervju med engelsklærere i ungdomsskolen i Norge. Jeg har også gjennomført en spørreundersøkelse med tretten engelsklærere for ulike aldersgrupper. I tillegg har jeg gjennomført en litterær analyse av *When the Moon Was Ours* av Anna-Marie McLemore (2016), en trans ungdomsbok som tilbyr en kompleks representasjon av trans liv og trans erfaringer. Jeg har analysert intervjuene, spørreundersøkelsen og boken ved hjelp av tematisk analyse, med temaer som læreres holdninger, ubehag og bekymringer med å undervise trans ungdomslitteratur og læreres opplæring og støtte i å undervise trans ungdomslitteratur eller lignende temaer. Målet med intervjuet og spørreundersøkelsen var å undersøke norske engelsklæreres holdninger, erfaringer og potensielle utfordringer med implementering av trans representasjon i klasserommet. Jeg valgte å utvide undersøkelsen til å inkludere en fiksjonstekst som tilbyr et eksempel som rommer de kompleksitetene som finnes innen trans erfaringer for å bidra til diskursen rundt trans litteratur i utdanningssystemet. Gjennom min forskning har jeg funnet at mens majoriteten av lærere er positiv og ser fordeler med å implementere trans representasjon i klasserommet, er det få som har gjort det. Forskningen viser videre at lærere mangler kunnskap og opplæring i å implementere kjønnsmangfold i undervisningen, som virker til å være en utfordring når de møter etiske dilemmaer og må takle kristiske spørsmål eller kritikk fra elever eller foreldre. Derimot er det en bred enighet hos lærerne i denne studien og i litteraturen at det er fordelaktig å representere alle typer menneskelige erfaringer, inkludert trans erfaringer, for elever og at det trenger politisk støtte, i tillegg til kunnskapsrike lærere med støtte fra skoleledelse.

Preface

The journey of writing this thesis has been a rollercoaster from start to finish. The process has taught me a lot, about myself in particular. As a self-proclaimed procrastinator my pessimistic nature almost convinced me that it could not be done. Turns out, I was wrong. However, I could not have done it on my own, which is why I want to thank the people who have helped and supported me while writing this MA-thesis.

Firstly, I want to thank all the participants in my research project. Without your participation, this thesis would not have had a leg to stand on. I appreciate everyone taking the time to participate in interviews and answering questionnaires to help me research my selected topic.

Secondly, I would like to thank the network that surrounds me every day. Classmates, in similar situations, all supporting each other with kind and motivational words. Thank you to my mom and dad who always supports me no matter what. Even though you may not have been able to assist much with the actual writing of this thesis, you always offer to help in any way that you can, and for that I am grateful. Thank you to my best friends who have helped keep my mind of the thesis when I have needed to. Thank you to my sister who always lets me air out all my frustrations and knows how to motivate me to keep going. I also want to thank my boyfriend, Henrik, who has put up with me these past few months without complaining, even though I might not have been the easiest person to live with at times. You are selfless and caring, and you always believe I can do anything.

Lastly, I would like to send a special thank you to my wonderful advisor, Libe. I have felt incredibly lucky having you assigned as my thesis advisor. I appreciate immensely the effort you have put down. You have gone over and beyond in providing feedback and support and your knowledge and commitment has been inspiring. I feel exceptionally grateful for your unparalleled guidance throughout this process.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	v
Sammendrag	vi
List of Abbreviations	xi
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Background and Motivation	1
1.2 Purpose and Research Questions	2
2 Theoretical Frameworks Employed	3
2.1 Trans Studies in Education	3
2.1.1 Trans Experiences in the International and Nordic Educational Systems.....	5
2.2 Inclusive Pedagogies	6
2.2.1 Teachers' Attitudes Towards the Inclusion of Gender Diversity in Teaching ..	6
2.2.2 Parents' Attitudes in Relation to Teaching Trans Topics in Schools	7
2.3 The Limits of Representation: Introducing Trans Literature in Educational Settings	8
3 Methodology and Methods.....	11
3.1 Thematic Analysis in Qualitative Research	11
3.2 Data Collection	12
3.2.1 Interviews	12
3.2.2 Questionnaire.....	14
3.2.3 Using Thematic Analysis to Analyze a Trans YA Novel	15
3.3 Ethical Considerations.....	16
3.3.1 Validity.....	16
3.3.2 Reliability	16
3.3.3 Positionality and Critical Humility	17
4 Data Analysis	19
4.1 Interviews and Questionnaires	19
4.1.1 Inclusion of LGBTQ+ Literature or Audiovisual Materials in the Classroom...19	
4.1.2 Teachers' Attitudes and Emotions Teaching Trans YA Literature.....21	
4.1.3 Teachers' Training and Support Teaching Trans YA Literature or Similar Topics 22	
4.2 Thematic Analysis	23
4.2.1 Gender identity and Representation.....24	
4.2.2 Prejudice towards Sexuality and Gender Minorities	26
5 Discussion	27
5.1 Discomfort and Empathy	27

5.2	Lack of LGBTQ+ Presence in the Curriculum and Inadequate Professional Development	29
5.3	Teaching Trans YA Novels to Create an Inclusive Classroom Environment and Fight for Social Justice.....	30
6	Conclusion	32
6.1	Reflections on Main Findings	32
6.2	Limitations and Further Research	32
	References	34
	Appendices.....	38

List of Abbreviations

EFL	English as a Foreign Language
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer +
NTNU	The Norwegian University of Science and Technology
YA	Young Adult

1 Introduction

1.1 Background and Motivation

Norway has become an increasingly diverse society and studies show an increase in acceptance towards LGBTQ+ people, and a positive attitude towards them within the majority of the Norwegian population (Ministry of Culture and Equality, 2021, p. 4). In 2022 we celebrated that fifty years ago, homosexuality was decriminalized in our country. We have laws against discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. We are thus moving towards a more inclusive and accepting society, but we still have a long way to go. According to the Norwegian Organization for Gender and Sexual Diversity FRI (Foreningen for kjønns- og seksualitetsmangfold) (2018), trans people experience harassment and discrimination more often than lesbian, gay or bisexual people. According to gender scholar Tey Meadow (2018), a trans person can be defined as someone "whose psychological gender is in direct opposition with their chromosomal or biological sex" (p. 266). Further drawing on Meadow (2018), children's and YA studies scholar Derritt Mason (2021) claims that *trans* "may encompass people with nonbinary relationships to gender; ...[and] individuals who have transitioned between genders through social performance, medical intervention, or a combination thereof" (p. 181). Following scholars like Mason (2021), I will be using the abbreviation *trans* in this thesis. I will also be using the abbreviation *cis* in my research to refer to a cisgender person as "someone whose gender identity is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth" (Stonewall, 2022).

Two specific incidents in 2022 contributed to my decision on choosing trans representation and trans inclusion in the classroom as the topic for my thesis. The first one was the shooting during Pride in Oslo in June, the night before the pride-parade, which ended up being cancelled because of safety concerns. Even though there was a widespread support for the pride-movement before, and especially after the shooting, I worry that this may create a greater fear for people who identify themselves within the LGBTQ+ movement, who might have already been afraid to come out and be who they are. Secondly, I was made aware that in January 2022 there was a digital signature campaign created by parents in Norway against "gender confusing teaching" in schools. The campaign argued that there are only two genders and that you should not be able to change into another gender than the one you were biologically assigned at birth, and that that is what should be taught in schools. So far, over 15.000 people have signed this campaign. This was an eye-opener for me on how wide this dangerous belief is and that through working in the Norwegian school system, running into these beliefs is inevitable. Therefore, I felt a responsibility as a future EFL teacher to implement a change within the English subject regarding trans representation and trans inclusiveness in the classroom, as English is my main subject. By researching existing practices, EFL teachers' knowledge, attitudes, emotions, and reflections, together with examples of trans literary texts to implement in the classroom, I can create a better foundation for myself, for my students and for anyone that might benefit from and find this thesis enlightening. I

believe that writing this MA-thesis will help me develop a deeper knowledge and a better understanding of what can be done in the English subject to fight for social justice.

1.2 Purpose and Research Questions

With those social and educational contexts in mind, my thesis examines the use of trans young adult literature in the EFL classroom. I have analyzed and discussed whether this is happening in EFL classrooms and why or why not EFL teachers choose to include this topic. I have also provided an example and analysis of a YA novel that offers an intersectional representation of trans identity and trans life. My preliminary research questions are therefore as follows:

- Do teachers implement trans literature in the lower-secondary EFL classroom? If they do, what opportunities and challenges come with it?
- How can teaching trans young adult literature in the English subject contribute to creating a more inclusive environment in the classroom?

As I explain in detail in Chapter 3, I have attempted to answer my two research questions through a qualitative research methodology, and using methods such as interviews, questionnaires, and a literary analysis of a trans young adult (YA) novel. I will present the findings from my collected data and discuss these findings through theory on trans studies in education, inclusive pedagogies and introducing trans literature in educational settings, which I will expand further in the next chapter.

Turning to the Norwegian curriculum (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019), there is no specific mentioning of gender or sexuality for the English subject. However, the terms that are mentioned in the core curriculum under "health and life skills" are "physical and mental health, lifestyle habits, sexuality, and gender..." (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017), indicating the relevance within this topic. Health and life skills is an interdisciplinary topic and is meant to be brought up in various subjects. I question whether EFL teachers, because it is not stated explicitly in the English curriculum, might shy away from the topic, as it might be perceived as a difficult one, and they might worry about potential backlash from transphobic students or parents, either openly or in unconscious ways.

Apart from the context offered earlier, the reason why I have chosen this topic for my MA project is that for me, one of the most important things as a teacher is making sure that inclusion and diversity are promoted and that being who you are is never wrong. I believe that by including classroom materials which reflect the diversity that exists within Norwegian society, students are more prone to accept themselves for who they are, and more accepting of others that differ from themselves. The purpose of this thesis is thus to contribute to research done on trans representation in classroom settings, but also to educate myself as best as I can and prepare myself for the realities of the profession I am getting into. Even though I have no personal knowledge or lived experience of being a trans person in a classroom, there is growing recognition that social and emotional adjustment influence academic performance on an individual level (Murray- Harvey, 2010). If this thesis can help me or others create a safer and more inclusive classroom or school environment, then I will have succeeded.

2 Theoretical Frameworks Employed

In this chapter, I will present the theoretical approaches that I have employed throughout my MA thesis. I will start by introducing trans studies in education both internationally and in the Nordic countries. Trans research in Norway is still very scarce. Therefore, I have chosen to draw on research conducted internationally, as well as in the Nordics to offer a more comprehensive overview of the topic. In addition to the Nordic countries, I have looked at research conducted in the US and Australia to examine trans experiences with the educational system and teachers' and parents' attitudes (Keenan and Suárez, 2021; Anderssen et al, 2020). Then, I will discuss theories on inclusive pedagogy (Dernikos, 2018; Zembylas, 2015). I chose to include this framework to promote knowledge on inclusive pedagogy and what an important factor it is for successfully bringing trans inclusion into the classroom. Finally, I will present theory on the limits of representation and introducing trans literature in educational settings (Corbett, 2020; Coats, 2017). I have focused on trans representation in literature because textual representation often reflects our values and beliefs across time, and I wanted to bring to light some of the resistance that has existed and still does against trans representation in literature (Sandercock, 2018).

2.1 Trans Studies in Education

In the last decade, trans and nonbinary issues have had an increasing visibility in popular culture, such as literature and television shows, which has made it possible for trans youth to find positive representations of themselves in the media (Clark et al., 2021). However, this increased visibility has also led to increased vocal opponents who have gained large followings on social media campaigning against trans and nonbinary rights. Gender studies scholar S. N. Berberick (2018) presents the paradox of trans visibility, which exposes portions of trans life, while veiling other parts, making it seem like society has come much further in gender inclusiveness than what is the reality. Berberick (2018) states that trans visibility and trans narratives have increased, but so have homicides of trans people, while corporate news coverage remains silent about this. Researchers focusing on trans studies agree, saying that we live in a world with trans visibility, but we also live in a world with anti-trans violence, meaning that visibility does not equal social acceptance (Koch-Rein et al., 2020).

There are several disagreements within contemporary trans studies, but Keenan and Suárez (2021) present three overlapping agreements where trans studies generally unite:

First and perhaps foremost, trans studies holds that sex and gender are more complex than the institutionally produced systems of classification that govern lives all over the world and operate in constant interaction with other forms of state regulation and confinement. Second, trans studies scholarship argues that inflexible and/or legalized gender categories contribute to increased vulnerability for those who challenge them. Third, trans studies broadly aims to contribute to material change in the conditions of trans life by identifying and dismantling the root causes of trans oppression and contributing to the development of alternate social formations. (p. 24-25)

In this thesis, I am particularly interested in the third point made by Keenan and Suárez (2021) in the context of education. It directly relates to what I am trying to accomplish though this thesis in a classroom setting, which is identifying existing practices of trans inclusiveness or lack thereof and contributing suggestions of improvement where teachers can develop alternative social formations by forging inclusive pedagogies.

According to Keenan and Suárez (2021), scholarly research on trans people and people who have challenged gender norms and categories in the Western world has existed since at least the mid-nineteenth century. At that time, transness was classified as a 'pathology' and the cause of 'sexual deviance' (Keenan and Suárez, 2021, p. 18). It was also connected to race, especially in the US, where Black people's bodies were exploited in gender research and experimented with to fabricate evidence of white superiority (Clark et al, 2021). The history of trans research is important to our understanding of gender norms today. From our first meeting with the educational system, children are often divided based on gender because of social reproduction. Gender is a social construct, and is traditionally connected to sex assigned at birth, but the lives of trans and non-binary people challenge how society views gender today (Castillo, 2023). In the US there has been an increase in legislation targeting LGBTQ+ people in schools and disregarding the presence of LGBTQ+ people, which contributes to further marginalizing this group of the population (Castillo, 2023). At the same time, trans studies scholars like Hil Malatino (2020) focus on trans joy and trans care to counter transphobic policies. Malatino (2020) states that there is plenty of joy within the trans community, but that part of the bond that ties them together is undeniably because of the disinvestment of the people and institutions trans people have had to turn to in order to be able to live the way they want to. As Malatino (2020) claims, "We need care in order to heal from transformative physical and emotional experiences" (p. 3). 'Aftercare' among trans people is also presented as important and necessary, both in the context of medicine and surgery, but also in relation to institutions such as schools (Malatino, 2020). Malatino (2020) defines aftercare as "what needs to be provided in order to help a subject heal in the wake of massive upheaval and transformation, and it is what facilitates and supports emergence into a radically recalibrated experience of both bodymind and the world it encounters" (p. 3). Care and aftercare are central to any discussion about inclusive practices and pedagogies in the classroom, in my view.

In Norway a law was passed in 2016 allowing one to change one's legal gender without a mental health diagnosis and sterilization, which had been the previous requirements and still is in various other countries (hartline, 2020). Finland passed the same law for people over the age of 18 at the beginning of 2023 (Amnesty International, 2023), which was celebrated among trans advocates. hartline (2020), for example, shares the appreciation for this progress but also asks questions and criticizes the Norwegian law on gender recognition for not being enough to impact how gender is interpreted and for excluding alternative gender subjectivities. In 2016, a questionnaire was carried out among 50.000 students in higher education in Norway, asking questions regarding gender identity, life satisfaction, loneliness, mental health problems, mental disorders, suicidal behavior, and self-harm (Anderssen et al., 2020). Of the 50.000 participants, 97 reported being binary trans or non-binary trans. Within this group the results showed significantly more psychosocial burdens compared to cis students. More than 60% of the students who identified as trans (binary and non-binary) reported having had suicidal thoughts, as opposed to 20% of cis students who reported the same. This clearly indicates that Norway is also lacking the support and attention required for

people who identify as trans to feel included and to prevent social and emotional difficulties based on their gender identity. As mentioned in my Introduction, the Norwegian core curriculum mentions “physical and mental health, lifestyle habits, sexuality, and gender...” under the interdisciplinary subject “Health and life skills” (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017). Icelandic gender equality scholar Jón Ingvar Kjaran (2017) argues that the Norwegian core curriculum takes a rather biological and stereotypical approach in its choice of words. Further, Kjaran (2017) claims that the core curriculum takes a rather universal approach to equality, thus assuming that there is no need for giving space to those who do not fit into the heteronormative frame within the curriculum. I agree with Kjaran (2017) and believe that the language used in the Norwegian core curriculum is too general, mentioning gender, but not gender identity, and having no references to LGBTQ+ people or topics anywhere, allowing schools and teachers to interpret this however they see fit.

2.1.1 Trans Experiences in the International and Nordic Educational Systems

Trans studies in K-12 education has made its presence largely only in the last ten years, but there is a lack of connection between trans studies and K-12 education for several reasons, such as the history of trans treatment in research, and the fact that educational institutions, being very gender normative environments, have been a place of suffering for trans people (Keenan and Suárez, 2021). In the context of Norway, there was a signature campaign in 2022 against gender diversity confusing pupils in schools, claiming that there are only two genders and that you belong to the gender you were biologically assigned at birth, and this cannot change (Opprop.net, 2022). This document was signed by more than 15.000 parents before the campaign was closed down, as I explain in my Introduction.. Although positive public opinion towards LGBTQ+ people has increased over time, recent public polling in the US shows a more positive attitude towards LGBQ people than trans people and their rights (Clark et al., 2021). Norwegian research similarly shows that there is a more negative attitude towards gender minorities such as trans communities as opposed to gay, lesbian and bisexual people (Holm, 2016). US-based studies in education show overwhelming statistics of trans and non-binary students who feel unsafe in school environments (Clark et al., 2021). According to the 2019 National School Climate Survey, 84% of trans students had experienced gender-based violence, which included verbal and physical harassment and physical assault. 75% of non-binary students had experienced the same. This is comparable to the study on life satisfaction and mental health among trans students in Norway, where more than twice as many trans people felt lonely and reported about mental health problems compared to their cis-gender peers (Anderssen, et al, 2020). A hostile school environment can negatively influence a person’s educational experience and US-based research shows that trans youth has reported a lower level of school belonging, missed more school and changed schools more often because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable, compared to other LGBQ students (Clark et al., 2021).

Gender studies scholar, Irina Schmitt (2022), recently completed a project as the first of its kind in Sweden, researching young and young adult trans and non-binary people and their experiences in school, concluding that trans-issues far exceed transphobic comments, but extend to schools’ reproduction of binary gender in social interaction, pedagogy, subject knowledge, and administration. As the Swedish and Norwegian society are similar and closely linked together in many ways, it is plausible

that this would be relevant for the Norwegian school system as well. The Norwegian curriculum does not specifically mention anything about LGBTQ+ people or rights but the core curriculum clearly states that one of their principles for the school's practice is an inclusive learning environment that promotes health, well-being, and learning for all, where diversity must be acknowledged as a resource (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017).

2.2 Inclusive Pedagogies

2.2.1 Teachers' Attitudes Towards the Inclusion of Gender Diversity in Teaching

Teachers play an important role when it comes to their students' safety and sense of belonging. Research shows that supportive educators, inclusive school policies and an LGBTQ+ supportive curriculum play a central role in school experiences for trans and nonbinary youth (Clark et al., 2021). As previously mentioned, the Norwegian core curriculum states that an inclusive learning environment and acknowledging diversity as a resource is one of the school's principles. The Education Act asserts that all discrimination shall be combated (Regjeringen, 2007). In the Norwegian curriculum for the English subject, there is no specific mentioning of gender or inclusion of LGBTQ+ topics, but the curriculum is quite vague when it comes to topics, which makes it very much up for interpretation for each teacher and each school. It is therefore key to look closer at teachers' attitudes towards teaching trans or other LGBTQ+ topics, why they choose to teach them or not, and how they are being taught. According to Clark et al. (2021), teachers who have received training in professional development in relation to trans students are more likely to take proactive steps in creating a more inclusive school environment for trans or non-binary students, through advocating for supportive and protective policies, educating their peers or intervening more when hearing biased remarks. However, the research shows that most teachers in Norway have not received training in LGBTQ+ topics at all and are not prepared to address the specific needs of trans or non-binary students in their classrooms (Anicic, 2020). Through interviews and questionnaires, I have taken a closer look at which teachers have received training on trans or non-binary issues in their teacher training and whether this has an impact on their perspectives or attitudes towards teaching about the topic. According to gender studies scholar Peggy Shannon-Baker (2020), LGBTQ+ topics in teacher education programs tend to occur in relation to young adults, sexual health, and bullying. They are typically discussed by some of the faculty members or in some courses but they are not integrated throughout the program. However, there is limited research on teachers' preparedness to work with LGBTQ+ children (Shannon-Baker, 2020). In which case, it is completely up to chance whether teachers in training receive competence on the topic.

While researching teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of gender diversity in teaching, I have been made aware of two pedagogies that I find highly relevant in this matter. The first one is 'pedagogy of exposure' which seeks to expose and recover traumatic wounds that have been inflicted on students through daily reinforcement of a narrow view on race, gender and/or sexuality (Dernikos, 2018). Dernikos (2018) states that the use of culturally authentic texts that honor historically marginalized groups, linking them to present-day and offering a historical background can serve a healing purpose: "Embracing a pedagogy of exposure entails adopting an ethic of care that

honors emotions, feelings and personal connections” (Dernikos, 2018, p. 27). Moreover, when the teacher openly shares their own stories and experiences it also opens up for students to respond in their own ways. Dernikos’ work is extremely relevant to my thesis as I argue that all students, trans, cis or others, benefit from being exposed to a variety of human experiences. Therefore, teachers have an enormous responsibility in providing this variety into the classroom and having the knowledge to handle any repercussions that might occur from it.

The second approach I have considered is ‘pedagogy of discomfort’ as articulated by education researcher, Michalinos Zembylas (2015). Before reading anything on this term, the topic of discomfort came up in almost every conversation I had while discussing my topic with teachers, both within my research and outside of it. Zembylas (2015) describes ‘pedagogy of discomfort’ in relation to students touching upon uncomfortable feelings by moving outside of the comfort zone and questioning cherished beliefs and assumptions (Zembylas, 2015). Zembylas (2015) reflects on the ethical implications of implementing a pedagogy of discomfort and the ethics of classroom safety. Zembylas (2015) concludes that provoking feelings of discomfort is necessary in order to achieve individual and social transformation, but these feelings need to be dealt with appropriately in order to avoid ethical violence towards students:

Whether or not teachers are able to create safety and/or discomforting conditions, it is important to open up a much needed learning space in the classroom to engage students in critical inquiry regarding their values and beliefs. Safe space, then, is not about the absence of discomfort, but rather it is a way of thinking, feeling, and acting that fosters students’ critical rigor. (Zembylas, 2015, p. 165-166)

To Zembylas’ (2015) point, I believe that creating a safe classroom environment does not entail excluding anything that may spark a feeling of discomfort in students or teachers but creating a space where our perspectives can be challenged, and the feeling of discomfort is welcomed and handled appropriately. Exposure and discomfort are therefore concepts at the forefront of my thesis. As my research shows, cis and trans pupils are rarely exposed to trans-related topics in Norwegian classrooms, and discomfort seems to be one of the main reasons why. This discomfort can lie within the teachers’ themselves, or concerns about creating discomfort for either trans or cis students, both, or the discomfort of having to deal with transphobic students or parents.

2.2.2 Parents’ Attitudes in Relation to Teaching Trans Topics in Schools

In an MA thesis in Norway from 2020, researching the use of LGBTQ+ literary texts and topics in the English subject, interviews with teachers showed that all participants had ethical dilemmas about teaching LGBTQ+ topics because of the cultural backgrounds or religious beliefs of students and parents (Anicic, 2020). As I discuss in my Methodology chapter, three of the thirteen teachers in my survey responded by stating that they were worried about parents’ reactions to teaching trans YA literature in the classroom. In turn, the majority of the responses reflected that they were not worried about either parents’ or students’ reactions to teaching about this topic. Concern about parents’ reactions also came up in all three interviews, where one teacher stated that potential backlash from parents was something she was genuinely concerned about as her students came from a wide variety of cultural and religious backgrounds.

In an Australian national study, researchers analyzed parents' perspectives on the inclusion of gender and sexual diversity in K-12 schooling (Ullman et Al., 2021). According to the study, there are a lot of preconceived notions among educators, curriculum authors and policy makers about parents dis/approval on the inclusion of gender and sexual diversity and its appropriateness within the K-12 classrooms. This is alarming, in my view, when there is in fact a lack of empirical data to support these assumptions. Specifically, parents' perceptions on gender diversity in the curriculum seem to be less well reported as opposed to sexual diversity which is more common (Ullman et al., 2021) The Australian national study was designed for the purpose of shedding light on these concerns that parents were negative towards gender diversity with facts instead of undocumented notions and fears. The results of the study showed that about 80% of the sample of Australian parents to children within primary through secondary education were positive towards the inclusion of gender and sexuality diversity in school, while 60% were positive towards a whole-school approach. While this shows that the majority of parents support gender and sexuality diversity inclusion in school, it is important to mention that 24% of parents 'strongly disagreed' that gender and sexuality should be included at a whole school level. I find this relevant to my research, as my teaching experience has showed that most parents and their children are open to the idea of integrating knowledge of gender in its various forms into the classroom, but there are also a few within this group that are against it, or at least skeptical towards it. Just like trans and non-binary students often experience schools as unsafe spaces, the parents of trans and non-binary children often experience schools as hostile places where their children are exposed to harassment from peers and little support from their teachers (Clark et al., 2021). I believe that having implemented Dernikos' (2018) pedagogy of exposure for trans and cis students might have prevented this type of negative school association for students and parents, and this would include exposure to varied texts, including LGBTQ+ literatures.

2.3 The Limits of Representation: Introducing Trans Literature in Educational Settings

The conversations and debates surrounding trans children and their existence have been increasing in the last decades and can therefore sometimes be perceived as something 'new', but there is evidence in the form of medical documents that shows trans children have existed for at least a century (Owen, 2019). In the 1960's, white trans children were offered 'curative' medical support, while Black trans children were often misdiagnosed as either homosexual or schizophrenic (Owen, 2019). Gender studies scholar, Tom Sandercock (2022), describes textual representation as a significant way to examine shared discourses and changes in values and beliefs across time, and states that there has been a shift from trans people being characterized in pop-culture as "mad, bad and dangerous", seen in films such as Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960), to a characterization that is more nuanced and sensitive, relieving them of the portrayal as a shocking curiosity. Sandercock (2022) further states that there are ongoing presumptions about depicting queer and trans people in children's texts as inappropriate or harmful, referring to the American Library Association's 'Top Ten Most Challenged Books', where books with LGBTQ+ themes such as *I Am Jazz* (Herthel & Jennings, 2014), *George* (Gino, 2015), and *And Tango Makes Three* (Richardson & Parnell, 2005) have appeared on the list several year in a row (Sandercock, 2022). As previously mentioned,

a signature campaign appeared in Norway in January 2022, where parents petitioned against what they called 'gender confusing teaching', arguing that there are only two genders, and you are the gender you were assigned at birth (Opprop.net, 2022). This signature campaign is in no way unique, and variations of the same thing emerge regularly. Another example is the American association 'One Million Moms', proclaiming to be fighting against indecency in the media, where they petitioned to ban a cartoon about a cross-dressing superhero, *SheZow* (2012-2013), fearing that this was just another way the LGBTQ+ community was trying to indoctrinate children into accepting their lifestyle (Sandercock, 2022). Literature is recognized as a highly influential socializing agent in the development of a child and can offer ways of being in the world, modelling behavior, and promote ideologies (Sandercock, 2022). As such, it is crucial that the literature provided to children and young adults depicts all kinds of human experiences and is not just an echo chamber that reinforces heteronormative stories and perspectives.

Importantly, Sandercock (2022) states how there has been an increase in trans representation in pop-culture such as literature, movies, television shows. However, the lived experiences of trans people are wide-ranging and some depictions can end up reinforcing stereotypes and excluding individuals. In an article in *DiGeSt: Journal of Diversity and Gender Studies*, Dhaenens et al. (2022) researched how Belgian trans people assessed the representation of trans people in media, and while the participants appreciated the increased visibility of trans people, some stated that this visibility is at the expense of the invisibility of others. I believe this shows the need for several different perspectives, and the knowledge that being trans cannot be depicted accurately for everyone in one book or one film. In addition to including trans representation then, we need to communicate that being trans is not a singular, universal experience for all.

In the influential essay "Window, mirrors and sliding glass doors", Rudine Sims Bishop (1990) introduces the concept of literature offering readers windows into different world views or mirrors, reflecting themselves. Bishop (1990) thus offers a way of seeing ourselves and others through text, and the importance of representation in literature: "Literature transforms human experience and reflects it back to us, and in that reflection, we can see our own lives and experiences as part of the larger human experience" (p. 9). I believe that representations of all types of human experiences are important within the literature that is being used in the classroom. To quote Bachelor (2018) in her article on LGBTQ+ literature for an inclusive classroom,

Every time we turn on a commercial, it's going to be a heterosexual couple; every time we turn on shows, there may be like one gay person, but the entire show is going to revolve around a heterosexual couple. If you can't relate to that, then 90% of what you're seeing in the media is completely unrelatable to you. (p. 32)

I find Bachelor's (2018) insights directly transferrable to a classroom setting, where if you are outside of the majority in one way or another, it might be difficult to recognize yourself in the materials, unless a teacher or a curriculum has specifically thought to include minorities and different kinds of human experiences. Introducing trans experiences into the classroom is thus key in influencing the perception that being trans does not make someone unrelatable to others. Trans people, as well as any person who identifies within the LGBTQ+ community, experiences challenges and life experiences

just like anyone else, and we need to prevent the distinction between “us” and “them”, while at the same time recognizing the individual struggles.

Children’s literature scholar Karen Coats (2017), however, problematizes Bishop’s (1990) use of the term mirrors, because mirrors can sometimes distort reality; they have edges that limit what they reflect, and they only show surface features. Coats (2017) connects this to literature by claiming that it selects and focuses on certain aspects of a situation and might ignore important contexts: “The author’s perspective might act like a distorted mirror, exaggerating some aspects and giving others short shrift, idealizing or stereotyping characters or exposing their cracks and flaws” (p. 1). I believe it is important to include texts in the EFL classroom that can work as windows and mirrors, but that we need to be aware of the context and what we are trying to communicate. I do not believe that as teachers, we can bring a text with minority representation into the classroom, have the pupils read it, and be done with that and think that the job is well done. Coats (2017) states that “Literary mirrors have an important function in that they frame experiences and situations and offer them back to us for analysis and contemplation; they reflect in their ways so that we can reflect in ours” (p. 2). This is what I believe that trans YA literature can do in a classroom; it can start reflections and conversations on a topic that might be recognizable to some and add insight into something completely new or at least quite unfamiliar to others.

3 Methodology and Methods

In this chapter, I will present my chosen research methods and methodology, which include semi-structured interviews, a questionnaire, and a thematic analysis of a trans YA novel and provide justification for my choices. I will start by discussing thematic analysis in qualitative research as an appropriate method to answer my research questions on trans inclusion and representation. Next, I will describe my chosen data collection methods, describing how I designed and carried out the questionnaires and interviews, which are common tools in qualitative studies in education (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). I will then describe the thematic analysis of my chosen trans YA novel and explain why I decided to include this combination of methods as a part of my thesis. At the end of the chapter, I discuss some of the ethical considerations related to this project, including validity and reliability. Finally, I consider my own positionality and the concept of critical humility (Cariou, 2020).

3.1 Thematic Analysis in Qualitative Research

In research there are many different approaches, based on what your goals is, and we typically make a distinction between a qualitative and quantitative method or approach (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). I have chosen a qualitative method, which Johannesen et al. (2016) describe as suitable for research where the objective is to obtain a deeper understanding of a phenomena. According to Croker (2009), when a topic has limited research, a qualitative method can be useful as it is exploratory and is not used to generalize findings in other contexts. My thesis does not seek to examine how many teachers use trans YA literature, but rather to investigate attitudes and opinions among teachers, potential benefits and how it can be taught, which is why a qualitative research method seemed most appropriate. Qualitative studies have often been criticized for being “too subjective” or too much based on feelings and personal responses” (Atkins & Wallace, 2012, p. 11), and hereby less reliable compared to data backed up by numbers or percentages. However, Atkins & Wallace (2012) argue against this claim by stating that “there’s very little educational researchers can do about this, since by its very nature education is concerned with human beings; and human beings are not predictable or static in the same way that inert materials or fixed numbers are” (p. 11). As I am researching teachers’ perspectives, emotions, and experiences on gender-related issues, their responses are inevitably subjective and directly relating to feelings and lived experience. Therefore, I found that a qualitative methodology, grounded on gender-inclusive educational research, would be the most beneficial for me to be able to answer my research questions.

I decided to do a thematic analysis of both my interviews and questionnaires, and my chosen literary text, since this method allows the researcher to find meaning in the data through categories and themes that bring together the commonalities and differences in the participants’ subjective descriptions (Crowe et al., 2015). When conducting a thematic analysis, researchers look for reoccurring topics, ideas, or patterns within the data, to uncover issues, similarities or differences (Hawkins, 2017). Analyzing

the content helps the researcher determine what is meaningful and noteworthy in the narrative (Parcell & Baker, 2017). Some argue that thematic analysis is not a specific method, but a tool to use across different methods (Boyatzis, 1998). However, Braun & Clarke (2006) contend that learning thematic analysis provides core skills in qualitative analysis and should be considered a method in its own right. In my analysis of my collected data, I have spent time reading and rereading my materials, looking for topics and themes that reoccur. Using thematic analysis has thus been helpful in conducting trans research in my thesis specifically because it allows the process to develop naturally without the limitations of following strict rules. Braun & Clarke (2006) describe thematic analysis in six different phases. The first phase, *familiarizing yourself with the data*, consists of familiarizing oneself with the data, transcribing if necessary and noting initial ideas (p. 87). After that, you start phase two, *generating initial codes*, coding interesting features of the data and collecting data for each code. Throughout the third phase, *searching for themes*, you turn the initial codes into potential themes. The three remaining phases consist of *reviewing themes*, *defining and naming themes*, and *producing the report*, which is where the researcher checks to see if the themes match up with the collected data, refine the specific themes and collect the final compelling extracts for analysis (p. 87). I decided to use the same themes for both my interviews and questionnaire, analyzing them together, whilst examining and discussing my chosen literary text separately, using another set of themes. Further, I will describe my chosen data collection methods in greater detail.

3.2 Data Collection

In collecting my data, I decided to use three different methods, including semi-structured interviews, a questionnaire and a thematic analysis of a trans YA novel. Interviews is one of the most common methods in qualitative research (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) and I found this as an effective and useful way to gather thorough data on my topic. Moreover, a questionnaire was helpful in obtaining a greater number of responses to some of the more general questions I was trying to answer. I also decided to include an analysis of the magical realist novel *When the Moon Was Ours* (McLemore, 2016) to include an example of a trans YA text that conveys the complexities within trans experiences including intersectional representations of gender, race and sexuality. In the coming sections, I will present each method more thoroughly. The data analysis and findings will be discussed further in chapters 4 and 5.

3.2.1 Interviews

Since part of my research is based on understanding the experiences and attitudes EFL teachers have about teaching trans YA literature, I found that qualitative interviews were the most fruitful method for me to go into depth on the topic. A qualitative interview is suitable when researchers wish to study opinions, attitudes, and experiences (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). This method allows for a dialogue between the interviewer and the participants, where the interviewer obtains insight on the lived world of the participants, often through stories and lived experiences (Johannesen et al, 2016, p. 145). I conducted semi-structured interviews containing a set of prepared questions (see interview guide in Appendix B), but follow-up questions, topics, and the order of these varied according to the interview subject.

As part of the research process, I created an interview-guide with a list of topics and general questions related to the inclusion of trans YA literature in EFL teaching. The interview guide was largely inspired by previous research papers connected to LGBTQ+ topics, but my design was created with a focus on trans research and education. I spent time writing and re-writing my interview guide thinking about what sort of questions I wanted to ask, and what my goal was for the interview. Some questions were close-ended and purely selected for seeking information about the participants and their everyday practices. Moreover, I wanted to include enough open-ended questions that would provide reflection, giving me insight into their perspectives on the topic. An interview guide identifies key topics that need to be covered, but also allows for the interview to go into unexpected topics that emerge and seem relevant (Croker, 2009), which was crucial to this project. I was also concerned with creating questions without any implied judgement, so the participants felt free to give honest answers. I decided to divide the interview questions into four categories: *general questions about background and teaching practices in the EFL classroom, experiences and attitudes, integration of trans or other LGBTQ+ topics in education and the curriculum and future steps.*

After my interview guide was granted approval by NSD, I interviewed three 8.-10. grade EFL teachers, where the participants vary in age, gender, teaching experience and teacher's geographic location. The participants were recruited in different ways. One was a teacher from one of my practice schools, one worked as an EFL teacher in a school I had a personal connection to, and the third was proposed to me by one of the other participants. The difference in background and experience in the participants was important for me in creating a varied selection of perspectives. Because of the time limit on my project, I decided that three teachers with varying age, gender identities, experience, and location was enough given the timeline perspective. In a qualitative study, the informant's relevance to the research is more important than the number of informants (Johannesen et al, 2016). However, had I had more time to collect data, I believe that including more interviews with an even wider variety in background, both professionally and personally, could have been beneficial. When interviewing teachers that I had a personal relationship with, I tried to avoid preconditioning their responses by clearly stating that there are no right or wrong answers, and that I was only interested in examining their current teaching practices and experiences. The only criterion was that they must work or previously have worked as an English teacher in lower-secondary school in Norway (8.-10. grade). One of the interviews was conducted face to face, while two were done over video online. Before the interviews, all participants were given an information sheet, with their rights, including the right to not answer certain questions and the right to withdraw their participation at any time. All interviews were sound recorded with an app called *Nettskjema-diktafon* and then transcribed. The key to a successful interview is listening and allowing the interview to develop naturally, whilst maintaining control (Croker, 2009), so I made sure to familiarize myself thoroughly with my interview guide to ensure that the interview did not go off track. All three teachers are given pseudonyms to maintain their anonymity. Examples of questions from the interview guide include the following (full interview guide can be found in Appendix B):

- Did you discuss trans or other LGBTQ-related topics in your teacher education?
- Do you think implementing trans YA literature could be beneficial in the EFL classroom?
- What do/would you find challenging about implementing trans YA literature in the classroom?

- Do you know if your school has any official guidelines when it comes to teaching trans or other LGBTQ-related topics?

3.2.2 Questionnaire

In addition to my three interviews, I conducted a questionnaire for 8.-10. grade EFL teachers. Whereas the goal of the interview was to obtain in depth knowledge about teachers attitudes and emotions towards trans inclusion and representation in literature for the EFL classroom, the aim of the questionnaire was to acquire a more general overview on the experiences and practices of EFL teachers regarding trans literature in the classroom. However, the questionnaire contained several open-ended items, which is where the participants are asked to answer in their own words in a provided space in the form (Croker, 2009). These questions are exploratory and commonly associated with qualitative research (Croker, 2009), and, as such, they were included to explore the participants thoughts on the topic, and to provide examples of trans literature they had experience with. This was in addition to close-ended questions where the participants had to select between prewritten answers. There are benefits to both types of questions, where the close-ended questions are easier to respond to when written clearly and makes it simpler for me as a researcher to compare to each other. In turn, open-ended questions leave more thinking to the respondents and are more difficult and time consuming to analyze but leave more room for reflection and answers the researchers might have missed in a close-ended question (Croker, 2009). Some of my questions were written as close-ended, but I added "Why/why not?" at the end of the question. An example is "Do you think it would be beneficial for students to be exposed to literature/audiovisual materials about LGBTQ+ topics in the English subject? Why/why not?". This made the participants expand their answers and reflections, giving me a greater insight into their perspectives, as opposed to just a 'yes' or 'no' answer.

I divided the questions into four categories: *personal information, literature in the classroom, LGBTQ+-literature in the classroom, and teaching trans young adult literature*. I spent time writing and rewriting these questions as well, to make sure I would get the information I was looking for. I tried to keep the questions as short and concise as possible, and without prejudice to allow for the participants to answer honestly. The participants answers were anonymous. I posted the questionnaire on the Facebook group "Status Lærer" for teachers in Norway, as well as sending it to teachers I know or have a previous relation to. My initial goal was to collect around twenty questionnaire responses. However, I was only able to obtain thirteen. Initially, I was concerned about the number of responses, as I had planned to post the questionnaire on a Facebook group for English teachers in Norway, but was unable to, as the administrator of the group decided they did not want MA-students collecting data, posting in their group anymore. Ultimately, I decided that in addition to the three interviews, thirteen responses on the questionnaire constituted sufficient data. Examples of questions from the questionnaire include the following:

- Have you ever introduced your students to LGBTQ+ related literature/audiovisual materials (picture books, novels, videos, etc...) in your English teaching?
- Do you think introducing your students to trans YA literature in the EFL classroom would be beneficial?
- Are/would you be worried about students' or parents' reactions to teaching trans YA literature in the EFL classroom?

What this sample of questions from my questionnaire has in common is that their intended goal is to examine teachers' attitudes and emotions around LGBTQ+ topics and their relevance in the EFL classroom (the full questionnaire can be found in Appendix C). Further, I will describe how I employed thematic analysis to analyze *When the Moon Was Ours*, by Anna-Marie McLemore (2016) as a way to supplement my data while offering an authentic representation of trans characters as a vehicle to forge inclusive pedagogies.

3.2.3 Using Thematic Analysis to Analyze a Trans YA Novel

As previously mentioned, I have conducted a thematic analysis of Anna-Marie McLemore's contemporary YA novel *When the Moon Was Ours* (2016). The reason why I chose this book was because, in my opinion, the novel presents a complex representation of trans identity and trans life. The novel contains a wide range of diverse primary and secondary characters regarding race, ability, and sexuality, such as queer, trans, and nonbinary Latine characters. My aim when deciding to include a fictional text as part of my methodology was to contribute to the trans inclusive discourses and pedagogies by analyzing and discussing an example of a trans YA novel for any teacher in lower secondary school who might be interested in this topic, and who might be inspired by it. Braun & Clarke (2006) state that even though there is a lack of concise guidelines in thematic analysis, its advantages are that it provides a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide rich and detailed account of data. In my thematic analysis of *When the Moon Was Ours* (McLemore, 2016), I created two themes, *Gender Identity and Representation* and *Prejudices Against Sexual and Gender Minorities*, according to Braun & Clarke's (2006) model of theme construction, which I have previously presented and will further describe.

In selecting the literary text, I started researching contemporary literature targeting young adults with trans themes online. I researched and read a few examples, such as *Pet* (Emezi, 2019), *I am Jazz* (Herthel & Jennings, 2014), *Cemetery Boys* (Thomas, 2020) and *Felix Ever After* (Callender, 2020), but eventually ended up choosing *When the Moon Was Ours* (McLemore, 2016), one of the novels recommended to me by my thesis advisor. I started off familiarizing myself with the author and their background, before reading the book from start to finish. After reading it for the first time, I plotted down my initial thoughts on the themes of the book and around the character portrayals. After that, I let the book sit with me for a while before I started reading parts of it again. This time I took a longer time with certain parts of the novel, writing down specific words and phrases the author used in describing characters, events and their emotions. Examples of these were "boys' clothes" (p. 36), "The water took me (...) It let me die as a boy (...) and it gave me back as a woman" (p. 212) and "The fiction that anyone in this town had ever been where he was" (p. 99). From this I started reflecting on the repeated themes and patterns I mapped in the book connected to the topic of trans inclusion and representation. After reviewing these, I developed and defined the themes for my analysis which are *Gender Identity and Representation* and *Prejudice Towards Sexuality and Gender Minorities*.

When researching trans representation and visibility in children's and YA literature, I have found that not all representation provides a meticulous description of trans life and experiences. Butler (2020) presents examples of certain problematic portrayals of trans characters in an article with critical reviews of trans themed books, including trans people functioning as facilitators for the emotional growth of a cis-gender

character, lack of support leading the character to want to detransition, and effectively detransitioning temporarily to spare the family of shame. An important factor when choosing a literary text for my thesis was also the importance of including an author with lived experience as a trans person, because I wanted the text to be authentic. In 2015, the #Ownvoices campaign was started on Twitter, "referring to books about characters from underrepresented/marginalized groups" (Orange County Library System, 2022, n.p). McLemore is relevant within #Ownvoices as they, according to their own website, writes stories "as queer, Latine, and trans as they are" (n.p). When looking for relevant themes and topics in the novel, I further examined whether this novel upholds or challenges stereotypes when representing trans characters.

3.3 Ethical Considerations

When deciding on my research topic and while writing this thesis, I have been concerned with the ethical considerations of writing about trans inclusiveness in the classroom. Below I will explain and explore the validity and reliability of my research, before further reflecting on my own research positionality in this thesis and exploring the concept of critical humility (Cariou, 2020).

3.3.1 Validity

According to Johannessen et al. (2016), "collected data is not reality, but representations of reality" (p. 66). Therefore, the question is how well the collected data represents the reality I am trying to uncover. According to Atkins & Wallace (2012), the researcher has to be upfront with the scale of their enquiry and that the results might not be transferrable to other contexts. As my research only focuses on EFL teachers in lower secondary school, the outcomes might not be transferrable to other graders, or other subjects. My sample of data collection is also limited due to the time perspective, which might not make the collected data representable for all EFL teachers in lower secondary school. Further, Atkins & Wallace (2012) claim that even though the research outcomes might not be transferrable to other contexts, it could still provide other researchers with a point of comparison. As my collected data is limited to a handful of teachers in Norway, the same results might not appear in similar research or research with a broader foundation in data collection, but hopefully in the future, others can use my thesis as comparison when conducting research on teachers' perspectives or attitudes towards trans representation or similar. According to Croker (2009), a trustworthy research study needs to have been conducted competently and ethically for the findings to be "worth paying attention to, worth taking account of" (p. 264). Hopefully, my research outcomes will shed light on the issue and be a resource for others who want to continue examining trans representation in literature and media and implementing inclusive pedagogies in the EFL classroom.

3.3.2 Reliability

Reliability is a term in concerning how reliable the data is, which is related to the accuracy of the research data, what data is being used, how the data is collected and how the data is processed (Johannesen et al, 2016, p. 36). When examining whether research outcomes are reliable, Atkins & Wallace (2012) claim that "the same data would have emerged from the enquiry if it had been conducted by a different researcher, or by the same researcher using different data collecting methods" (p. 16). However, when

using interviews, for example, as a data collection method, Atkins & Wallace (2012) state that the outcome might be affected by your own preconceived notions, and other researchers might draw different conclusions or focus on different arguments from the same data. When conducting my data collection, I have had a focus, and made decisions, both consciously, but probably unconsciously as well, that might differ from other researchers who might perceive things differently from myself. As Merriam (1998) notes,

Because what is being studied in qualitative research is assumed to be in flux, multifaceted, and highly contextual, because information gathered is a function of who gives it and how skilled the researcher is at getting it, and because the emergent design of a qualitative study precludes a priori controls, achieving reliability in the traditional sense is not only fanciful, but impossible. (p. 171)

Since interviews are one of my chosen methods, this might affect the outcomes of my research, and the results might not be reproduced in the same way, if conducted by a different researcher. Specifically, I would find it interesting if the results were produced differently by a trans researcher, as opposed to myself, as a cis researcher. Including questionnaires as a method, in addition to the interviews, is also a way of verifying that the research outcomes are more reliable, because it provides a greater number of responses.

3.3.3 Positionality and Critical Humility

While writing this thesis, I have had many conflicting thoughts on my chosen topic. On the one hand, I have occasionally struggled with my motivation because I sometimes find academic writing and creating a structure for myself challenging. On the other hand, I have felt a great responsibility to my topic. I chose to research and write about trans representation in education because I found it important and interesting. The shooting in Oslo in 2022, targeting the LGBTQ+ community, and the signature campaign in 2022 mentioned earlier in my thesis, shocked me, and made me realize the significance of including these topics in an educational context. These two thoughts have been at the center of my attention throughout this whole process. Throughout my educational career, I have been content with my results for the most part, but I have often felt that I could have done more, or I could have done better, if I had just put in a little extra effort. However, with choosing this topic for my thesis, I have felt responsible to more than just myself. I felt a responsibility towards trans people, especially young trans people who deserve to go through the educational system and be included and accepted for who they are, and without experiencing harassment or exclusion based on their gender identity.

This responsibility is also connected to the notion of accountability. As hooks (1989) claims, "When we write about the experiences of a group to which we do not belong, we should think about the ethics of our action, considering whether or not our work will be used to reinforce or perpetuate domination" (p. 43). This is very relevant to my thesis as I am researching the topic of including representation of trans people through literature in a classroom setting, a group to which I do not belong. As a white, cis woman I am part of the majority in Norway, and therefore, it is important for me to clarify my position in my research and my reasoning for choosing this topic. My position as an outsider might also lead to me problematizing something that an insider would not consider problematic, and, in turn, it might make me overlook something that an insider

would find challenging because of their familiarity with the topic. hooks' piece (1989) mainly focuses on race and uses the example of a white woman writing about Black women's experiences. Even after stating that it is not intended to diminish Black women's experiences or their right to tell their own story, because of the structure of white supremacy, her version might still be considered more legitimate than similar work done by Black women (p. 43). I believe this can be directly transferred to the topic of my thesis where I, as part of a majority group, is writing about a minoritized group. This is not to say that only people that are a part of a minority should be allowed to write about this group, but that as a part of the majority, I need to clarify the purpose of the research and that the research might be affected by my perspective. It is therefore important to me that the literature I include in my thesis is authentic. For example, Anna-Marie McLemore, the author of my primary literary text, identifies themselves within the trans-community.

Métis scholar Warren Cariou (2020) introduces the concept of critical humility when working with Indigenous texts. He describes critical humility as honest and humble engagement with the work and approaching it with an understanding that we cannot know it completely, and that there might even be aspects that some of us should not know (Cariou, 2020, p. 8). I also find this relatable to my topic where I am entering this field of research with the intention of learning and understanding how I, as a teacher who is part of the majority group, can create the best possible learning environment for trans-people as well as other minority groups without claiming to know what is best, or what the right answer is. I am thus trying to be humble in my understanding of trans people and their perspectives on the topic. In light of the concept of critical humility, if I had more time in my research, I would have been interested in hearing thoughts from trans people themselves on my research topic, both in a teaching context, but also as students. Cariou (2020) describes an Indigenous Elder "Dan", a speaker at an academic gathering, who was living and embodying humility, an important value in Indigenous culture, and showed it in his actions, rather than telling others about it. I aspire to be a teacher with this kind of humility, who can show by example. I want to include representation of marginalized groups such as trans people in my teaching as naturally as I would with other texts from other communities. In this sense, McLemore's YA novel can help teachers in lower secondary school introduce trans inclusion through an informative and exploratory perspective.

4 Data Analysis

In this chapter, I will present and analyze my findings from my chosen data collection methods. First, I will analyze the data from the three interviews, supplemented by the data collected from the questionnaire. I have chosen to do a thematic analysis where I have familiarized myself with the collected data and identified the following three relevant themes within the context of my research: *Inclusion of LGBTQ+ literature or audiovisual materials in the classroom, Teachers’ attitudes and emotions teaching trans YA literature, and Teachers’ training and support in teaching trans YA literature, or similar topics*. Second, I have carried out a thematic analysis of *When the Moon was Ours* (McLemore, 2016) to examine whether this novel upholds or challenges stereotypes regarding the representation of trans characters. I have decided to focus on two themes for the analysis of the novel: *Gender Identity and Representation and Prejudice Towards Sexuality and Gender Minorities*. In chapter 5, I will further discuss the analysis of my findings through the theoretical framework on trans studies in education (Berberick, 2018; Keenan & Suárez, 2021), inclusive pedagogy (Dernikos, 2018; Zembylas, 2015) and introducing trans literature in educational settings (Sandercock, 2022; Bachelor, 2018), which I have previously presented in chapter 2.

4.1 Interviews and Questionnaires

As mentioned in chapter 3, I interviewed three EFL teachers, and I will be referring to these participants as Teacher 1, Teacher 2 and Teacher 3. Teachers 1 and 2 were currently working in lower secondary schools, while Teacher 3 was now working in a primary school but had previously worked as a lower secondary EFL teacher. Of the three participants, two identified as “women who are attracted to men” (Teacher 1 and 3), and one as a “man who is attracted to women” (Teacher 2). I found this information relevant because, like me, they did not identify within the trans or any other LGBTQ+ categories. I would have found it interesting to include teachers who identified as trans or within LGBTQ+ to see if their responses would contrast. I did find however, that none of the teachers used the word cis explicitly but presented themselves as a “straight woman” or “straight man”, hereby implying that they were not trans, presumably because they considered cis to be the norm and wrongly assuming it to be the universal.

4.1.1 Inclusion of LGBTQ+ Literature or Audiovisual Materials in the Classroom

In the questionnaire, the participants were asked to list any LGBTQ+ literature or audiovisual materials they had included in their EFL teaching. Nine different texts were listed (see table 4.1), but these came from six of the participants, while the other seven responded that they had not introduced their students to any LGBTQ+ literature or audiovisual materials.

Books/texts	Frequency	Movies/tv shows	Frequency
<i>Rainbow boys</i>	1	<i>Love, Simon</i>	1
<i>Everybody knows Peter is gay</i>	1	<i>Call me by your Name</i>	1

<i>The boy in the dress</i>	1	<i>Boys don't cry</i>	1
<i>I am Jazz</i>	1	<i>The last of us</i>	1
<i>Oranges are not the only fruit</i>	1		

Table 4.1

Some of the books and texts mentioned by the participants are similar to *When the Moon Was Ours* (McLemore, 2016) in the way that they are written by authors with queer or trans lived experience. *Rainbow boys* written by Mexican American writer Alex Sanchez, and *Oranges are not the only fruit* by English author Jeanette Winterson are both books about coming of age and being queer, written by authors with the same experience. *I am Jazz* is the autobiographical story of Youtube personality and LGBTQ+ rights activist, Jazz Jennings, a trans young woman from the US. These lived experiences of the authors create authentic stories for students which is important in trying to avoid problematic portrayals of queer and trans characters (Butler, 2020).

The teachers, who had included LGBTQ+ inclusive literature, in answering to whether or not they found it to be beneficial, stated the following: were "Yes, why not? All kinds of genres and 'cultures' should be included", "Absolutely! Schools should include, inform and educate pupils and act as a counterweight to heteronormativity" and

I think it is important to expose my students to literature about all varieties of human beings, LGBTQ+ included. However, I do not find it necessary to underline the characters' sexual and/or gender orientation. We discuss all the topics I introduce in the classroom, this one included. (n.p)

Of the seven teachers who had not included trans or other LGBTQ+ inclusive literature in their teaching, five answered that they did believe it would be beneficial for their students, while one answered: "I don't know", and one answered "No". The English core curriculum, under the interdisciplinary topic *health and life skills*, states that in the English subject, students should be able to "express their feelings, thoughts, experiences and opinions and can provide new perspectives on different ways of thinking and communication patterns, as well as on the pupils' own way of life and that of others" (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019). In my view, this could be implicitly related to the inclusion of LGBTQ+ materials. It is problematic, however, that the English curriculum does not say anything explicitly about LGBTQ+ inclusion. Without being able to research the participants' perspectives further, my interpretation of their responses is that these teachers see LGBTQ+ inclusion as self-evident and a part of their responsibility as teachers, without deflecting from that responsibility because it is not explicitly stated that LGBTQ+ needs to be addressed in the English subject.

All three interview participants expressed positive attitudes towards using literature and audiovisual materials as teaching tools in the EFL classroom. This was quite expected as the curriculum for the English subject states that students should be able to "read, interpret and reflect on English-language fiction, including young people's literature" and "use different digital resources and other aids in language learning, text creation and interaction" (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019). Regarding literature, a common denominator was that fictional texts often led to language learning without the students reflecting on how much learning actually came out of it. When asked what genre they preferred, the answers varied from comedy, to fantasy or historical fiction. The

same conclusion came up from the questionnaire, where 10 participants responded that they 'often' used literary texts in their teaching, while three responded that they used literature 'sometimes'. Regarding the use of LGBTQ+ literature, the responses varied more among the interview participants. Teacher 1 was very determined to bring different types of representations through literature into the classroom and mentioned the picturebook *I am Jazz* by Herthel & Jennings (2014), and the middle-grade novel *Melissa* (Previously published as *George*) by Alex Gino (2015), as examples of literature she had implemented in her teaching. When explaining why this was important, she stated the following: "All of my students need to learn to be understanding and empathetic to other people, and literature can be a great way for them to experience a point of view that is different from their own" (n.p.). In turn, Teachers 2 and 3 were positive towards implementing LGBTQ+ literature into the classroom, but they had not used it in their own EFL teaching. When asked if she had any experience including trans topics into her classroom, Teacher 3 stated the following: "No, but I have included topics about being gay, which I think is more common. Trans is something that has shown up in more recent times" (n.p.). According to Owen (2019), the increased visibility of trans people in the last decades has left the impression that this is something new, when in fact the existence of trans people has been documented to exist at least a century back. I find Teacher 3's notion that trans is something new, and that being gay is more normal, and therefore more likely to appear in the classroom, understandable, yet also potentially damaging to those who identify as trans for their potential exclusion.

4.1.2 Teachers' Attitudes and Emotions Teaching Trans YA Literature.

In all three interviews, discomfort and concerns were words mentioned. Yet, their perspectives varied. Teacher 3, who was teaching in a more rural location in Norway, explained that her students came from a variety of cultural and religious backgrounds:

In our school, the majority of our multicultural students come from Eastern European countries because of labor immigration. In many of these countries LGBTQ+ rights have regressed in the later years and to me it seems like more of these children bring with them a more negative attitude towards LGBTQ+ from home. For example, I have experienced use of the term "gay" as an abusive term used towards other students, not necessarily because they have done anything that implies that they might be gay, but because they have acted in a way that is considered wrong or uncool, turning it into a bad word. (n.p)

According to Anicic (2020), LGBTQ+ terms are rarely a part of the school vocabulary, but when they are, it is often through insults that should be silenced. These experiences increased Teacher 3's concern that her students and their parents who originated from these countries would have values or beliefs that collided with explicitly teaching about gender diversity. She underlined that her main concern was not the potential backlash she might receive, but she was worried about potential LGBTQ+ students in her class being exposed to harassment or negative comments as a result. Similarly, Teacher 2 stated that potential negative reactions from students or parents was something that ideally should not have an impact on his choice of literature. However, he felt that he had a lack of knowledge about the topic which would make it more difficult for him to defend his choices if faced with critical questions. Research has shown that supportive educators with sufficient professional development play a central role in the educational experiences for trans youth (Clark et al., 2021), but like Teacher 2, most teachers in Norway have not received training in LGBTQ+ topics and are not prepared to address

these students' needs (Anicic, 2020). Teacher 2's concerns about his lack of knowledge can also be related to Zembylas' (2015) 'pedagogy of discomfort', since in my teaching experience, teachers are often required to discuss topics in their classroom that they do not have extensive knowledge about. However, trans or LGBTQ+ topics might be outside of the comfort zone for many teachers, including Teacher 2, and while they might feel uncomfortable, Zembylas (2015) underlines how feelings of discomfort are a necessity in order to achieve individual and social transformation.

In turn, Teacher 1 expressed no concerns when it came to the reactions of students or parents but was very concerned with bringing the topic into the classroom just as naturally as she would with any other topic. She believed that not making it into a big deal would translate to her students and her experience was that her students mostly responded with curiosity and not skepticism or negativity. She also found that in this curiosity her students had many questions. The central values in the curriculum for the English subject reads: "The subject shall develop the pupils' understanding that their views of the world are culture-dependent. This can open for new ways to interpret the world, promote curiosity and engagement and help to prevent prejudice." (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019). This coincides with Teacher 1's perspectives where she wanted to promote curiosity and asking questions, because this would lead to a greater knowledge.

From both the interviews and the questionnaire, even though many lacked the experience and felt a lack of knowledge, the attitudes and responses showed that the majority believed trans and LGBTQ+ inclusion would have a positive impact and be beneficial for students. However, one respondent disagreed. When asked whether this person thought it would be "beneficial for students to be exposed to literature/audiovisual materials about LGBTQ+ topics in the EFL classroom? Why or why not?", they responded as follows: "No. Such topics have little relevance in the classroom and are plagued by activists with little more than a political opinion based on feelings rather than facts" (n.p.). Though I find this response somewhat troubling from an educated teacher, I am glad that this respondent decided to answer honestly because it brings light to the fact that these attitudes and opinions do exist and need to be addressed. The Norwegian curriculum refers to inclusion and diversity (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017) but it does not explicitly mention the inclusion of LGBTQ+ texts, which allows teachers with these attitudes and opinions to exclude these topics from their teaching entirely (Kjaran, 2017), thus being detrimental to the implementation and development of inclusive pedagogies in the EFL classroom.

4.1.3 Teachers' Training and Support Teaching Trans YA Literature or Similar Topics

In the interviews it was very clear that the training on trans or other LGBTQ+ topics the teachers had received within their education varied drastically and seemed to correlate with their confidence in bringing it into their classroom. Research shows that teachers who have received professional training in relation to trans students are more likely to take proactive steps in improving the conditions of trans people in school, which may involve trans inclusion in teaching, but also promoting trans inclusive policies in schools (Clark et al., 2021). Teacher 1 who finished her teacher training four years ago, explained that she had discussed the topic both in her EFL training and also in her pedagogy classes. She stated that this definitely had an impact on her decisions as a teacher and brought an awareness that she might not have had without it. She expressed

that she felt a shift with younger teachers, who had received similar training on the topic, as opposed to teachers who finished their teacher training many years ago. Her impression was that for many young teachers, awareness and knowledge on the topic of trans or LGBTQ+ inclusion was more present. She did not believe that many of the older teachers were negative or opposed to including it, but that many felt less confident and knowledgeable, and consequently avoided the topic all together. Most Norwegian teachers have not received training and is not prepared to address trans inclusion (Anicic, 2020), and though Teacher 1 speculates that the topic is more present in teachers' training now, research seems to show that it is not integrated throughout the program, but brought up in certain courses or by certain faculty members (Shanon-Baker, 2020), leaving whether teachers receive training on the subject up to chance.

Teachers 2 and 3 had both finished their teacher training more than fifteen years ago, so neither could remember the topic of LGBTQ+ inclusion being mentioned in their original teacher training in any subject. Teacher 3 explained that in recent years, she had taken some further education in Norwegian, where they had been presented with texts that included LGBTQ+ topics, but this was not something they had spent much time focusing on. Teacher 2 had mostly learned about trans and LGBTQ+ topics from traditional and social media and expressed that he would have liked to have learned more about it in an educational context.

All three teachers believed that they would receive support from their school administrators in introducing the topics of LGBTQ+ and gender diversity in their classrooms. However, they all expressed that the availability of materials like LGBTQ+ literature, even in their school libraries were limited. They all stated that the selection of literature in their schools included books with characters that were gay or lesbian, but as far as they knew, there was nothing on trans, bisexual, asexual or gender diverse characters. Literature is shown to be an important social influence on a child, and therefore, depictions of different types of human experiences is crucial (Sandercock, 2022), and as the lived experiences of trans people are wide-ranging, there is a need for more diverse representation. Teacher 1 explained that any literature she had included in her own teaching, like *I am Jazz* and *George*, she had obtained herself, outside of her school. Likewise, in the questionnaire, none of the teachers responded yes to whether trans YA literature was easily accessible in their school.

4.2 Thematic Analysis

According to the Anna-Marie McLemore's website (2022), *When the Moon Was Ours* has won a number of awards, including the 2017 Stonewall Honor Book, and was being longlisted for the National Book Award in Young People's literature. This recognition matters because it increases visibility and acknowledgement of trans and gender diverse youth. McLemore uses the pronouns they/them, and their husband is transgender. As stated in their website (2022), "Anna-Marie McLemore writes magical realism and fairy tales that are as queer, Latine, and nonbinary as they are" (n. p.). This statement on positionality matters because it gives their texts an authentic status, and McLemore's marriage to a transgender man provides them with kinship and a care network which Malatino (2020) argues is an important factor in the physical and emotional experiences of trans people's lives.

As described in chapter 3, I have conducted a thematic analysis of *When the Moon Was Ours* (McLemore, 2016). After careful consideration while reading and rereading the book, going through the steps of thematic analysis according to Braun & Clarke (2006), I ended up choosing two defined themes: *Gender Identity and Intersectional Representation* and *Prejudice Towards Sexuality and Gender Minorities*.

When the Moon Was Ours tells the story of friendship and love between the two main characters, Sam and Miel. The narrative is located in an unnamed town and the book belongs to genre of magical realism. Sam paints moons and hangs them all over the town, and Miel has roses growing out of her wrist. Even though the main plot covers a love story between two young people, elements like gender identity, family history and trauma, secrets and sexuality are essential themes that emerge from the storyline. The main protagonists face personal challenges as well as in their relationships, from both their surroundings and from within themselves. A quote from the book that demonstrates the conflicting emotions within the main characters is when Sam says the following "One thing, Miel. One thing I didn't want you to talk about. I've given you all there is of me. You have it. How much of you have you kept back?" (p.140). I believe this demonstrates how these young people are struggling with trusting each other and their fear of being rejected based on who they are.

4.2.1 Gender identity and Representation

Conflicting feelings around gender identity is an essential theme in the book. Sam, one of the main protagonists, was born a girl (Samira), but raised as a boy, according to the Pakistani tradition 'Bacha Posh' in which a daughter is dressed and treated as a boy for the entirety of her childhood. The introduction of this tradition situates gender diversity as something also existing outside of the Western context (Stamper & Miller, 2019). Sam had learned about this tradition from his grandmother, which might demonstrate an acceptance across generations. Feeling a "clawing envy" (p. 35), Sam decided he wanted to be one of these girls at the age of four. Even though Sam is never explicitly referred to as a trans character and according to the Bacha Posh tradition, the girls who lived as sons would become women when they grow up, Sam identifies as a boy and is reluctant to reemerge as a girl. A quote from early in the book reveals his conflicting emotions:

That was his problem. Sam was sure of it. He couldn't be a girl. But maybe if he waited out these years in boys' clothes and short hair, he would grow up enough to want to be a woman. He would wake up and this part of him would be gone, like rain and wind wearing down a hillside. (McLemore, 2016, p. 36)

Aracely is the other trans character portrayed in the book, but her journey through finding her own gender identity is different from Sam's. Aracely was born Leandro, but always knew that she identified as a girl. In the book, she explains to Sam that her mother always told her "How handsome she was, and how happy she was to have a son, so there was no space" for Aracely being her true self (p. 104). Fighting a curse, Aracely's mother drowns in a river, and Aracely is pulled down by the water too, but "the water took Leandro (Aracely), folded him into its current, brought him back as the girl he always wished he could grow into" (p. 102). Literature and gender identity scholars Stamper & Miller (2019) read this moment in the narrative as a metaphorical rebirth, where the death of her mother finally allows her the space to be free and become herself. These two characters, with similarities like sharing the experience of a gender

identity different from the sex they were assigned at birth, are presented in two different ways. While Aracely's story about transitioning in the water can be compared to that of a medical and surgical transition, Sam's story is not one about gender transitioning or coming out. It is rather a story about discovering and accepting his identity without the physical transition. Through encountering these two stories, "students are able to understand that there are multiple ways of being trans, rather than accepting a media-perpetuated single-story" (Stamper & Miller, 2019, p. 172). These different depictions of trans people also counteract trans people's concern that visibility of some trans people can relate to the invisibility of others (Dhaenens et al, 2022) and the paradox of trans visibility (Berberick, 2018).

The story is written in the magical realism genre, which balances elements of the natural and the supernatural (Stamper & Miller, 2019). It contains descriptions of magic, such as roses growing from Miel's wrist and Aracely magically transitioning in the river, while revolving around recognizable themes like high school, love, friendship and belonging.

Magical realism is often characterized by fluidity, intangibility, and the abstract, provides an entrance for readers to discuss topics such as gender and sexuality, which are similarly fluid and intangible. Through utilizing YA novels that pair nonnormative development (e.g., breaking from heteronormativity) with magical elements, we believe that secondary students will develop readings not only of a rich literary tradition that extends beyond the Anglo-European authors most commonly taught in classes, but also of intersectional and marginalized populations. (Stamper & Miller, p. 173)

I agree that the genre of magical realism can be a gateway into discussing topics such as trans representation because, like in this novel, magic is often connected to transformations or characteristics that differ from others, which might be identifiable to trans students. However, Stamper & Miller (2019) also bring up another important topic here, which is the use of intersectionality. "Because of the way *When the Moon Was Ours* discusses the intersection of race, ethnicity and gender" teachers are able to introduce these topics in their classroom as intertwining, and not as separate topics (p. 174). McLemore, who is themselves Latine, describes characters that are complex, not only in terms of gender identities and sexuality, but of different ethnical backgrounds as well, such as Sam and his mother, Yasmin, who are Pakistani, and Miel, who is a girl of color. According to McLemore's website they write "main characters of color, queer and trans and nonbinary characters, who live, and win" (n.p). This is an important statement from the perspective of trans life and resistance to stereotypes, as there have been many examples of trans characters being portrayed as victims with a lack of support (Butler, 2020). I also want to connect this to the relevance and central values in the curriculum for the English subject which state that "English shall help the pupils to develop an intercultural understanding of different ways of living, ways of thinking and communication patterns" (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019). Then, I would claim that the inclusion of such texts in the EFL classroom can promote core values of human dignity and forge inclusive pedagogies.

4.2.2 Prejudice towards Sexuality and Gender Minorities

The story takes place in a small, unnamed town, who might seem charming from the outside: "they (the town) dug up wildflowers, chicory, and lakespur, replanting them alongside the road (...). They feared that if they were not kind to the beautiful things that grew wild, their own farms would die" (p. 2). The truth, however, is that the town is infested with vicious gossip. Like most places, gossiping and rumors affect those who are 'different' in one way or the other hardest. Difference in the novel relates to gender identities and sexualities but also race and ability. As mentioned above, Sam and Aracely are two trans characters, but then there is also Peyton, one of the antagonists of the story, who turns out to be a closeted lesbian girl. The narration describes Peyton's fear of what her life would be like if she was outed like this: "Undisguised glances would needle her and her family at church. Mothers would forbid their daughters from visiting the Bonner house" (p. 115). This description of her fears speaks to the homophobia that exists in the town and is further confirmed by the following line: "Boys had been run out of this town for sleeping with other boys, ones meant to marry pretty, pale-eyed girls" (p. 117). This coincides with the transphobia that co-exists, shown in the line: "Girls who'd once thought Sam was handsome might let it slip to their boyfriends, who would beat Sam up because they could not stand the thought of their girlfriends liking anyone born female" (p. 118). The trans and homophobia that exist within this novel translate into our world today, where anti-trans violence is increasing, and vocal opponents to the trans movement are multiplying (Berberick, 2018).

However, this violence co-exists with the proliferations of YA literature with trans characters, visibility of trans celebrities and increase in discourse online on diverse representation and authorship in YA literature (Corbett, 2020). In representation of reality, the novel does not only depict violence, but also friendship, kinship, and love, thus resisting stereotypical representation of transness. One of the strengths I find in *When the Moon was Ours* is that those who struggle with either their identity or sexuality are not just "good" or "bad". Identity issues exist within both the protagonists and the antagonists of the story, showing that it is a universal part of the human experience, and it is not a question of virtue. This is important in contradicting the historical depiction of trans people in literature and film as evil (Sandercock, 2022). There is also Miel, who is in a romantic relationship with Sam. The novel does not mention anything explicitly about her sexuality. As she falls in love with Sam, she knows nothing about him being born a girl, so we can assume that she might be straight. However, when it is revealed to Miel that Sam's body has the physiology of a girl, she still loves him and wants to be in a relationship with him: "She didn't scream or run down the hall (...) Her expression was so full of wondering and recognition, as though she almost understood but not quite" (p. 33). I find it a strength that her sexuality is not put into question after this, but the novel allows for the fluidity that exists within gender and sexuality. She loves who she loves, without the need of putting herself into a box or labeling herself as queer or straight.

5 Discussion

In this chapter, I discuss will the findings presented and analyzed in chapter 4 in light of my theoretical frameworks consisting of trans studies in education, inclusive pedagogies, and introducing trans literature in educational settings. My research questions were 1) Do teachers implement literature in the lower-secondary EFL classroom? If they do, what opportunities and challenges come with it? And 2) How can teaching trans young adult literature in the English subject contribute to creating a more inclusive environment in the classroom? The main goal in this study is to better understand the situation in Norway today on whether trans inclusive literature is present and used in Norwegian EFL classrooms, and if so, what are the opportunities and challenges teachers face in implementing it. I have also explored what the implementation of trans YA literature can contribute to regarding a more inclusive environment, including the impact it can have on both trans students and others. I have decided to divide my discussion into three different subsections that relate to my most prominent findings in the analysis of my collected data: *empathy and discomfort, lack LGBTQ+ presence in the curriculum and inadequate professional development, and teaching trans YA novels to create an inclusive classroom environment and fight for social justice in the lower secondary English subject.*

5.1 Discomfort and Empathy

Of all the participants in both the interviews and the questionnaires, the majority seemed to find trans inclusiveness favorable to all of their students. Only two out of thirteen responses to the questionnaire were negative towards it, and all of the interview subjects expressed that they thought it would be beneficial. Keenan and Suárez (2021) present material change in the lives of trans people as a way to counteract root causes of trans oppression as one of the three overlapping agreements within general trans studies. I find that including trans inclusive literature and increased trans visibility could be a first step to such material change. Despite the fact that most of the interview and questionnaire respondents were generally positive towards implementing trans YA literature in their classrooms, only seven out of sixteen participants had actual experience with it. When going through my collected data and gathering relevant information into different themes, there were some reoccurring patterns that emerged from many of the responses as to why the teachers might feel reluctant to include literature with trans representation. One of these was the aspect of discomfort which included both their own discomfort, and the fear of making others uncomfortable. According to Zembylas (2015), opening the learning space for discussions regarding values and beliefs, and engaging students in critical thinking can be uncomfortable but also necessary in order to implement change. I believe this is relevant for pupils in lower secondary school, but also for the teachers themselves. If teachers are not willing to move out of their comfort zones, then nothing will change. Teacher 2, in the interview, stated how his lack of knowledge made him feel unprepared for negative reactions or critical questions, which was one of the reasons he shied away from trans inclusive literature. Teacher 1, however, seemed unaffected by the thought of getting negative feedback. She was concerned with introducing the topic naturally. Dernikos (2018) argues that texts introduced in the classroom with a narrow view on race, gender or

sexuality can create repetitive traumatic wounds. In turn, by introducing texts that challenge these narrow views, teachers can expose and recover these traumas, which she calls a pedagogy of exposure (Dernikos, 2018) In this manner, Teacher 1 stated the following:

I know that some of my students are more immature or insecure than others, and at times I have had students, especially boys, react to trans inclusive texts with calling it “weird” or “damaged”. When it comes to boys, I have also noticed how some are very concerned with demonstrating their own masculinity, either by voice or body language, but I think this is just their insecurities coming out. When I have experienced these situations, I have spent even more time discussing it with them instead of getting angry or yelling. Like why they said what they said, what did they mean by that, and why they felt the need to act in certain ways. And after some reflection, it mostly ends up being a positive experience.

I believe Teacher 1 here uses both pedagogies of discomfort and exposure in her teaching. Zembylas (2015) underlines the importance of creating a safe classroom environment, which does not mean avoiding uncomfortable feelings, but rather provoking discomfort by questioning cherished beliefs and assumptions and being able to deal with those feelings of discomfort in a safe manner. I find that this is what happens in Teacher 1’s classroom. She exposes her students to texts with a less narrow view on gender which sparks discomfort with some of her students, appearing in the form of insults or self-confirmation, and then she takes the time to really let her students reflect on their own reactions and statements in a safe way, and not just as an insult that needs to be silenced.

When asked about potential benefits of including trans or other LGBTQ+ inclusive literature in the classroom, empathy, and the ability to see new perspectives was another reoccurring theme with many of the participants in both the interviews and the questionnaire. Here are some examples from the questionnaire participants:

I think it is important to expose my students to literature about all varieties of human beings, trans people included. We discuss all the topics I introduce in the classroom, this one included. (n.p)

Of course. It's a way to help us try to understand different kinds of people, experience different points of view. LGBTQ+ people are people, so obviously students should be exposed to experiences from that group of people in the same way they should be exposed to experiences from other groups of people. It also might help students understand themselves, their own identity, be it sexual identity or otherwise. Representation matters, folks! (n.p)

Extremely important for young queer students to feel represented + equally important for non-queer students to be exposed to queer perspectives. (n.p)

These were some of the responses to whether the participants felt that including literature or audiovisual materials with trans or other LGBTQ+ topics would be beneficial for students. While research shows clear indication that academic performance is heavily influenced by social and emotional adjustment (Murray-Harvey, 2010), research on trans people in education, both in Norway and internationally, paints a picture of poor mental health and the experience of hostile school environments (Anderssen et al, 2020). I think

this indicates a lack of inclusion and representation of trans people in classrooms, leading to a lack of empathy and understanding among students. In the next section, I will be discussing the lack of LGBTQ+ presence in the curriculum and in teacher's training and arguing for the importance of incorporating LGBTQ+ explicitly in these contexts.

5.2 Lack of LGBTQ+ Presence in the Curriculum and Inadequate Professional Development

As previously mentioned, in the Norwegian core curriculum and the curriculum for the English subject there is a large focus on diversity and equality, but there is no explicit mention of LGBTQ+. The interdisciplinary subject "Health and life skills" in the core curriculum mentions students "physical and mental health, lifestyle habits, sexuality, and gender... (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017), but the mention of words such as 'gender' and not 'gender identity' can be interpreted as taking a rather biological approach, thereby reinforcing gender stereotypes (Kjæran, 2017). Under 'Core values of the education and training' it is stated that

What is in the best interests of the pupil must always be a fundamental consideration. There will always be tensions between different interests and views. Teachers must therefore use their professional judgment so that each pupil is given the best possible care within the school environment.
(Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017)

Relating this to the inclusion of trans and LGBTQ+ representation in education, I find that the best interest of the students, also include LGBTQ+ students, and teachers' therefore need to know how to act in their best interest. Research on trans experiences in the educational system is lacking and one of the reasons is that educational institutions have been a place trans people associate with suffering (Keenan & Suárez, 2021). However, the research conducted show discouraging results both in Norway and internationally (Clark et al, 2021; Anderssen et al, 2020). Research conducted in the US shows that among students in higher education, 84% of trans people had experienced gender-based violence (Clark et al, 2021). In Norway, the reports are equally disheartening where 60% of trans people in higher education reported having had suicidal thoughts. These numbers are frightening, which is why I believe that, in addition to including LGBTQ+ topics into the curriculum, these need to be incorporated in teachers' professional training. Research conducted in Sweden concludes that trans issues extend to schools' reproduction of gender in social interaction, pedagogy, subject knowledge and administration (Schmitt, 2022) and given the similar structure of the Swedish and Norwegian school system, I think we can assume that the situation is similar in both countries.

In reference to my analysis of teachers training and support in teaching trans YA literature, teachers professional training on inclusion of trans and gender diversity seems to be a pivotal reason as to whether they choose to include this in their teaching or not, so I believe that implementing it into teachers training should be mandatory. In my teacher training, I have been fortunate enough to have teachers who have included LGBTQ+ topics into some of my courses, which initially sparked my interest in researching the topic more closely, but not everyone seems to be as lucky. Both Teacher 2 and Teacher 3 stated that LGBTQ+ topics were not a part of their teacher training and felt unprepared to address these issues. These teachers had both finished their professional training over fifteen years ago, but even today, research shows that

LGBTQ+ topics in teacher education programs are discussed by certain faculty members and in certain courses, and that it is typically in relation to young adults, sexual health, and bullying (Shannon-Baker, 2020). This coincides with the responses to the questionnaire, where four respondents were ages 20-29, and two of these reported not having learned about LGBTQ+ inclusion in their teacher training. Further, the respondents who had learned about LGBTQ+ issues in their teacher training reported having implemented LGBTQ+ topics in their EFL teaching, which the two without LGBTQ+ training had not. The lack of LGBTQ+ topics as integrated throughout teachers training is problematic, knowing that teachers play an important role in school experiences in the lives of trans people, and that teachers with professional training in relation to trans people are more likely to take proactive steps in creating a more inclusive school environment (Clark et al, 2021). Further, I will be discussing the advantages of introducing trans YA literature and increased representation in the classroom.

5.3 Teaching Trans YA Novels to Create an Inclusive Classroom Environment and Fight for Social Justice

Teaching trans YA novels can be part of an inclusive pedagogy, exposing both trans and cis students to new perspectives and opening up for critical thinking that challenge cherished values and beliefs (Zembylas, 2015). In my collected data with EFL teachers in Norway, fourteen out of sixteen participants believed that including trans YA literature would be beneficial for students, yet only seven out of sixteen teachers had actually included LGBTQ+ literature or audiovisual materials in their teaching. As literature is proven to be a highly influential socializing agent in the development of children, there is a need for representation that challenges traditional heteronormative stories and depictions (Sandercock, 2022). I find that *When the Moon Was Ours* (McLemore, 2016) is a great example of this type of literature, including representation of two trans characters, depicted in two different ways, and also including other intersectional identities such as racially marginalized LGBTQ+ people. Regarding representation, there has been a shift from trans people being characterized in books and movies as "mad, bad and dangerous" to a characterization as more nuanced and sensitive (Sandercock, 2022). I believe that this shift can also be used as a topic for discussion in classrooms, as a way of sparking critical thinking for students and providing them with knowledge about how trans lives and experiences are complex, just like anyone else's.

I find inclusion of trans inclusive texts equally important for both trans and cis students. Bishop's (1990) depictions of literature as windows and mirrors, describes the importance of seeing yourself represented through text, as well as the importance of being exposed to the perspectives and experiences of others, all as a part of "the larger human experience" (p. 9). We all have different life experiences and different perspectives, and though someone who identifies as trans might experience aspects of life differently from someone who is cis, there are other aspects in life that we all have in common and raising awareness about this might prevent the distinction between 'us' and 'them'. Having established the need for literary windows and mirrors, the specifics of which literature teachers decide to include also matter. As trans experiences are wide-ranging, the literature, and discussion of the literature, needs to reflect this. This is relatable to Coats' (2017) problematization of the term mirrors, since mirrors can sometimes distort reality, having edges that limit their reflections and might ignore important contexts. Research has shown that there are several problematic portrayals of

trans characters in books from the last decade as described in 3.2.3 (Butler, 2020), and as the lived experiences of trans people are so wide-ranging, it would be impossible to include accurate representation for everyone. However, the inclusion of a novel with several different perspectives like *When the Moon Was Ours* (McLemore, 2016) is a good starting point in addition to having and being able to convey the knowledge that the experiences depicted in the book may or may not necessarily be recognizable to people who identify as trans.

6 Conclusion

In this thesis I have analyzed and discussed whether Norwegian EFL teachers implement trans literature in the lower-secondary English classroom, and what challenges and opportunities come with it. I have also described how teaching trans YA literature in the English subject can contribute to creating a more inclusive environment. In the final section, I will provide some reflections on the main findings from my research, and finally I will present some of the limitations of this study and opportunities for further research.

6.1 Reflections on Main Findings

The conclusion I have reached regarding whether Norwegian EFL teachers implement trans literature in the EFL classroom is that a small amount has implemented trans literature specifically, while several teachers have implemented LGBTQ+ literature more broadly. I found that teaching and learning with trans literature brought several opportunities for discussion of vital themes, such as trans visibility, learning empathy and presenting students to new perspectives. However, from the participants in my research, more than half had not implemented any LGBTQ+ literature or audiovisual materials in their teaching. Of all the participants, a large majority felt that the inclusion of trans literature and other LGBTQ+ literature or audiovisual materials would be beneficial for all students, but there were several reasons why teachers were reluctant to implement trans literature with pupils in grades 8-10 in the English subject. Discomfort, students' and parents' possible reactions and lack of accessibility were all brought up as reasons why teachers had not adopted trans or LGBTQ+ literature into their teaching materials, but I found that a lack of professional training was one of the main causes. My collected data showed a correlation between teachers who had received professional training in trans and LGBTQ+ topics in their teaching and whether they chose to implement them or not. The teachers without any training on LGBTQ+ inclusion in their teaching felt unprepared as they did not have enough knowledge. I have related this issue to the lack of explicit mentioning of LGBTQ+ questions in the Norwegian curriculum and the lack of LGBTQ+ topics integrated throughout teacher training programs.

Throughout my analysis and discussion of *When the Moon Was Ours*, by Anna-Marie McLemore (2016), I have provided an example of a YA novel that offers a nuanced representation of trans experiences and trans life in intersectional ways. As a counterweight to stereotypical depictions of trans people in literature and movies, McLemore presents several trans characters with different life experiences, LGBTQ+ characters, and characters of color, thus providing an excellent introduction into trans communities and multiple topics for discussion and learning for teachers and students in lower-secondary school.

6.2 Limitations and Further Research

This master's thesis is limited, due to the time constraint, accessibility of participants for my data collection, my own positionality and the subjective experiences provided by my participants. I would have liked to post my questionnaire on the Facebook group for Norwegian English teachers to get more participants in my data

collection. As I was not able to, I posted it on the biggest Facebook group for all teachers in Norway, but as the group has more than 40.000 members, I believe that my post might have drowned somewhat in all the group activity and not reached as many interested participants as I would have liked. I would have also found it interesting to interview one or more teachers who identified as trans to convey and learn with their perspectives on my topic, but I was not able to find any within my time limit. Bearing in mind that this is a qualitative study with a limited number of respondents, we cannot assume the numbers I have provided to be an accurate representation of Norwegian EFL teachers, but I believe it gives an insight into the current conditions. As qualitative research is subjective and much based on feelings and interpretations, the results should also be interpreted in light of the positionality of the writer. Based on the findings of my research I believe that it is necessary to conduct more research on trans and other LGBTQ+ topics in the context of education, and my hope is that this master's thesis can be an inspiration for others wishing to conduct further research on the topic.

References

- Anderssen, N., Sivertsen, B., Lønning, K.J., & Malterud, K. (2020). Life satisfaction and mental health among transgender students in Norway. *BMC Public Health, 20*(1), 138–138. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-020-8228-5>
- Anicic, B. (2020). The use of LGBTQ+ literary texts and topics in the English subject: A qualitative study on EFL teaching practices in Norwegian lower-secondary schools [Master's thesis]. Norwegian University of Science and Technology.
- Atkins, L., & Wallace, S. (2012). *Research in education*. SAGE Publications Ltd. <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781473957602>
- Batchelor, K. E., Ramos, M., & Neiswander, S. (2018). Opening doors: Teaching LGBTQ-themed young adult literature for an inclusive curriculum. *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas, 91*(1), 29–36. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00098655.2017.1366183>.
- Berberick, S. N. (2018). The paradox of trans visibility: Interrogating the “year of trans visibility.” *Journal of Media Critiques, 4*(13), 123–144.
- Bishop, R. (1990). Windows, mirrors and sliding glass doors. *Perspectives: Choosing and using books for the classroom, 6*(3), P. ix-xi
- Boyatzis, R. E. (1998). *Transforming qualitative information: Thematic analysis and code development*. Sage.
- Brant, C. A. R., & Willox, L. (2020). *Teaching the teachers*. Information Age Publishing.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Butler, C. (2020). Portraying trans people in children's and young adult literature: Problems and challenges. *Journal of Literary Education, 3*, 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.7203/JLE.3.15992>
- Cariou, W. (2020). On critical humility. *Studies in American Indian Literatures, 32*(3), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1353/AIL.2020.0015>
- Castillo. (2023). The battle for trans rights: Political spectacle theory and its implications for education policy. *Sexuality, Gender & Policy, 6*(1), 8–15. <https://doi.org/10.1002/sgp2.12057>
- Clark, C.M., Kosciw, J, G., & Hurley, P. (2021). Life in school for transgender and nonbinary students. *Trans studies in K-12 education: Creating an agenda for research and practice*. (2022). Lightning Source Inc.
- Coats, K. (2017). *Introduction to children's young adult literature*. Bloomsbury Academic.

- Corbett, E. (2020). Transgender books in transgender packages: The peritextual materials of young adult fiction. *The International Journal of Young Adult Literature*, 1(1) DOI: 10.24877/ijyal.32
- Creswell, J. W. & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design. Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches* (Fifth ed.). SAGE publications.
- Croker, R. A. (2009). An introduction to qualitative research. In J. Heigham & R. Croker (Eds.), *Qualitative research in applied linguistics: A practical introduction*. (pp. 3-24). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Crowe, M., Inder, M., & Porter, R. (2015). Conducting qualitative research in mental health: Thematic and content analyses. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 49(7), 616–623. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0004867415582053>
- Dernikos, B. P. (2018). 'It's like you don't want to read it again': Exploring affects, trauma and 'willful' literacies. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 146879841875618. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468798418756187>
- Dhaenens, F., Van Bauwel, S., & Van Haelter, H. (2022). Trans persons on trans representations in popular media culture: A reception study. *DiGeSt - Journal of Diversity and Gender Studies*, 9(1). <https://doi.org/10.21825/digest.81844>
- FRI.Foreningen for kjønns- og seksualitetsmangfold. (2018). Transpersoners rettigheter. <https://www.foreningenfri.no/informasjon/dine-rettigheter/transpersoners-rettigheter/>
- hartline, F, R. (2020). The (trans)gender equality paradox. (Doctoral thesis). Norwegian University of Science and Technology
- Hawkins, J. (Ed.) (2017). Thematic analysis. (Vols. 1-4). SAGE Publications, Inc, <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483381411>
- Holm, B.C., (2016). Holdninger til kjønnsminoriteter i Norge: Hvem mener hva om transpersoner? (Mastersthesis). University of Bergen.
- hooks, B. (1989). *Talking back: Thinking feminist, thinking Black* . Sheba Feminist Publishers
- Johannessen, A., Tufte, P.A., & Christoffersen, L. (2016). Introduksjon til samfunnsvitenskapelig metode. Abstrakt forlag.
- Keenan, H.B., & Suárez, M. I. (2021). Toward trans studies informed theories and methods. *Trans studies in K-12 education: Creating an agenda for research and practice*. Lightning Source Inc. (Tier 2).
- Kjaran, J, I. (2017). *Constructing sexualities and gendered bodies in school spaces*. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-53333-3>
- Koch-Rein, Haschemi Yekani, E., & Verlinden, J. J. (2020). Representing trans: Visibility and its discontents. *European Journal of English Studies*, 24(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13825577.2020.1730040>

- Kunnskapsdepartementet (2017). Overordnet del – verdier og prinsipper for grunnopplæringen. Fastsatt som forskrift ved kongelig resolusjon. Læreplanverket for Kunnskapsløftet 2020
- Kunnskapsdepartementet (2019). Læreplan i engelsk (ENG01-04). Fastsatt som forskrift. Læreplanverket for Kunnskapsløftet 2020.
- Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *Det kvalitative forskningsintervju*. 2. utg. Gyldendal Akademisk.
- Malatino, H. (2020). *Trans care*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Mason, D. (2021). Trans. In Nel, P., Paul, L., & Christensen, N (Ed.), *Keywords for children's literature*(2nd. Ed.). New York University Press.
- McLemore, A. M. (2016). *When the moon was ours* (1st ed.). Thomas Dunne Books, St. Martin's Griffin.
- Meadow, T. (2018). *Trans kids: Being gendered in the twenty-first century*. University of California Press.
- Ministry of Culture and Equality. (2021). Trygghet, mangfold og åpenhet. Regjeringens handlingsplan mot diskriminering på grunn av seksuell orientering, kjønnsidentitet, kjønnsuttrykk og kjønnskarakteristika 2021–2024. The Government.
- Murray-Harvey, R. (2010). Relationship influences on students' academic achievement, psychological health and well-being at school. *Educational & Child Psychology*,27 (1). The British Psychological Society.
- Opprop.net. (2022). Vern våre barn mot kjønnsforvirrende undervisning. https://www.opprom.net/vern_vare_barn_mot_kjonnforvirrende_undervisning
- Owen. (2019). Histories of the transgender child by Julian Gill-Peterson (review). *The Lion and the Unicorn* 43(1), 133–136. <https://doi.org/10.1353/uni.2019.0007>
- Parcell, E., & Baker, B. (Eds.) (2017). *Narrative analysis*. (Vols. 1-4). SAGE Publications, Inc, <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483381411>
- Peräkylä, A., & Ruusuvauro, J. (2018). Analyzing talk and text. In Denzin, N, K., & Lincoln, Y.S. (Ed.). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research*. Fifth Edition. SAGE publications, Inc.
- Sandercock, T. (2022). *Youth fiction and trans representation*. Taylor & Francis Group. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003225966>
- Schmitt, I. (2023). Transgressing purity: Intersectional negotiations of gender identity in Swedish schools. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 20(1), 93–111. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19361653.2022.2103609>
- Shannon-Baker P. (2020). Unlearning heteronormativity: A framework for talking about LGBTI children in teacher education. In Brant C. A. R. (Ed), *Teaching the teacher: LGBTQ issues in teacher education* (pp. 39–52). Information Age Publishing.

- Snow, C, & O'connor, C. (2016). Close reading and far-reaching classroom discussion. *Journal of Education*, 196(1), 1–8.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/002205741619600102>
- Stonewall. (2022). List of LGBTQ+ terms. <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/list-lgbtq-terms>
- Suárez, M, I., & Mangin, M. M. (2022). *Trans studies in K-12 Education: Creating an agenda for research and practice*. Harvard Education Press.
- Ullman, Ferfolja, T., & Hobby, L. (2022). Parents' perspectives on the inclusion of gender and sexuality diversity in K-12 schooling: Results from an Australian national study. *Sex Education*, 22(4), 424–446.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14681811.2021.1949975>
- Zembylas, M. (2015). 'Pedagogy of discomfort' and its ethical implications: The tensions of ethical violence in social justice education. *Ethics and Education*, 10(2), 163–174. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449642.2015.1039274>

Appendices

Appendix A:

Are you interested in taking part in the research project

“Teaching Trans Young Adult Literature in the EFL Classroom

A Qualitative Study on Teachers' Perspectives”?

Purpose of the project

You are invited to participate in a research project where the main purpose is to examine how teachers in lower secondary schools use children's literature and/or young adult texts (including audiovisual) that portray transgender characters/communities (e.g. George, PET, From the Stars in the Sky to the Fish in the Sea, Heartstopper) in the EFL classroom and what opportunities and challenges come with it.

The MA-projects research questions are:

- 1) Do teachers implement trans literature in the EFL classroom? If they do, what opportunities and challenges come with it?
- 2) How can teaching trans young adult literature in the English subject contribute to creating a more inclusive environment?

Which institution is responsible for the research project?

Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Faculty of Social and Educational Sciences, Department of Teacher Education.

Supervisor: Libe García Zarranz, Associate Professor in Literature in English

Student: Vera Brandeggen

Why are you being asked to participate?

Research participants are English teachers in lower secondary schools in Norway.

What does participation involve for you?

I will carry out the research project in two ways: completing a questionnaire and conducting interviews. The questionnaire will be online and hopes to include 20-30 EFL teachers in lower secondary schools in Norway. The interview will include 3 EFL teachers in lower secondary schools in Norway. The interviews will be conducted in person. I will be using sound recording when collecting data, but the data will be deleted after the transcribing process. Participants will receive pseudonyms to protect their anonymity. All data collected will be managed confidentially.

Participation is voluntary

Participation in the project is voluntary. If you chose to participate, you can withdraw your consent at any time without giving a reason. All information about you will then be made anonymous. There will be no negative consequences for you if you chose not to participate or later decide to withdraw.

Your personal privacy – how we will store and use your personal data

We will only use your personal data for the purpose(s) specified here and we will process your personal data in accordance with data protection legislation (the GDPR).

Libe García Zarranz, my supervisor (Department of Teacher Education, Norwegian University of Science and Technology) will have access to the personal data.

Your IP and email address will be registered by the data processor (NTNU, SelectSurvey). Other than that, the form will remain anonymous.

I will replace your name and contact details with a code. The list of names, contact details and respective codes will be stored separately from the rest of the collected data and will be locked away/encrypted.

The participants will be recognizable in publications to a limited extent. The only personal information which may be published is age, sex and occupation.

What will happen to your personal data at the end of the research project?

The planned end date of the project is 25. May 2022. Any collected data will be deleted at the end of the research project.

Your rights

So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:

- access the personal data that is being processed about you
- request that your personal data is deleted
- request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified
- receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and
- send a complaint to the Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data

What gives us the right to process your personal data?

We will process your personal data based on your consent.

Based on an agreement with Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Data Protection Services has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project meets requirements in data protection legislation.

Where can I find out more?

If you have questions about the project, or want to exercise your rights, contact:

- NTNU, Faculty of Social and Educational Sciences, Department of Teacher Education via Libe García Zarranz (libe.g.zarranz@ntnu.no)
- Our Data Protection Officer: Thomas Helgesen (thomas.helgesen@ntnu.no, tlf. 93079038)
- NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS, by email: (personverntjenester@nsd.no) or by telephone: +47 55 58 21 17.

If you have questions about how data protection has been assessed in this project, contact:

Data Protection Services, by email: (personverntjenester@sikt.no) or by telephone: +47 53 21 15 00.

Yours sincerely,

Project Leader

Student

Libe García Zarranz

Vera Brandeggen

Consent form

I have received and understood information about the project "Teaching Trans Young Adult Literature in the EFL Classroom. A Qualitative Study on Teachers' Perspectives" and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

to participate in an interview

to participate in a questionnaire/online survey

I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end of the project.

(Signed by participant, date)

Appendix B:

Interview questions

Part 1: General questions about background and teaching practices in the EFL classroom

- Why did you want to become an English teacher?
- In what grade(s) are you teaching, or have you previously taught English?
- How many ETCS points do you have in the English subject?
- For how many years have you been an English teacher?
- What aspects of the English subject do you enjoy teaching the most? (Language and grammar, communication, literature, culture and history...)
- Do you use literature in your EFL classroom? If so, which are your favourite genres or topics to discuss?

Part 2: Experience and attitudes

- Have you ever received instructions on LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer +) topics and texts within your teacher education training?
- Have you ever discussed transgender topics and texts within your teacher education?
- Do you know if you have or have had any pupils that are within the LGBTQ+-categories/communities in your classroom?
- Have you ever talked about LGBTQ-related topics in your EFL classroom?
- Have you discussed trans issues, or used teaching materials containing trans representation in your EFL classroom?
- Do you think that learning about trans people is a part of other subjects such as natural sciences and social sciences in your school?
- Do you use YA literature in your classroom?
- If yes: Do you use YA literature with trans content in your classroom?
- Do you think implementing trans YA literature could be beneficial in the EFL classroom? If so, why (or why not). Please elaborate.
- Who do you think would benefit from reading trans YA literature in your classroom?
- What do/would you find challenging about implementing trans YA literature in the classroom?
- How do /would you prepare as a teacher before implementing trans YA literature in the classroom?
- In what ways would you prepare for possible students' reactions when teaching trans YA literature?
- In what ways would you prepare for possible parents reactions when teaching trans YA literature

Part 3: Integration of trans or other LGBTQ+ topics into schools and the curriculum

- Do you know if your school has any official guidelines when it comes to teaching trans or other LGBTQ+-related topics?

- Sexuality and gender are a part of the interdisciplinary topic health and life skills. Do you know if your school has a clear plan for which subjects this should be taught in?
- Are you or do you think you would be supported by your school administration in teaching trans YA literature?
- Do you know if trans YA literature, including YA, is easily accessible in your school?

Part 4: Future steps

- Are trans topics and texts something you will continue/consider teaching in your EFL classroom in the future?
- What changes would you want to implement in your teaching practices within this topic?
- What advice would you give a new teacher when teaching about trans and other LGBTQ+ topics in the EFL classroom?

Appendix C

Questionnaire

Part A: Personal information about the candidate:

Which age group do you belong to?

- 20-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60+

What is your gender identity?

- Male
- Female
- Non Binary
- Trans
- Other
- Do not wish to answer

How long have you worked as a teacher?

- 1-2 years
- 3-4 years
- 5-10 years
- More than 10 years

How long have you been teaching English?

- 1-2 years
- 3-4 years
- 5-10 years
- More than 10 years

In which grades do you teach English?

- 5-7
- 8-10
- Younger
- Older

How many credits do you have in the English subject?

-

Are you currently or planning on taking extra credits in the English subject?

- Yes
- No

Part B: Questions about Literature in the Classroom:

How often do you use literature and/or audiovisual materials in your English teaching?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes

- Often

Do you use literary texts such as short stories, graphic novels, picture books, plays or poetry (add more) in your classroom?

- Yes
- No

Why? Why not?

If yes, please list 2-3 books (not textbooks) that you use in your classroom:

-
-
-

Do you use audiovisual materials in your classroom (e.g. tv-shows, films, animations)?

- Yes
- No

Why? Why not?

Part C: Questions about Using LGBTQ+ – literature in the EFL Classroom

Have you ever included the topic of LGBTQ+ in your English teaching?

- Yes
- No

Why? Why not?

Have you ever introduced your students to LGBTQ+ related literature/audiovisual materials (picture books, novels, videos, etc...) in your English teaching?

- Yes
- No

If yes: what literature/audiovisual materials?

How do you find talking about LGBTQ+ topics in the classroom?

- Interesting
- Important
- Difficult
- Relevant
- Other

Do you think it would be beneficial for students to be exposed to literature/audiovisual materials about LGBTQ+ topics in the English subject?

- Yes
- No
- Why? Why not?

Part D: Questions about Using Trans Young Adult Literature in the EFL classroom

Do you have any experience using the genre young adult literature in your English teaching?

- Yes

- No
- If yes, please elaborate:

Have you ever used trans YA literature in your English teaching?

- Yes
- No

Why? / Why not?

Do you find trans YA literature easily accessible in your school?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Do you think introducing your students to trans YA literature in the EFL classroom would be beneficial?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Are/would you be worried about students' or parents' reactions to teaching trans YA literature in the EFL classroom?

- Students
- Parents
- Both
- Neither

Why? Why not?

Appendix D

NSD sin vurdering

Vurdering av behandling av personopplysninger

06.12.2022

Referansenummer: 967371

Vurderingstype: Automatisk

Dato

06.12.2022

Prosjekttittel

Teaching Trans Young Adult Literature in the EFL Classroom A Qualitative Study on Teachers' Perspectives

Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon

Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet / Fakultet for samfunns- og utdanningsvitenskap (SU) / Institutt for lærerutdanning

Prosjektansvarlig

Libe García Zarranz

Student

Vera Brandeggen

Prosjektperiode

01.11.2022 - 25.05.2023

Kategorier personopplysninger

- Almennelige

Lovlig grunnlag

- Samtykke (Personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a)

Behandlingen av personopplysningene er lovlig så fremt den gjennomføres som oppgitt i meldeskjemaet. Det lovlige grunnlaget gjelder til 25.05.2023.

Grunnlag for automatisk vurdering

Meldeskjemaet har fått en automatisk vurdering. Det vil si at vurderingen er foretatt maskinelt, basert på informasjonen som er fylt inn i meldeskjemaet. Kun behandling av

personopplysninger med lav personvernulempe og risiko får automatisk vurdering. Sentrale kriterier er:

- De registrerte er over 15 år
- Behandlingen omfatter ikke særlige kategorier personopplysninger;
 - Rasemessig eller etnisk opprinnelse
 - Politisk, religiøs eller filosofisk overbevisning
 - Fagforeningsmedlemskap
 - Genetiske data
 - Biometriske data for å entydig identifisere et individ
 - Helseopplysninger
 - Seksuelle forhold eller seksuell orientering
- Behandlingen omfatter ikke opplysninger om straffedommer og lovovertridelser
- Personopplysningene skal ikke behandles utenfor EU/EØS-området, og ingen som befinner seg utenfor EU/EØS skal ha tilgang til personopplysningene
- De registrerte mottar informasjon på forhånd om behandlingen av personopplysningene.

Informasjon til de registrerte (utvalgene) om behandlingen må inneholde

- Den behandlingsansvarliges identitet og kontaktopplysninger
- Kontaktopplysninger til personvernombudet (hvis relevant)
- Formålet med behandlingen av personopplysningene
- Det vitenskapelige formålet (formålet med studien)
- Det lovlige grunnlaget for behandlingen av personopplysningene
- Hvilke personopplysninger som vil bli behandlet, og hvordan de samles inn, eller hvor de hentes fra
- Hvem som vil få tilgang til personopplysningene (kategorier mottakere)
- Hvor lenge personopplysningene vil bli behandlet
- Retten til å trekke samtykket tilbake og øvrige rettigheter

Informasjonssikkerhet

Du må behandle personopplysningene i tråd med retningslinjene for informasjonssikkerhet og lagringsguider ved behandlingsansvarlig institusjon. Institusjonen er ansvarlig for at vilkårene for personvernforordningen artikkel 5.1. d) riktighet, 5. 1. f) integritet og konfidensialitet, og 32 sikkerhet er oppfylt.



 **NTNU**

Norwegian University of
Science and Technology