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# **Authentic literature in “Kunnskapsløftet 2020”**

How do teachers relate to and use authentic literature in light of LK20?

## **Abstract**

This paper examines how teachers relate to and use authentic literature after the implementation of "Kunnskapsløftet 2020" by using semi-structured interviews as a method. We discuss our findings in light of the role coursebooks play in Norwegian classrooms and the changes in the curricula since "Kunnskapsløftet 2006", such as the increasing emphasis on deep learning.

Our results show a positive attitude towards using authentic literature, but also that a lack of knowledge of how to use it may prevent more teachers from relying less on coursebooks. A coursebook provides more structure and predictability according to our interviewees. In our discussion, we conclude that the use of authentic literature is likely to help pupils reach many of the aims outlined in LK20 in a better way than using coursebooks only.

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## 1 Introduction

When we started our masters program at USN, we experienced something that we had not experienced earlier in our studies, at least not to this extent. Having several semesters of English throughout the master's program, we experienced an incorporation of authentic literature that we had not seen before. "Authentic literature" here means texts that are not created with the intention of being used for teaching, and the way we use the term it can refer to any type of text (Ciecierski, Bintz, 2015, p. 17). While we were lucky and were exposed to authentic literature earlier in our teacher training, there was not that much focus on the didactics involved in using authentic literature in the classroom. However, when we reached the master's program part of our studies, this changed. A number of our teachers started to fully embrace literature and the benefits that it could bring, showing us ways in which we could incorporate this in our own teaching when our education was finished.

This made us think back to classrooms we have observed throughout our studies, classrooms we had our teachers practice in, as well as classrooms we have worked in ourselves. Why had we not seen the use of authentic literature in primary schools? While we experience this exposure to teaching through literature, what we saw in the primary school classrooms we observed throughout our teacher training was mostly the traditional coursebook.

This made us ask the question of why this was the way it was, and it made us want to investigate. The logical place to start was the curriculum, keeping in mind that the introduction of the new LK20 curriculum focuses more on deep learning (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2019). Could this not be an opportunity to incorporate more authentic literature into primary school teaching?

Did the new curriculum focus more on literature in general than LK06? What were actually the major changes that came with the new curriculum? Were there major changes? These were questions that interested us.

We started looking into the tradition of coursebooks both in Norway and abroad, and we discovered that the coursebook seemed to have a rather strong footing both in Norway as well as elsewhere. This led us to further investigate what the benefits of incorporating authentic literature in an English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom could be. We looked at research related to the use of authentic literature in the EFL classroom, and we wanted to look at what would be some of the benefits of using authentic literature as opposed to using the traditional printed textbook.

The overall research question in this thesis is: How do teachers relate to and use authentic literature in light of LK20? In order to answer this question, we have interviewed four teachers. In light of previous research, theories and our own findings we will also discuss the following questions: What role does the coursebook have in EFL teaching? Why should teachers use authentic literature? How can teachers use authentic literature in the EFL classroom in light of LK20?

## 2 Methods

We chose to interview teachers as a method in this thesis. Approximately ten to twelve teachers were asked to partake in our study, but due to our topic, most of them were reluctant to participate. We are aware of the delimitations of a limited number of respondents. The input from the four teachers who responded to our questions nevertheless gave us a lot of material to use in our discussion of authentic literature. Three of these teachers have between three and six years of experience as EFL-teachers, whereas the fourth interviewee has approximately 20 years of experience. They all teach Years eight to ten in lower secondary school.

For the interviews in this thesis we chose to use a semi-structured interview to collect our data. The reason we chose this method was that while we wanted to make sure the data we collected was as relevant as possible, we also wanted our informants to answer as freely as they possibly could without feeling that the questions they were presented with would limit how they could respond. The interviews in this thesis were done in a written format. There was no audio or video recording of any kind.

## 2.1 Semi-structured interviews, a qualitative approach

When faced with the choice of what kind of method we wanted to deploy to gather our data a qualitative approach seemed reasonable. Since gathering massive amounts of data on an overarching and generalized topic was never our intention, instead we were looking to get detailed and well thought out information from a few informants to serve as voices in our discussion. With having a difficult time getting teachers to help us, we had to get creative with how to get informants and how to interview them, but according to Befring (2016), qualitative methods is an option that can be considered informal and flexible, offering up room for both improvisation and creative adjustments (p. 109). However, since a qualitative approach leaves room for flexibility, and is largely based on interpretation of the data we collect, It is up to us to interpret the information we have gathered, and this interpretation will always to a certain extent be affected by the information we already possess, which means that we have to take into account the hermeneutic aspect of utilizing a qualitative approach (Befring, 2009, p. 111). In our study, we know that we are using materials, such as the interviews, which will be influenced by our interpretation. While it is impossible to stay completely objective as how we interpret the data is influenced by the knowledge we already possess and our own opinions, it is our responsibility to stay as objective as possible in order not to misrepresent our sources.

We designed the interview guide with the intention of getting in-depth answers that could highlight the teacher's experience with choosing and utilizing learning material. We conducted two test interviews to check if the questions would give us enough of the information we wanted. After editing the interview guide we conducted the interviews in writing, meaning that the interview subjects were given a version of the interview guide. They were then asked to write out their answers and return them to us.

Postholm and Jacobsen (2016) raise a few points that make interviews performed through asynchronous means different from a face to face interview, points that can alter the collection of data in some ways. one of the points they raise that holds

relevance for the way we choose to do things; they state that when interviews are performed asynchronously, we as interviewers lose the ability to observe the person we are interviewing, not being able to look at facial expressions, body language, voice inflections or factors like this (p. 70). While the interviews we did were not in person, maybe handling this the way we did could have taken some of the pressure off the informants compared to an in person setting. However, the information that we wanted to get from our informants had to do with their own teaching practice, and their take on topics such as the use of authentic literature, the introduction of LK20, the role of the coursebook in their teaching and their planning.

## 2.2 NSD - anonymous information

We did not send our project into the NSD for this thesis. The reason for this is that the information coming from our interviews is in no way traceable to our informants, the data collected contains no personal information, the interviews themselves have only written data collected and no audio recording was done. This fulfills NSD's criteria for anonymous information, as well as the criteria for interviews that state that interviews or observation where data is only recorded through notes and no audio recording is done, are considered anonymous (NSD).

## 3 Background: LK20 and the choice of learning materials in Norwegian schools

In this chapter we discuss possible changes in how the use of authentic literature is encouraged in LK20, compared to LK06. We also look at the tradition of choosing learning material in the EFL classroom in Norway, which is not based on any specification of topics that should be taught, but rather the skills that should be learned;

When the curriculum operates with competence aims, and not content aims as in older curriculums, the learning material developers can in a lot of contexts choose what content they want to put emphasis on. It also means that the teachers have a lot of choices in terms of what content they want to



work with to meet the competence aims of the curriculum.  
(Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2021, ch. 2.4, our translation)

It needs to be noted, however, that LK20 is not the first curriculum to utilize competence aims, as LK06 also used competence aims and not content aims.

We attempt to look at both positive and negative sides of using a coursebook versus authentic literature. Since the competence aims do not specify content, it also means that teachers are free to utilize the materials that they see fit to meet the competence aims in the curriculum (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2021 ch. 2.4). The changes from LK06 to LK20 can be said to represent an evolution rather than a revolution, but in any case it is interesting to look at some of the consequences the changes may have had in the EFL classroom.

### 3.1 The role of literature in the EFL classroom

In an article in *Bedre Skole*, Anna Birketveit and Kåre Nitter Rugesæter (2015) state that the teaching of English in Norwegian classrooms is less than satisfactory. They point out how important extensive reading is for vocabulary teaching, which in turn is necessary to be able to use the language, and they go on to show how Glenn Ole Hellekjær (2005) concluded that Norwegian students are not well enough prepared to read extensive texts in higher education. Students do not read enough lengthy texts, and even though research has shown that they should, close reading is still the preferred method of choice amongst teachers (Birketveit & Rugesæter, 2015). Even though we have not found much research on the use of authentic literature in Norway, there are many studies that have been conducted abroad.

Bobkina and Dominquez (2014) briefly explain the development of the use of literature in EFL classrooms in Europe and Asia. In the early 20th century, literature was considered the best model text for improved writing skills, as well as functioning as visual examples of correct grammar. They claim that by the 1960s literature was not a part of the language learning curriculum, and although literature was again a topic in the 1980s, they claim that literature still has a minor role in the EFL classrooms today (p. 249). This may not reflect the tradition in Norway, but it is still

relevant to discuss the role of literature and how authentic fiction texts can play a major role in EFL teaching.

### 3.2 The background for a new curriculum

In documentation stemming from the government, we see some of the aspects that were aimed to be improved with LK20, and why they were deemed in need of revision. These revisions can also be relevant for teachers who want to use more authentic literature.

Judging from the wording used when the design of a new curriculum was discussed, it seems as if there may have been discrepancies in LK06 in several areas, both in terms of the definition of some of the terminology used in that curriculum, as well as the competence aims not wholly reflecting the general section of the curriculum. Also, the general section had not been revised for LK06, but was carried on from earlier curricula. This seems to have been the general consensus when looking at some of the arguments discussing what would need to be revised and improved in the new LK20 (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2016, ch. 3.2).

The goal of this new curriculum is better learning and understanding for the students. Schools and teachers are to facilitate the goal of the students obtaining good knowledge and understanding of the subjects, basic skills, and being able to utilize this knowledge in different contexts.

(Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2016, ch. 3.2, our translation)

Not only does a new curriculum attempt to address inconsistencies throughout LK06, but it intends to be a curriculum that feels more relevant to prepare the students for life after school, as workers and as democratic and active citizens. One of the new changes with LK20 is a stronger emphasis on correlation between subjects (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2016, ch. 3.2). The last sentence in the quote also refers to deep learning, which might be considered the overall goal of LK20. Nevertheless, the changes in LK20 can still be called an evolution.

### 3.2 The definition of the term “competence”

The term "competence", or “kompetanse”, is also seen in both steering documents. However, it has been revised for LK20. It basically extends the meaning of the term and adds to it the pillars that we see are central for deep learning, these global competencies that are at the core of the deep learning concept.

In LK06 “competence” was defined as: “The ability to solve tasks and master complex challenges. The students show competence in specific situations by using knowledge and skills to solve problems” (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2016, ch. 4.1). While in LK20, it is defined as:

Competence means to master challenges and solve problems in different contexts and includes cognitive, practical, social and emotional learning and development, including attitudes, values and ethic assessments. Competence can be developed and learned and will be expressed through what a person does in different activities and situations. (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2016, ch. 4.1, our translation)

As evident from the quotes above, the term entails the same skills that are listed as the global competencies: creativity, communication, critical thinking, citizenship, collaboration, and character, with an emphasis on transferable knowledge, i.e taking knowledge from one field and utilizing it to solve problems in a different field.

This is also emphasized when talking about the scope of the new curriculum. If we explore the change of focus from surface knowledge of a wide array of themes to a more focused approach to fewer themes and topics. A central issue here is deep learning:

That curricula and competence aims has a scope that gives adequate time for immersion is important to facilitate deep learning. It also demands that the progression in the curricula are clear, that means that the difficulty and the

complexity of what the students shall learn and master gradually increases. Seen in light of how much time is at our disposal, a lot of the aims contribute to there not being adequate time for immersion. This could lead to the students learning a little about a lot of topics without achieving lasting knowledge and understanding.

Deep learning also demands a certain width in the education because the students need to be able to utilize their knowledge and understanding in a larger context. This is important to understand a topic or content area holistically. It could also contribute to knowledge of why one is supposed to learn something, which could motivate the students to learn more, but without time and the possibility for immersion, it will to a small degree lead to lasting knowledge. To achieve deep learning, there needs to be interaction between the width and the depth in the education to a certain extent.

(Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2016, ch. 4.3, our translation)

We see here an emphasis on transferable knowledge, but also on the progression of the competence aims themselves. There needs to be enough time for the students to attain a certain depth with their learning, and the complexity and difficulty of what they are working with should increase in a linear curve, while also attempting to make the students understand why they are learning something. These metacognitive processes are essential to achieve deep learning.

### 3.3 Competence aims

One of the things that immediately stands out when looking at the competence aims, is that in LK06 the competence aims are divided into subcategories. LK06 divides the competence aims into four different subcategories: language learning, oral communication, written communication, and culture, society and literature. LK06 contains many more competence aims than LK20, and the ones that we see in LK06 are more specified and less open to interpretation.

An example of this is: in LK06 we find the competence aim “discuss and elaborate on different types of English literature from English-speaking countries” (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2013), while in LK20 we find the competence aim “read, interpret and reflect on English-language fiction, including young people’s literature” (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2019). While one could argue that these competence aims somewhat attempt to say the same thing, it could be interpreted in a way that LK20 formulates the competence aim in a way that more clearly describes what the students should take away from working with the literature, breaking down the terms discuss and elaborate into the more concise terms read, interpret and reflect. While LK06 utilizes the word “diskutere”, or discuss, a lot, it could be considered a term that does not really entail anything specific and is very much up for interpretation. Instead we see LK20 use the words “lese”, or read, “tolke”, or interpret and “reflektere”, or reflect on much more. This reinforces the idea that the students need to understand the information they are working with to a much larger degree, and attempt to have a reflected relationship to what they have read and utilize this in other situations rather than just using it in a discussion for the sake of discussion. By reflecting on and interpreting what you read instead of just discussing it, at least on paper the intentions behind the changing of words seem to work more towards deep learning than what LK06 did.

#### 3.4 General section, interdisciplinary topics, and deep learning in the competence aims

The introduction of LK20 also sees the introduction of interdisciplinary topics added to the steering document, as well as a set of core elements that the competence aims are based on. An example of such an interdisciplinary topic is “livsmestring”, or health and life skills, which refers to skills that are important for the students to be able to master their own life. This also has a more nuanced formulation in the curriculum for English, which more directly addresses aspects such as expressing feelings, thoughts, experiences and opinions, providing the students with skills they need in life (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2017). This approach of having a set of values and competence aims that are very closely woven together can possibly be traced

back to the core philosophy that went into designing LK20. LK20 is based on the concept of deep learning, a concept that will be explored in more detail below.

If we study the general section and what lays the foundation for the competence aims, something that can be found repeatedly is the term “awareness”, giving the students the urge to explore, sparking curiosity in regards to the different themes and topics. Terms such as ethical awareness and understanding of cultural awareness are also examples of terms that can be seen in the general section of LK20 (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2017). What we see here, is that a lot of the formulations that focus on factual knowledge seem to be missing. Instead, we see a focus on terms enforcing understanding and reflection on the topics instead of memorization of facts. By doing this the students are encouraged to explore and discover for themselves, while learning from their own mistakes.

We see some competence aims reinforce a critical thought process for the students, encouraging them to reflect on and discuss the sources of information they use instead of simply taking for granted that all sources of information are reliable. This means that it allows for the students to stumble along the way in search for information, and learn from it. If we also look at the core elements, we find formulations such as this one:

By reflecting on, interpreting and critically assessing different types of texts in English, the students shall acquire language and knowledge of culture and society. Thus the students will develop intercultural competence enabling them to deal with different ways of living, ways of thinking and communication patterns. (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2017)

Once again we see that the focus is not on the topic itself necessarily, but rather that the learning should take place through reflection, interpretation and critical assessment, it also might focus on a particular skill, for example intercultural competence in this case. For comparison, no such competence aim can be found in LK06 if we look at the competence aims (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2013). Comparing this to the principles for education found in LK06, terms of this nature are almost

never mentioned in the principles for learning section of the general section of LK06. Instead, we find a much larger focus on terms relating to having the students engage in different activities relating to the topics at hand (Utdanningsdirektoratet, n.d.).

With the way the general section of LK20 is formulated, it can be interpreted in a way that puts the focus on attempting to provide the students with the competence to become functioning members of society, which could be considered one of the overarching goals of deep learning. This allows them to use already gained knowledge in new contexts to help them not to memorize knowledge, but rather help them become problem solvers in different fields (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2019). While in LK06, the focus is rather put on implementing assets such as local culture and the society around them into the learning in a meaningful way (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2017). While this formulation will help familiarize them with the society around them, it does not seem to convey the need for an approach that wants them to partake in said society in a contributing way, or to become functioning parts of this society, as terms such as understanding or critical thinking are hardly used in LK06.

When looking at the part of motivation for learning and learning strategies, it becomes clear that while methodological freedom can be an asset there is no guarantee that it goes past the traditional fact of memorization. LK06 puts the focus on varied learning activities to keep students motivated, but it does not really take into account what these learning strategies should result in, just that they should be varied and engaging enough for the students to find learning fun (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2017). Of course a lot of this needs to be seen in relation to the contents of LK20, which is largely based on the concept of deep learning.

### 3.5 Deep learning

While the idea of deep learning is not new in and of itself, Michael Fullan et al. (2018) has been at the forefront in talking about the benefits of this pedagogical approach. It is his definition that is the foundation for LK20, and will therefore be our source in regards to deep learning. In its basic form, deep learning boils down to the

process of gaining six global competencies considered vital for building a wider competence in terms of problem solving and overall building of character (p. 41).

What supposedly makes a difference with deep learning as compared to surface learning, is that it involves higher cognitive processes to gain a deeper understanding of problems one will be faced with in the modern world. It dives into cross-curricular problems as well as integrating the individual's skills in different fields. It is an active, authentic, challenging and student focused approach to learning with a focus on exploration, research and trial and failure, as opposed to fact memorization. (Fullan et al., 2018, p. 45)

In other words, it is an approach that wants students to gain an understanding of problems and situations that they would approach in life outside of school. Removing the focus on memorizing facts, and instead building upon exploration, research, as well as trial and error. Allowing the students to make connections as a cumulative process. Allowing this process to happen over time due to new ideas and as times change. This would also require building a classroom environment where making mistakes is not only allowed, but considered an important part in the process of learning. Not making a point of the mistakes that were made, but shifting the focus over to what the students can learn from it. This approach is looking to create a form of solidarity between teacher and learner so that everyone is working toward the same goal (Fullan et al., 2018, pp. 56-58).

According to Fullan et al. (2018), when students start to engage in authentic learning that means something to them, they become reluctant to go back to the traditional coursebooks and notetaking. This supposedly makes the teacher see that the students are changing right before their eyes, and becoming motivated for drastic change. Forming a new synergy between teachers and learners that can move the barriers for learning that teachers on their own might not have been able to figure out (p. 79). Seeing this from the perspective of how authentic literature can be used in the classroom when compared to coursebooks, we can look at some of the concepts already mentioned in regards to deep learning. If we want to engage the students with authentic learning and transferable knowledge when it comes to language education, is it not reasonable to assume that one of the key aspects to accomplishing this would be through informed discussion and reflection? With critical



thinking as one of the central pillars for deep learning, we would assume it would also be one of the central pillars in terms of using authentic literature in language learning. This is allowing the students to have critical discussions around literature they find engaging, and being able to see it in context with other texts that both themselves and the other students have worked with. Using authentic literature can also give students a chance to spend plenty of time on one task and really go deep into one thing.

Even if Fullan et al. (2018) in his book explains deep learning in a way that makes it appear as a didactic revolution, it also needs to be noted that this approach to learning is not necessarily something brand new, and has been used in learning earlier. However, it is now resurfacing as a pedagogy with the intention to inspire and motivate students.

### 3.6 Coursebooks

The purpose of this chapter is to take a look at the role that coursebooks traditionally plays in teaching both in Norway and abroad. The information from this chapter will be used to lay a foundation for further discussing whether or not authentic literature is better suited to reach the competence aims in the new curriculum than the coursebooks, which are written with the sole purpose of fulfilling said competence aims.

#### 3.6.1 The tradition of coursebooks in light of LK20

With the focus on competence aims in the curricula, the goal of a school year is first and foremost to get the students to develop as much competence as possible, with the end goal of passing an exam. Coursebooks are of course designed around this very concept of helping the students reach the competence aims of the curricula. As we can read from “Kunnskapsgrunnlag for engelsk”, chapter 2, from Utdanningsdirektoratet, there are no guidelines for topics or learning material that indicates that coursebooks are necessary:

Competence is the ability to acquire and apply knowledge and skills to master challenges and solve tasks in familiar and unfamiliar contexts and situations. Competence includes understanding and the ability to reflect and think critically. (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2017)

This understanding of competence is related to deep learning as defined in LK20, since deep learning also can be defined as the ability to reflect and think critically, but also to use knowledge in new situations (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2019).

Common reference frameworks are important for each person's sense of belonging in society. This creates solidarity and connects each individual's identity to the greater community and to a historical context. A common framework gives and shall give room for diversity, and the pupils must be given insight into how we live together with different perspectives, attitudes and views of life. (Utdanningsdirektoratet 2017)

The common frame of reference could refer to coursebooks, but using written authentic literature for this very same purpose is of course not a problem, as stated earlier, the curricula offers the teachers complete freedom in terms of the material they use. It is possible to order classroom sets of literary books, or even use a variety of books to cover the same topics. In this way the aim of having a common frame of reference may still be fulfilled.

Looking at the changes from LK06 to LK20, each curriculum seems to try to achieve many of the same things, but in different words. One example is the competence aim “describe and reflect on the situation of indigenous peoples in English-speaking countries” from LK06 (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2013).

In LK20 the competence aim is formulated like this: “explore and reflect on the situation of indigenous peoples in the English-speaking world and in Norway“ (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2019). It may be interpreted to LK20 having a larger focus on process, and LK06 having a greater emphasis on the end goal. In LK20, the focus

on deep learning and interdisciplinary activities are specified. and what might be one of the intentions behind LK20 is that the students should be more active in their own learning process, or in other words, learning to learn. We suspect that coursebooks may not always be motivating enough for students to want to be creative, curious and do their own research. Whatever the answer to that is, we want to explore how authentic literature is used as a possible way to increase motivation, give the students more freedom and serve as a foundation for their own interests and creativity.

### 3.6.2 Are coursebooks for everyone?

In the language learning classroom, the teacher has freedom of method in terms of how the teacher approaches teaching their subject and what material they elect to use. However, it is a fact that many teachers still choose to use the coursebook as their go to material, even though it may not always be the best choice. Data from Forleggerforeningen (2020) shows an increase in net sales for coursebooks of about 31,2% driven by the introduction of a new curriculum, as well as a drastic increase in sales of digital learning materials. The numbers also show a decrease in sales of both children's books and literature of 1,5% and 9,7% respectively (pp. 7-10). The freedom to choose your own material makes it relevant to look closer at how teachers reason when they make their choices.

Looking to Brian Tomlinson's (2013) experience with this exact choice from over 40 years ago, he chose to throw his textbooks literally out the window together with his students. To him, the coursebooks represented meaningless material with a pretty big tedium factor.

My first and most dramatic attempt to humanize a coursebook took place one wintry night in Liverpool 45 years ago. As a very young teacher of a night school class of underprivileged underachievers I could take the tedium no more. I ordered the class to line up along the windows with their middle-class, middle-of-the-road coursebooks in their right hands. We opened the windows and, on the command 'throw', they threw their coursebooks away. Now we had no irrelevant materials for the English class and, in fact, now we had no

materials at all. So, instead the students brought their own. Soon we had a lot of comics and magazines and even one or two books as well. Then we had a lot of fun devising activities together that involved the students doing things that connected to their lives. (Tomlinson, 2013, p. 139)

While physically throwing a coursebook out the window might hold a certain symbolic value as well, it seems like Tomlinson (2013) almost wants to paint the coursebook as the villain of the classroom. Looking at the topic at hand, it is easy to gravitate towards either being on the side of coursebooks, or being against them. As a teacher, it is also possible to find a middle ground between relying on the coursebook for all your teaching, and throwing it out.

What Tomlinson (2013) used to substitute his coursebooks with, was authentic material that had a larger connection to his students' lives, making it easier for them to connect with the material in a meaningful way. That was his intention. However, Tomlinson's (2013) statements here can be interpreted as if all coursebook material is problematic because it is tedious to the students. It is not uncommon for coursebooks to have excerpts from authentic literature. Reading an excerpt from a short story or novel found in a coursebook does not necessarily make it less motivating compared to reading the same excerpt from a source that is not the coursebook.

Tomlinson's (2013) primary concern with the coursebook is what he claims to be its lack of ability to meet the students' psychological and sociological realities (p. 139). What he argues is that the students will be more engaged in material which makes them draw parallels to their own lives and experiences, and it may not be possible for some students to find this kind of connection to the material in a coursebook. In reality, coursebooks usually contain some authentic material in the form of for example book excerpts, or longer authentic texts found on online resource pages. For that reason, the discussion of authentic or non-authentic texts is far more nuanced than it may seem.

Nonetheless, coursebooks should ideally be adapted to better suit the needs of all the different groups of students that they will inevitably be used with. Obviously, most coursebooks are designed to fulfill the aims of any given syllabus, and these goals

depend on which country's school system you look at. However, if the material is being modified too much, their primary function is somewhat lost. If they are only modified to a small extent, the coursebooks still provide a clear framework for the learning process. The contents of the course are predetermined by the contents of the coursebook, and the dilemma of learners not being engaged could again resurface (Geoff & Humphrey, 2019).

In light of Tomlinson's (2013) example, it can be argued that the coursebook should be removed completely from the classroom, but another possibility is rather to adapt it to better suit the needs of each class it is used with. In other words, the option is not to rely solely on the coursebook for everything, or removing it completely, but rather adapting some of the material that might not work with your group of students..

Tomlinson (2013) states that in an ideal world, the coursebook would be already humanized when the teachers open them and use them with their students (p. 147). But is it even possible to produce a coursebook that is pre-humanized like this?

The answer to that would be both yes and no. As a coursebook probably could be written in a way that is varied enough to connect with a larger group of students, many students might perceive them as humanized. However, it might be too big of a task to create a coursebook that can connect with every single pupil's life in a meaningful way. If we take into account the points that have been raised earlier in this chapter, we see that what makes a coursebook humanized is in large part up to the single student's views and experiences. Therefore, the answer is still vague, as you can attempt to cater to a larger group, but it would still be extremely hard to cater to every single one (Tomlinson, 2013, p. 147).

Tomlinson (2013) goes on to state, however, that the most important factor in terms of humanizing the coursebooks that we use in school comes down to what a lot of the tasks ask from the students. The tasks that the students work with in conjunction with the coursebooks need to connect with the students' own lives, and what is meant by this is that the tasks need to address the students own view, attitudes, feelings and opinions. This would in turn help them pull parallels to their own lives, and come up with their own examples when working through the problems in question (p. 151).

Therefore, while Tomlinson (2013) once went to the extreme of physically throwing them out the window, the coursebook does have its place in the classroom. However, the coursebook as it stands might work for some students, but others might require different kinds of material to be more engaged in the learning. The way Tomlinson (2013) refers to the coursebook, it almost seems like he sees it as the counterpart to authentic literature. Coursebook does often contain excerpts from authentic texts, and may not be considered a counterpart, but rather two different sources of material. While Tomlinson (2013) does raise some valid points in terms of using the coursebook, it should also be considered how the teacher uses the coursebook, and that how they are being utilized might be different for every teacher out there, not making Tomlinson's (2013) points any sort of absolute, but rather pointing at what could potentially be problematic with certain groups of students.

### 3.6.3. The tradition of coursebooks in Norway

When it comes to the presence of the coursebook in the language classrooms in Norway, a lot of teachers claim that it is an integral part of their planning. They state that this is because they want to be sure that their teaching is in line with what the steering documents say (Blikstad-Balas, 2014, p. 4). However, this begs the question of why do these teachers look towards the coursebooks instead of the actual steering documents that these books are based on?

This section will focus on studies conducted by other people in the field, and discussion of said materials will come in a later chapter. We wanted to find out if coursebooks can be used in a satisfying way. Are the coursebooks motivating? Do they inspire the students to learn on their own? Are they challenging enough? We will look at Blikstad-Balas' (2014) work on the use of coursebooks in Norway, as well as Gurrettaz and Johnston (2013) and Garton and Graves (2014) with their work on a similar topic outside of Norway.

One of the answers to this can of course be the fact that these books are tailor made for use in the classroom, which makes them an easy way for teachers to ensure that they include topics that are fit for working towards the competence aims in the

curriculum (Blikstad-Balas, p. 4. 2014). This can, however, to an extent be interpreted as a way for teachers to not necessarily need to plan out their own learning materials, instead just rely blindly on a coursebook. It would of course be wrong to assume that all teachers use their coursebooks like this, as a lot of teachers probably supplement their coursebook work with external materials. This could nevertheless indicate that the coursebooks themselves might play a bigger role in the planning of a semester than the actual steering documents do (Blikstad-Balas, p. 4. 2014). Coursebooks can also affect the teacher's methods of approaching the curriculum by doing it through the coursebook instead of looking at the actual curriculum itself.

Marte Blikstad-Balas (2014) is a professor at the University of Oslo with a Ph.D in language pedagogics. A lot of her work is related to the use of learning materials in teaching, and more specifically how the internet is being utilized in the classroom. However, the material that will be utilized in this chapter has a much greater focus on coursebooks and how the students use them, as well as how the teachers rely on them both when teaching and how they impact the planning of their semester. While her work in this article is not specifically tied to the planning of EFL teaching, it might be assumed that the findings in this paper could apply to several fields, including EFL.

Blikstad-Balas (2014) does state that it is not the fact that teachers use coursebooks that should be looked into, but rather how they are used (p. 4). This does build upon the point made earlier, that it can still be assumed that coursebooks can serve as a good foundation for a lesson. However, it would be a much more creative tool to use if it was supplemented by additional materials, which could for example mean things like authentic literature, films, or other forms of supplementary works to a certain topic.

This is further built upon when students claim that the most important use of the coursebook is actually in preparation for tests.

This goes back to what has been mentioned earlier; that a lot of the semester has been planned around the coursebook. Furthermore, not all teachers have a similar

practice in terms of how they decide to use the coursebooks, and this can contribute to confusion among students (Blikstad-Balas, 2014, p. 5)

One of the things that could prove problematic about this is that students often do not read either headlines, factboxes or factor in illustrations. Because of not only partially ignoring these factors but also finding it problematic to draw connections between verbal text and illustrations / models, it became very difficult for them to draw any meaningful information out of the text (Blikstad-Balas, 2014, p. 4.). As will be seen in our analysis of several case studies later on, authentic material in any form seems to engage students more, and perhaps this is what is needed to enhance the students reading skills.

This means that while the textbook, according to the students, is the most important when it comes to practicing for tests and not necessarily how it is used in the classroom, this becomes somewhat of a dilemma when we know how the students consume this content on their own.

We have experienced that the students tend to ignore headlines, illustration, factboxes and other very relevant information when consuming content from the coursebook. If this information is coupled with the fact that the texts in the coursebook are not granted much attention in the classroom either, it can indicate that the students are given a resource that is not optimally used either in the classroom or when they study on their own. This could possibly mean that even though the coursebook is being used, it is not being used as a source of exciting and engaging learning material, but rather as a way to get through tasks and the competence aims.

While a coursebook also usually brings several tasks to the table, the coursebooks in Blikstad-Balas's (2014) example are based on summing up information the students have already read in said coursebook serving mostly as a test for the students to see to what extent they paid attention to what the texts before the tasks were trying to communicate. However, if external tasks are brought into the picture not associated with the coursebook, it can suddenly become a resource for finding information to



answer said tasks, serving as a source just as any other sources the students might make use of to answer a task (p. 6)

Most students encounter several different texts and not just coursebooks throughout their school life, and reading different texts is important. However, the choice of non-coursebook texts students seem to be offered can often seem very monotonous, one of the dangers of this is that the students' reading skills become very narrow (Blikstad-Balas, 2014, p. 9). In other words, the texts in the coursebooks and the texts offered by the teachers are often very similar, both in content and purpose. Blikstad-Balas (2014) states that there is a strong tradition of fact based texts in schools, and the biggest goal for reading these texts have typically been to be able to reproduce the knowledge of these texts. However, this is the very same type of text that we find in most coursebooks, and because of this one could argue that it makes coursebooks very predictable for the students once they have figured out the pattern of a factual text (p. 10).

Another important argument for bringing in external texts into the classroom is that a student that only encounters material from a coursebook might find that the reading done in school is disconnected from reading in 'reality' (Blikstad-Balas, p. 10. 2014). It can create this feeling of disconnect between what students read in school and what they read in their free time, making it appear that the two are not connected in any way.

As mentioned above, Anna Birketveit and Kåre Nitter Rugesæter (2015) also criticize the use of coursebooks in Norwegian schools. They state that the coursebook dominates as the learning material of choice in the English subject in Norwegian schools, and with the coursebook being the primary source with which the teachers plan their teaching, lessons can end up feeling predictable and repetitive rather quickly. It also furthers the practice that if the students can solve the tasks and score well on a vocabulary test, teachers think it means that they are competent English speakers or writers. The workflow of the lessons will typically consist of working with tasks from a coursebook, which offers little challenge to many students (Birketveit, Rugesæter, 2015). This corresponds with the arguments that Blikstad-Balas (2014)

makes regarding the role coursebooks play in planning, namely that some teachers elect to base their whole teaching practice around the use of a coursebook, resulting in repetitive and predictable lessons.

#### 3.6.4 Use of coursebooks outside of Norway

A lot of the arguments that Blikstad-Balas makes in her text can be backed up by the words of Guerrettaz and Johnston (2013), and Garton and Graves (2014), stating that for a lot of contexts, coursebooks function as a kind of de facto curriculum, having a strong influence on what is being taught, and how. This points to the fact that what content is being used has a significant impact on language learning. However, there is a lack of research regarding how the choice of content affects affordances and the interactions taking place in the classroom (Garton & Graves, 2014, p. 654). In this setting, affordances can be considered the specific teaching purpose of a medium, which in this case is the coursebook.

They also state that interactions between students and the materials they use usually occur when there can be drawn a connection between the materials and the students' lives (Guerrettaz & Johnston, 2013, p. 788), suggesting that the content of the material itself plays a significant role in terms of how these connections are made. However, these connections usually occurred through the prompt from a teacher, and did not necessarily happen through having the students simply engage with the content (Garton & Graves, 2014, p. 655).

Materials such as coursebooks can still play an important role in terms of classroom pedagogy though, and can also serve as agents of change, functioning as a support for teachers who are less experienced or teachers who lack confidence. Also, the fact that coursebooks can serve as a catalyst for curricular change provides a visible framework that both the teachers and the students can work with (Garton & Graves, 2014, p. 655)

They can, however, also constrain classroom interaction and can cause unintended affordances (Garton & Graves, 2014, p. 655). We do not believe that this can not happen with the use of authentic literature, but as we will see in later chapters,

authentic literature often comes with increased motivation, which in turn can lead us to believe that teachers would experience fewer obstacles by using it.

It should also be noted that there are difficulties in carrying out research on the use of materials. It would have to be carried out over a very long period of time, not to mention the fact that it would be extremely hard to account for all the variables that could affect the learning situation in a classroom setting (Garton & Graves, 2014, p. 656). Guerrettaz and Johnston (2014) also state that the lack of empirical research on the topic of how materials affect language acquisition is somewhat surprising, considering the central role the materials play in this learning situation (p. 779).

### 3.6.5 Humanizing coursebooks

Several of the sources cited so far have mentioned that for the students to engage with the material in a meaningful way, they need to be able to draw a connection to their own life situation or be able to relate to the material in other ways. While it could be assumed that it is more or less impossible for any one single coursebook to meet this need for every student, this is where the concept of humanizing materials comes in. We will look to the work of Brian Tomlinson (2013) to attempt to explain the concept of humanizing a coursebook. In the words of Tomlinson (2013):

The voice of most coursebooks is semi-formal and distant, and matches the stereo-type of the knowledge-transmitting teacher talking to his learners. The writers reveal very little about their personalities, interests, beliefs and experiences and spend most of the time either telling the learners what to learn, do and say or interrogating them about what they know. (p. 150)

To make a coursebook more humanized, one of the easier way to go about achieving this is to ensure that most activities within the book inquire about the students own views, attitudes, feelings and opinions, and that they receive help from the teacher to think of their own examples and draw lines to their own life situations. This is a way of ensuring that the text and task is more likely to engage the students, making them feel that they are engaging with the writer of the book as an equal. Sadly, there are not many coursebooks that achieve this (Tomlinson, 2013, p. 151).

What we can take from what Tomlinson (2013) argues is that we could define humanizing a coursebook as altering how its content is being utilized to better engage the students by ensuring that the students can draw parallels to their own lives and utilize their own views and opinions when working with a coursebook. One could look at it as providing the coursebook with a more 'human' aspect, given that the whole point is to make the students feel that the material in the coursebook is more grounded in reality, instead of feeling distant and unrealistic, feeling very much irrelevant to their personal lives.

However, there is an argument to be made here that the students do not necessarily need to be able to draw a direct parallel to their own life to be able to find something interesting. This does not mean that students should not read or work with material they can not relate to at all. It is possible to engage in other people's lives, situations, cultures and so on even if the reader of these materials do not have personal experience with what they read. Through empathy, understanding and acceptance for others, students can learn about many complex matters that challenge their knowledge beyond what they are familiar with.

Emily Style (1988) introduced a term known as "mirrors and windows". What this basically boils down to is that the students need to be able to have experiences through literature that not only reflect their own situation, but also the situation of others (Moran, 2018). When we see the concept of a mirror, it does somewhat reflect the argument we have seen Tomlinson (2013) just made, that the students need material that to some extent reflects the students own situation.

You could say that it mirrors the students' lives in a way. However, looking at what Style (1988) refers to as windows, we see the exact opposite. This is supposed to be textual experiences that should serve as a window into others lives, whether it be in terms of culture, sickness, family situation or any other life situation (Moran, 2018). It is reasonable to assume that when considering the function of 'window' literature, it will not always be possible for students to draw lines to their own lives or their own experiences, however; this does not mean that it is impossible for them to find these texts interesting.

Style (1988) illustrates this in an interesting way with an example from a Lew Gardner poem, which we will not be citing here. But her example is:

While everyone in that fourth grade classroom looks out the same window, they do not all see the same old man. For all but one, their knowledge is “detached” and “objective.” And all but one of them suffer (unaware) from the limitation of their detachment. The poem’s narrator, on the other hand, is aware of his suffering as he acquires another view of the old man to whom he is intimately connected. Prior to the classroom window experience, the narrator’s view had been purely provincial. Now he is forcefully educated during “one afternoon of silent division” to see more than he has before. He sees his great-uncle reduced to being a mere “Other” in the eyes of the others. But there are more observations to be gleaned from this poetic incident. The child’s (understandable) silence means that the others in the classroom remain trapped in their limited, “objective” view of the old man. His otherness, his alien nature, is all they can see. This is a particular shame in the light of the insight of the painter Van Gogh who once asked in a letter to his sister-in-law, Could it not be that by loving a thing one sees it better and more truly than by not loving it? (Style, 1988, p. 3)

This example illustrates how teachers can not necessarily label a text as a window text but it is rather dependent on how your students experience the text, and this again could be tied into statements made earlier in this chapter; Namely that as a teacher, one should help their students draw these lines, help them find interest in the instances where they feel detached. In our opinion, this does not directly translate to help the students draw parallels to their own lives, but help them find meaning and an opening to experiencing something through someone else’s shoes. So while the earlier statement that the students need to be able to draw these parallels can be considered an obstacle, they do need to find an opening into finding the text they encounter interesting, even if the teacher helps them find said opening.

## 4 Theoretical Framework

In this chapter we look at what authentic literature is and how it can be used in the classroom, as well as a variety of approaches to authentic literature. We also analyze case studies to find out the results from using authentic literature in the EFL classroom.

### 4.1 Bringing literature to the EFL classroom

Authentic literature is everything that is not written with a purpose to teach someone something, or cover competence aims in a curriculum. It can be anything from novels to picture books and instructions, but also news articles and biographies (Ciecierski, Bintz, 2015, p. 17). Birketveit and Williams (2013) also uses the term “authentic literature”, but more loosely about literature in general (p. 7).

There is quite a lot of research done on authentic literature, but the few conducted in Norway are smaller studies made on what must be considered small groups. Quite a few studies have been conducted around the world. However, these mainly focus on how the students can learn more about other cultures. Sindland and Birketveit (2020) argue that learning a language is the same as learning a culture, and that it is important in today's society to develop intercultural competence. This can be done by using literature as a tool to teach students how to decenter, or seeing things from other people's point of view (p. 115). This is of course relevant to our research, as the competence aims in LK20 also cover culture in English-speaking countries. However, we also want to discuss how we can use authentic literature to also cover other competence aims while increasing motivation, instead of or as an addition to coursebooks. This includes extensive reading, as Birketveit and Williams (2013) point out as lacking in EFL classrooms in Norway.

How do students learn their first language? Elley and Mangubhai (1983) ask this question as a comparison to how students can struggle to learn a second language at school, but when being exposed to a community where they are exposed to the language they learn it faster and more naturally. Of course, exposing students in the Norwegian EFL classroom to the language in an authentic and natural context will

prove rather difficult, but there are several methods involving authentic literature that possibly can have some of the same effects (p. 54).

The studies we have chosen to look at show that there is more than one type of authentic texts that can be used in the EFL classroom, and that different genres and methodological approaches can enhance and improve a wide range of skills, which we will explore more thoroughly through looking at case studies done by Mehrdad Rezaee and Majid Farahian (2011), and Zhihui Fang and Youhua Wei (2010), and Luisa María González Rodríguez and Miriam Borham Puyal (2012).

There are also studies that cover content area teaching in EFL classrooms, and we have included one of the studies on science in this chapter because it has some interesting findings about increase in students vocabulary and writing skills when using authentic texts. According to Ciecierski and Bintz (2015), authentic literature can be used to, amongst other things, develop increased vocabulary and learn content area material more effectively (p. 17). This is relevant because EFL is not only about learning a spoken or written language, but also to learn different aspects of many cultures, history and politics, and to a smaller extent mathematics, science and religion. By learning about a culture from people living in the culture, through authentic literature, there could possibly be greater benefits than most teachers know. All these aspects are an important part of the curriculum in LK20, as it is hard to imagine learning a language without being able to place it in a wider context, and understanding the language on a deeper level. Having knowledge about how literature can be used to acquire content area knowledge in science or other subjects can be beneficial for potential cross-curricular activities.

Even though the studies and research done on this field is executed on different age groups and with different focuses, the results in them show that authentic literature makes a difference in several ways. The studies mostly agree that authentic literature is beneficial to the students in many ways, no matter the age group. Before we go into detail on the case studies we have to understand more about some of the issues teachers have with authentic literature.

## 4.2 Why use authentic literature

Being a proficient reader is generally considered both a necessity and a success criteria for students as well as most occupations as an adult. Being able to comprehend a variety of written material is a vital 21st century skill (Graham & Hebert, 2011, pp. 1-2.). National tests in English conducted in Norwegian schools for 8th graders between 2015 and 2022 show no significant development in the students' English skills. Between 56,000 and 61,000 students took the test, and even though there are delimitations regarding motivation to do their best we still get an indication as to how the EFL students are doing (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2023).

Sell (2015) looks at reasons for and against the use of literature in general in the EFL classroom, but even though he is more general in his literary approach his focus is on how children and teenagers often benefit from a narrative structure when learning, which can be relevant when dealing with authentic literature.

Due to mainly outside factors many teachers believe that spending time on literature is a waste, mostly because reading novels takes time, or literature is fake and not really interacting with "real life" or authentic situations. Some claim that new technology makes reading and writing skills outdated (pp. 86-87): "The question that concerns FL teachers is what to do with literature and, perhaps more importantly, why do anything with it at all" (Sell, 2015, p. 87).

This indicates rather strongly that many FL teachers are at a loss when it comes to literature, and it raises questions about why there is not more research on this topic or in steering documents in which the curriculum is based on (Sell, 2015, p. 87). Wan-Lun Lee (2016), during the European conference for education in 2016, points out that literature was frowned upon in the EFL classroom in the sixties and seventies, because the spoken language got more focus, and explains how literature has gradually made its way back. Now, the question is, why does literature still play a marginal role in language teaching? The answer is much the same as Sell (2015) points out, that teachers feel they do not know enough about how to use literature, and therefore choose the coursebook (Lee, 2016, p. 4).



Sell (2015) continues with several reasons for the use of literature in the EFL classroom. Some of the reasons are dissected and dismissed by Sell. The first reason listed is the idea that reading literature trains the mind and makes you better at understanding texts and using inference. Sell does agree that literature requires a greater amount of inference than other texts, but that does not mean that texts from for example a course book do not need inferencing. Basically, you can still learn the target language from a coursebook. He continues to point out that yes, narrative structures might be easier for younger children to understand and learn from, however, only if suitable texts are chosen (p. 90).

Sell (2015) goes on to cultural competence and language. He states that it is not necessary to learn only the culture of the target language, in this case English, since we do, after all, live in a multicultural world where a lot of people are able to communicate in English (p. 90). It is impossible to talk about one culture when talking about English, because it is technically a world language that has no culture of its own, per se. If we look at these competence aims from ENG01-04 after year 10, we see that they focus solely on the English speaking world and Norway.

- describe and reflect on the role played by the English language in Norway and the rest of the world
- explore and reflect on the situation of indigenous peoples in the English-speaking world and in Norway explore and describe
- ways of living, ways of thinking, communication patterns and diversity in the English-speaking world
- explore and present the content of cultural forms of expression from various media in the English-speaking world that are related to one's own interests (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2021)

The coursebooks we have access to have a tendency to narrow down the content to the extent where the English speaking world seems smaller than it really is. This means that teachers are limited by the curriculum, but also available material, to an extent. Sell (2015) argues that this limitation should not be there, precisely because

English is spoken by cultures that are not English in any way, like for example Norway or Spain. He means it is important to learn about these cultures as well (Sell, 2015, p. 91, Utdanningsdirektoratet).

The last point Sell (2015) makes is if literature or coursebooks are authentic or not, and how the content of coursebooks are often out of date or simply not dealing with the things the students believe are real life issues in their eyes. They almost always have other purposes than teaching about these “real life issues”, such as language, vocabulary and so on. This is counterproductive and will most likely end with less motivated students. Instead, using literature to fill the gaps the coursebook does not cover, actual real life matters such as gender roles, sexuality, racism, drugs, loneliness and growing up, amongst others, can actually be quite beneficial and motivating (p. 92). This is supported by Lee (2016). In this context Lee defines literature as authentic due to its nature of not being written for the purpose of teaching. Literature can be a source for motivation, but also for developing language proficiency with increased vocabulary and literacy in general. He also mentions how literature can be used to teach about cultures around the world (Lee, 2016, p. 2-3). The studies we have looked at show that authentic literature, as Sell (2015) and Lee (2016) states, is important for many reasons.

#### 4.2.1 Extensive reading

Birketveit et al. (2018) make the point that language learning in both primary and secondary school typically consists of working with coursebooks and the texts in those books in detail:

Reading in the English subject in both primary and secondary school often involves studying course book texts in detail. Therefore, students are rarely exposed to longer texts which require reading for meaning, a skill needed in higher education and working life. (Birketveit et al., 2018).

Through this practice, the students are to a very low degree exposed to extensive reading, longer texts and authentic material. This is not really in line with the point

Stephen Krashen (2004) makes, where he states that extensive reading is one of the most powerful tools we have in language education (p. 1)

In-school reading programs provide some of the clearest evidence for the power of reading. In these programs, part of the school day is set aside for unrestricted FVR or free voluntary reading. There are three kinds of in-school free reading programs: Sustained silent reading, self-selected reading, and extensive reading. Sustained silent reading entails the student engaging in silent reading from five to fifteen minutes. Self-selection entails quite a bit of free reading, but it is also a practice where the teachers typically hold a conference with the students to discuss what was read. How Krashen (2004) defines extensive reading, is reading with minimal accountability. This means that the students read for reading's sake, and not to answer a task or to be able to partake in a discussion. Maybe a short summary is required, but never anything major that would take the focus away from the reading itself (p. 2)

Even though Krashen (2004) presents some very good findings regarding the results of extensive reading, the results he presents could also be problematic. The reason for this is that some of the research relies on how much the students claim to read, which will not necessarily be accurate. Another problem with these results is that it does not take into account the effect of other literacy development factors. If the students who claimed to have read did vocabulary exercises for example, or that doing these exercises made them better readers. Even though these delimitations are a little bit far fetched, they are a possibility (p. 8).

A study from Dublin compared two different groups of 6th graders, and the results spoke for themselves. The evidence from this study shows that students much prefer to choose their own reading material as compared to traditional reading practices. The study group were given 40 minutes per day of reading class, allowing them to choose their own material and read it at their own pace as they saw fit. After the research period of eight months, the students rated their reading class, and the studygroup who had the opportunity to choose the material themselves rated their class significantly higher. Looking at the data presented, of the students participating

in the group with self chosen material, 28 of them rated their class very interesting, while only three rated the class as neutral or boring. Comparing this to the group who participated in traditional reading practices, only eight of the students in this group rated their class as interesting while as many as 17 students rated it as neutral or boring. Granted, 13 students rated it as reasonably interesting, but this is still a significant difference in how the groups perceived their reading classes. (Krashen, 2004, p. 30)

Krashen (2004) even concludes that reading is not only most likely the best way to develop your reading skills and become a good reader, develop a good writing style and build your vocabulary to an adequate level, as well as helping you develop grammar skills and become a better speller. He points out direct instruction as an inferior way to practice these skills, and that it is a method that is of little to no help to the students (p. 37).

Krashen (2004) makes quite a few points as to why direct instruction is an inferior method to develop literacy, but in short, much of it can be boiled down to the complexity of language learning, as well as the students' learning habits. He states that through error-correction, teachers expect students to adjust their practice and knowledge of a certain rule. However, he argues that language is too vast and complex to tackle one word or one rule at a time. He also states that while the students' habits of utilizing rules in a different way through error-correction may change for a while, the change often seems to diminish over time. (p. 18)

Every monday, in thousands of language and language arts classes, children are given a list of 20 vocabulary words. During the week, they do "Skill-building" exercises: Draw a line from the word to the definition, fill-in-the-blank, write three sentences with each word. On Friday, the children are tested on the words.

If you show the list of 20 words to a child who has read, who grew up with books, he probably knows 15 or 16 of the words already. He has seen them before, in *Choose your own adventure*, *Harry Potter* and *Batman Returns*. If

he studies, he gets an A. If he doesn't study, he gets a B. (Krashen, 2004, p. 38)

This example gives an idea of how free reading and reading material the students find interesting in general affects their learning habits, and maybe even in a way that the students do not even notice or pay much thought to. It also builds a strong case for the role extensive reading has in terms of building vocabulary.

One of the important factors of creating a successful reading program is that there is material available that is accessible and pleasurable. Stories and narratives hold a unique position when used as learning material as they are a way to structure and make sense of things, in principle the same way nursery rhymes and stories help structure one's first language, they also hold potential as a tool for L2 acquisition (Birketveit et al., 2018. p. 7).

Even though there is research that shows the effect of extensive reading, it is a rare practice both in Norway and other places in the world. It continues to be the road less traveled, even though there is research proving the important role it plays in language acquisition. There are many reasons for this, it gives the teacher a different role in the classroom and demands that teachers to a certain extent give up control. Also since this approach entails self-selected material, students can easily choose material deemed too easy or light. This requires the teacher to have the overall control on the reading material available to the students, as a means to avoid this issue (Birketveit et al., 2018, p.4).

#### 4.2.2 Short stories, picture books and novels

As teachers, there are some genres that one could argue are more commonly used in the EFL classroom than others, such as short stories and novels. Picture books and graphic novels are also being used, but probably less intentional and more when the students get to choose their own reading material.

Birketveit and Williams (2013) explain how picture books can be beneficial in the way that they provide pictures to help the reader understand the meaning of the text

without necessarily having a great vocabulary. The use of picture books can also make it easier to differentiate between students, and weak readers are less likely to be put off by the extensive amount of text found in novels (p. 17) There has been a shift since the internet became accessible to everybody in how for example newspapers write articles; before, articles were mainly text in physical newspapers. Nowadays, articles are often multimodal with text, pictures and sometimes sound. This requires the readers to develop skills to learn how to read these types of text. Most picture books have traditionally been for children, but in the past decades this has changed. Many authors now write picture books for a more general audience, and both adults and young adults can enjoy and learn from picture books in all genres.

There are several language learning possibilities in picture books, such as working on vocabulary matching the topic of the books, grammar, learning idioms, customs and having dialogues about the content (Birketveit & Williams, 2013, p. 22).

According to Birketveit and Williams (2013), novels and short stories are the literary forms that best deal with the individuality we see in people in today's society. While fairy tales often deal with a certain type (princess, hero, villain) short stories and novels can show us the reality of people's lives on a personal level. One can read stories about someone similar to the reader, or one can read about things far from what we are familiar with. This can, amongst academic skills, also help developing empathy and understanding amongst the students (pp. 211-212).

#### 4.3 Instructional methods

Instructional methods and instructional strategies are in many ways joined together and can easily be mixed up due to the terms' similar meanings. Lang and Evans (2006) conclude that strategies can include one or more methods (Vural, 2016, p. 10).

There are several ways to achieve meaningful learning through the use of instructional methods, according to Vural (2016), but the most important factor is that

the teacher is well versed in the different methods and is able to use them in a well thought through way that will benefit the students at hand best (p. 8).

Instructional methods should be chosen based on the goal for the particular lesson, and different methods are deemed more suitable to certain goals than others.

Methods such as drama, role-play and conversation circle is used as an example of methods that could help build empathy (Vural, 2016, p. 11).

The term “direct instruction” is more than a hundred years old, and has been used in the USA since 1893. It has since then developed into what most teachers would think of as any instruction given by a teacher. Barak Rosenshine (2008) points out that direct instruction is the source of confusion and prejudices amongst both teachers and others. This is partly due to how the term has been interpreted. Some think of it as authoritarian, regimented and a passive teaching method. Still, according to Rosenshine (2008), direct instruction can be an effective learning method if used as originally intended. To sum up, having a detailed, well-planned lesson based on teacher instruction has proven to improve the students performance and skills in the target area. This includes, but is not limited to, scaffolding, supportive feedback to the students' learning process, dividing tasks into smaller components and stating lesson goals (pp. 3-5).

#### 4.4 Studies done on the topic

In a study made in the US amongst students with English as a first language, Ciecierski and Bintz (2015) showed specific ways to use authentic literature while taking into account the fact that it is more challenging to plan lessons based on literature rather than predictable coursebooks (p. 17). They continue by explaining how teachers can use literature to teach content area material through instructional methods, by using different types of authentic literature. In this specific article they chose to focus on picture books, novels and nonfiction trade books as a means to not only teach a specific subject, but also improve reading and writing skills, with the end results that students hopefully develop a lifelong literacy. Most of their article is based on what students should know according to Common Core State Standards,

but the main points are just as relevant to, and can be used, to fulfill the competence aims in the Norwegian curriculum as well.

The good thing about picture books is that they engage a great number of students, they are not too long and they are great for visual learners. One of the picture books in the study, *Abe Lincoln's Dream*, by Lane Smith, is used to show how picture books can be used to give younger students a visual image on social studies concepts, showing that this method can be translated into almost every field we teach.

It is a stellar example of a picture book that may be used for interdisciplinary instruction because it holds the potential for both social studies and language arts instruction. According to Libresco, Balantic, and Kipling (2011), picture books provide young readers with visual images that make social studies concepts more concrete. (Ciecierski, Bintz, 2015, p. 19)

Facts are woven into the story, and the facts presented and the questions asked by Lincoln in the book can be used for further learning in various ways for the students (Ciecierski, Bintz, 2015, p. 19). As previously mentioned when referring to Jonathan P.A. Sell (2015), narrative structures can be a good approach when teaching especially younger children (p. 92).

With regard to novels, Ciecierski and Bintz (2015) explain how the novel *Wonder*, by R. J. Palacio, in combination with instructional methods can be both interesting and motivating. It can teach the students about identity and communication, analyzing the different points of view in the novel and use it as a base for several writing tasks and analysis

The other novel they explore is *Between shades of Gray*, by Ruta Sepetys. Before they go into details about the book they comment on how it is important to choose books students can relate to.

Because novels are written in a variety of genres, the potential for their use as instructional tools is extensive. While reading historical fiction novels, students



are able to live through the characters' lives in a vicarious experience. They are far more likely to connect with the identity and emotions of the individuals in novels than they would by trudging through a textbook. (Ciecierski, Bintz, 2015, p.21)

They continue with how other genres can be used in the same way, like science fiction, fantasy and so on.

In *Between shades of gray* the reader follows a 15 year old Lithuanian girl and how she experienced the Lithuanian persecution under Stalin's rule, but it is also a love story. Chances are that quite a few students can relate or at least be interested in several aspects of the book, be it politics, the love story or a general connection to the main character. Most of the literature from the second world war is focused around Nazi Germany, Holocaust and just in general more known events, so it is interesting to show the students that there were several layers to the political situation in other countries than Germany and what we consider closest to ourselves (Ciecierski, Bintz, 2015, p.22).

Exploring actions during the time of the Holocaust and the bombing of Pearl Harbor or making connections to current war-torn regions may help to engage students in understanding that historical moments have resounding relevance in the present. (Ciecierski, Bintz, 2015, p.22)

The last section gives us ideas for how authentic nonfiction literature can be used in the classroom, more specifically how *National Geographic Book of Animal Poetry: 200 Poems with Photographs That Squeak, Soar, and Roar*. This is a collection of poems accompanied by real life pictures that together can be very inspiring for students. There are several ways to use this book in the classroom. It can be used as a model text for the students to write their own poems, but it can also be used as a base to learn more in depth about the animals in the poems. It can be an inspiration to do something else than the traditional methods, and Ciecierski and Bintz (2015)

suggest using it as a mentor text. This opens up for a lot of possibilities when it comes to teaching writing, and gives the students opportunity to work with language, writing skills, knowledge about the content, to mention some (Ciecierski, Bintz, 2015, p. 23).

... we recognize that increasing students' interests and engagement is not easy; it requires teachers to step forward with bravery as they utilize authentic literature as an instructional tool that encourages students to learn in ways that are creative and innovative. (Ciecierski, Bintz, 2015, p.23)

It is not an easy job getting the students motivated and active in their own learning processes, but by using authentic literature from several genres, Ciecierski and Bintz believe this will be a step in the right direction (Ciecierski, Bintz, 2015, p.23).

Fang and Wei's (2010) study is based on science, not English in particular, but as previously mentioned we found the results interesting and transferable enough to include it due to the results of the study. This study is also interesting because of the relatively young age (6th graders) of the participants, because it is interesting to see that including authentic literature can benefit a wide range of students.

Fang and Wei (2010) explain in detail why reading is not something you just learn in elementary school, but how it is a skill that it is important to continuously develop in order to develop advanced literacy. By using authentic literature there is an increase in the students motivation, but also measurable skills such as using correct grammar, learning new vocabulary and learning content material more effectively. This is because authentic literature usually contains a rich language which the students seem to be more engaged in, and it can motivate them to want to engage in extracurricular reading outside of school. The results from the study showed that when reading authentic literature was introduced to the test subjects they performed better than the group that learned only through inquiry-based instructions (Fang, Wei, 2010, p. 262). In this case, inquiry-based instructions is a teacher-led approach where the teacher guides the students through the content they are supposed to learn, which is not uncommon in the EFL classrooms in Norway. Why is this relevant

when teaching English? Basically, the methods used to learn the specific content in science can be transferred to almost all other content in any language, and can provide exciting and new ways to teach.

In the study, the control groups consisted of three classes of 6th graders which followed the standard curriculum. The three test groups, also consisting of 6th graders, did the same, but with some alterations; their curriculum was infused with reading strategy instruction and a home science reading program. The strategies were taught at school for approximately 15-20 min once a week for 22 weeks, and they were encouraged to use them during classes.

The home science reading program was incorporated to get more practice using the reading strategies, but also to read more and get more content based knowledge. The total number of books used in this study was 196, and they were all nonfictional authentic books picked because of their content and layout. In the end, they did conclude that teaching reading strategies alone would not give the same effect, the extra addition of authentic literature and the home science reading program played a crucial role in the results (Fang, Wei, 2010, p. 270).

In 2012, Rodríguez and Puyal published a journal article about how teachers can promote intercultural competence through the use of authentic literature. The article describes advantages of using literary texts to develop intercultural reflection through a case study made in Spain in a multicultural EFL classroom by using CLIL as a pedagogical method (p. 105).

The novel used in this study was *The house on Mango street* by Sandra Cisneros, and the series *Outsourced* (2006). Rodrigues and Puyal (2012) explain how it is important to learn about different cultures, because many classrooms become more and more multicultural nowadays. They do point out that it is important to be aware of the literature chosen, and to not focus on only British or American culture (pp. 107-108).

Many teachers complain that most foreign language teaching textbooks rarely include consideration of culture and intercultural communication and, when this happens, cultural information is usually considered as secondary to linguistic content and is presented in an arbitrary and artificial way.

(Rodrigues, Puyal, 2012, p. 109)

By using a CLIL approach teachers get an opportunity to combine language, content subject and intercultural learning.

The study was initially aimed to get the students to end up at a B2 level, and the class consisted of students from a variety of cultures. It was organized into different didactic units, each with an overall theme that was deemed relevant and engaging to the students. Gender roles, work and education, to mention some of them, were picked, and appropriate authentic texts were chosen for each unit. The idea behind choosing a movie was to motivate the students that could react negatively to extensive reading. Tasks for before, during and after reading were designed, and the students split the work between homework and in class.

In the unit on gender roles, female and male stereotypes to be precise, *The house on Mango street* was used to work on this. The pre-reading activity was to “*enumerate the positive and negative stereotypes that define the roles of men and women*”. While reading, they were asked “*to take notes of attitudes and behaviours that support or destroy the stereotypes*”. The post-reading activity was to “*analyse how the influence of American films or or the contact with a new culture has changed Chicano women’s desire to adapt to cultural conditionings*”, with a creative writing task in the end, where the students are encouraged to use other sources to write a biography about a person who contributed to undermine established stereotypes (Rodriguez, Puyal, 2012, pp. 112-113).

The conclusion was that the use of authentic texts are a good source for several things, such as developing the students' empathy and tolerance, improving their own perception of their own linguistics, communicative skills and language skills in general.

Rezaee and Farahian (2011) did a smaller study on upper-intermediate students in Iran where they wanted to know if the use of short stories and folktales could improve the Persian students' knowledge about American culture in the EFL classroom (p. 1756). To be clear, they do not use the term “authentic” in this study, but Smith & Wiese (2006) explains the importance of authenticity when dealing with folktales in their study, so in this context folktales are considered authentic literature.

...authentic literature has the “capacity to break down negative stereotypes and encourage understanding and appreciation of different cultures” (p. 183). Bishop (1997) writes that if “multicultural literature is to...help readers gain insight into and appreciation for the social groups reflected in the literature, then the literature ought to accurately reflect those groups and their cultures” (p. 16). Norton (2001) notes that the issue of authenticity is crucial in the selection of multicultural children’s literature. (Smith, Wiese, 2006, pp. 69-70)

The results of the study showed that the students that had a literary approach to the cultural aspects of the American culture showed better results on tests, even after a two week period (Rezaee, Faharian, 2011, p.1760).

## 5 Findings

This chapter presents the findings from our semi-structured interviews. The questions posed in the interview guide are used to organize the summary of the answers from the interviewees.

In line with the research questions that this thesis is based on, our interview guide inquires about teacher planning habits, how they plan their semester and what kind of material they base their planning on, how they plan their lessons, how and if they incorporate authentic material, as well as if they think authentic material can be beneficial to acquire deep learning and the new LK20 curriculum.

## 5.1 Question 1

Our first question was: Do you plan your semester based on the course books you have access to? If not, can you describe how you plan it?

Out of the four answers we got, three of them state that the coursebook plays a fairly significant role in how they plan their semesters. While not stating this explicitly they write that they look to the competence aims and how the books correspond with these aims, but at the same time it is clear that the coursebook often serves as the foundation of how the semester is planned.

Our final interviewee answered in a different manner though, stating that the coursebook had no role in the planning at all. Some of the material was used, but the coursebook as a whole was not part of the planning process.

I don't plan my semester based on the course book, but I do use some of the material in the course books when I teach. I plan my semester together with colleagues who teach English the same year as me, we are usually a team of four teachers. We plan a little differently each year, but we usually start off by finding topics that fit both the competence aims for English and that are possible to combine with other subjects (tverrfaglighet) with human relations and culture. A challenge is of course that it is quite time consuming for the teacher to find relevant and age/level appropriate authentic literature that is easy.

As mentioned with regard to delimitations, four respondents are not sufficient to give us a lot of data. Still, the results clearly indicate that coursebooks still play a major role when it comes to semester planning for a lot of teachers.

## 5.2 Question 2

Our second question was: If you do, how do you use authentic literature in the English classroom?

The answers to this question are both different and similar at the same time. While all four of our interviewees state that they do use authentic material, the implementation of the authentic material and the focus of what type of texts is used varies here, not to mention how big of a part it plays over the course of a semester. The answers range from “We use authentic material to supplement the coursebook with for example speeches. The coursebooks have some texts that we can use, but most of the literature we have to find ourselves.” This answer would be interpreted as authentic texts having a small place in the teaching practice, and mostly play a supplementary role to a teaching practice that seems to be driven mostly by the coursebooks, with occasional drips with authentic material.

However, for this question we had answers at the other end of the spectrum as well. One of the interviewees states that the use of authentic literature plays a big role, and it is often used to bring certain topics to light, giving examples of some of the literature that has been used:

I find that it is useful to use authentic literature that is available on online teaching resources, such as *cdu skolen*. For example, when working on the topic of racism we read excerpts from young adult fiction works such as *The Hate U Give*, memoirs such as *Born A Crime* and *Twelve Years a Slave*, speeches such as *I Have a Dream*, as well as newspaper articles about current events found in online newspapers. When I teach using authentic literature we usually read or listen to the text together or in smaller groups and discuss the contents. The students are usually asked to sum up the

author's thoughts in their own words and give their own opinion of the topic discussed. It is also important to discuss the source material's intent, credibility, and neutrality, as this can be a challenge for the students at this age to comprehend.

This indicates that the teacher gives authentic material a central role. A similar response is given by one of the other interviewees:

I have a goal in making my pupils understand that the book has more information than the movie. I try to make sure that we listen to at least one to five chapters of a book each year and watch the movie adaptation. In 9<sup>th</sup> grade, I also have a project where my pupils read a book of their own choice. I usually have a list of suggestions, but my pupils can come with their own suggestions as well. To make sure that everyone has the ability to read and talk about their book, I include some picture books that a selected few can choose. They get one month to read the book before they hand in a summary of at least three chapters and talk about the book in a conversation with me. Furthermore, the course books have excerpts from authentic literature.

This teacher seems to have focused on authentic literature also in terms of how English is taught in general, including a reading project where the students get to choose their own reading material.

Generally, all of the teachers in our study do utilize authentic material in one way or another. The biggest difference is to what extent they use it in their teaching, as well as the range of material they use.



### 5.3 Question 3

The third question was: Do you think it is possible to cover the following competence aims in LK20 by using authentic literature? If yes, can you elaborate?

In our interview guide we presented a few competence aims from LK20, and asked the subjects if they thought these could be fulfilled with the use of authentic literature. These were competence aims that focused on the exploring and reflecting on the situation of indigenous people both in Norway and the English-speaking world, describe ways of living, thought-patterns, communication-patterns and diversity in the English speaking world, and also explore and communicate cultural expressions from different mediums in correlation with one's own interests.

The answers to this question were a little more mixed, as one of the answers simply gives us that speeches have been used, but not much more than that. On the other hand, one of the other teachers states that there is no reason not to use authentic literature to reach these goals. Furthermore, the teacher states that using authentic material can help the students see how there are multiple sides to a story. Making the point that this allows the students to engage with material from the English-speaking world or authors stemming from indigenous heritage, choosing an author that is not necessarily colored by colonization, or some views that make us pity some countries or ways of life. While this gives using authentic literature a very prominent role, the other two teachers stand somewhere in between on this question. One of them states that working towards these aims probably would require a combination of materials to grant the students a grand understanding of these topics, and authentic material would also play a part in this.

The other teachers makes a very interesting point for this question;

I do think it's possible and, in some cases, more relevant to use authentic literature to cover these competence aims. Many course books do contain excellent excerpts from authentic literature and good factual texts, but when it comes to keeping up with the current situation, course books become outdated quite fast. This works better with online resources for teachers that are updated more frequently. I find that using movies and video games as well as non-fiction authentic texts such as newspaper articles, opinions, and memoirs, will often engage the students much more than using factual texts or fictional stories in the course material.

This answer raises a highly relevant point, namely that even though coursebooks can contain good material and factual texts suited to tackle these themes, in an ever changing world, they can quickly become outdated. With schools often having to use the same coursebooks for many many years before they are replaced by a new one, using authentic material might be a more reliable way to tackle real-world issues that change along with a lot of other things.

#### 5.4 Question 4

The fourth question was: If you look at the following competence aims from LK20, what kind of literature comes to mind? You can mention specific literature or be more general.

For this next question, we presented our interviewees with a few more competence aims. This time, we were looking for concrete examples of literature that could be used. The aims that were presented for this question was to read, discuss and communicate content from different types of texts, including self-chosen texts. The other goal we presented was to read, interpret and reflect on English literature, including young-adult literature. What we wanted to know was what kind of literature that came to mind for our subjects when they thought about fulfilling these goals.

With regard to the first goal, two of the teachers are in agreement that different types of texts do not just mean texts in the traditional sense, but can range from novels and written texts, to letters, movies, social media, movies, podcasts, paintings, etc.

While the other two teachers interpret this aim in a way that the students should work with texts in the traditional sense, but that they should work with texts in a more traditional sense, from different sources and different types of texts.

With regard to the second aim, the teachers presented quite a substantial list of different materials: *A Lamb to the Slaughter* by Roald Dahl; *New Kid* (graphic novel) by Jerry Craft; *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian* by Sherman Alexie was named by one subject. Another subject mentioned *Shadow and Bone*, *The Hate U Give*, *The Whale Rider*, *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children*, *Ready Player One*, *A Wizard of Earthsea*, *Wonder*, *Divergent*, *The Gruffalo*, and *The Moose Belongs to Me*. *Harry Potter* was also mentioned, with one subject stating that what kind of texts they tend to work with is somewhat dependent on the group of students and what they like to read as well as what is popular at the time.

## 5.5 Question 5

The fifth question was: Since deep learning is a big part of LK20, where the students to a much higher degree are supposed to “learning to learn”, do you think you are going to change how you use or focus on literature in the English classroom? If yes, how?

While the answers we got to this question differed quite a bit, one of the sentiments that seem to be true for all of them is that they would like to give the students more freedom of choice in relation to what they read. Also for the reading that is chosen by the teachers, they try to focus more on cross-curricular friendly material, which could mean trying to work with material that is relevant to more than one discipline and allow the students to work more independently with the material, as a major aspect of deep learning is the exploratory aspect of learning.

One of the teachers states that changing your teaching practice to go in a different direction is hard:

I wish. I should have done things differently from the start. However, time is a major aspect and I do not think I am about to change things that much at this point. If yes, then I need specific information on how to move forward. Perhaps even more education.

What can be interpreted from this, is that it might be hard to know what direction to take your teaching practice, and more direct instruction in terms of how the teaching needs to change might be needed for some. Especially for someone that is still somewhat inexperienced in the field of teaching, it is easy to become insecure about larger change.

#### 5.6 Question 6

Our fifth question was: In your experience, what are some of the benefits of using a coursebook as opposed to authentic materials or vice versa?

When it comes to positives and negatives when working with the different materials, our interviewees seem to agree that one of the biggest advantages of using a coursebook is the predictability it provides both to your students and you as a teacher. As one of the respondents write:

Course books give a good framework to work from, they help ensure that one covers all elements in an appropriate and structured way. There are often extra resources that can help teachers and students, for example differentiated resources. Varied and well chosen texts, which are up to date in newer course books. Authentic literature gives a sense of achievement from finishing a book, and it is something that is done together as a class. It also gives a deeper insight into how other people act, live and think in different environments and societies.

One of the other interviewees has a similar response:

Using a course book is reliable for my students. Some of them even need predictability. When it comes to planning my year, it is easy to start by looking at a course book because it gives me an idea into what other people think a year at that grade should cover. It felt necessary as a new teacher. Without a course book, it was easy to forget to include teaching grammar and aspects like how to tell directions to my students. The competence aims are big and what to teach is up to me as the teacher. If someone else has the class the next year, they can get annoyed if we did not touch topics like informal letters in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Cooperation is really important between teachers if the book is put away. When teachers then come from different areas of the school, it could be more difficult to cooperate with everyone. Some even like their privacy in what they are doing. If everyone starts with the course book, it solves the problem.

Authentic material can broaden student's view on the world, it can give students more literature they like and give them a bigger choice in what to read and learn about within the range of the competence aims. It has the potential to be much more motivating.

Even though the responses are worded slightly differently, they convey a lot of the same points. The coursebooks can provide predictability both for students and teachers, and it gives the teacher a reliable way to cover the topics that the writers of the coursebook find suitable for that age group. Another interesting point that is brought up is the issue of continuity, or the problem of what happens if you do not teach the same group of students next year and another teacher needs to pick up where you left off. If the coursebook has been followed, at least to a certain extent, it gives the teacher that succeeds you an idea of what has been covered up to that point.

There are both positives and negatives mentioned in relation to working with authentic material here too, however, and the respondents make a lot of good points as to the positives of using authentic literature.

The benefits of using authentic material is that it's easier to adjust to the student group's interest and current events. It also offers more variation and feels more authentic and engaging for many students.

According to one of the teachers, an argument can be made that it is easier to adjust material in accordance with the group of students you are teaching. While the texts in a printed coursebook are set, other material can be adjusted to more accurately fit the needs of the students you teach, as well as also making it easier to stay relevant to current events and the state of the world around us.

How can outside factors affect how we choose methods and learning material? We are interested in any outside factors, such as national tests, how colleagues impact our methods etc.

In terms of what outside factors affect teaching practices, the respondents list a number of them. Some of them mention assessment situations the students will face at some point, such as national tests and the exams coming up. Working in teams and pulling each other's strings to change and improve are also listed as factors that help them not get stuck in their ways.

One interesting point is that one of the teachers discussed the continuity issue of choosing something other than the coursebook as learning material. If one teacher is responsible for the same group of students for a long period of time, it becomes less of an issue. However, if for some reason the same teacher only gets to teach the same group for a shorter period of time, it becomes harder for the next teacher to pick up the thread if they have no idea what material has been taught up to that point. Hence why the same interviewees point out that if you put the coursebooks away, cooperation becomes even more important.

## 5.7 Question 7

The seventh question was: How do you think the students would react and benefit from a more literary approach as opposed to excerpts and facts in a course book or vice versa?

The interviewees are generally in agreement when it comes to this question. If it is done right and planned properly, they think that a teaching schedule based more on authentic literature could be motivating and engaging, as well as help with maintaining the deep learning aspect of LK20. While one subject believes that a mixture of coursebook material and authentic material would be beneficial for the students.

However, the argument for the coursebook once again comes back to predictability, a comment made by several of the teachers is that the predictability of the coursebook can be an advantage for less motivated and less structured students. They state that while some students might find motivation and joy in working with a lot of authentic material, without a very well planned term-schedule that makes sense for the students, it could become hard for some to look back at material that has previously been worked with. Removing the coursebook removes that anchor of predictability in terms of what material and themes will be worked with over the course of a period, and that is something that needs to be thought about and compensated for if one is to remove the coursebooks from the classroom all together.

## 6 Discussion

We have now looked at how four teachers relate to and use authentic literature in light of LK20. In light of this, we will in this section discuss the possible benefits of using authentic literature for EFL students, either as an addition to the coursebook or as a replacement for the coursebook.

## 6.1 What role does the coursebook have in EFL teaching?

In our opinion, one advantage with LK20 is that the competence aims do not come with guidelines as to how teachers should teach, which is the same as in LK06. Teachers are more or less free to teach whatever topics and use the methods they deem fitting for their student group, but there are some tendencies pointing towards the use of coursebooks rather than finding material themselves. The strong tradition of coursebooks in Norway have been criticized by several researchers because of the limited amount of longer texts that are present in most coursebooks (Birketveit & Rugesæter, 2015; Blikstad-Balas, 2014; Krashen, 2004). The most commonly used reading strategy when reading seems to be close reading, or reading to find answers to something concrete. The coursebooks do often come with excerpts, but the argument made by for example Birketveit and Rugesæter (2015) and Hellekjær (2005) is that reading short texts does not prepare students for what comes next, which in this context usually means higher education. There are several other reasons for reading extensive texts than just preparing for higher education, as we will discuss below.

Another possible consequence of the way the competence aims are formulated is that extensive reading is not something the students necessarily will experience at all because it is not specified in the curriculum that they should. The curriculum specifies literature, but there are no limitations as to what this could be. It is therefore up to the individual teachers to choose what and how much the students get to read. What we do see specified is what competence is, and here lies what could possibly be one of the reasons why the coursebook has a strong voice in Norwegian EFL classrooms. When competence is described as an extension to deep learning where skills such as critical thinking and transferable knowledge are key words it can explain why choosing topics and material for the students on their own can be scary. Choosing something that feels like the safer option is understandable.



Our interviewees seem to agree on this, and three out of four use a coursebook as a foundation when planning for a year. They also plan with the competence aims in mind, but it seems like they fit the competence aims to the coursebook and not the other way round. One of our interviewees states otherwise, and writes that the coursebook does not play a role in the planning at all, but it is being used when needed. This interviewee also plans the year with interdisciplinary topics in mind, but specifies that this way of planning is fairly time consuming.

If we take into account that it probably is more time consuming planning your year using material where nothing is pre-made it is not surprising that most teachers choose a coursebook. After all, they are produced for the current curriculum, and they even come with a ready plan for the year. It does happen that some teachers end up teaching all the classes in a year on their own, and there might simply not be enough time to prepare the type of material one would need in order to prove Birketveit, Rugesæter (2015) and Hellekjær (2005) wrong; that extensive reading is a priority in the EFL classroom.

## 6.2 How can teachers use authentic literature in the EFL classroom in light of LK20, and why should they?

Since the coursebook seems to be the preferred medium for teaching, there might be a lack of knowledge as to how authentic literature can be used in the classroom. As we can see from the findings from the interviews, our interviewees state that they use authentic material, but to what degree varies quite a lot. One of the interviewees states that the goal is that the students should understand that there is more information to gather from the book rather than the film adaptation, and that they usually read between one to five chapters in the book before watching the film. The same teacher explains that the students get to read a book they have chosen themselves for a one month reading project. The other interviewees seem to use authentic material where they believe the coursebook is lacking suitable texts. Still, only one of them is actually letting the students read more than shorter excerpts from books. The way we interpret the answers, it could seem like Sell (2015, pp. 86-87) was correct in stating that many teachers think it is a waste of time spending time on

literature, or that they do not know how to approach a teaching situation based solely on longer authentic literature. He claims that this is because the teachers believe literature is not real enough or dealing with authentic situations, which leads us to think this is because literature often is interpreted as “fiction only”. This is probably a common misunderstanding, as there are several fictional books based on for example true stories that would be suitable to cover several competence aims. Regular “fiction” could of course also be used for much the same purpose as true stories, but then again, if what Sell (2015, pp. 86-87) claims is true, teachers do not know this or might not even be interested in such information.

Our interview subjects were asked what kind of literature they thought of when being presented with some of the competence aims from LK20. Two of our interviewees stated that “texts” in this context could mean more than literature, and mentioned films, podcasts, paintings etc. The other two interview subjects were more traditional in their answers and listed specific novels such as *The Hate U Give*, *The Whale Rider*, *Ready Player One* and *Wonder*, to mention some. One of the interviewees stated that the student group was taken into consideration when choosing literature. One of the interview subjects pointed out that authentic literature should be used and could be more relevant when teaching some of the competence aims, specifying that one of the biggest problems with coursebooks is that the content is rapidly outdated. Since some of the competence aims in LK20 have a more specific approach as to how verbs are used to explain what students should learn than what we found in LK06, the connection to deep learning seems fairly clear. Instead of the verb “discussing” found in LK06, LK20 uses verbs like “interpret, read, and reflect”, which is very much in line with learning to learn, or deep learning. “Critical assessment” is also something the students should practice. In general, factual knowledge has lesser focus in LK20, while being able to see the greater picture and connect the red lines are more profound.

Fullan’s (2018) idea of motivating students to become partakers in their own learning through meaningful and authentic learning can be used as an argument for the use of authentic literature as well. If we want the students to be active and find interest in the material in a way that encourages them to want to learn on their own, authentic

literature can possibly be more useful than teachers seem to be aware of. Implicitly, it could mean that letting students be a part of choosing literature could promote motivation, which is what one of the interview subjects stated as well. Choosing texts is a process in its own that can prove quite valuable, as questions such as “what can be learned from this particular book” possibly could spark the student’s interest in the topic.

### 6.2.1 Reading

Reading authentic literature in a critical way can involve many processes that can be beneficial for the students. According to Warwick and Mangubhai (1983), immersing the students in an authentic language context is the best way to learn a language, but since that can prove rather difficult in a classroom situation teachers need to substitute an authentic context with something that can give some of the same results (p. 54). The case studies we have looked at suggest a variety of methods and specific books teachers can work with to enhance and learn English. However, none of the interviewees mentions the probability of increased vocabulary, improved writing skills and more effective content area learning, which could lead us to agree with Sell (2015) once more. It is possible that too many teachers do not know what to do with literature in the EFL classroom (pp. 86-87).

Learning content area material could be relevant not only in the EFL classroom alone, but also when working with cross curricular topics such as history, science and even mathematics.

Since reading and comprehending a variety of texts is considered a 21st century skill according to Graham and Herbert (2011) it seems vital to include more lengthy literature to the material taught to the students (pp. 1-2). Since the results from the National tests in English do not show any improvement in the English skills amongst students in Norway the last six years, there is a possibility that the majority’s chosen methodological coursebook approach might not be the best way to improve EFL-skills. Sell (2015) points out that it is perfectly possible to learn English from a coursebook alone. Still, the narrative structure found in literature might be beneficial for some students (p. 90). With this he does not mean that literature is not relevant,

but in terms of what the students “need” to learn English, literature is literary not necessary. He does, however, state that what happens when teachers focus mainly on a coursebook they are limited by the curriculum aims, and that technically there should be no limits as to which cultures one learns about since English is a world language after all. Even though literature is not considered vital at all during a student's process of learning English it is possible to turn the tables and look at this the opposite way. What would the students learn if taught by literature alone, and how can this be achieved? There are many things one can learn from a coursebook, there is no doubt about this, as many teachers obviously are aware of since it seems to be the preferred teaching material. Still, we have to look at the case studies to get concrete examples of how a variety of different types of literature has been used to improve English skills, and understand how

If we go back to reading as an important skill the students should learn well, we see that extensive reading may play a minor role in many teachers' classrooms. As our interview subjects mostly agree on, the students are seldom exposed to more than shorter types of text. Krashen (2004) is adamant that letting the students choose their own reading material and read simply for the sake of reading scored their reading class higher in terms of liking the class more than the students who were exposed to a more traditional reading approach (p. 30). Does this tell us that the students become better at communicating in English? The possibility is there. As we have seen, motivation to learn is often related to the students' own involvement in their teaching. Letting them simply choose what they want to read and provide them with enough time to do so is providing them with knowledge they might not even know they acquire. It is important to point out that in Krashen's study the group were given as much as 40 minutes per day to read, which is not achievable in the Norwegian EFL classroom due to English being given approximately 74 hours a year between year 8-10. Still, we can only assume that even a little reading as often as possible could have positive effects on the student's language skills.

### 6.2.2 Direct instruction

Direct instruction, according to Krashen (2004, p. 18), is inferior due to its nature of being less inspiring and too focused on following rules. This is because, according to

Krashen (2004), rules do not have a place in such a complex situation as language learning is. Interestingly, some of the case studies we have looked at shows that direct instruction can be beneficial in some cases, see below. Even though there are different opinions amongst researchers as to which methods are best, they all have the same goal: make students better at communicating in the target language. In order to help teachers who are less confident teaching literature, it makes sense to show that there are many ways to achieve increased language skills through literature, giving each teacher the tools needed to teach the way they think is best. As we saw from the answers to our interview questions, one of the teachers would like to teach literature, but felt the need for more education in that particular field in order to do so. As implied by our interviewees, direct instruction seems to be a favored teaching method as far as defining a method goes in the EFL classroom. Combining something familiar with teaching literature could be an eye-opener to teachers, since it is likely that they already would be familiar with direct instruction.

### 6.2.3 Case studies

In order to teach literature it is possible to look at what researchers have found out on this topic. Around the world, several studies have been conducted on how to use literature and what kind of literature one can use, with results showing improved skills amongst the students when being exposed to this type of teaching.

Ciecierski and Bintz's (2015) main goal with their study is to improve reading and writing skills as well as developing literacy. In order to do so they have chosen to use picture books, novels and nonfiction trade books. This covers quite a lot of the typical literature most people are familiar with, and could peak some interest amongst teachers that are uncertain on where to start when looking for authentic literature they can use. Since one of our interviewees commented specifically that it felt necessary with more education in order to use literature in the EFL classroom, studies like this could be very helpful.

One of the picture books in this study, *Abe Lincoln's Dream*, shows explicitly how the dialogue in the book can be used as a means to both understand social studies concepts and use the facts presented in the story to investigate more. Picture books in general can be used for every single student since the potential to differentiate is

so great. Even if someone is a weak reader or has poor literacy it is possible to become motivated to read pictures. According to Birketveit and Williams (2013), picture books are no longer considered for young children, but many are written for adults (p. 17.) This means that everybody can find picture books with topics that are relevant to them and with that, motivating to work with.

One of the other books in this study is *Between shades of grey*. This book is just one example on how it is possible to learn about wars and political unrest and how this affects people's lives on a more personal level than what facts in a coursebook usually can provide us with. Since one of the goals for Ciecierski and Bintz (2015) is to develop literacy, literature like this could possibly be a great way to develop a deeper understanding of language as well. By reading longer texts more, and diving into a story, students could subconsciously pick up on literary devices which in turn can make them greater readers and writers. On the other hand, if a story does not interest you it is hard to become immersed in it, and with that also harder to improve language skills or find motivation to even get started. Is it harder to motivate a student to read a fictional book about historical events than reading a short factual text in a coursebook? It might be, but maybe if the teacher training had more focus on this issue more teachers would choose to work with literature in the EFL classroom. As Ciecierski and Bintz (2015) point out, if you want motivated students you have to find literature that engages them and feels relevant for them (p. 21). As previously mentioned, Krashen's (2004) results showed that choosing reading material themselves makes the students more motivated (p. 30). Maybe this is one of the tools teachers need in order to feel more secure when choosing to teach literature. If the students get to make decisions on what to read with the teacher, they are more likely to become invested in the literature and possibly want to become immersed in the chosen literature. Since deep learning is based on the premise that students develop higher cognitive processes in order to understand modern real life problems, motivated and involved students seem to be a key factor (Fullan et al, 2018, p. 48).

Fang and Wei (2010) also emphasize that reading is a skill that students need to work on even after they first learn how to read, in order to develop literacy. They also

point out the importance of authentic literature, as students often find this more motivating since it contains a rich language (p. 262). The study shows that the students reading authentic literature did better than the students that had a more traditional teacher-led approach. By teaching reading strategies along with reading authentic literature and following a home science reading programme, where content based nonfictional literature was used (Fang & Wei, 2010, p. 270). This is interesting as a reply to the interviewees that answered that they felt they needed more education in order to teach literature, because technically literature can be implemented into what most teachers already do, with only small alterations. By taking small steps, the thought of teaching literature might not feel overwhelming. Also, when working with cross curricular topics this method could also be useful.

With deep learning being the core element of the curriculum, the way students are being taught could possibly benefit from an approach more connected to deep learning. It is not possible to achieve deep learning without working with a topic for a longer period of time so there is time for the students to become immersed in the content they are working on (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2016, ch 4.3, our translation). We believe this to be true only to an extent, as this is where differentiating can be an important factor in order to succeed with teaching literature. Some students are more mature and their cognitive development has come further than other students, which requires the teacher to be able to keep these students motivated while at the same time keeping less mature students interested. By using literature all students can benefit from, like novels or picture books with the same topic but with more or less text to the pictures or the length of the novel, it is possible to make all students feel included and be able to work on a topic on their own cognitive level. It could potentially seem impossible to become immersed in literature that is above what you can achieve. On the other hand, working with something that is not challenging enough can also have the same effect (Birketveit & Rugesæter, 2015). A coursebook can sometimes be differentiated if there are easy to read versions available, but this only differentiates one way. By using literature there are endless options.

One of the aspects of deep learning is to take knowledge the students already have and be able to use it in different situations to solve real-life problems. Remembering facts is not a huge part of LK20, but exploration and research is. Using literature and discussing and reflecting on the content is possibly an easy way to teach critical thinking (Fullan, et al., 2018, p. 79). Learning about different cultures is important since the Norwegian EFL classrooms are multicultural. This is also the case for the English speaking world in general; we cannot say that English users belong to one culture (Sell, 2015, p. 90). Rodriguez and Puyal (2012) describe how authentic literature can promote multicultural awareness and develop intercultural reflection. By using the novel *The house on Mango street* by Sandra Cisneros and the series *Outsourced* (2006) as a means to promote other cultures than British or American through a CLIL approach. *The house on Mango street* was particularly chosen for its content on gender roles and male/female stereotypes, and the end result showed that by using authentic literature the students' empathy, tolerance and language skills improved (pp. 112-113). If some students need visual support in order to grasp a concept and picture books are not sufficient it is possible to use movies or series to help them understand for example cultural differences etc. *Outsourced* is just one of many series that focuses on how stereotypes, communication between different cultures etc can be interesting topics to discuss in class. Watching tv series also gives the students an opportunity to get to know the different types of English spoken around the world, which in turn can increase their understanding of the language. Since it is difficult to let EFL students experience authentic situations concerning language and culture in the classroom, authentic literature and tv series can let them experience more variation than what for example a coursebook can provide. Since a coursebook also has a tendency to narrow down the English speaking world, when in reality he sees English as a world language (Sell, 2015, p.91).

Sell's (2015) opinion on how a narrative structure can be beneficial to younger students can possibly be transferred to also mean less mature students (Sell, 2015, p. 90). Since each student group will consist of different individuals, teachers are bound to have at least some students that prefer and enjoy fairy tales and literature as such. Since folktales are considered authentic literature (Smith, Wiese, 2006, p. 183), it gives teachers even more material to choose from from around the world.



Most countries and cultures have their own traditional folktales and fairy tales, and can be a source to exciting research on other cultures. Since fairy tales are structured in a way that often makes them easy to remember, they can also make learning English easier for some students, as they might recognize elements from fairy tales they already know from their own culture. We believe older students can enjoy a narrative structure as well, especially since it is fairly normal to grow up watching cartoons with the same structure and elements. The results from Rezaee and Farahian's (2011) study shows that a literary approach to culture even over just a short period of time showed better results on tests than students that did not.

### 6.3 What do teachers think of authentic literature as a supplement or replacement for the coursebook in the EFL classroom?

Based on the data from the interviews and the studies conducted by other people cited in this thesis, there are two things we would like to point out with regard to choosing learning materials. First of all, the material from Blikstad-Balas (2014), Gurettaz and Johnston (2013) and Garton and Graves (2014) show us that the tradition for using the coursebooks stands rather strong not only here in Norway, but also in other countries. While the data we have collected for this thesis in no way represents a large group of teachers, it does give us an idea of what the reality is when we see that three out of the four teachers we have collected data from say that the coursebook plays a large role in both their teaching and planning.

Secondly, this can be seen in light of research conducted on the minor role authentic literature has in the EFL classroom. As pointed out by Birkteit and Rugesæter (2015), as well as studies done abroad by Bobkina and Dominique (2014), the role authentic literature plays in EFL teaching today, leads to or contributes to a lack of extensive reading. Looking to the points that Krashen (2004) makes in regard to the effect of extensive reading on language acquisition, the trend of relying so heavily on the coursebook is in a way in direct opposition to the research done on extensive reading and the benefits it brings.

On the other hand, the data from our interviews points out something that to some students is an important factor, and that is predictability. The coursebook brings with it the predictability that our interviewees claim that some students require. If we look at some of the answers from the interviews from the previous chapters, they state that not only is it reliable and predictable for the students, but it also provides continuity for the teachers. While they state that they think authentic literature is easier to adjust to a group of students' interests as well as addressing current events, it is also a time consuming endeavor for the teacher.

While the studies still speak of the coursebook as the material of choice for many teachers, our interview subjects did for the most part not cite the coursebook as their only choice of material. Even though they said that they often looked to the coursebook as a means of planning a semester in accordance with what topics were deemed appropriate for a certain grade. There were statements that show that authentic texts are used as a supplement to the coursebooks. While this was not necessarily literature in that regard, they still referred to material such as speeches as drips of authentic material that the students would encounter.

Utilizing supplementary material in this way is much in line with the concept of humanizing the coursebooks, as mentioned by Tomlinson (2013). Using supplementary materials as several of our interview subjects mention is according to Tomlinson (2013), an important aspect of making coursebooks work, as he claims most coursebooks have a too formal and distant tone to properly engage most students (p. 151). While supplementing with material such as speeches might help keep a coursebook more relevant to current events as well as help with adapting it to different groups of students, it will most likely not contribute to more extensive reading in the EFL classrooms. While our interviewees points to several different reasons for using authentic literature, some use it simply as a supplement to a coursebook, while others use it for the sake of exposing the students to longer texts, show them the world of literature, and try to use it to engage the students, it is the absence of extensive reading that is one of the main drawbacks to relying solely on a coursebook.

Once again, the choice of learning material does not necessarily need to be either or, but when looking at what merits our interviewees see in a teaching-schedule based on the two different material types, they see that both approaches have their merits. While our interviewees thought that a lot of students might benefit from having a teaching-schedule based more on authentic literature if it was planned and executed correctly, they also state that it would be a time consuming process to both plan as well as finding all the literature needed to work through a full semester.

There were also some who stated that they thought a semester based more on authentic literature could help better achieve deep learning, which is a central pillar of the LK20 curriculum. Looking at the global competencies of deep learning and the purpose of cross-curricular topics (Fullan et al, 2018), the approach of authentic literature might lend itself well to cross-curricular teaching as themes and topics could be easier to coordinate. It could also make more room for free discussion between students and teacher, relying less on the knowledge transfer from teacher to student, but encouraging more learning through discussion of the material at hand and the topics it tackles.

Utilizing extensive reading as opposed to knowledge transferring or direct instruction is also an approach that falls in line with Krashen's (2004) language learning philosophies.

Our interviewees claim that an approach catering to authentic material might be hard for the already demotivated students or the students that need predictability and very strict structure to function. If we look at Tomlinson's (2013) ideas, it might be that these students that seem demotivated, might also have the opposite effect of an authentic material based semester, by finding motivation in material they could find more engaging than the coursebook?

This approach would again leave plenty of opportunity for the students to engage in extensive reading. Again, with Tomlinson's (2013) drastic act of throwing coursebooks out the window in mind (p. 139), if we are to teach in line with both Tomlinson (2013) and Krashen's (2004) approaches to choosing materials, it could

be interpreted as having to throw away the coursebook altogether. Instead, several of the teachers in our study seem to think that the solution to the dilemma of learning materials could be somewhere in between utilizing just authentic literature or solely using the coursebook. This approach seems to cater towards Tomlinson's (2013) idea of humanizing the coursebooks (p. 150). While a good variety of learning material probably could be considered a positive either way, Tomlinson's (2013) description of humanizing coursebooks is about altering the material to better fit the students who are working with it so it better meets the students needs. However, utilizing a combination of the coursebook and authentic material might also help in meeting the students needs in even more ways.

Tomlinson (2013) writes about the need for materials that connect with their views, attitudes, feelings and opinions (p. 151). The way Tomlinson (2013) presents his views could be interpreted as arguments mostly about the students motivation and how the choice of material impacts student motivation. While having material that connects with the students in this way most likely has a huge impact on motivation, it is also about providing a frame of learning for the students that makes them feel secure, which is something that our interviewees name as one of the advantages of planning around the coursebook.

In our study, a point that is brought up is that while some students might shine from a teaching schedule without the coursebook, this might hurt the learning of others. This again comes back to utilizing strategies that best fit the group of students you are currently teaching (Vural, 2016, p. 8). As a teacher, adapting your methods might be an important factor to teach different groups of students in the best way possible. Is not the choice of material for any given group of students a part of that responsibility, making sure that as a teacher you pick the appropriate learning materials to fit your current group of students?

It needs to be mentioned that while Tomlinson (2013) chose to seemingly eliminate the coursebook from his teaching, when he defines the term humanizing, he does not state that it is necessary to completely remove it from the teaching environment.

He merely claims that the content of a coursebook can be altered to better suit different groups of students (p. 151).

The interviewees think that a lot of students could benefit from a more literature oriented approach to teaching, but that it needs to be planned very particularly. The reasoning they provide is that planning a whole semester without the predictability of a coursebook could contribute to insecurity for students that find self-regulation and self-structuring challenging. Our respondents even think that if planned and executed well enough, it could help better achieve the deep learning aspects of LK20.

However, Krashen (2004) points out that extensive reading should be read with minimal accountability (p. 8). This means that the students should not have a set of tasks or an overarching assignment when reading their material, but rather focus on the reading itself. Looking at the studies that Krashen (2004) presents, it reveals that students much prefer to choose their own material, not only does it suggest that students who choose their own reading material are much more motivated, but it shows a rather big difference in motivation between the students that got to choose and those that did not (p. 30).

This means that one of the questions that needs to be taken into account is how a term-schedule planned around authentic material with little to no use of the coursebook would impact student motivation, given that the students would still not be given complete freedom of choice in terms of reading. Another potential issue is that it is necessary to immerse oneself in the reading material in order to actually gain the potential benefits from doing so (Fullan et al, 2018, p. 48). This does not mean that there will be no benefits from reading, but we seem to come back to Krashen's (2004) results where self-chosen material makes students more motivated to learn (p. 30).

Ciecierski and Bintz's (2015) study from earlier makes an argument for how authentic material can help teach interdisciplinary topics (p. 19). While several of our interviewees have talked about how the coursebooks quickly become outdated in terms of staying up to date with current events, as well as other changing factors in

the world. The responses to our interview indicates that authentic material can be beneficial in handling such topics, and it can be more easily used to teach cross-curricular themes. This again goes back to what our interviewees state about a term-schedule more based on authentic material might help the students better achieve the deep learning associated with LK20.

One of the major aspects of deep learning is transferable knowledge and interdisciplinary topics (Fullan et al., 2018, p. 56). Teachers in our study make statements of how they think that authentic literature can more easily be tailored to cross-curricular learning. Combining this with the statements from what our interviewees write about how authentic material can be easier to keep relevant in terms of current topics and issues, one could argue that in terms of staying in line with the values of deep learning, it might be considered beneficial to at least incorporate authentic material to some extent.

Given that deep learning is a pedagogical approach that could be seen as wanting the students to engage in topics, challenges and topics that can be considered relevant to the world as it is today. Preparing them for challenges they will face in the world of today (Fullan et al., 2018, p. 45). One could consider that at least incorporating some form of authentic material to better tailor to the problems of today might be considered beneficial. While a lot of the coursebooks that are made for the new curriculum might still be somewhat relevant in that regard today as the curriculum is still pretty new, this will probably change quickly. Our respondents also make a point of how coursebooks quickly become outdated in terms of staying relevant to current issues, and this can be viewed as one of the weaknesses of the printed coursebook.

However, our respondents make points with regard to how both types of material have their own benefits. They point out that using authentic material might help with students' motivation, expose them to longer texts as well as being easier to adapt to the current group of students. This falls in line with both Krashen's extensive reading philosophy as well as Tomlinson's (2013) views on how coursebooks often are not the ideal learning material and Fullan's deep learning approach. The teachers in our

study also see the negative sides that can come with utilizing authentic material, seeing as removing the coursebook from the equation removes a lot of predictability for the students, which in turn can be problematic for some students who need this aspect of predictability.

Looking at the responses from the teachers in our study, they make a case for both the coursebook and authentic material having its place in the EFL classroom, and the one conclusion from the study is that while using more authentic literature could be a great asset for the students in a number of ways, teachers also consider it to be a time consuming undertaking. It could also prove to be problematic for students who need predictability.

## 7 Concluding Remarks

In this thesis, we have discussed our own findings in light of the curriculum and research. While a lot of the research we have looked at points towards the use of authentic literature and extensive reading as approaches that have high potential for meaningful learning in several ways, the tradition of the coursebook appears to stand rather strong, both nationally and internationally. Although the excerpts from authentic material found in coursebooks might have the desired effect on teaching right then and there, it does not solve the issue of failure to expose the students to longer texts to prepare them for the next step of education.

Our research question was: How do teachers relate to and use authentic literature in light of LK20? Even if we cannot draw too many conclusions based on our own data only, the results from our study are similar to many other studies. While the coursebook in and of itself is not a negative aspect of teaching, it has a tradition of playing a very large role not only in the teaching, but functioning as a pseudo-curriculum when it comes to planning out a semester-schedule. In short, both our study as well as the data we have collected from studies conducted by others shows that the coursebook plays a very big part in planning out a semester, and might be more central to the planning than the curriculum itself. Coupled with the fact that extensive reading is not specified as such on the curriculum for English,

there might be a big chance that a lot of primary school students are never exposed to longer texts, making the step from primary school and onwards harder than it should be, because students are simply not prepared for neither the length nor complexity of the texts that will face them later in their education.

Based on our findings, as well as other studies, it would seem that there are teachers that simply do not know what to do with authentic literature in the classroom. One interviewee explicitly writes that it would be necessary with more education if they were to teach authentic literature confidently. This does not mean that they do not use authentic literature at all, but it is not the main focus of their teaching.

The fact that our interviewees can be said to be uncertain when it comes to using authentic literature is understandable, and probably very common. However, there are good reasons for overcoming such uncertainty. According to many studies referred to in this thesis, it is definitely possible and doable to teach authentic literature in the EFL classroom. It is a fair assumption that being exposed to authentic literature will have benefits for most of the students exposed to it. Our findings indicate that teachers mainly use authentic literature in addition to coursebooks, if they use it at all. With more knowledge of the use of authentic literature, teachers are likely to use it much more.

The use of authentic literature is in our opinion a good method in itself, and the case studies we refer to also show that genre is irrelevant. It seems that authentic literature in any form and taught to the students with any method most likely will be beneficial to increase their competence in several areas. This does not mean that some approaches and types of authentic literature cannot give better test results than others, but the use of authentic literature can generally be used to fulfill the competence aims in LK20 in a better way.

Teaching authentic literature and involving the students in the decisions regarding what to read, can also contribute to more deep learning, as self-chosen reading material is more likely to motivate the students to engage and spend more time with



the teaching materials, which in turn can help motivate teachers to continue to use authentic literature.

Many teachers think it is time consuming to use authentic literature, and the process of finding suitable texts can be trying. This is also reflected in our interviewees answers. However, it might not be necessary to do too many changes from the teaching approaches teachers most likely are familiar with. Our interviewees seem to prefer a tangible approach to teaching, but we see no contradiction between this and teaching authentic literature.

Even though many studies clearly indicate that authentic literature is beneficial for a number of reasons mentioned above, more research on this topic is necessary. We acknowledge that our study only contributes to shed light on how a small number of teachers relate to the use of authentic literature. However, we believe that they represent many other teachers as well. The teachers are interested in and concerned with the competence aims and how to fulfill them, but teaching authentic literature is not a main priority. The focus is on using a coursebook. More teachers than our respondents do probably not have sufficient knowledge about using authentic literature. So they choose what they feel they know and what feels safe. We have not looked at research on various teaching methods and a variety of authentic literature in our study, but these are areas that could be interesting to investigate further. Furthermore, LK20 was only implemented quite recently. It will be interesting to see results from research done in Norway on EFL students with the new curriculum in place for a few more years.

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