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Abstract

The aim of the present master's thesis was to find out how a selected group of teachers view comics in general, and to look at the use of comics in their textbooks. Three textbooks, *Targets*, *Gateways YF* and A*ccess*, were studied, and six participants agreed to participate in an interview about their textbooks.

A semistructured interview was chosen in order to get reflective answers from the participating teachers. The textbooks were chosen because they were the ones used in the English classroom by the participating teachers.

The findings show that comics are not given much space in the participating teachers' classrooms, nor in the textbooks they use. *Targets'* comic is used as a simplification of another text. The participating teachers had not used it, which suggests that it was not seen as significant. *Gateways YF*'s comic was regarded as a comic and not just any other text. However, the participating teachers had not used it, which suggests that it was not seen as worthwhile. *Access* favoured other kinds of texts, and it did not have any examples of comics in it; one of the participating teachers thought this was a shame, while the other teacher who used this textbook had not missed them.

The participating teachers' knowledge of comics and their use was limited. When comics were used, they were rather included because they were easy or entertaining than that they had value on their own. The participating teachers saw comics as useful, but when comics were used, they were not applied to the fullest extent. Some of their positive thoughts about comics were that they were fun, creative, different and engaging. Some of the negative sides the participating teachers brought up with regard to using comics in the classroom, were that comics had less text, that they represented an oversimplification and that they disturb image creation. Regarding how comics should be used English education in the upper secondary Norwegian classroom, some of the points that were brought up were that comics could be used as a supplement and that that they could be used as a summing up exercise.

The participating teachers' opinions of comics are comparable to Krashen's view that comics are a conduit to reading more 'regular' texts. According to this view, comics do not possess other values then being easier and more engaging for pupils to read, as opposed to what Jacobs points out, namely that comics should be seen as a great way to teach multimodality in the classroom. Because of limited knowledge of how to use comics in the classroom, the participating teachers used them only to a minor extent, in their teaching.

Table of contents

Table of figures

1 Introduction

This thesis is an investigation into the attitudes towards and practical usage of comics in six Norwegian upper secondary English as a foreign language classrooms. The focus is on three different textbooks and six teachers at three different schools who are using these textbooks in their teaching.

1.1 Aim and scope

Comic books and graphic novels are highly popular media that are translated and sold in their original language all over the world. Children are exposed to and enjoy reading comics that make it easier for them to understand the content of a story. By seeing how popular comics have become among the general public, it is important for teachers and educators to understand the medium, and the possibilities it has when it comes to teaching English as a foreign language. The intention of the present master's thesis is to enquire into how a selected group of six upper secondary school teachers view comics, and to explore the presence and use of comics in the three textbooks used by these teachers.

More specifically, the primary focus is these six teachers' attitudes towards comics, both in their textbook and in general. The secondary aim is to ascertain how comics are presented in their textbooks and whether this might impact the use of these comics in the classroom. For the present thesis, the term 'comics' will be used henceforth as an umbrella-term to describe comic books, comic strips and graphic novels; however, it does not account for single panels that are not a part of a sequence. The following research questions have been devised for this thesis:

1. What are the teachers' attitudes to comics and how does this affect their use of comics in the classroom?
2. How are comics used in the textbooks and what does that suggest about attitudes towards them?

To be able to answer these research questions, the first part of the project was designed as a qualitative interview study. The six interviews were carried out through the use of the video chat service 'Skype'. The second part of the project involved a close reading of the three

textbooks used by the six teachers from the interviews. Additional textbooks were also consulted to see if the ones included in the study were representative in their use of comics.

1.2 Background and rationale for the study

Children growing up in today's society have access to a multitude of electronic devices and media, such as Ipads, the Internet and their phones, already from an early age. They are exposed to so much more, and they are expected to learn so much more than people did only twenty years ago. Two decades ago, to become literate was mainly about reading and understanding a text, while today, with all the new media children are exposed to, it is not enough to only understand a text. Like in the past, children are expected to understand the world around them; however, with all the new media around, this is simply no longer possible only through the understanding of texts.

Multimodality is a concept that children are becoming more exposed to. If they are able to master this concept and become critical readers, not only of the text but also of everything else that can be 'read', it becomes easier for them to understand the whole picture. Critical thinking arguably becomes easier by analysing the individual constituents of something in order to understand how they work together to create what is being seen. If children are expected to understand multimodal texts on a deeper level than merely understanding the text, they have to be taught how to accomplish this, and comics could be a useful tool for doing just that.

Teachers are a big part of children's education; they are usually the most important people when it comes to a child's literacy development. If the teachers' attitudes towards a certain medium are negative, then most likely the children in their classroom will not be exposed to that medium in a classroom setting. They might be asked to use the medium, or in the case of comics, to read the medium; however, to be able to appreciate it on a deeper level it is not enough to just read it, one also needs to understand it. If one is expected to understand something correctly, then gaining access to knowledge of its different parts is essential.

This thesis aims to contribute to a better understanding of six teachers attitudes towards comics and how this affects their use of them in the classroom. By looking at the textbooks used by the participating teachers, the goal is to see how comics are represented and used in the textbook and what this suggests about attitudes to them. It is also hoped that the insights gained from this thesis could be used as a basis for further study on the use of comics as a teaching tool.

Previous research of the use of comics in the Norwegian English as a foreign language (henceforth EFL) classroom has, at least as far as the present writer is aware, been focused around the pupils (e.g. Brænden 2015, Beenfeldt 2016). The research that has been done has shown positive results of the use of comics in the classroom; however, to be able to understand why they are or are not employed in the classroom, the questions need to be aimed at the teachers. After all, the teachers are the ones who chose what to bring into their classrooms, and they are the ones we need to understand in order to address the potential issues they have with the medium. By showing the positive outcomes of using comics in the classroom, Brænden's (2015) and Beenfeldt's (2016) research should be taken into consideration by teachers. If teachers do not understand the positive sides of using a medium that they are not familiar with, then they might not see the point of using it at all.

1.3 Material and methodology

The data for the discussion was gathered from interviews conducted with six teachers who taught English at an upper secondary Norwegian classroom, and the textbooks they used became the textbooks that have been focused on in this study. Each textbook was used by two of the participating teachers: two of them used *Targets* (Balsvik et al. 2015), two used *Gateways YF* (Rugset and Ulven 2013) and two used *Access* (Burgess and Sørhus 2015). The reason for choosing these textbooks was to make sure that the teachers knew them well enough to be able to form an opinion.

The teachers were asked to participate in the interviews through 'Skype'; the main reason for not conducting the interviews in person was the cost of travelling to the different participating teachers. They were asked to participate in an interview about their textbook, and they had no previous knowledge about the agenda of the interviews, that is, that the focus would be on comics. The decision for not including information about comics being the central theme of the interview was made to make sure that the responses from the participating teachers were genuine and on the spot, and that they did not get a chance to prepare themselves for what might be asked of them during the interview.

The questions were made before the interviews started in an interview guide, and they were separated into either being about comics in the textbook or comics in general. The questions were gathered from previous research by looking at which questions had actually been asked and what might additionally have been asked. Some of the participating teachers needed some follow-up questions if the first question was not answered in full. The transcription of the interviews took place within a day of the interviews being conducted in

order for the researcher to remember what was said, but the interviews were also taped to make sure that everything was included in the transcriptions.

A semistructured interview was preferred because it would let the participating teachers speak more freely about the questions at hand than with a structured interview. Because the sample size consists of interviews of six people, the results are descriptive and difficult to generalise. The downside to using interview was that there would never be enough time to interview enough teachers to get a predictive result. On the other hand because the interviews were in a one on one setting the participants were likely to be more comfortable and able to give a full description of the questions at hand (Dörnyei 2007: 143).

The textbooks were consulted and analysed before the interviews took place. What was looked at was the difference between how many other types of texts there were as opposed to the number of comics, what kinds of comics there were, how these comics were presented and what the purpose of a comic being a part of a specific chapter was. Also, the kind of instructions the pupils and teachers were given was looked at in order to see if the comics are regarded with the same importance as the other texts that are in the different textbooks.

1.4 Relevance

The study is relevant for both teachers and publishers because it shows how attitudes towards comics are shown through the use of them, both in the textbooks and in the classroom. With the assumption that comics are not seen as a serious medium that pupils may learn from, the study may contribute to a better understanding of how the medium is seen by upper secondary EFL teachers in Norway and what might lead to them using more comics in the future.

Previous studies have had a focus on how the medium works in a classroom setting, and the subjects of these studies have been the pupils. This study, on the other hand, will focus on whether or not the comics that are chosen to be in Norwegian EFL classrooms have been taken full advantage of as a medium, and the subjects are the teachers and their thoughts on how the comic medium is used, and on their textbooks in general.

1.5 Outline of the thesis

Chapter two presents the theoretical orientation of this thesis, with a focus on two different views of comics held by Steven Krashen and Dale Jacobs. Krashen (Ujiie and Krashen 1996, Krashen 2004a, and Krashen 2004b) looks at how comics are a conduit to something else, while Jacobs (Jacobs 2007a, Jacobs 2007b and Jacobs 2014) presents how comics should be

viewed as a good enough medium with value on its own. Other researchers are presented on each side: Haugaard (1973), Brænden (2015), Weiner and Syma (2013) share Krashen's views, while Manoli and Papadopolou (2013a and 2013b), Beenfeldt (2016), Leber-Cook and Cook (2013) largely agree with Jacobs. Blanch and Mulvihill (2013), and Versaci (2001) are considered to be between the two camps.

Chapter three presents the history of comics, both in the world and in Norway, ending with a look to the future of comics. In chapter four, the methodology is presented, with a focus on how the information was gathered and how the sample was found. The textbooks are presented, and any ethical considerations are discussed.

Chapter five presents the results and findings of the research. The findings from the interviews are presented in separate sections, the first section containing the participating teachers' attitudes towards the comics in their textbook, while the second presents their attitudes to comics in general.

Chapter six contains the discussion part of the thesis, where the findings are brought together to answer the two research questions. Finally, Chapter seven presents concluding remarks to the thesis, ending with a discussion of the present thesis limitations and suggestions to further research.

2 Theoretical orientation

This chapter presents two main contrasting theories that discuss what comics should be used as and how they should be viewed. Krashen has a focus on comics being a conduit to reading other types of literature, while Jacobs' focus is on how comics should be considered good enough on their own.

As was stated in the introduction, the goal is to find out how comics are used in the Norwegian upper secondary English classroom and what this suggests about teachers attitudes to comics. Comics scholars, and among them Krashen and Jacobs, give different views to how comics should be seen and used. Of the comics scholars that have been consulted for this thesis, Haugaard, Weiner and Syma have similar ideas to Krashen, as does Brænden, while Manoli, Papadopolou, Leber-Cook and Cook's views coincide with Jacobs description of comics, with Beenfeldt's conclusions also following a similar line of thought. Blanch, Mulvihill and Versaci bring in ideas from both sides, and are thus, in terms of their theoretical perspective, situated in-between the two camps. By first looking into the views of comics scholars, and afterwards looking into how teachers view the comics medium (see Chapter 4), the aim is to compare their views and ascertain the presence of potential similarities between them.

The textbook is here defined as the book which is used by teachers and pupils during the course of two semesters (August-December and January-June). Some teachers use the textbooks extensively, while others might choose to replace certain texts in the textbook with other texts that they find more useful or interesting for their pupils. Harmer (2013: 181) describes the main benefit of using a textbook as providing structure to the course; good textbooks provide a consistent syllabus and motivating texts, teachers can use the textbook even if they are not well prepared for their next lesson, and pupils can revise the material easily. At the same time, there are restrictions:

> Units and lessons often follow an unrelenting format so that students and teachers become demotivated by the sameness of it all. And in their choice of topics, coursebooks can sometimes be bland or culturally inappropriate (Harmer 2013: 181).

Even though the textbook as a whole is not a part of this study, the background of the benefits and restrictions of the use of a textbook might show the reason to why the teachers in the

study might have chosen to not use the comic in their textbook. Harmer (2013: 183) explains the choices a teacher goes through when deciding whether or not to use the textbook like this:
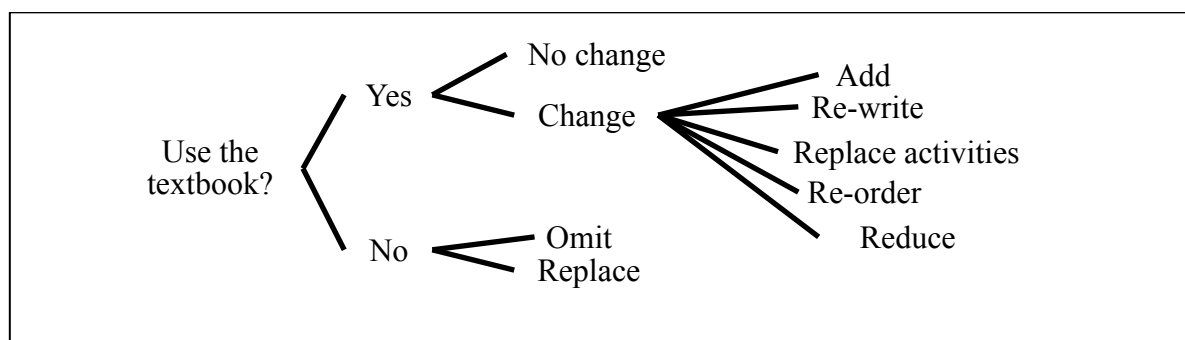
Figure 1. Options for textbook use (Harmer 2013: 183)

Figure 1 shows how the choice of using a text in the textbook is reflected in later stages when the teacher has to make a plan for the lessons ahead. As can be seen from Figure 1, the easiest choice is to stick with the textbook as it is, while the most difficult choice, or perhaps the most inventive one, at least judging from this overview, is to use the textbook only in part; this option entails a whole series of options as to what to do with the topic specified in the textbook. At the same time, using the structure of the textbook as a basis to add additional material might be the most rewarding both for the teacher and the pupils, as that would force them to think about the subject in a less pre-fabricated way. Not using the textbook at all could of course also be rewarding and could present the teacher with a range of choices; this could be considered as going down a slightly different path, and since the focus here is on textbooks, this path will not be further discussed here.

In the following, a detailed impression of the different schools of though when it comes to the medium of comics is presented, with a presentation of research on comics in the classroom and looking at the recommended guidelines for the use of comics in the Norwegian national curriculum.

2.1 Comics, Graphic Novels or Comic Books?

Comics, Graphic Novels, Comic Books; the different terms are often used simultaneously when describing different parts of the same medium; however, the definitions of the terms are not the same. 'Comics' is defined by McCloud as the medium that both graphic novels and comic books are a part of, while graphic novels and comic books are the form in which they are presented (McCloud 1993: 4). When choosing to use 'comics' as the generic term, it

includes both comic books and graphic novels and it becomes easier to discuss them on a general basis.

McCloud tries to find a definition that can narrow down what 'comics' are, what they include and what should be left out when we are talking about and discussing comics. McCloud's discussion starts with defining the term 'comics'; he begins with an expression that he describes as Eisner's term: 'sequential art' (McCloud 1993: 7). Eisner, in an interview by Yronwode, explains that this is the essence of what comics are: "a sequence of pictures arranged to tell a story" (Inge 2011: 67). He also explains that to him, sequential art is a form of language (Inge 2011: 61). During McCloud's search for a definition of 'comics', 'sequential art' is initially regarded as too ambiguous a term; however, he still ends up with explaining that even though his own definition is quite specific, 'sequential art' remains the definition that is easiest to apply in most situations (McCloud 1993: 9). Therefore, 'sequential art' is a practical definition, it is short and easily remembered; nevertheless, a more specific one should be put into place.

McCloud goes on to define the term 'comics' as: "juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence, intended to convey information and/or produce an aesthetic response in the viewer" (1993: 20). While the definition leaves out single-panel pictures, it includes all comics that have a series of panels, which give the reader information about something and/or make the reader feel something about it. McCloud (1993: 21) looks at single panels and says:

> They are cartoons as am I, and there is a long-standing relationship between comics and cartoons. – But they are not the same thing! One is an approach to picture-making – a style, if you like – while the other is a medium which often employs that approach.

His understanding is that cartoons are a style, while the medium is comics, and therefore they are not the same.

By using McCloud's definition one can easily leave out spectatory media such as films, even though one could argue that when we slow down a film it is simply consists of a series of picture after picture, which may compare to comics. This definition is a collective one that can be used for all the different forms of comics, including graphic novels and comic books, as comics is the collective term for all of them. 'Comics' as the general and collective term is the easiest applicable term; nevertheless, there does not seem to be an absolute consensus about this, and different scholars do use the other terms as well, even though they

are talking about the same thing.

'Graphic Novel' as a term is taken more seriously than comics in general, and it separates itself from comic books and the comical aspect that is related to the term. 'Graphic Novel' was a term coined by Eisner. He explained in an interview by Fingeroth how he believed publishers would take this new term more seriously; also, he did not like the term 'comics' and compared it to how Kleenex had become a concept rather than a brand when talking about facial tissues (Inge 2011: 214). Changing the term to something else entirely might be difficult, as most people would still call it comics. When Eisner used the term 'Graphic Novel' for the first time it had been seen in print earlier, but it was not until he used it that people took notice (Inge 2011: xi). Inge describes Eisner's use of 'Graphic Novel' like this: "Soon it was adopted by others as an appropriate description for length, complex, and thematically mature works of graphic fiction and nonfiction" (Inge 2011: xi). By separating the work from the common comic book, Graphic Novels gained respect because of the preconception that comic books are always supposed to be comical. Although this is no longer the case, the point that Eisner made by naming his work a Graphic Novel instead of placing it within the collective term 'comics', has stuck with the genre since then.

Even though Eisner resented the term 'comics', he still used it, because, as he explained, that was the word that had stuck:

> To me, comics is somewhat like a typeset: it's a language, and it's always been a language. The art within that language is an art form. It's sequential art, which consists of pictures arranged in a sequence to tell a story. That's the core of the medium. But it is nevertheless a storytelling or message or communication device, and consequently, the survival of this medium will be based upon the content — the message.

This is how Eisner explains what comics are during an interview with Harvey conducted in 1998 (Inge 2011: 186). McCloud, on the other hand, wants to draw our attention to what the different parts of comics represent. If the visual iconography of the medium could be seen as the vocabulary of 'comics', then its grammar would be closure (McCloud 1993: 67).

Closure is the "phenomenon of observing the parts but perceiving the whole" (McCloud 1993: 63). This is the strong suit of 'comics'; even though movies and television also take advantage of closure, 'comics' is the place where readers use it continually from beginning to end. When the first of two adjacent panels shows a person dropping an egg, and the next panel shows a chicken farm, we as readers cannot really know that the egg was

broken, but we presume that it happened based on our past experiences (McCloud 1993: 68). In the same way, looking at the panel in Figure 2, there is no way to understand the action that is being conducted without using closure. We know that eggs that are being dropped or thrown usually end up broken. By using this 'tool' to show that time passes from one panel to the other, the author relies on the knowledge of the reader, and therefore, without the reader, there is no one to make comics come to life and make sense of it all.

Figure 2. Panels from Understanding Comics (McCloud 1993: 71)

When producing comics, the authors make several choices that are easier to see if the readers recognise the choices behind what they are reading. They choose which moments to include, what the frame should look like, what kind of images to use, what words to use, and how to show the flow of the story on the page (McCloud 2006: 10). There are different goals to achieve within these choices. For instance, within the choice of moments the goal is to show the moments that matter and leave out the ones that do not, while in the choice of frame the goal is to see the focus of the page. Further, in the choice of image the goal is to show what the author wants the reader to understand, in the choice of words the goal is to find the right way to collaborate with the pictures, and lastly, in the choice of flow the goal is to make sure that the reader is able to follow the story (McCloud 2006: 37).

McCloud goes further than most when trying to educate people about what comics are. The icons used in 'comics' are the pictures that serve as a subject that we as readers recognise as something we know from things that we have only heard of to things that we have seen ourselves (McCloud 1993: 27). The pictures can resemble something quite realistically, or it can be far from the real thing, but we still see that a circle, with two dots and a line, is

supposed to be a face (McCloud 1993: 31). McCloud makes a point out of cartoon faces being simple and basic: he believes that this is the reason why people can recognise themselves in the characters; if the pictures had been realistic there would be less of a resemblance to people in general, and therefore identification with the character would be more difficult (McCloud 1993: 42). Some artists have taken advantage of this and made some characters more realistically than others, in order to separate the characters that they want the reader to identify with, from the characters that they do not want the readers to identify with. This method of making something simpler than it really is can be applied to the drawings of things as well as faces, by drawing something simpler than it really is, the artist can give focus to the parts that the reader is supposed to take notice of, and draw attention away from the things that are not as important (McCloud 1993: 30). By using the reader as a collaborator and not only as a spectator in order to make sense of the story, the artist is doing something that most are not aware of, the thing that happens without most of us thinking about it, the thing we call 'closure'.

The reader definitely plays an important part in comics. Without the reader, there is no one that makes the unconscious choice of putting the different parts of the comics together. There has to be someone who understands and uses closure to actually break the egg; without the reader's collaboration, the egg might as well have landed on a cushion and not having been broken at all (McCloud 1993: 68).

Both Eisner and McCloud are known advocates to the medium of comics. Eisner is described as the person to study in order to understand the development of comics itself (Inge 2011: ix), while Eisner describes McCloud's book *Understanding Comics* as a must read for everyone who is interested in the medium. At the other end of the spectrum there is Fredric Wertham, a German-educated American psychiatrist who vividly protested against the potentially harmful effects of reading comics, most notably in his 1954 publication *Seduction of the Innocent.*

2.1.1 Wertham - comics' enemy number one?

Wertham is generally seen as comics' enemy number one. He conducted a study of children reading comics in order to find out what kind of influence they had and how excessive that influence was (Wertham 1954: 48). Wertham claimed that comic books were the reason for adolescent illiteracy and that the reason for this was because the focus was too much on the images and too little on the written words (Wertham 1954: 125). He also pointed to a specific

problem which makes comic book reading even more of an issue, namely the problem that comics apparently cause harm to the achievement of left to right eye movements (Wertham 1954: 127). When reading comics, the eyes sometimes follow a different pattern than they usually do; there might be a conversation that jumps from one panel to the other, but generally, they still follow the left to right eye movements from the left panel to a right panel, just as they would by reading a regular printed text. To say that Wertham studied the medium of comics and all its different aspects might be an overstatement. Among other things, he has been criticised for choosing his subjects in order to prove that he was right in his beliefs that comics were harmful to children.

Wertham's study has been criticised by most advocates of comics. Krashen, for example, describes Wertham's problems with comic book reading as unfounded and disproven, and refers to other studies that have disproven Wertham's claims (Krashen 2004a: 94). There will be more about Krashen and his views on comic books in Chapter 2.2.1. Eisner did not agree with Wertham's claims either. During an interview with Yornwode in 1978 he expressed his distaste of the belief that one should use censorship in order to make literature that was 'suitable' for children (Inge 2011: 76). However, all the criticism of him has also lead to people trying to speak on behalf of Wertham, making the point that he is no longer here to be a part of the discussions about his statements and can not defend himself.

Wertham's study led to misunderstandings regarding the medium of 'comics'. The Comics Code of 1954 (see Chapter 3.1, p. 34) was a result of the scepticism that arose after Wertham´s study, and it gives explicit rules as to what comics should look like and what kind of content should be present.

Lewis (2011) wrote in his article 'Seduction of the Insolent (or, Retraction of the Innocent)' about the misinterpretation of Wertham and his status as the number one enemy of comics. He argues that Wertham's biggest issue with comics was not with the medium itself, but with the parents who did not understand what their children were reading. He also suggests that if Wertham were alive today, his problems would no longer be with the medium of comics, but rather with violent television and video games, which is something that several people have spoken out against in our time. Lewis looks at how the medium of 'comics' has changed since Wertham, and that he might not have been as concerned with its effects on children if he had seen what it looked like today (Lewis 2011).

A positive outcome from Wertham´s misguided beliefs about comics is the discussions that it has later lead to. His ideas brought out more of the advocates of comics and made them speak up, do their own studies and prove how comics can be a positive medium

that children should keep reading. Even though most scholars agree about Wertham being comics' number one enemy, they still have different thoughts as to how comics have evolved and how they should be used. The bottom line is that the more comics are discussed, the more people will learn about them, both in terms of what they are good for and how they could be used to their full potential.

2.2 Comics: light reading or not?

Can comics be considered light reading, and does it lead to reading other literature in general? Is the point of reading comics that it should lead to reading other things? Do we appreciate comics in their own right? These are all questions that are highly relevant to ask, and in the following, different views on the subject are presented.

The *Collins English Dictionary* defines light reading as "reading which is not considered too demanding or intellectual[1]", and the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines it as "something that is easy to read[2]". By using 'considered' in the definition, the *Collins English Dictionary* places the responsibility of defining what is light reading on someone else, which means that some people may consider something as light reading while others might be opposed to using this term to describe the same thing. In any case, by describing a text as light reading, one has decided that the text is easy to read.

2.2.1 Comics as a conduit

Krashen discusses his own and others' research of free voluntary reading (FVR) in *The Power of Reading*; the discussion also involves how FVR should be used and he argues for what it has to offer (Krashen 2004a: xi). According to Krashen FVR:

> (…) means reading, because you want to: no book reports, no questions at the end of the chapter. In FVR, you don't have to finish the book if you don't like it. FVR is the kind of reading most of us do obsessively all the time (Krashen 2004a: 1).

When it comes to comics, his goal is to find out if comic books can be a conduit to reading towards reading books, whether or not they cause any harm, and whether they are demanding enough (Krashen 2004a: 93).

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[1] https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/light-reading (accessed 09.05.17)
[2] https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/light%20reading (accessed 09.05.17)

When it comes to Krashen's view of Wertham, he briefly mentions him and quickly disregards his claims as unfunded. He does not discuss Wertham further; however, he states that there is documentation pertaining to the idea that comic books could be a conduit to what he calls 'serious' reading (Krashen 2004a: 97). He gives a presentation of studies that show different levels of difficulty within different comic books; some of the comic books are claimed to be at a higher intellectual level than others (Krashen 2004a: 98).

Throughout his discussion, Krashen refers to comic books as light reading; however, he does not give any description of what he means by identifying all comic books as light reading. The general idea is that comic books will and do lead to heavier reading among most comic book readers (Krashen 2004a: 103).

Ujiie and Krashen (1996) conducted a study of two different groups of boys who belonged to different socio-economic groups. The goal of the study was to find out if there were differences between the two groups regarding the extent to which comic book reading varied with social class, and if there was any relationship between reading comic books, reading books and the enjoyment the students experienced from the reading (Ujiie and Krashen 1996: 51). The results of the study showed that boys from both groups enjoyed reading comic books, and that the ones who enjoyed reading comic books also liked to read other things and read more in general (Ujiie and Krashen 1996: 53). The researchers anticipated a difference between the middle-class and the less affluent groups reading habits. However, they argue that if the less affluent group had been given easier access to books the differences between comic and non-comic book readers would be as great as they were in the middle-class group (Ujiie and Krashen 1996: 54).

In his acceptance speech for 'The Dorothy C. McKenzie Award for Distinguished Contribution to the Field of Children's Literature', Krashen brings up one of the most important points about children and how we are expected to get them to read more. His main point is that exposure to good books will get them to read more and this will again lead them further in their literacy development (Krashen 2004b: 1). Krashen seeks to make literature in general available to all; his belief is that FVR will lead to more reading and more learning.

Krashen's main point throughout is that we should get children and people in general to read more. They should read a lot, because it will lead them towards a greater literacy development, and that will only happen if they find what they are reading interesting. When discussing comic books, Krashen is not talking about graphic novels or comics in general; instead, he is including all comic books in his definition of light reading. By only focusing on comic books, he has left out a bigger discussion when it comes to the medium of comics as a

whole; he might have found it more difficult to define the whole medium of comics as light reading.

Krashen aims to show how comic books can be a conduit to heavier reading by referring to a study of Haugaard´s (1973) experience with her own children. Haugaard tries to read her eldest son's comic book and finds it inadequate, but she does not see the harm in him reading it if it can lead to him reading something else (Haugaard 1973: 54). She gives examples of the boys starting to read comic books, asking what the words mean, and later on, when the eldest son moves on from comic books and gives them to his younger brother, she sees that the comic books have worked as a conduit. Then she concludes that she hopes educators will start to see how motivating comic books can be for reluctant readers (Haugaard 1973: 55).

The goal for both Krashen and Haugaard when it comes to comic books is to show that comic books are conduits to more demanding texts. They never mention anything about other types of comics other than comic books; if one considers the whole medium of comics rather than just focusing on how comic books can help reluctant readers to find motivation to read, one might find that comics can stand as a valuable medium of its own without necessarily being the conduit to something else or something more demanding.

2.2.2 Comics as a valuable medium of its own

Jacobs believes that comics are complex multimodal texts that should not be seen as a conduit to something else (Jacobs 2007a: 20). He explains how comics advocates such as Haugaard, who use their advocacy for comics simply to underline one of Wertham's points, namely that comics are not suitable texts for reading, have not moved on from the simple understanding of comics as just a stepping stone to more worthwhile texts (Jacobs 2007: 20). He tries to bring the medium of comics out from the shadow of word-based literacy, giving it its own platform: multimodal literacy (Jacobs 2007a: 20).

Jacobs has seen that comics have become more available both in school and in libraries, but that this is mainly because educators believe that comics is a popular medium that will later lead to reading other things that are considered more difficult (Jacobs 2007a: 20). The motivating factor is the one he sees as being the main reason for using and having comics available to pupils; comics are still regarded as having too much focus on pictures, and Jacobs points to how comics advocates still align themselves with Wertham's understanding of comics where the visual is inferior to the written word (Jacobs 2007a: 20).

Moreover, Jacobs points to how nothing can be seen as entirely positive or negative, and gives an example that shows how even Wertham could see that: "not every comic book is bad for children's minds and emotions" (Jacobs 2007b: 187). Depending on one's point of view, one needs to understand how something can be seen differently from different perspectives; the reader of a comic could see comics as a way to escape everything else that is going on, while a teacher could see comics as a time thief that takes the focus away from the tasks that seem more urgent to finish (Jacobs 2007b: 187-188).

Jacobs points to how comics have been degraded in the sense that they have been looked at as something that does not contain the word-based literacy that has been expected from a learning perspective (Jacobs 2007a: 20). He therefore suggests placing comics in another category, as parts of multimodal literacy, where the focus is not only on the text but also on the whole picture. This includes the art, panels and gutter we see on the page; at the same time, it also gives the readers time to study the facial expressions, the clothes and the movements that are portrayed.

The focus on meaning-making and teaching this to pupils is an essential part of Jacobs' argument, he explains that the text is not the only thing that makes the readers of a comic understand what is happening, and he shows how he would use a comic in a discussion with his pupils (Jacobs 2007a: 22). He would focus on the visual aspect, such as the different shades and the perspective that is used, the gestural aspect, such as the characters' facial expression and the way they are moving, and the spatial aspect, such as the environment that is being portrayed and what this might tell us about what is going on in the comic (Jacobs 2007a: 22). By considering all of these elements together with the linguistic and audio elements they form a multimodal system of meaning-making (Jacobs 2007a: 23); it is not just the words alone that provide the understanding the readers will get from reading a comic (Jacobs 2007a: 24).

Jacobs wants educators to teach pupils what they are doing when they make sense of a comic, they have to become conscious and critical of how they make meaning of a multimodal text. The active process they are a part of when creating meaning from a comic has to be something they are aware of (Jacobs 2007a: 24).

By looking at comics as a part of multimodal literacy the point is to not to look at comics as simplified versions of word-based literacy, but to try to look at everything the comics page has to offer. (Jacobs 2007a: 21). If pupils are expected to not just read the printed words, but also take everything else into consideration, this opens up a whole new dimension:

By complementing our view of comics so that we do not see them as simply an intermediary step to more complex word-based literacy, we can more effectively help students become active creators, rather than passive consumers, of meaning in their interactions with a wide variety of multimodal texts (Jacobs 2007a: 24).

Jacobs wants comics to be taken seriously as an effective way to teach pupils about critical reading, and if that is the goal, then the people who first need to understand how to use comics, are the teachers. Teachers have to understand that print literacy is not the only goal anymore; by being exposed to multimodal literacy all the time through picture books and computer games, the way our pupils see and understand text is not the same as it used to be (Jacobs 2007b: 183).

Krashen and Jacobs may not agree about what role comics should have when it comes to its use; the main difference concerns whether comics should be seen as a conduit to other word-based literacies or not. On the other hand, they do agree that comics as a medium has not been used to its full potential and that more focus should be placed on it.

2.2.3 Comics as multimodal texts

Multimodal texts are texts that combine both text and pictures, such as magazines, advertisements, video games and picture books. Manoli and Papadopoulou explain:

The pedagogy of Multiliteracies focuses on the multifarious integration of the different modes of communication during the meaning- making process, when the written-linguistic mode of meaning is linked with the visual, the gestural, the spatial, or the audio mode, requiring a new, multimodal literacy (Manoli and Papadopoulou 2013a: 2).

Children who grow up today are exposed to multimodal texts from a young age; this exposure comes through media like websites and video games, as well as through other things that they use on a daily basis (Manoli and Papadopoulou 2013a: 1). This is something that has evolved at a rapid pace as technology has become increasingly available and cheaper since the beginning of the twenty-first century. Children today are more accustomed to appreciating their surroundings from different input channels, not just from reading texts but by interpreting pictures as well; they are more exposed to multimodal texts than what has ever been the case before (Manoli and Papadopoulou 2013a: 2). Manoli and Papadopoulou argue that:

educators should enhance students' ability to use reading strategies in multimodal texts, which have become part and parcel of our life, in order to help them identify the main idea or spot specific information, boost their reading performance and render them independent readers (Manoli and Papadopoulou 2013a: 4).

They also point out that it is important for foreign language learners to be able to understand multimodal texts and that they get familiar with it (Manoli and Papadopoulou 2013b: 2).

Jacobs also points to how comics and other multimodal texts are a big part of pupils' lives and that teachers have to teach pupils how to improve their multimodal literacies (Jacobs 2014: 2). He argues that comics have an advantage to other multimodal texts because they use both text and pictures, and by using comics in a classroom teachers are bringing together the expected alphabetic literacy and the multimodal literacy (Jacobs 2014: 3). In order for pupils to read comics critically, they have to be taught both how to understand them by looking at the parts of which the comics consist, but also the way they are working together to create meaning. The drawings represent a visual mode, the words that are being said represent the linguistic mode, our understanding of the characters' facial expressions and their body language represents the gestural mode, the sound effects represent the audio mode, while the page as a whole and how the panels are arranged represent the spatial mode (Jacobs 2014: 9). By being able to see all of these modes both together and apart from each other, while at the same time understanding and being critical of the text one is reading, it becomes easier to develop into a capable multimodal reader. Instead of reading a comic just for the sake of remembering what it said, pupils will instead be able to answer questions that will give answers to the deeper meaning of what they are reading. Questions such as: 'Why do you think the artist chose those words?' or 'Why did the artist chose to focus on that particular character?' will raise the pupils' awareness of the different aspects of the comic. Basically, it will make the reading of a comic more worthwhile, because the focus in on how the comic is constructed and the choices the artist made when composing the comic, instead of simply on what information or facts one has learnt by reading the comic (Jacobs 2014: 17).

Manoli and Papadopoulou conducted a study in Greece with 23 EFL Greek-speaking pupils between the age of 11 and 12. They were trying to find out if a teaching intervention about the use of reading strategies in EFL multimodal texts would improve the pupils' ability to get "information from both linguistic and visual modes in order to derive meaning from the text" (Manoli and Papadopoulou 2013b: 6). The results showed that after having been taught

how to understand the text (which in this case was a map) the pupils' "ability to produce information from multimodal texts using reading strategies" improved (Manoli and Papadopoulou 2013b: 8). They argue that it is important to teach foreign language learners how to understand multimodal texts because they are becoming increasingly more common (Manoli and Papadopoulou 2013b: 2).

2.3 Comics in the classroom

To be able to see how comics have been used as a resource in the classroom, this section will take a closer look at how comics work in the classroom as an educational tool. In their introduction, Weiner and Syma point to how comics have been used more in education during the past ten to fifteen years and that the discussion is no longer regarding whether or not one should use comics in education, but how one should use them in education (Weiner and Syma 2013: 1). Uslan (1974), cited in Weiner and Syma (2013: 4-5), brings up four reasons for using comics in education, which are:

> 1. that comics can help people who are having problems learn to read more effectively
> 2. that comics can help improve grammar and increase vocabulary
> 3. that comics can be an introduction to the reading of more sophisticated materials and the to the study of literature in general
> 4. and finally, that comics could be used to teach various attitudes and facts"
> (Uslan 1974 [Weiner and Syma 2013: 4-5]).

These reasons correspond more with Krashen's reasons for using comics in education as a way to make something easier to learn than with Jacobs' reasons.

Weiner and Syma state that comics are "one of the purest forms an educator could use to teach visual literacy"; by placing them in the visual literacy category the focus is primarily on the pictures and not on all the parts that make up a comic. They also give comics credit for being a way to engage students because it embraces their minds (Weiner and Syma 2013: 5). The essays Weiner and Syma have included discuss the use of comics in different ways and in different types of classrooms; in the following, the most relevant ones will be presented and discussed.

In their essay, Leber-Cook and Cook (2013) study the use of comics in the Adult English as a Second Language Classroom. They bring up the idea that comics scholars are

trying to tell educators that comics are a legitimate part of reading, but that the only point educators have been able to grasp is that comics are worthy of being studied (Leber-Cook and Cook 2013: 25). Their point is that even though the way educators view comics has changed since Wertham, the medium is still not taken as seriously as it should be (Leber-Cook and Cook 2013: 27).

Leber-Cook and Cook join Jacobs in his view that comics are multimodal texts. The skills that are required to understand a multimodal text are many, one would have to understand among other things what the gestures that are portrayed mean, how the spoken language differs from the written and what the reason for that may be (Leber-Cook and Cook 2013: 27). Learning to understand these things may help EFL pupils interact and understand conversations in real life with a native speaker of English, or understand the cultural references that are presented in films or in television broadcasts. When looking at multimodal literacy as an essential part of language learning, comics are a great way to learn these skills. When learners become aware of the different parts they need to focus on to be able to understand the comic, there is a whole new world of language that opens up to them.

In Blanch and Mulvihill's (2013) essay, they argue for including comics as a type of teaching method, not to replace another method, but to include it as a supplementary approach just as movies have been included over the years (Blanch and Mulvihill 2013: 37). They also point out the positive attributes of comics, such as their ability to motivate pupils and that they are a whole-brain activity (Blanch and Mulvihill 2013: 38).

Motivating pupils is something that might be difficult sometimes, particularly with pupils who have grown up never being bored and who have had things with which to distract themselves at all times. Television has become an important part of our society, and by being able to choose something one finds interesting to do at all times, pupils might not be easily engaged and motivated to read, for example, Shakespeare. Finding one type of material that motivates all the pupils in the classroom equally much is a challenge for most educators, and often this is not possible. Thus, adapted education has become increasingly important, and pupils are given different types of material to be able to work on the same topic. By using comics as a tool, one might be able to catch the attention of the pupils who usually do not participate in discussions on a regular basis If educators include comics as part of the curricula, the students might see the connections between their real life and their learning, they might be more capable of relating themselves and their lives to a character that they read about in a comic (Blanch and Mulvihill 2013: 38-39).

Blanch and Mulvihill explain how comics can be a great way to get pupils to use their

whole brain. Usually, when reading a print-based text, we are only using one side of our brain. Reading, writing, and listening are all left hemisphere activities, while the right hemisphere is used for imaginative and artistic activities. Since comics include both pictures and a narrative, when reading comics, the pupils use both the hemispheres and are therefore using their whole brain (Blanch and Mulvihill 2013: 39).

The authors also conducted a study of six students who read a comics textbook instead of a normal textbook. The results of the study were that the attitudes the students had towards comics changed after having read the comics textbook. The comics textbook made one of the students describe it as a lot more interesting, another described it as a book that they would remember the content of, and after having the experience all of the students had a more positive view of comics in general (Blanch and Mulvihill 2013: 45). The preconceptions that the students had were preconceptions shared by many people. Some educators have gotten to understand that comics can be a great resource, but they are still not giving it the same 'importance' as printed text. Blanch and Mulvihill point to how teachers have to continue to educate themselves in order to see how the new methods work and if they work. The way teachers and educators teach their pupils change over time and when a new method is tried and presented educators have to acquire knowledge in order to implement the new methods in their classroom (Blanch and Mulvihill 2013: 45).

Versaci (2001: 61) discusses from his perspective as a teacher how comics and comic books in particular can change how pupils see literature. He argues that the canon of literature, which is presented, in the classroom gives pupils a reason to believe that the only literature important enough to read are novels and literature by highly praised authors (Versaci 2001: 61). It is not in the pupil's best interest to only give them literature that fits in with what the teachers judge to be the best literature. Pupils should be taught to read different kinds of media and make up their own opinions about whether or not what they read has value, and not be taught to regard comics as being juvenile and subliterate (Versaci 2001: 63,64).

Like many other comics advocates, Versaci believes in comics' engagement value, but he also brings up how they can be valuable when teaching pupils analytical and critical skills in connection to what they are reading. When faced with a commonly praised and highly valued literary work, trying to be critical might be difficult; however, when faced with comics one can be asked to analyse the pictures as well as the text, which might be helpful to pupils when trying to find the meaning behind the work they are given to read (Versaci 2001: 65). Teachers must try to give pupils the confidence to form their own critical opinions about

literature, and by giving them comics they could widen their opinion about what should be considered 'proper' literature (Versaci 2001: 66).

Versaci brings up a side to comics which coincides with Jacobs' opinion that comics are not just a conduit to what is considered to be the 'right' literature. He gives the medium meaning on its own and tries to show how comics can be a great tool to use in different teaching settings. At the same time, Jacobs (2014) goes further in his definition of the medium of comics in not only considering it as a tool, but in addition defining it as a multimodal textual genre.

2.3.1 Comics in the Norwegian school system

For several years, comics have been a part of the Norwegian school system; this is particularly visible in the curriculum L97 for the Norwegian lessons at the 8th grade level, which states that the children should work with comics, consider text and pictures, also with an emphasis on the aesthetics, make their own comics, and test some of their knowledge about the genre (L97: 126).[3] This is the first time that comics are mentioned specifically, and, at least as far as the present researcher is aware, it is also the only time. When it comes to the English curriculum throughout the years, the one place where comics could fit in as part of the description, is when they use the description 'ulike sjangere', which means 'different genres'; however, then it is up to the teacher to choose which genres to use in the classroom.

The competence aims in the Norwegian upper secondary English classroom today are the same for both the general studies program (1 year) and the vocational program (2 years). The competence aims is a list of what the pupils should know at the end of the school year, and what knowledge is expected in order for them to be able to pass their exam. The competence aims that might use comics as a tool to reach these goals are the following:

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[3] «arbeide med teikneseriar, vurdere tekst og bilete, også med vekt på det estetiske, lage teikneseriar sjølv og prøve ut noko av kunnskapen sin om sjangeren. Arbeide med biletbøker, kunstbilete og plakatar»

1. Evaluate and use different situations, working methods and learning strategies to further develop one's English-language skills.

2. Evaluate and use suitable reading and writing strategies adapted for the purpose and type of text.

3. Understand the main content and details in texts of varying length about different topics.

4. Discuss and elaborate on culture and social conditions in several English-speaking countries.

5. Discuss and elaborate on different types of English language literary texts from different parts of the world.

6. Discuss and elaborate on English language films and other forms of cultural expressions from different media.

7. Discuss and elaborate on texts by and about indigenous peoples in English-speaking countries.

Figure 3. Parts of the English competence aims after Vg1 – programmes for general studies and Vg2 – vocational education programmes[4]

These competence aims could be reached through the use of comics because of the following reasons: the comics could show different situations, and be seen as a different working method (competence aim 1); the reading strategies are different when reading a comic (competence aim 2); a comic is a text, and it could present different topics (competence aim 3); comics could bring up discussions about culture and social conditions (competence aim 4); comics is a different type of literary text, and one might find ones that are from different parts of the world (competence aim 5); comics is a different type of medium that can show cultural expressions (competence aim 6); and one can find comics written by and concerning indigenous peoples (competence aim 7). The competence aims are what the pupils should learn, but the specific methods are often not stated and that leaves the choice up to the teachers. Therefore, even though the competence aims do not exclude comics as a method, they do not specify it either and leaves the decesion up to the teachers.

These aims and the others stated by 'Utdanningsdirektoratet' (the Ministry of education) are supposed to be covered during the English course. At the end of the course the

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[4] https://www.udir.no/kl06/ENG1-03/Hele/Kompetansemaal/competence-aims-after-vg1-–-programmes-for-general-studies-and-vg2-–-vocational-education-programmes?lplang=eng (accessed 26.04.17)

pupils have an exam, which they should be preparing for throughout the course. Comics have been used as part of this final exam, as illustrated in the following examples:

Figure 4. Exam question (Autumn 2014: 5)

Figure 5. Preparation material for exam (Autumn 2014: 11)

In Figure 4 and 5, the pupils are presented with a choice between four different tasks, and this is one of them. The pupils are asked to interpret the comic in order to answer the exam task; while it might not be the most complicated comic, it shows how comics are a part of an exam recently used.

Figure 6. Exam question (Autumn 2014: 4)

The example in Figure 6 is one of two tasks that the pupils had to choose between at the 2014 exam. It shows what the people who made the exam call 'cartoons', but which, judging from McCloud's definition of comics, should not be considered cartoons, as they do not consist of a series of pictures in deliberate sequence (see Chapter 2.1, p. 8). Still, the pictures could be viewed in a multimodal way by considering all the parts that go into them; by looking at, for instance, the facial expressions of the characters rather than just reading the text, the way the pupils view these pictures would be different than what it would have been had they just read the text. Even though McCloud's definition does not include single panels, the point to be made here is that if comics had been used, as a way to teach multimodality in general, the tasks would be easier to understand and complete for the pupils. These are two examples of how a comic and a picture, which here is called a cartoon, are used in an exam in order to make the pupils find inspiration to answer the task.

The English subject curriculum in Norway contains all the competence aims from the first grade to the third year of the upper secondary EFL education. Within the curriculum there is a section called 'Purpose', and within the 'Purpose' section there is an explanation of the purpose of teaching and having English as a subject in the Norwegian school system. One of the statements given is:

Language learning occurs while encountering a diversity of texts, where the concept of text is used in the broadest sense of the word. It involves oral and written

representations in different combinations and a range of oral and written texts from digital media.[5]

By stating that the texts pupils are supposed to learn from are texts in the broadest sense of the word, they have opened up for a certain level of interpretation. 'A diversity of texts' means that factual, fictional and other texts are encouraged to use in teaching situations at all levels of the Norwegian EFL education. That makes comics a part of what should be taught in the EFL classroom in Norway, as it is a different kind of text than the 'normal' literature that is out there.

Helene Skjeggestad (2016) wrote a comment about comics in *Aftenposten*, called 'give the children comics before the boredom of school takes them (my translation)'.[6] Her argument was that comics are necessary to read and that the Norwegian school system cannot afford to lose comics as a tool. She also pointed to research, which showed how boys who struggle with reading are motivated to read comic books. This was in regard to reading in general and not specifically to English reading; however, reading in general might lead to reading in English as well. Comics have been and are still highly relevant to use in the Norwegian school system; however, the question is still whether and how much the teachers' attitudes towards comics play a role in their use of them in the classroom.

2.4 Review of related research

There has been some research conducted in Norway that concerns comics as a teaching method; however, most of the research that has taken place in Norway about the use of comics in the English classroom, focuses on the pupils and not the teachers. Beenfeldt (2016) looked into comics as a multimodal medium in a Norwegian EFL classroom, while Brænden's (2015) focus was on the motivational factor that comics bring to pupils. Their different foci give reason to draw parallels with Jacobs on the one hand and Krashen on the other.

In her Master's thesis, Beenfeldt conducts a case study with a graphic novel to look at multimodal reading in the Norwegian upper secondary EFL classroom. Beenfeldt aimed to primarily answer how the graphic novel as a medium could create opportunities for fostering students' multimodal reading literacy in the EFL classroom. She argues that it is important to use the comics medium as a multimodal classroom text in order to expand the collective

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[5] https://www.udir.no/kl06/ENG1-03/Hele/Formaal?lplang=eng (accessed 26.04.17)
[6] Gi barna en tegneserie før skoletørken tar dem

metalanguage of the pupils. She also argues that graphic novels are a suitable visual format for pupils on different levels that could result in pupils seeing their reading experiences as positive (Beenfeldt 2016: 1).

The case study used graphic novels rather than comics in general; still, the results support Jacobs' claims for comics presenting a possibility for teaching multimodal literacy (Beenfeldt 2016: 94). The results indicated that after the teacher's presentation of how comics works as a multimodal text and after having read a graphic novel, the pupils reflected more critically and read the text in depth, with a focus on the elements that a graphic novel contains, in order for the reader to comprehend the meaning (Beenfeldt 2016: 95).

In the final survey, Beenfeldt asked the pupils close-ended questions and open-ended questions. One of the open-ended questions was: "If you were an English teacher in upper secondary, would you use graphic novels in your teaching? Why/why not?" (Beenfeldt 2016: 142, my translation).[7] As this is close to one of the questions asked in this present study, it is interesting to see some of the answers Beenfeldt's pupils gave:

"Yes, you would help engage the pupils, and they will learn how to read pictures, which is used a lot in today's society of complex texts (Internet). It could work better in order to illustrate a difficult topic than other ordinary texts" (Beenfeldt 2016: 142, my translation).[8]

"Yes, because it is important to be able to read more than just words, everybody has a use for that now. And the pupils think it is easier to speak English about methods and messages when we can base it on pictures everyone can see and mean something about" (Beenfeldt 2016: 142, my translation).[9]

"If the pupils are positive to it, and if it turns out that they learn something from it, then I would use it. It would be to achieve good attendance in the lessons and to be

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[7] Hvis du var engelsklærer i videregående skole, kunne du tenke deg å bruke tegneserieromaner i undervisningen din? Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke?
[8] Ja, du kan hjelpe med å engasjere elever, samt lærer de å lese bilder, noe som blir brukt mye i dagens samfunn av sammensatte tekster (internett). Kan være bedre til å illustrere vanskelige temaer med en andre vanlige tekster.
[9] Ja, for det er viktig å kunne lese mer enn bare ord, det har alle bruk for nå. Og elevene synes det er lettere å snakke engelsk om virkemidler og budskap når vi kan ta utgangspunkt i bilder alle kan se og meine noe om.

able to be a good/respected teacher" (Beenfeldt 2016: 145, my translation).[10]

"I would let the pupils read both comics and a book. And then made a 'test' for both the books in order to see if the test for the comic would do better than the book" (Beenfeldt 2016: 145, my translation).[11]

"I would do that. Because we have gone through how graphic novels are 'built', how we can read and what the authors think about when they make the story. So, then we pupils understand how the books can be read and understood (Beenfeldt 2016: 145, my translation).[12]

These are the responses from only some of her pupils. In order to see how they compare to the responses from the teacher's in this study (see Chapter 6.2), I have picked out the ones that were most reflective and brought up more than the idea that comics was a good motivational medium for pupils. The pupils in Beenfeldt's case study had more time to reflect on how comics should be used because the project lasted over several lessons, while the teachers in this present research had to come up with a response on the spot. Even though the time frame is different it is still interesting to see if there is any correspondence between the answers from the two studies.

Brænden's Master's thesis looked at how the use of graphic novels in a Norwegian lower secondary EFL classroom could improve the pupils' reading skills, with a main focus on how to motivate children and students to read more English by using a graphic novel. Early on in the thesis, she agrees with Krashen's conclusions of comics being a conduit to 'heavier' reading, she hopes that the readers of graphic novels "reach a point where the graphic novels have completed their motivating mission". She also states that EFL pupils should reach a point where they are able to read more demanding literature (Brænden 2015: 9).

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[10] Om elever er positive til det, og det viser seg at de lærer noe av det, ville jeg brukt det. Det ville vært for å få oppmøte i timene og vært eng god/respektert lærer.
[11] Jeg ville latt elevene lese både tegneserier og en bok. Og deretter lagd en "prøve" på begge bøkene for å
se om prøven til tegneserien gjør det bedre enn boken.
[12] Jeg ville gjort det. For vi har gått gjennom hvordan tegneserieromaner er "oppbygget", hvordan vi kan lese og hva forfatteren tenker når de lager historien. Så da forstår vi elever hvordan boka kan leses og forstå.

By seeing graphic novels as a stepping-stone already from the outset of her thesis, this might limit the results that came out of her research. She did have a lesson where she taught her pupils about the different qualities a graphic novel consists of, with the aim of teaching the different aspects to focus on before starting to read a graphic novel (Brænden 2015: 109). However, with her view of comics as a stepping-stone to something else she limits the scope of her research. To understand why comics should be taken seriously as a medium it is important to look at how it has developed thru history. First through a general historical overview, which leads into an outline of the development of comics in a specifically Norwegian context, and finally taking a look at the possible future of comics.

3 Historical overview of the development of comics

To gain a better understanding of the different parts of comics, both in terms of the history of comics and with regard to the present thesis, it is useful at this stage to clarify certain words and concepts related to the medium. The terms in Figure 7 are used to describe comics in general and the different parts that are present on the comics page. Many of the terms are well known to most people, while others, such as panel, gutter and motion lines might be less familiar.

Panel	Contains the pictures and text, often placed within a frame
Frame	The lines and borders that contain the panels
Gutter	The space between the framed panels. Typically indicates transition.
Captions	A box containing a variety of text elements, including scene setting, description, etc. A character does not necessarily speak these.
Speech balloons	Enclose dialog, come from a specific speaker's mouth, vary in size, shape, and layout and can alternate to depict conversation.
Thought balloons	Indicates what a character is thinking, the stem of a thought balloon is usually a trail of bubbles.
Motion lines	Lines that indicate movement.
Special-effects lettering	A method of drawing attention to text; often highlights onomatopoeia and reinforces the impact of words such as bang or wow.
Graphic novel	A long-form work in comics format; not necessarily fiction.

Figure 7. Basic vocabulary for comics (Readwritethink[13])

3.1 Comics around the world

Comics as a medium has grown immensely since its beginning. The exact beginning of comics could be discussed; one starting point would be around the 1920s, when comics were

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[13] http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson1102/terms.pdf (accessed 26.04.17)

mainly a part of magazines, or, depending on how one chooses to define comics, one could venture even further back. Following the latter option, McCloud (1993: 10, 13) tries to show how illustrations from the sixteenth century and even ancient Egyptian paintings that try to tell a story could fit within the term 'comics'. Sabin (1996: 11), joining McCloud in this line of thought, explains how the innovation of the printing press in the fifteenth century was when comics became more visible for the common man; illiterate people could read the pictures, which helped them understand what the text said. During the early years of the printing press, making these comics was not considered well-paid work, however, some artists became relatively well known (Sabin 1996: 13). Among the known artists was James Gillray, who, with the comic shown in Figure 8, commented on the common soldiers' fate through a sequence of pictures rather than just a single picture, with textual comments in the captions (Sabin 1996: 13).

Figure 8. Print by James Gillray from 1793 (Sabin 1996: 13)

One way of defining comics introduces the idea that in order for it to be a comic, it has to have a continuing character. Following this definition, it could be argued that 'Ally Sloper's

Half Holiday' (Figure 9) by Gilbert Dalziel, first published in 1884, was the first proper comic to be produced (Sabin 1996: 16).

Figure 9. Ally Sloper's Half Holiday (Sadin 1996: 16)

However, different historians and comics advocates will disagree about when and where the first comic was made, and who it can be accredited to. McCloud argues that Töpffer was the modern comic's father:

> The father of the modern comic in many ways is Rodolphe Töpffer, whose light satiric picture stories, starting in the mid-1800s, employed cartooning and panel borders, and featured the first interdependent combination of words and pictures seen in Europe (McCloud 1993: 17).

Töpffer's anti-academic drawings (Figure 10) let him break away from the boundaries set by the taught way of drawing (Smolderen 2014 [2000]: 28). Töpffer's first picture story, "Histoire de Mr Jabot", was published in 1833 and its aim was to make knowledge available

to children. His series were set in the upper middle class, and they inspired many cartoonists (Harper 1997: 20-21).
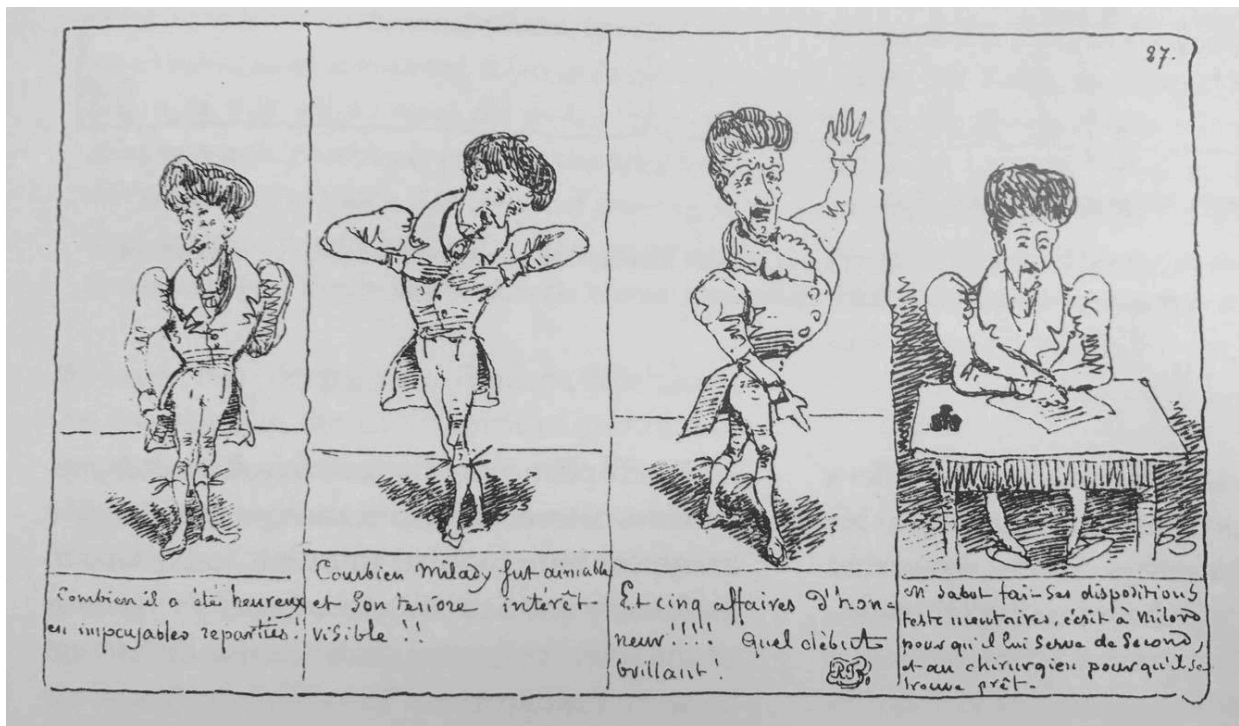
Figure 10. Rodolphe Töpffer, Histoire de M. Jabot, 1833 (Smolderen 2014 [2000]: 39)

Another comic, the The Katzenjammer Kids (1897), could arguably be placed at the beginning of the comics tradition; this was a comic strip about two boys who were up to no good and it was widely distributed around the world (Harper 1997: 29). Traditions with pictures and text then merged with the American comic tradition and inspired new comics.

In the early twentieth century, the printing of newspapers made it possible for comics, and specifically comic strips, to reach out to a larger audience (Sones 1944: 232). They started as a part of some newspapers' Sunday pull-out sections, and later became a regular part of the newspapers as comic strips; this trend first started in America before it travelled to other parts of the world (Zanettin 2008: 1). The comic strips in the American newspapers were not specifically directed at children, some could be but others were also mainly for adults. In Europe, on the other hand, the pictures were meant as a way to introduce children to the written word, as an aid in making them understand what the text was saying. This was mainly visible in the way that American comics used speech bubbles as opposed to having text outside of the picture frame (Zanettin 2008: 2). Speech bubbles were later used not only

in the United States; however, the spread outside the United States happened later in the twentieth century (Zanettin 2008: 2).

Comic books first came to be as collections of the comic strips originally seen in the newspapers before they moved on to becoming original content comics (Zanettin 2008: 2). One of the original content comics that was published as a comic book was Simon Shuster's Superman (1938); this was also one of the comics that were translated into other languages and were published around the world (Zanettin 2008: 2).

The 'Golden Age' of American comics is set between the 1930s and the 1950s, when the superhero characters were popular; later the themes focused more on crime, horror and exotic adventures (Zanettin 2008: 2). This change in themes made discussions regarding the effects of these themes on children come to light; this is visible in particular when reading Wertham's *Seduction of the Innocent* which was looked at in Chapter 2.1.1 (p. 11, 12, 13). The rising scepticism towards comics led to the creation of the 'Comics Code Authority', which was a policy the American publishers made themselves in order to make sure that comics would not be seen as harmful in any way to children's literacy development (Zanettin 2008: 3).

The Comics Code was a policy that American publishers had agreed to follow, and this lead to original content comics being more commonly made in other places of the world. In Europe, comic books with adult content flourished, and these were also translated into other languages. The Comics Code also lead to underground comics being published in the US that had adult content. After a while some of the publishers who supported the Code decided not to support it any more, and as more publishers followed, the result was that the code was no longer followed by any of the original publishers who took part in making the original code (Zanettin 2008: 3-4).

In the late 1960s, underground comics with subjects dealing with drugs, sex and rock music, started to appear. The underground comics were known as comix, and the 'x' showed that these comics were X-rated. The creators of these new comics were the ones who had been children during the reign of the Comics Code, and they reacted with expressing their feelings towards the old Code in the best way they knew how: through comics (Sabin 1996: 92). Sabin explains:

[…] these, were the very people who had been worst hit by the 1950s scare – sometimes having their comics collections torn up by their parents, or thrown on the playground fires. Now it was time for payback: where the Code had stipulated 'no

violence', 'no sex', 'no drugs' and 'no social relevance', the underground comix would indulge themselves to the maximum in every category (Sabin 1996: 92).

These comix were mainly self-published and sold in hippie stores. Because they were private publications, the frequency in which they were published was fairly low, since by doing everything themselves, publication took a lot of time (Sabin 1996: 94). Sabin (1996: 126) claims that the comix time ended around 1975, when heroin took over for marijuana and LSD, which eventually lead to the death of several of the comix creators.

Japanese comics, or what is more commonly known as 'manga', is currently the largest comics industry in the world, it is not only distributed in Asian countries but can also be seen translated in most countries around the world. Osamu Tezuka and his creation 'Astro Boy' (Figure 11) is one manga comic that has been widely distributed, its universe has not only been presented in printed comics but also in animated television series (Sabin 1996: 227).

Figure 11. Page from Tetsuwan Atom, 1951 (Sabin 1996: 227)

Sabin (1996: 227) states: "Tezuka, was responsible for virtually creating the comics industry in Japan after the Second World War". Manga comics have also been made outside of Japan in other languages; the themes are divided into boys (shonen), girls (shojo), ladies (redisu),

adult erotica (seijin) and young men (seinen), and cover anything from cooking to martial arts (Zanettin 2008: 4).

McCloud (2006: 220) describes manga shojo as being more prone to reader participation by using the entire page as its surface, he looks at the North American comics tradition as usually being contained within the frames, while in manga shojo the frames change in order to show what the characters are feeling. The different themes use different styles to create reader participation; the techniques that are used are there to make the reader a part of the story (McCloud 2006: 221). McCloud (2006: 223) sees the differences between other comics traditions and manga now, but argues that in the future, manga will be seen as what it really is: "another word for comics". The traditions will still be there, but the readers that now read manga and later make their own comics inspired by manga, are blurring the lines between the traditions and making comics on their own.

Figure 12. Panel from Tintin (Methuen, 1959) (Sabin 1996: 218)

Modern comics as we know them came from the US. In Europe, however, Bandes Dessinées (French for 'drawn strips'), or BD, were being made as early as 1893 (Harper 1997: 73). Tintin, which still is known and popular today, was first published on the tenth of January 1929 and featured a story about him in the Soviet Union and all the dangers he experienced there. The author Hérge (Georges Remi) had made comics before, but with Tintin he established the European comics tradition (Harper 1997: 72). Tintin started out as a newspaper pull-out section and has later been sold as collectable albums, which are about 48 pages long on average, these albums can be seen as the equivalent to the graphic novels from a BD standpoint (Sabin 1996: 218). The style Hérge used is known today as 'clear line' which can be seen in Figure 12; other European comics creators would later either follow or deviate from this style.

As has been shown above, it is difficult to place the origin of comics at a specific place and time; it depends on how one defines the term and which particular features one chooses to focus on. The different comics traditions have been inspired by one another, and however one chooses to look at the future of comics, the traditions will most likely continue to change as new ones emerge.

3.2 Comics in Norway

In the beginning, Norwegian comics were picture stories with text placed in the captions outside of the pictures; they were often inspired by American comics, though some comics relied more on the educational factor with characters showing how children should behave than the American comics did (Harper 1997: 101). Comics were included in magazines from the late 19th century onwards, they were generally short panels which at the end of the year might be included in a classical Christmas magazine (Harper 1997: 102).

2. Sterk-Ola Bakken har og fått brev og innbyding frå bladstyraren. «Skal vi verkeleg reise?» spør Kåre. «Visst skal vi reise!» svarar Sterk-Ola. «Men er det ikkje veldig langt til Oslo?» — «Ja, men vi skal ikkje traske og gå den lange vegen!»

Figure 13. Panel from Vangsgutane, 1955 (Harper 1997: 109)

Norway had its own golden comics age from 1935 to around 1950. One comic that came to be during this era was 'Vangsgutane' (Figure 13), which was made as an alternative to the translated 'The Katzenjammer Kids', called 'Knoll og Tott' in Norway (Arneson 1986: 68). The translated version was the first comic book to be released to the Norwegian market in 1912 (Harper 1997: 102). The translated version looked somewhat different to the original, the speech balloons from the original would be changed to captions placed below the pictures in order to keep with the traditional look of picture books (Harper 1997: 104).

As opposed to 'The Katzenjammer Kids', 'Vangsgutane' was made to do only good and be great examples for Norwegian boys who read the comic. The story was about two Norwegian boys, aged 10 and 12, who had to work hard and be nice after their father passed away. It was first published in a magazine in 1940, and in similar fashion to the comics published in the US, the comics increased the sales of the magazines severely (Arneson 1986: 68). The reason behind Vangsgutane's 'be a good example to children' streak was that the magazines were often sold as a subscription, which the parents paid for, and the comic then had to be approved by the parents before it reached the hands of the children (Harper 1997: 103).

The discussion that Wertham brought up in the US was visible also in Norway during the mid 50s, when the parents group called 'Foreldreaksjonen' demanded that comics should not be sold to children below the age of 16 (Harper 1997: 115). This resulted in a list of demands that the Norwegian state wanted the comics creators to follow, which focused on not having violence, not showing how to commit a crime, not showing other races or beliefs in a bad way, not showing cripples or sick people as potential criminals, or showing things that might lead to children not having faith in the police (Harper 1997: 115).

3.3 The future of comics

Will Eisner talked about the future of comics in an interview with Harvey (1998) and described how comic books were now too expensive (Inge 2011: 190). Earlier, the comic books could be bought for ten cents, and children would buy them themselves; however, progressively more expensive comic books lead to parents buying comics for their children, which meant that when the parents were the ones who bought the comic books, they first had to approve of them (Inge 2001: 190).

Sabin (1996: 236) concludes his book by looking to the future of comics and brings up some important issues that might arise. He problematizes the rising use of computers and screens, and how these platforms might take over from the paper-based media, of which comics traditionally have been a part. At the same time, he points to how the screens are more costly than printed comics are, and also to how different the screens are from the paper-based media, which makes the digital revolution seem less scary for the future of traditional comics. He states: "they are, in other words, two completely different media, and therefore the rise of one does not by any means automatically presage the decline of the other" (Sabin 1996: 236).
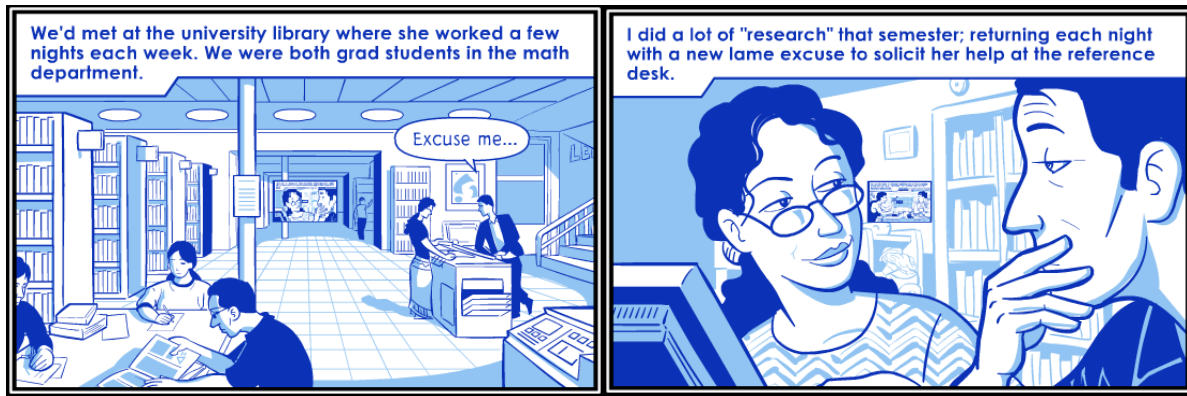
Figure 14. Panels from McCloud's 'The Right Number' Part One (McCloud 2003: 6, 7)

McCloud is one of the comic artists who early tried to experiment with the use of digital media as a canvas for comics. In 2003, he published what he calls an "online graphic novella about math, sex, obsession and phone numbers" (McCloud n.d.). In Figure 14, the two pictures are originally shown in the same frame by zooming into the next picture, instead of only transferring a 'normal' comics page onto the screen, he has seen how the screen opens up a new and different way of presenting comics, and has taken advantage of the new technology. McCloud describes webcomics as something to be treated rather as a window than a page, or as an infinite canvas (McCloud 2009).

If technology and screens take over for the paper-based media, there are alternative options for comics, as seen through McCloud's webcomics. Other options might be to publish full comic pages online, which have already been done in order to reach more people, though McCloud would rather have comics creators treat the screen as a window. It might be negative thinking to believe that print-based medium is a dying medium because of technology, but just as comics has evolved from Töpffer to the great 'Maus' by Art Spiegelman (Figure 15), one must hope that the medium keeps evolving in the future.

Figure 15. Panel from 'Maus', by Art Spiegelman[14]

4 Materials and methodology

This chapter presents the methodology that was used in order to answer the following research questions:

1. How are comics used in the textbooks and what does that suggest about attitudes to them?
2. What are some teacher's attitudes to comics?

To be able to answer these questions, a qualitative approach was chosen as the most appropriate method for this study. The aim of this chapter is to give a description of the qualitative research method used in this study, namely the research interview, and explain why this method was chosen in order to answer the research questions. This is followed by a detailed explanation of how the study was conducted and an analysis of the three textbooks that were included in the study; also, the validity, reliability and research ethics are considered in this chapter.

4.1 Research methods

There are different research methods one can choose in order to find answers to one's research questions within educational research, and one has to find the one that best will provide the answers one is looking for, either quantitative, qualitative or mixed methodologies.

The focus of quantitative research is to find a measurable number of people who do, say or believe the same thing, and this is done with a larger group than one would use in a qualitative study (Dörnyei 2007: 32-33). The results are meant to be precise and the research sample is large in order to give the results validity (Merriam and Tisdell 2016: 20).

In a qualitative research, the goal is to find out how a phenomenon is understood by some individuals or a certain group, and not necessarily by all (Dörnyei, 2007: 126). What the researcher who chooses to use a qualitative research method wants to find out is "how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world" (Merriam and Tisdell 2016: 15). In this study, that relates to finding out what teachers' attitudes towards the use of comics, as well as to addressing the phenomenon of comics.

Mixed method research makes use of both quantitative and qualitative methods (Dörnyei 2007: 42). This method is used in order to give a description of both the quantity and the quality of the research questions and different types of information may be gained from using both data types (Dörnyei 2007: 62).

4.2 Qualitative research

For this study, conducting a set of interviews was thought to be the most suitable method for answering answer the research questions. Kvale (1996: 5) describes interviews that are conducted in a research setting as follows: "The research interview is based on the conversations of daily life and is a professional conversation." An interview is just a conversation with another human being were the interviewer wants to find out want the participant's thoughts are about something. The reasons for choosing interviews as the main source of information for this study was that is would give the participants a chance to give the reasons behind their choices.

There are different types of interviews one can choose to conduct with one's participants: structured, unstructured and semistructured interviews. A structured interview is similar to a questionnaire; it gives room for comparison between participants, but at the same time it leaves little room for asking new questions that might come up during the interview (Dörnyei 2007: 135). The questions and the order, in which they are asked, are decided upon and fixed before the interview session; in short, a structured interview may be considered an oral questionnaire (Merriam and Tisdell 2016: 110).

On the other hand, one could choose to use an unstructured interview, where there is no detailed interview guide made in advance, the interviewer does not need to have much prior knowledge about the phenomenon, and there might be another interview conducted later that builds on the first interview (Merriam and Tisdell 2016: 110). The role of the interviewer is mostly to listen and one tries to not interrupt the participant when they are speaking (Dörnyei 2007: 136).

A third possibility is to use a semistructured interview. As in a structured interview, the interviewer makes an interview guide before the interview takes place (Dörnyei 2007: 136). The interview guide has questions ready that are open-ended; however, the questions might be asked in different ways or at different times during the interview depending on the participant's responses. It also opens up for asking follow-up questions during the interview if anything is unclear or if the interviewer would like the participant to elaborate on a certain topic (Merriam and Tisdell 2016: 110). Semistructured interviews are highly descriptive in

their results and they let the participants describe and talk about a phenomenon freely; the researcher's role is to ask questions and not lead the participants into one direction over the other (Merriam and Tisdell 2016: 20 & 110). Dörnyei (2007: 136) explains when semistructured interviews should be used as such:

> The semi-structured interview is suitable for cases when the researcher has a good enough overview of the phenomenon or domain in question and is able to develop broad questions about the topic in advance but does not want to use ready-made response categories that would limit the depth and breadth of the respondent's story.

The topic of the present thesis, comics, has been researched before in a Norwegian context, both in Norwegian- and English-language classrooms (e.g. Beenfeldt, 2016; Brænden, 2015), as well as in other classrooms around the world (e.g. Weiner and Syma, 2013). Using the research that has been conducted earlier as a suitable place to look for questions that have been asked before in other settings, as a starting point in order to find the questions that were not asked, the semistructured interview was chosen as the tool for gathering the information that would best answer the research questions.

A semistructured interview has open-ended questions, and follows an open interview guide, meaning that the questions are not set and might be asked in different ways during the interviews; nevertheless, it tries to gather specific information from all the participants (Merriam and Tisdell 2016: 111). Because the goal was to enquire into how a selected group of teachers view comics, that is, their attitude towards comics in general as well as the specific comics in their respective textbooks, a semistructured interview was chosen as the best option to collect descriptive results of the topics and questions that were brought up during the interview.

Dörnyei (2007: 143 – 144) describes the positive sides of using interviews as the primary source of information both in terms of making it simpler to understand the participants more in-depth, and that the participants are more likely to feel comfortable in a one-on-one setting. On the other hand, he brings up interviews as being time-consuming, both when it comes to finding participants, setting up and conducting the actual interviews, as well as transcribing them when the interviews have been conducted. It is also difficult to generalise the results because the sample is often smaller than it would have been if a quantitative method had been chosen; therefore the focus here is on a specific group of teachers and not the teaching community at large. While the teachers who participated in this study could not

be said to represent all Norwegian upper secondary school teachers, the results will show the particular attitudes of this group of teachers and might raise questions that could be applied on a more general basis.

4.3 The data collection

The results that are gathered in this thesis are gathered from interviews conducted with teachers who teach English at a Norwegian upper secondary school level. One interview was conducted with each participant through the communication tool Skype. Some of the interviews could have been conducted face-to-face; however, in order to keep the settings as similar as possible, all of them were conducted through Skype.

4.3.1 The sampling selection

The participants were selected on the basis of them being English teachers at an upper secondary level; however, they were also the only ones available to participate in the interviews, which suggests that they could be considered a convenience sample as well as a homogeneous sample (Dörnyei 2007: 127-129). On the other hand, several schools and teachers that were approached by the present writer during the planning stages of the project, did not wish to or have the time to take part in the study, and thus the group of participants might not qualify as purely a convenience sample. Dörnyei (2007: 126) describes the goal of the sampling as being "to find individuals who can provide rich and varied insights into the phenomenon under investigation so as to maximize what we can learn".

If we consider the participants to be a part of a convenience sample because they were the only ones that were willing and available to participate, this might compromise the credibility of the study; on the other hand, it also might lead to the participants being more willing to talk freely during the interview (Dörnyei 2007: 129). The participants are a part of a homogeneous sample because of the criteria for choosing them; they were chosen because they were part of a specific group of teachers, that is, upper secondary level EFL teachers, from which the researcher wanted to hear the attitudes towards the medium of comics.

The subjects were teachers who were familiar with *Targets*, *Gateways YF* or *Access*, which are among the textbooks used in upper secondary school in Norway. Most of the teachers who were approached declined to participate or forgot to answer. This resulted in having to contact teachers who the present researcher knew to different degrees because they would be easier inclined to participate. The six participants had different educational

backgrounds, they were of different ages, and taught at different schools. This might also influence the study, as the younger teachers might be more familiar with comics to start with; another issue could be that the different schools have a different collective consensus about how to use comics.

The researcher first contacted several schools in the district to find out what textbook their teachers used, then the department heads were asked if they could forward the email explaining what the interview was about, and if they would like to participate in the study. All the contacted teachers were given the option of choosing when to conduct the interview within a time frame of several months. The goal was to get 9 participants, 3 participants to each textbook; this goal was not reached, as several of the contacted teachers were not willing to participate. There is no correct number of participants when is comes to conducting an interview, and Dörnyei (2007: 127) gives reason to believe that even a small sample such as this will give sufficient data in order to understand the phenomenon that is comics. There was also an issue regarding the textbooks; *Targets* is a popular textbook used by many of the schools in the local area, and therefore, the choice was either to only look at two textbooks or to contact schools in another part of the country. The latter choice was made and that is how Access ended up as one of the textbooks that are a part of this study.

After having gathered the six participants, two for each textbook, they were given information, which suggested that the interview would only be concerned with their attitude toward the textbook. As stated in the introduction (see p. 1), this was a circumvention of the actual aim, which was to look at their attitudes toward comics, both in their textbook and in general. During the interviews, they were given an explanation as to why this information had been left out; the researcher did not want them to think about comics prior to the interview. This could have left them frustrated or even angry; however, this was not the case, and all of the participants seemed unopposed to the topic and were happy to answer any questions regarding comics.

4.4 The interviews

As stated above, in order to get enough information about teachers' attitudes to comics being used in the classroom, six teachers were interviewed. An interview guide was made before the actual interviews took place (see Appendix A); by having the guide ready, the goal was that all the participants were given the chance to talk about and answer the same questions, at least to a certain degree. The guide would also be help at the analysing stage of this study. The guide consisted of topics with questions that were relevant to that topic, and the questions

were used flexibly, meaning that follow-up questions were asked where relevant (Merriam and Tisdell 2016: 110).

The topics were: 1. General information about the participant; these questions were asked in order to create a relaxed environment for the participants (Dörnyei 2007: 137). 2. Opinions about the textbook; since the participants were given information that the interviews would concern their opinions about the textbook, these questions were asked even though they mostly did not contribute to answering the research questions. 3. The use of comics in the textbook; at this point the questions that were asked to the participants who worked with textbooks that actually contained comics, differed from the questions asked to the participants whose textbook did not contain any examples of comics. The aim of the questions asked to the participants with comics in their textbook, was to see what their attitudes were to the comics that were present in their textbook, while the questions asked to the participants without comics in their textbook were asked about what they thought about the absence of comics in their textbook. 4. Comics in general and teachers' attitudes to them; these questions started out the same for all the participants but changed depending on whether or not they had used comics before; the aim was to find the reasons behind their choices when it came to the use or non-usage of comics in the classroom. Dörnyei (2007: 138) suggests to use a final closing question that lets the participants have the final say; some of the participants used this option, while others were happy with what had already been stated during the interview. Between the second and third topic, the participants were asked one single question regarding light reading: "How would you define light reading?"; this is a term Krashen (2004a) uses to describe comics (see Chapter 2.2.1, p. 14), and the reason for asking the participants this question was to see if anyone would use this opportunity to mention comics or to use the term in their responses later in the questions that followed.

The interview guide and its questions were tested during a pilot interview; this served as a practice interview as well as a helpful tool that helped the researcher see which questions could be left out or rephrased to get the best responses during the actual interviews (Merriam and Tisdell 2016: 117). The pilot interview was also a good way to test both the video chat service 'Skype' and the audio-recording app 'Apowersoft lydopptaker'. There could have been technical difficulties with the video chat service, the audio-recording app, or with the computer on either the researcher's end or on the participants'; thankfully, this did not happen. To ensure that the audio-recordings would be safe, there was another recording as a backup on an iPhone; however, the main audio-recordings were clearly audible and the iPhone ones were not used.

Prior to the interviews, the participants were reminded of the reason for interviewing them, they were also given information about where the information that would be gathered would end up and how their anonymity would be secured. After having given their oral consent, they were also asked if it would be all right that the interviews would be recorded. None of the participants objected to any of the requests or the information.

Following each of the interviews all the recorded interviews were transcribed. By personally transcribing each one of the interviews the researcher came to know the data thoroughly (Dörnyei 2007: 246). Because all of the interviews were conducted in English, the transcription process was easier than it would have been if it was conducted in Norwegian, and none of the participants objected to doing the interview in English.

4.5 The textbooks

The main focus of the textbook analysis is on the two textbooks that did have one example each of comics in them, *Targets* and *Gateways YF*. The last textbook, *Access*, does not get as much focus because of its lack of examples of the medium in question.

Each textbook was looked at as a whole to see what kinds of text types it contained, how many texts there were in all, where in the textbook eventual comics were located and how the comic fit in in that particular chapter. When examining the comic in the textbook, the focus was on what kind of comic it was, what it was called, how it was talked about in the introduction and if the questions that were asked reflected the fact that it was a comic that had been read. By asking these questions the aim was to see if the comic was regarded as just another text or if there was any focus on it being a comic.

In order to consider the comics in the textbook, the textbook accordingly has to be looked at as a whole to see how the comic fits in and what other kinds of text types have been chosen to be a part of the textbook. When analysing the comic itself, the whole comics section is included. What is referred to here as the comics section, is everything that refers to the comic in the textbook, including the introduction and the questions that the pupils are supposed to answer when they have finished reading the comic itself. The goal is to see if the comic is treated in the same way as the other texts in the textbook, or if the comics section reflects the fact that the text is a comic; from this we might find some suggestions to the attitudes to comics.

4.5.1 Analysis of *Targets*

Targets is a textbook made to suit the first year of upper secondary English education for pupils participating in the general studies program. Altogether there are 328 pages in the textbook and it contains six different chapters: Chapter 1 - Let's Communicate!; Chapter 2 - The English Language; Chapter 3 - The UK and Ireland; Chapter 4 - The USA and Canada; Chapter 5 - Around the World; and Chapter 6 – Words, Sentences and the Rules of English. The textbook has one comic in it, 'Hamlet Prince of Denmark'; this is an excerpt from Marcia Williams' *Mr William Shakespeare's Plays* (1998) and in the textbook it is located on the last pages of the English language chapter.

Text type	Number of texts in the textbook
Short story	14 (1)
Factual text	20 (3)
Interview	1
Poem	9 (3)
Novel excerpt	5 (1)
Play excerpt /graphic story	1 (1)
Film review	2
Song lyrics	2
Personal text	1

Figure 16. Text types in *Targets* and how many there are of each

Figure 16 shows the different text types found in the textbook; the numbers in parentheses show which ones are located in The English Language Chapter. By ascertaining the nature of the different text types and how many there are of them, it becomes easier to spot the text types that seem to be more highly valued than others.

At the beginning of each chapter in *Targets* they list a few points to indicate the focus of that chapter; these bullet points are similar to the curriculum aims which are stated by the Norwegian Ministry of Education (see also Chapter 2.3.1, p. 23). The focus for the English language chapter is to revise and practice the sounds of English, use different learning strategies to improve your English, focus on some basic rules of English, listen to social and geographic variants of English, learn vocabulary related to your education programme, use patterns for pronunciation, intonation, word inflection and sentence types, use suitable reading

and listening strategies, discuss the growth of English as a universal language, discuss the growth of English as a universal language, discuss different types of English-language literary texts and explore a piece of art (Balsvik et al. 2015: 38). Of the focal points that are listed in this chapter, there is no reference as to which point(s) are supposed to be covered by the comic; however, it is a different type of English language literary text and could be meant to cover the point, which has a focus on exploring different types of English-language literary texts.

Before the four pages occupied by the comic itself, there are two pages which contain a small biography of Shakespeare, a synopsis of the Hamlet play, an explanation of who the different characters are and a glossary both for the two introductory pages and for the comic. Amazon defines *Mr William Shakespeare´s plays* as comic-strip versions of Shakespeare's plays. In the introduction, the comic is defined as a cartoon strip version of the play, in the glossary it is defined as a cartoon, while in the contents pages they place it under the genre play excerpt / graphic story (Balsvik et al. 2015: 4). In the textbook's introduction to the comic (Balsvik et al. 2015: 70-71) there is an explanation of it; by reading the text underneath the drawings as well as the drawings, the pupils will understand what Hamlet is about and the "small lines inside the drawings" are direct quotes from the original play. Figure 17 shows what the authors mean when they are referring to the small lines and the text underneath the drawings. This is all the information the textbook gives to the pupils on the comic itself. They do not explain how the pupils should read the 'drawings' but state that: "After reading the texts underneath the drawings and the drawings themselves, you will have a good understanding of what *Hamlet* is all about" (Balsvik et al. 2015: 70). The statement shows what the goal of the comic is, and this will be further discussed in the next chapter.
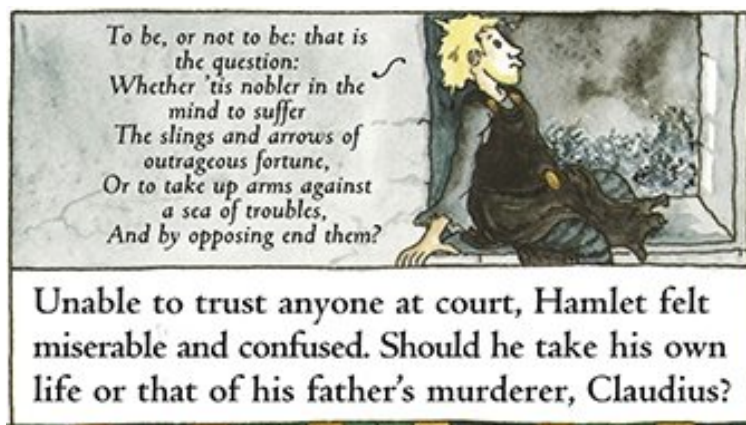
Figure 17. Panel from 'Hamlet Prince of Denmark' (Balsvik et al. 2015: 72)

The questions which the pupils are supposed to answer after reading the comic are mainly questions regarding their understanding of the text, for example: "His mother thinks Hamlet is mentally unstable because…" and "Claudius wants to get rid of Hamlet and decides to…" (Balsvik et al. 2015: 76). The pupils are supposed to finish these sentences with the information they have gathered from reading the comic.

One of the focal points for The English Language chapter was to discuss different types of English language literary texts, and by including one of Shakespeare's texts there are possibilities to discuss Early Modern English. As we can see in Figure 17, Williams has set up the comic by using direct quotations from the play in the pictures while having a narrator tell the story in a rubric underneath. Williams' interpretation of the play gives the readers a unique possibility to both read the original text and see the way it differs from the English language today, and understand what they are saying by giving the readers the narrator's voice as an explanation to the quotations.

After a quick search online and looking at the source of the comic one finds that it was originally made for children, not for young adult learners such as the 16 years olds that the textbook *Targets* is aimed at (see e.g. Williams' website[15]). Another Aschehoug textbook that has used another of Williams' comics is *Stages 8*, which was made for the 8th grade of Norwegian lower secondary school. Among the four text that are defined as cartoons within this textbook, one of them is "King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table" which is also made by Williams (Areklett et al. 2013: 106).

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[15] http://www.marciawilliams.co.uk (accessed 10.05.17)

4.5.2 Analysis of *Gateways Engelsk for YF*

Text type	Number of texts in the textbook
Short story	22 (7)
Photo/news	4 (1)
Fact text	14 (8)
Poem	6 (2)
Film script	3 (1)
Song lyrics	3
Novel extract	2
Play	1
Story	1 (1)
Cartoon	1 (1)

Figure 18. Text types in *Gateways YF* and how many there are of each

Gateways YF was made for the vocational program, which takes place over two years, but it is supposed to cover the same curriculum aims as the other two textbooks during the course of its 316 pages. In Figure 18 there is an overview of the different text types there are in the textbook, the numbers in parenthesis also show here the texts that share the same chapter with the comic.

The comic is located in the chapter called Worldwide and it is called 'Face Value'. As in *Targets*, each chapter in *Gateways YF* states a few main focal points that are supposed to be covered by the chapter, and for the Worldwide chapter, the main point that seems to be covered by the comic, is the culture, society and literature point which reads: "discuss social conditions and values in English-speaking countries" (Rugset and Ulven 2013: 191).

The comic has 8 panels and is about a man overhearing other men talking about him. *Gateways YF* does not give a long introduction to the comic; they do, however, give the pupils these instructions before reading the comic: "Have you ever thought about how you read cartoons? Look over this one without paying too much attention to the text. Can you tell what it is about? How important are the pictures to your understanding of the cartoon?" (Rugset and Ulven 2013: 200).

This is a cartoon about our attitude to people who are different from us; people who look different, behave differently and talk differently.

A group of well-dressed white men are sitting round a table on the pavement enjoying their drinks. Then a young musician walks past them. He is wearing a baseball cap and a hooded sweater. The well-dressed men laugh at him and make fun of him.

The young musician is very angry. When he gets to his friends' table he tells them what has happened. He never thought this could happen in this day and age, he said.

Then a well-dressed gentleman in a dark suit walks past them. They immediately begin to make fun of him. So they were no better than the other group.

We are all prejudiced to people who are very different from us.

Read and listen   **Pronunciation**

Figure 19. Task about 'Face Value'[16]

In the small introduction, the authors define the comic as a cartoon; by choosing to use that term the authors give a suggestion of what the comic is supposed to be. If the pupils were to look up the term in for example the Oxford English Dictionary[17], they would find a definition that suggests that what they are about to read is supposed to be humorous.

The screenshot shown in Figure 19 is from the publisher of the textbook's web page; this is mainly an assignment, which focuses on the terms that pupils would need in order for them to talk about the comic. This also suggests that the comic is not supposed to be seen as humorous, but as a way to start a discussion about prejudice.

The comic 'Face Value' does not take up a whole page in the textbook, just a part of it, and there are six questions which the pupils are asked to answer after having finished reading it on the adjacent page. The questions open up for analysis of not only the text and what is being said in the comic, but also the drawings themselves: "Look at the pictures and describe the characters you see" (Rugset and Ulven 2013: 201). This is an example of one of the questions that the pupils are asked to answer in pairs; by asking this particular questions there is no reason to focus on what the characters are saying at all, and the pupils have to analyse what they are seeing, not only what is being said.

16
http://www3.lokus.no/flashEmbedder.jsp?contentItemId=2504822&selectedLanguageId=2&title=Face%20Value (accessed 10.05.17)
17 https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/cartoon (accessed 10.05.17)

4.5.3 Analysis of *Access*

Text type	Number of texts in the textbook
Short story	9
Song	8
Factual text	14
Poetry	6
Newspaper article / persuasive essay	1
Film study	1
Excerpt from novel	3
Folk ballad	1
Film review	1
Excerpt from play	1
Travel project	1
Film analysis	1

Figure 20. Text types in *Access* and how many there are of each

As previously stated, *Access* was the one textbook that did not have any examples of comics in it. Within the 296 pages, there are several different texts, as we can see from Figure 20. In the introduction to the textbook, the authors speak directly to the pupils: "one of the joys of learning a language is to be able to read texts intended for pleasure. In other words, literature." (Burgess and Sørhus 2015: 6-7). The authors have chosen literature, which is supposed to be enjoyable to read for the pupils.

    Access is not the only textbook that has chosen not to include comics; the textbook called *New Experiences* is another one that does not include comics as part of what should be studied by the pupils using it. *New Experiences* does contain two comic strips; however, they are placed within the pages at the end sections of two chapters, which contain questions regarding the chapter the pupils just read, as opposed to questions about the comics themselves (Heian et al. 2008: 169 & 193).

4.6 Research ethics, validity and reliability

Research ethics regarding the interview session depend on there being informed consent from the participant; this means that the participant needs to be given information about the purpose and procedure of the interview (Kvale 1996: 153). This information was, as earlier

stated (see Chapter 4.3.1, p. 45), given before the interview started, and the participants also had at least one month after having been asked to participate where they could have backed out of their agreement to be part of the study.

In order to keep the participants anonymous, they where given pseudonyms; for example, P1T represents Participant 1 who commented on the textbook *Targets* in the interview. All of the participants are also referred to as female. The reason for this is that only one of the participants was male, and this found to be necessary in order to keep his statements anonymous as well.

From the use of The Norwegian Social Science Data Service's (NSD) online survey regarding the necessity of approval from them to conduct the present research, the results showed that for this study it was not necessary. Only the researcher knows the participants' identities, and information that could identify them from the interviews has been left out. The researcher is the only one who has listened to the audio-recordings, and they were deleted after having been transcribed, shortly after the interview session had been concluded. By making sure that personal information or other information that could lead to the identification of the participants was left out of the study, there was no need report the study to NSD.

Qualitative studies are interested in people's personal interpretations and views of a phenomenon (Dörnyei 2007: 64); this is also the case in this study were the focus is on teachers view of the medium of comics as an aid in teaching and learning EFL. By choosing to conduct a qualitative study, the focus on personal views of a participant gives reason to believe that there are more ethical questions to consider than if a quantitative study was chosen, because a quantitative study often deals with larger groups of reserch subjects where the results show numbers rather than personal views on a topic (Dörnyei 2007: 64).

As the sample contained only six teachers commenting on three different textbooks, it would be difficult to generalise the results to be representative of all teachers involved in upper secondary level EFL teaching in Norway, nor their opinions about their textbook, its use of comics, or comics in general. However, by using two different theories as a basis for the study, and testing which one was closer to each of the teachers' attitudes towards comics, the validity of the study is enhanced (Merriam and Tisdell 2016: 244). As presented in Chapters 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 (pp. 13-19), these theories are on the one hand given by Krashen (2004a: 103), who sees comics as a conduit, and on the other hand Jacobs (2007a: 20), who argues that comics should be appreciated as a complex multimodal medium worthy of being read in its own right.

The questions and the interview guide as a whole, which were the basis for the interview sessions, were looked at and commented on by a member of the English department at the University of Stavanger prior to the interviews being conducted; this as well as a peer examination of the questions made sure that the questions were not only checked by the researcher.

To replicate the results from this study would be difficult, mainly because the participant's attitudes towards comics could change. By bringing comics up as a possible teaching method during the interviews the participants have been exposed to the possibilities there are. The interview itself brought up comics as a possibility and this would make the teachers think more about using them. The only possibility would be to use new interview subject to see if a second study shows similar findings; however, as information about comics becomes more easily available the attitudes might change. For this reason, the findings that are gathered here only consider the attitudes of these teachers at this time, and they might not be applicable in the future.

By leaving out the fact that comics were the main thing the interviews wanted to address, the trust between the researcher and the participants could be seen as having been breached. The reason for leaving out the intention of the interview was to get the primary thoughts that the teachers had about comics; if they had known about comics being the main subject, they could have discussed it with their colleagues or they could have thought about the topic and imagined the questions that would be asked during the interviews. As earlier stated, while this might have been an issue, it did not seem to be a problem among the participants.

5 Presentation of findings

This chapter presents the findings both from the textbooks and from the interviews conducted with the six participants. The textbooks will first be considered one at a time in order to see how the participants who use them perceive the different textbooks. The second part of the chapter presents the participants' answers and attitudes towards comics in general, to see if there are differences between them or not.

The first three questions of the interviews regarded the textbook in general; these questions were included as part of the interview because the participants were only informed about the interview being about their opinion of the textbook. These questions and the answers to them are not relevant for this research and will therefore not be presented here. For a full transcript of the interviews, see Appendix B.

In order to keep the participating teachers' anonymity, they were, as indicated earlier, given pseudonyms. Throughout the thesis they are labelled as P1T, P2T, P3G, P4G, P5A and P6A, which are acronyms for Participant (number) interviewed about (*Targets/Gateways YF/Access*). The (…) in the quotes from the interviews are used to show that the participants said something more, but that these additional statements by the participants were not seen as relevant to show what they were trying to explain. Square brackets [xx] are used when the present researcher found it necessary to give more information about the thing the participant described, and the text within square brackets is thus not part of what was actually being said by the participant.

5.1 Comics in the textbooks

5.1.1 Participants P1T and P2T about the use of comics in *Targets*

P1T and P2T were the participants who used *Targets* as their textbook. P1T had used the textbook for three years, and P2T had used it for three years as well (see Appendix B, p. 97, 102). The first question they were asked was if they had used the comic, which is found in their textbook, 'Hamlet, Prince of Denmark'. Neither of them had used it, however P1T explained how s/he had:

(…) a fuller version at home, which I used, but not the Hamlet play, but Romeo and

Juliet. But I always thought I should use it, but I never got as far as actually doing it,

so. I think its okay that its there, but no I haven't used it (Appendix B, p. 100).

P1T had intended to use it in the past, and wanted to use it in the future if s/he finds the time

and if it fits in with the focus of the year (see Appendix B, p. 100). P1T also brought up the

introduction to the comic, which s/he thought had a good explanation of the play and the

characters, and s/he did not miss any other information:

(…) you do need to read the two pages before the actual comic text to get an

understanding of what is happening because if you start right on page 72 [first page of

the comic] I think you will lose your pupils in the first box, actually the first picture

(Appendix B, p. 100).

S/he points to how the introduction is essential to read prior to reading the comic in order to

understand the comic to the fullest extent.

For P2T the reason for not using it was not that it was a comic, but because s/he did

not want to use Shakespeare, and that s/he would rather focus on the difference between

English and American when it came to the English language chapter (Appendix B, p. 103).

P1T and P2T had different reasons for not having used the comic in their classroom, but the

fact that neither of them found the comic worth using is something to take notice of.

P1T described the comic like this: "The Hamlet text, it's more about making a play

easier to read" (Appendix B, p. 100). The participant pointed out that the comic is not an

original content comic; the authors' reason for including it in the textbook seems to be mainly

because it makes the Shakespeare play easier for the pupils to understand. P2T seemed not to

like the fact that it has been included in that specific chapter at all:

It's not what I focus on for that chapter. There are still a lot of things to look at for the

English language, how it started out, and how it developed, and differences between

English and American. So we focus on other things and I tend to let those texts just, I

left them out (Appendix B, p. 103).

By including examples from the original play, the comic has provided the opportunity to look

further into and discuss Early Modern English, but because P2T did not want to use

Shakespeare in general, the comic was not used, and that opportunity was then perhaps lost in the bargain.

P1T (Appendix B, p. 100) explained how future use of the comic in the textbook depended on the focus of the current school year. Current events happening around the world needed to be considered before committing to use any text in the classroom, and it was important to her to adapt her lessons to what is relevant at that particular place and time (Appendix B, p. 100).

5.1.2 Participants PG3 and P4G about the use of comics in *Gateways YF*

The two participants P3G and P4G were the ones who had worked with their textbook, *Gateways YF*, the least out of all the participants. P3G had only used the textbook for approximately six months (see Appendix B, p. 105), while P4G had used it for a year (see Appendix B, p. 108). When asked if they had used the comic *Face Value* that was in *Gateways YF*, it turned out that neither P3G nor P4G had used the comic in their classroom (see Appendix B, p. 106, 109). After having looked at it, the participants were asked what they thought about it. P3G thought that it would be a good way to illustrate the American society and showing the social differences, but disliked that:

> (…) the tasks about the comics is very much about what's happening in the comic and not that much about the American culture and the African Americans. So this one could maybe be some extra activity for me but not something I would use mainly in class (Appendix B, p. 106).

P4G explained how the comic could be a:

> (…) discussion starter in the classroom. Especially in the class that I had, from this comic, you can talk about prejudism [prejudices] and racism and societal issues in the US. So for this chapter and from the other texts that I've seen that are in that chapter this is a good supplement (Appendix B, p. 109).

However, s/he would have liked more information on how to approach such a difficult topic, because a teacher would have to be well prepared in order to manage a discussion about how people judge each other on the basis of what one looks like.

P3G was afraid that the comic, together with the tasks which followed after the comic itself, would be finished quickly by the pupils, and stated that they would mainly use this as an extra activity, if they were to use the comic at all in the future (see Appendix B, p. 106). Both of the participants would generally have liked more information and guidance as to how they should use the text in the classroom (see Appendix B, p. 106, 110).

The fact that neither one of the participants had used 'Face Value' in their classroom could have several different reasons; however, the important thing to note is that they had not used it.

5.1.3 Participants P5A and P6A about the lack of comics in *Access*

Participant P5A had used the textbook, *Access,* for six months, but was familiar with its content before the start of the six months after having worked with it as a substitute teacher (see Appendix B, p. 113), while P6A had used the textbook for two years (see Appendix B, p. 118). Because the textbook did not have any examples of comics in it, the first question regarding comics the participants were asked was if they were aware of the fact that there were no comics in the textbook. Both of the participants had realised that there were no examples of comics in their current textbook; the reason for this was that they had seen an example of a comic in another textbook. P5A explained how s/he:

> (…) would say that it's a bit of a shame when, I mean I wouldn't, I haven't thought of it before you asked me, but I think that's a very interesting way of making literature accessible to 16-year-olds, you know, so it's a bit of a shame really (Appendix B, p. 115).

P6A pointed out that the pupils had not missed comics in the textbook, but that their reason could be that they are not familiar with other textbooks that do contain comics; nor did s/he herself miss comics as part of the textbook (see Appendix B, p. 120).

Both of the participants brought up a Macbeth comic, which had been present in another textbook that they were familiar with. P6A thought the Macbeth comic would be too difficult for the pupils s/he now had (see Appendix B, p. 120), while P5A thought that the Macbeth comic would have been interesting to use (see Appendix B, p. 115). P5A brought up that s/he would have liked to see examples of comics, which represent part of the American or British culture. Further, s/he would not mind if there had been examples from Calvin and

Hobbes or other examples of comics (see Appendix B, p. 120). P6A's expectations to comics, which could be part of her textbook, were comics that show a historical event, the storyline of a short story or a novel (see Appendix B, p. 120).

When asked what kind of information and guidance they would have liked there to be if there had been any comics in the textbook P5A explained how it was important that the pupils were:

> (…) understanding the general message of this comic, what are they trying to say, how are they using humour to say something deeper, or how does this reflect US or British (…) culture, is this different to Norwegian values, you know, to use comics as sort of a gateway into the general culture of a place, to understand something deeper. I think that would have been fun (Appendix B, p.115)

S/he wanted there to be questions which could help pupils understand the meaning of the comic and to help them understand profound literature through a comic, s/he would also like a comic which could bring up a discussion among the pupils about the different values there are in, for example, the UK or the US as opposed to Norwegian values (see Appendix B, p. 115). P6A would like a description of the characters. The description should include the name of the characters in the comic, and if the characters were a part of a historical event s/he wanted there to be a description of the role that character had in history (see Appendix B, p. 120, 121).

The participants were asked one question that has not yet been addressed: how they would define light reading. The reason for asking this question was to see if they would use that term in order to describe comics in the questions that followed. When P6A was asked what they thought about there not being any examples of comics in the textbook *Access*, one of the points s/he brought up was that s/he had not missed them and that one could probably call it light reading (see Appendix B, p. 120). S/he had previously defined light reading as:

> The reading that the students (…) do without being/feeling constrained to do so, that I force them into it, and that, of course, has not a basic, but an intermediate vocabulary which they can relate to easily without having to look up to much, and whose length is not 300 pages. So somewhere in-between an easy reader and novels, but light, I suppose it is something that gives them pleasure first and foremost that they read so that they could enjoy it (…) (Appendix B, p. 120).

Of the six participants, only P6A used the term 'light reading' to describe comics after having defined what the term meant to them.

5.2 Comics in general

The teachers were also asked questions about comics in general and not only their perception of the comics in the textbooks. These questions were asked to find out what kind of attitude they had towards comics in general, and if that attitude could relate to the way they taught comics in the classroom, that is, if they did teach how to read comics in the classroom.

5.2.1 Teachers' opinions of comics

The first thing the participants were asked was to describe comics. Most of them brought up the point about comics being a combination of pictures and text, and that it was entertaining but that it could also be a way to bring up serious topics. For P1T, comics was a way to explain something complicated in a simpler way (see Appendix B, p. 101, 102). P3G saw comics as light reading and entertaining as opposed to textbooks, while P4G gave a description of how the illustrations, as well as the text, would make pupils like comics because they would get other input than what they usually get from a more conventional text (see Appendix B, p. 108, 111). P5A's description was versatile and positive:

> (…) it's about show don't tell, what can you read out of this photo, or how can we read it. It will engage more of your brain, than just reading something. Not all comics are funny though; some comics are serious or sad, philosophical. I guess it's an art form, you know, and it can be easily accessible, it can be a part of popular culture, it can also be, there are artful comics as well, like the ones about holocaust and historical events. (…) I don't know a lot about comics (…) I should probably use comics more in my teaching (Appendix B, p. 116).

P6A, on the other hand, described comics as:

> Easy to read, it gives you a sense of completing or reading through a text easily and quickly. In a way the kind of text that sums up, (…) I see them as very suitable for students at beginners and intermediate level (Appendix B, p. 120).

When the teachers were asked if they had used any other comics in their classroom and not just the ones that were in the textbook, there were different answers. Even when they concluded that they had actually used comics, they still answered 'no' because they had not focused on teaching comics specifically. Out of the six participants, only two answered 'yes' straight away. P6A explained how s/he had:

(…) asked them to read [a comic version of Macbeth], they did it quickly and they laughed because it was, well, a way of reading quickly and understanding the content, but that was actually the point, that they should get the message quickly, and they did (Appendix B, p. 121)

Of the teachers who answered 'no', one of them (P1T) ended up with explaining how s/he had actually used comics as a way to conclude lessons (see Appendix B, p. 102).

Two of the participants explained why they had not used comics: P3G pointed to the fact that there was only the one example of comics in *Gateways YF* and that s/he thought the students would benefit more from other methods (see Appendix B, p. 108), while P2T's reason was that:

There's not enough time to do everything, and I don't know, its uncommon maybe to use comics and then when you start out as a new teacher you just kind of grab what's already there. So if I wanted to use comics then I would have to come up with something on my own and that takes time, and I haven't come around to that yet, but I have been thinking about doing that in my year 2 course (Appendix B, p. 105).

The participants who had used comics were asked if they found using them useful. P1T saw that the pupils found them easier to read and that reading comics was a fun experience for the pupils (see Appendix B, p. 102). P4G gave a description of an assignment which the pupils got at the beginning of the semester in order to assess what levels they were on, the assignment was to complete a comic where the text was left out.

Because then the students had to produce by themselves and they had to understand what the pictures was about, so I got a clear vision of their language and also their

understanding of the pictures, which could vary. I think it was a good test (Appendix B, p. 111).

S/he thought that out of all the tasks s/he gave them that day the one involving comics was the most useful, s/he got to see how the pupils were able to produce something and how they understood the pictures (see Appendix B, p. 111). P6A used a comic version of Macbeth in order to make the pupils understand the content quickly, and s/he found that they got the message fast and that they enjoyed the reading (see Appendix B, p. 121).

The participants were also asked if they would like to use (more) comics in the future; overall, they answered that they would like to, but some of them had a few conditions, which would make it possible for that to happen. P1T wanted comics to be more available:

(…) as of now its difficult to find good comics in English unless you actually buy them and bring them with you from either the UK or the US or another English-speaking country. You have, you know, some comics in the textbooks but other than that it's not that easy to find. But you can have your students make comics as well and that would probably be fun to do at some point (Appendix B, p. 102).

P2T would use comics in the classroom if s/he had more time. S/he explained how s/he knew that comics could be used in the classroom, but that s/he had not found the time to use them yet (see Appendix B, p. 105). P3G would if there was a purpose behind using that particular comic (see Appendix B, p. 108), while P6A would use them if s/he could find comics that resembled the ones s/he had used in Italian classes (see Appendix B, p. 121). It did seem like they had not thought about using comics before it was brought up as a topic in the interview, but that they might try to find out more about the use of comics after having been asked these questions.

When asked if they could think of some positive and some negative aspects to using comics in their classroom, all of them had a lot to say. P1T said that it was positive because it would be fun for the pupils due to the fact that it was a creative medium (see Appendix B, p. 102). While P2T brought up that there is a lot to talk about when it comes to comics, and that it would function just as well as any other text (see Appendix B, p. 105). P6A thought that the positive aspect to using comics in the classroom would be:

(…) the fact that they would read more I suppose, and that they would continue the activity without losing track in the middle of the story (…) it would be a page turner, they would continue reading until the end of it. So in, that would be easy reading I suppose or even light reading (Appendix B, p. 122).

P3G explained how it was a good way to teach pupils about analysing pictures (see Appendix B, p. 108), while P4G thought it was positive that it was different from other media and that the pupils could be creative if they made their own comics (see Appendix B, p. 112). P5A thought it was positive that it could engage more of the brain and that reading one of Shakespeare's plays in a comic version could help pupils understand better (see Appendix B, p. 116).

When it came to the negative aspects P1T brought up that comics have:

(…) less text sort of, and you know, its sort of limited how much information you can get thru a cartoon, or focus on literary devices if its more that sort of text, so that's the negative aspect of it. So you can't only use comics, but as a supplement it's great (Appendix B, p. 112).

On the other hand, P3G thought that the pupils might not see the relevance to using comics and not think about it as school material (see Appendix B, p. 108). P4G first brought up that having visual aids would limit the pupils' use of their creativity and imagination, but s/he changed her opinion when s/he remembered that she had been using it in the past, and that she had seen how the pupils were able to use their creativity when coming up with their own text to a comic (see Appendix B, p. 112). Both P4G and P5A were concerned that reading comics only might impede the ability to create your own images. P5A stated that:

(…) sometimes comics can be a bit complicated, you need to understand abstract things maybe, or you need to read stuff into it, and sometimes comics presuppose certain knowledge from before and they have to understand, maybe, so it would not be for everyone (Appendix B, p. 116).

With this explanation s/he tapped into how closure might presuppose knowledge in the reader and that this could make some of the pupils not understand everything they should, s/he was also afraid that comics could oversimplify things and that this would not give the complete

picture of what was going on (see Appendix B, p. 116, 117). Like some of the other teachers, P6A brought up that comics should not be used too extensively; the reason s/he had was that pupils need practice in reading short stories and novels of a certain length (see Appendix B, p. 122). P2T explained how s/he thought that there were no negative sides to using comics in the classroom, as long as you choose the right ones to use and understand the different functions they have; the important thing was that the teachers had knowledge about how comics could be used (see Appendix B, p. 105).

A complicated question the participants were asked in the end let them describe how they thought comics should be used in English education, and some of them brought up important points in this respect. P2T brought up that comics are not being considered as real literature: "I know that for a lot time [for a long time] (…) comics (…) hasn't been defined as real literature" (Appendix B, p. 105) and s/he thought that this ought to change and that the medium should be used more as long as there is a purpose behind using it in English education (see Appendix B, p. 106). P3G thought it should be used as a supplement and as an activity that could sum up lessons (see Appendix B, p. 109), while P4G thought it should be used to create enjoyment of narratives, and s/he thought that if there had been more comics in the textbook one might enhance the use of comics in the classroom (see Appendix, p. 112). P5A thought comics could be used in a way that would let pupils understand the mind and the culture of an English-speaking country (see Appendix B, p. 117). P6A did not describe how s/he thought comics should be used in education but s/he described what she would need to use comics more in her classroom:

> I would like to learn how to use them and to use them properly, to see the results and that the students improve their reading skills or that they get more interest in literature. (…) if I were to use that [comics based on Shakespeare] more they would probably be more interested in Shakespeare or get to know authors and their work in an easier way (see Appendix B, p. 122).

The biggest issue, which seemed to be common among the participants, was that they had not learnt enough about the positive results that come from using comics, especially when it came to learning English as a foreign language. Some of the participants seemed surprised to hear about comics being a possibility at all, because they had not heard about it being used among their colleagues.

P1T explained how comics might be expected to have humour in them, but that they could also be a way to approach serious topics. When trying to explain how s/he had used comics, s/he stated that the purpose of them was mainly to have something which could be more fun to read for the pupils, but s/he thought that comics were difficult to get hold of and would rather have the pupils make their own comics in the future (see Appendix B, p. 101, 102).

P2T had let her pupils draw their own comics, but pointed out how it is easier for a new teacher to just do what has already been done and use what is already seen as a normal approach by colleagues who have been teaching longer (see Appendix B, p. 105).

P5A imagined that using comics would involve using the whole brain, and stated that: "It will engage more of your brain than just reading something" (see Appendix B, p. 113). Even though the participant had not used comics in the classroom before, the idea that comics are a good way of engaging the whole brain was something s/he had realised.

P6A brought up an example where some of her pupils asked if it was a possibility for them to read a comic when the assignment was to read a book and s/he said:

> no because, well, my argument was that there are more pictures and less text, and they should relate to a novel of a certain length, witch should be fiction and in English. So that's the point when I realised that they actually read comics (Appendix B, p. 120).

All these examples from the interviews indicate that these Norwegian upper secondary level teachers have not studied comics enough to tell what their advantages and disadvantages in the classroom are. The few times comics were used as part of a school session, it was either as an end-of-the-class activity, a get-to-know-each-other activity, or as a way of making other texts easier for the pupils to understand. Even when they were asked if they would consider using more comics in the future, the general idea was not to read an entire graphic novel; instead the ideas the participants came up with as being possible scenarios, was either to use the comics they already had in their textbook as an activity that would perhaps take one classroom lesson, or to let their pupils make their own comics.

5.3 Summing up

Among the six participants, there were four who had textbooks that included an example of comics, while two had not. Out of the four who did have comics in their textbook, two said they had used comics in their teaching, but neither one of them had used the comic that was in

their textbook. P3G brought up a suggestion as to why s/he had not used comics in the classroom before, namely that the example in *Gateways YF* was not good enough, and there were no other examples to choose from (see Appendix B, p. 108).

Of the two teachers who used the textbook that contained no examples of comics, P5A thought it was a shame that there were no comics in *Access* (see Appendix B, p. 115), while P6A had not missed them (see Appendix B, p. 120). P5A had not used comics in the classroom, but indicated that the reason was that s/he was a new teacher and that s/he was not familiar with their usage in the upper secondary English classroom (see Appendix B, p. 116). P6A had used them, but only as something the pupils should read quickly to understand the content (see Appendix, p. 121).

The participating teachers, who had used comics to some extent in their classroom, had never had a focus on the comic itself. Rather than addressing the different parts of which a comic consists, the content was valued more for its ability to motivate the pupils and its ability of being read quickly.

6 Discussion

In this chapter, the findings from the teacher interviews and the textbooks are brought together and discussed in relation to the research questions. Each research question will be dealt with in turn and related to the relevant theory.

6.1 How are comics used in the textbooks and what does that suggest about attitudes to them?

This first research question mainly relates to the findings from chapter 4.1; the textbooks are first discussed separately, and then brought together in a comparative discussion.

6.1.1 *Targets*

Targets is the textbook that contains a comics version of Shakepeare's *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*; judging by how many different text types there were in the textbook one would assume that comics is not a highly-valued medium by the authors. However, the blame is not put entirely on the authors themselves, as most of the textbooks the present researcher has looked at, both in the present thesis and when preparing for the writing of the thesis, either contain no examples of comics in them at all, or they contain only one comic. There seems to be a consensus among the textbook authors about comics; they could be used, but one is probably enough. Other text types were favoured by the authors of *Targets*, and most valued were the factual texts.

The comic in *Targets* is accompanied by an introduction and a set of questions the pupils are expected to answer after having read the comic. As stated in chapter 4.5.1 (p. 49), the introduction indicates what can be seen as the goal of having the comic there and why the pupils should read it; in short, "understanding what Hamlet is all about" (Balsvik et al. 2015: 70). With this statement, one may assume that the goal is not to read a comic, understand comics as a medium or to look at the different components that are a part of a comic.

The questions that were meant to be answered by the pupils after having read the comics are simple in the sense that they could have been answered if the pupils had read any other version of Hamlet. The fact that the text the authors chose to include in the textbook is a comic, is not reflected in the questions section. The focus of the assignments was not the comic itself, its focus was rather on the content of the play, which suggests that the authors probably only wanted an easier text to make the play seem more enticing for the pupils. It also

suggests that this use of comics could be intended as an easy introduction to Shakespeare and Early Modern English, and supports Krashen's thoughts about comics being a conduit into something else (see 2.2.1, p. 14).

Not only does it seem like the authors who chose to include the Hamlet comic in their textbook focused on function rather than form, that is, not focusing on the medium itself; the teachers who used this textbook (P1T and P2T) had not really considered or found a use for the comic in their classroom. The fact that neither one of the participants had used the comic in their classroom suggests that it does not come across as critical enough and that it has not been seen as a significant part of the focus of the chapter. P1T explained how using the comic depended on the focus of the current school year and whether there was enough time (P1T app); however, as s/he had been using *Targets* for three years, these excuses might suggest that the comic did not have enough significance, in particular since s/he had been using several other texts from the same textbook during the three years that s/he had been working with it. S/he also gave a description of the comic, which explained how it was made in order to make the play easier to understand for the pupils. This again gives further reason to believe that the comic was not included because it necessarily was the best example of a comic to use as an introduction to comics as a medium, but rather that it was included because it was a simplification of a text which would be too difficult for the pupils to understand if they had been exposed to the original.

As was established in chapter 4.5.1 (p. 50), the comic was originally intended for English speaking children, and not for an upper secondary class in a Norwegian EFL classroom. This further suggests that the comic was included in the textbook as a text that would make it easier for EFL learners to understand a play written by Shakespeare, and not as an introduction to a multimodal medium.

The terms that are used to describe the comic differ greatly throughout the textbook (see 4.5.1, p. 49). The authors use 'cartoon strip version', 'cartoon', 'play excerpt' and 'graphic story' to describe the same thing. McCloud (see 2.1, p. 8) explained why a cartoon and a comic was not the same thing, and judging from his description the comic should not be defined as a cartoon. One possibility for the discrepancy in their choice of terminology could be because of the number of people involved in the making of the textbook: in all there are five people listed as the authors of *Targets*. There are no indications as to which of the authors had the overall editing responsibility for the chapter in which the comic is located; however, seeing as the different terms are located in different places within the textbook, this might be a reasonable explanation.

Another possibility as to the reasons behind using this comic in the textbook is the publisher, Aschehoug's apparent fondness of the author of the comic, Marcia Williams. As seen in 4.5.1, *Stages 8* also uses a comic made by Williams. The authors of the two textbooks are not the same; nevertheless, they chose to put two different comics made by the same author within two different textbooks published by the same publisher. This might be a coincidence, or perhaps it was the publisher and not the authors who decided which comic to include in the textbooks. Another possibility might be that the publisher managed to get hold of the copyright for Williams' comics, which may have made it easier to include her comics in more than one textbook.

The choice to include the comic in the textbook seems to be valid when it comes to the 8th-grade textbook; the comic was originally made for children, and it makes more sense to include it within the lower grade textbook *Stages 8* than within the textbook *Targets* which is aimed at 16-year-olds. As seen in Figure 3 (p. 23) the competence aims, which can be reached with the use of comics, do not specifically state that text made originally for English speaking children are not an option to be used at an upper secondary level. However, text, which is intended for children, might not be the best choice when picking out texts intended for young adults as they might see them as juvenile. If the pupils see a text as juvenile or if they find out that it was originally made for children they might loose motivation to read that text.

6.1.2 *Gateways YF*

Gateways YF was the second textbook that contained one example of a comic. This comic, called 'Face Value', was shorter than the Hamlet one found in *Targets*; however, the focus of the questions that were asked gave reason to believe that it was included in the 'Worldwide' chapter not only to create a discussion about the content of the text contained within the comic, but also to create awareness about the comic as a genre.

The questions in the textbook which the pupils are asked to answer, both before reading the comic and after, do not only focus on the text when reading the comic (Rugset and Ulven 2013: 200-201). This suggests that the authors of *Gateways YF*, at least to a certain extent, are aware of how comics work. Judging from the apparatus accompanying the text, there seems to be an understanding that comics is a medium which can open up for a different kind of reading which does not only focus on reading a text for the sake of reading itself, but also on connecting what you see with what is being said, thus approaching the text from a multimodal point of view.

On the other hand, the authors used 'cartoon' as the term to describe the comic, which might suggest a lack of awareness of the differences in terminology, and thus perhaps not providing the best term to describe the text that they chose to include in their textbook. Since the comic was not supposed to be humorous, then perhaps using the term 'cartoon' was not the best decision. As stated in Chapter 2.1 (p. 9), Eisner found the term 'comics' to be a term which also suggests that what we are about to read is supposed to be humorous; 'cartoons' also include in its definition that it could represent anything from an animated film to a full-size drawing. Instead of defining it as a 'cartoon', a better way of describing 'Face Value' would be to use a term, which suggests that it does not fall under the same category as an animation film, but that it represents a separate genre within the larger umbrella-term 'comics'.

Neither of the participating teachers who used *Gateways YF* in their teaching (PG3 and P4G) had used the comic 'Face Value'. They did not give a specific reason for why they had not made use of it; however, reasons such as not having enough time, not finding the comic to be important enough, or that other texts were seen as more important for the pupils, could have played a part in the decision to leave it out of their teaching schedule. The fact that they had not used it suggests that the comic chosen by the authors of *Gateways YF* to be a part of their textbook was not regarded by these two teachers as a text worthwhile for the pupils to read. Another thing to take into account, is that these two teachers were the ones who had worked with their textbook for the least amount of time. Judging by how long each participant had used their textbook, P3G had only used it for six months, while P4G had used it for one year, and this could also be a reason for why they had not yet used the comic. P3G mentioned that the comic in the textbook was not good enough (see 5.2.1, p. 62), which, in line with the argument above, suggests that the comic that was picked to be a part of the textbook did not seem worthwhile to make time for in the classroom. Finally, it might suggest that there is a general lack of awareness or focus on the medium of comics among textbook authors, and that the authors of the *Gateways YF* could have made a more informed choice when choosing that particular comic to be a part of the textbook. That being said, the authors of textbooks are often teachers themselves, and perhaps there needs to be more focus on comics as a multimodal medium at the teacher training level, in order to raise awareness among the teachers about its usefulness in teaching.

6.1.3 *Access*

As stated earlier (see Chapter 4.5.3, p. 53), *Access* was the only one of the textbooks in this study that did not have any examples of comics as part of their selection of texts. Judging from the examination of the three textbooks included in this study, as well as of other textbooks at other levels, the lack of comics as part of the material meant for instruction is not uncommon in Norwegian EFL textbooks. This makes the discussion of *Access* different from the two preceding books, in that the textbook as a whole is taken into consideration, in order to provide an explanation for the lack of comics.

The introduction to the textbook states that the texts which have been chosen to be a part of the textbook, are supposed to be pleasurable for the pupils to read. In line with this aim, informant P6A defined light reading as something that gave the pupils pleasure when reading it (see page 60). Later on, s/he placed comics in the same category, that is, light reading; when doing so s/he gave a reason for why a comic should preferably have been present in *Access*. If comics are a pleasure to read then that is what the authors were supposedly looking for when they were trying to find texts to include in their textbook; yet, they chose not to include any. Even though P6A stated that s/he did not miss the presence of comics in the textbook, the description of the texts that were included, could have included comics as well, at least if one were to look at P6A's description of comics as light reading. The real reasons for not including comics in *Access* is naturally a question only known to the authors of the textbook; however, it is interesting to see how their description of the chosen texts coincides with the description given by P6A.

Both of the participants (P5A and P6A) were aware of the fact that there were no examples of comics in their textbook. P5A mentioned that it was a shame, while P6A stated that the pupils did not seem to have missed the presence of comics in their textbook, mainly because they did not know that other textbooks have them. By excluding comics as part of the textbook, the authors have taken away what might have been an introduction into a different textual medium. As stated by Uslan (see Chapter 2.3, p. 19), there are several positive reasons why the use of comics could be helpful in teaching: people become more effective readers, they improve their grammar skills and increase their vocabulary. In addition, it constitutes a different angle to introducing literature in general and to teaching different attitudes and facts (Uslan 1974 [Weiner and Syma 2013: 4-5]). Since such an introduction is missing in *Access*, the pupils who are using this textbook will have to either get it from somewhere else, or they might not be introduced to it at all.

All of the teachers who participated in the interviews mentioned that they had supplemented with other texts in their English classroom. By asking this question before the questions about comics, I wanted to see whether they mentioned anything about bringing comics into their classroom themselves. However, seeing as none of the participants brought up comics here, even though some of them had in fact used comics that they had brought in themselves, suggests that this was something that either did not happen often enough to be remembered, or that the comics they had brought with them were comics that were not worth mentioning.

6.1.4 The textbooks

In general, the three textbooks do not have much to show for when it comes to comics, even though two of them do contain one example each. The 'Face Value' comic in *Gateways YF* was the one that best regarded the text as being a comic, but it was still limited, as the two teachers did not see it as important enough to be used in their classroom.

Because there is very little by way of comics within these textbooks, the responsibility of introducing comics to pupils is therefore placed on the teachers. They would have to find the right comics to be used as an introduction into the genre and supplement their lessons with suitable comics based on their own judgment.

There is of course a limit to the number of different types of texts that can be included in a textbook; even though comics might be a useful vehicle to bring the pupils' language and reading skills to the next level, there are probably plenty of other text types that would potentially fit the criteria as being useful to both pupils and teachers. The teachers who participated in this study supplemented the textbook with other materials in their classroom, such as bringing in films to analyse and discuss, using YouTube clips and listening to songs; the list is seemingly endless as to what kind of material teachers could use as a supplement in their classroom. However, the teachers themselves would have to understand the benefits of these supplementary materials, such as for instance comics, for them to bring such materials into the classroom.

6.2 What are the teacher's attitudes to comics?

This research question is here addressed using the findings described in Chapter 5.2, and linking these findings to the relevant theory.

In their descriptions of comics, most of the participants mentioned the basics, namely that it was a combination of pictures and text and that it might be easier for the pupils to read than a longer text on the subject. This suggests that their knowledge of comics was limited; the reason for this might be that they did not have enough experience with the use of comics and the medium of comics itself. P5A mentioned that comics might engage more of the brain (see Chapter 5.2.1, p. 61), which aligns with the idea that Blanch and Mulvihill discussed in their article where they explain how comics engage both the left and the right hemisphere (Blanch and Mulvihill 2013: 39). This indicates that the participant had some knowledge of the benefits of using comics.

Even though some of the participants answered that they had used comics in their classroom before, they had only worked with comics on a limited scale; that is, limited in the sense that it was not the teaching of how to read a comic or the comic itself that had been the focus, the use of comics was rather limited to concluding lessons or as a get-to-know-each-other exercise at the beginning of the semester (see 5.2.1). This again shows that the comic was not regarded as a medium worth teaching, as the focus was not on the medium itself. The participants, who had used comics either as a way to conclude lessons or as something else, still found them useful for their intended purpose. The focus had not been on the medium itself; based on their own observations they saw that pupils seemed to find them interesting and easier to read, which was something the teachers regarded as a positive outcome of the use of comics.

The participants' conditions for using more comics in the future were concerned with different factors, such as their availability, whether or not they had enough time in their schedule, and that they needed to serve a useful purpose. Availability is an easy obstacle to overcome: several websites provide free comics; another free option would be to use library resources. Most libraries in Norway have their own comics section; this is a great resource that can be utilised by the teachers. The school libraries might have limited examples, and this could limit the immediate availability; however, with more teachers asking about comics, there might become a consensus between the teachers and the school for them to make comics more readily available to the pupils.

The issue with not having enough time is mostly up to the teachers themselves. If they find comics that they think are useful and worthwhile, they have to make time in the schedule for the use of them. Finding useful comics is also mainly up to the teachers themselves. The textbooks can of course help; however, if the textbooks do provide examples of comics they should make sure that the comics they chose seem useful and worthwhile for both the

teachers, who are the ones that decide whether or not to use them, and to the pupils, who are the intended audience the teachers need to think about when choosing to use a text in their teaching.

In Beenfeldt's research (see Chapter 2.4, p. 27), one of the questions she asked her pupils is quite relevant with regard to whether or not the participants in this study would use comics in the future: she asked her pupils if they would use graphic novels in their teaching if they were an English upper secondary teacher. The most reflected answers brought up that they would use them, for several reasons: because they were engaging, they helped teach pupils how to read pictures, the pupils found it better to use a graphic novel to illustrate a difficult topic, they thought it was important to read more than just words, and finally, if one goes through how graphic novels are constructed it becomes easier to understand how the books can be read and understood (see Chapter 2.4, p. 27, 28). By bringing up that they would use comics because it is important to learn more than just the picture, the pupils had reflected over the need to read the whole page and not just the text. The pupils appreciated that to understand the content of the graphic novel it was important to understand what it contained and how it was constructed.

These pupils had just learnt much about comics and were aware of the positive sides of using the genre because of the project they had been working on with graphic novels, and it shows that after having used and worked with comics the reasons for using them to a larger extent became more apparent. It also suggests that if the teachers who participated in the present study had used comics in their classroom, it would be easier to give a definite answer to whether or not they would like to use more comics in the future.

Judging from the comments by the teachers in this study, the positive aspects of the use of comics in the classroom were many; the participants thought comics were fun, creative, a conversation starter, different and engaging. Again, their descriptions were limited; this might be because they did not have enough experience with using comics in their teaching, and those who had in fact used comics at one time or another, had neither used them extensively nor with a focus on the medium of comics itself.

The negative aspects that they brought up were that comics had less text, that pupils might not see them as relevant, they might oversimplify a topic, that it might disturb the pupils' ability to create their own images in their head, and that with an overuse of comics in the classroom the pupils would not get enough practice with reading texts of a particular length.

Comics might have less text in the ordinary sense of the word; however, if one regards the whole page as text, including the illustrations, the gutters, etc. (see Chapter 3. p. 30), there is much more to engage with than just the reading of the text. The reading of the text is only part of what is involved in the reading of a comic, the whole page has to be taken into account, which makes the page so much more than merely pictures with a bit of text. Most have heard the idiom "A picture is worth a thousand words"; if this is transferred to reading a comic page, there is more text on a comic page than there would ever be room for on a page containing just text. This is in fact the essence of a comic; if one were to read only the text, one would understand just parts of the content of the comic, and in many cases it would not make sense at all.

For example in Figure 2 (see p. 10) the only text in the first panel from the first character is: "NOW YOU DIE!!", while the other character says: "NO! NO!". In the next panel the only text we read is: "EEYAA!!" and there is nothing in the text that suggests which character the utterance belongs to. If the text were the only thing on the page, this would not be enough to understand what happened. However, the panels contain more than text: in the first panel we see two characters, the first character looks angry and is swinging an axe from over his shoulder. The other character looks scared with sweat on his face while having his hands in front of him; this gives the reader an understanding of what is going to happen to the second character in the next panel even though the characters are not even visible in it. In the second panel, we see a moon over a dark city, which gives the reader a better understanding of the situation: seeing a man swinging an axe in the middle of the night in a dark city could only mean one thing; however, the result is never shown, and the reader is left to make the unconscious decision of swinging the axe and killing the second character. The reader has to read between the two panels and put all the information into one; by using closure, the reader has become an accomplice to the actions seen on the page (see Chapter 2.1, p. 11). By looking at all of the parts, the comic page is thus shown to contain more 'text' than what there is to be read.

What pupils see as relevant is different for every pupil. Still, given that most pupils have been exposed to different kinds of teaching methods that might have seemed irrelevant in the beginning, they might, over time, learn how to appreciate the full extent or potential of comics as well. As shown in Chapter 2.3.1 (p. 24, 25), comics have been used in the final exam in Norwegian EFL classes. The pupils are expected to consider all the parts that make up a comic to become inspired to write a text. By using comics as part of the exam task at the

end of their English course, the people responsible for making these exams have made comics more relevant.

In the exercises shown in Figure 4 (see p. 24) the pupils are asked to use the comic presented in Figure 5 (see p. 24) together with other texts as inspiration to complete the task. The comic was given to the pupils ahead of the exam and was part of a preparation folder that they are supposed to study in their preparation for their exam. In Figure 6 (see p. 25), which was also part of an exam, two single panel cartoons are presented and intended to be used as inspiration to produce a concise text based on the cartoons; these were not given ahead of the exam. By using comics and cartoons both in preparation as well as on the exam paper, the people who made the exams are expecting the pupils to understand and use these as part of their exam. However, if the pupils have never seen or worked with comics during their English course, it might seem strange to use them during an exam. This is an important point to stress in order to get teachers to use comics in the classroom; since there is a chance that comics might appear as part of the final exam, and since the course is supposed to prepare the pupils for that exam, teachers need to incorporate comics into their teaching to a larger extent than what seems to be the case today, at least judging from the textbooks and interviews that form the basis for this study.

The question regarding oversimplification, which was mentioned by the teachers, might be relevant if one chooses a comic that is based on or is an adaptation of something else, for instance as a novel or a short story, such as the adaptation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* play in the textbook *Targets*. Still, if we read a novel and a short story and then read a comic based on either one of them, the way the illustrator has understood the story might open up discussions on the differences between the ways we interpreted the original story and the way the illustrator interpreted it. On the other hand, if one chooses an original comic it becomes difficult to argue that it is a simplification of anything, because the content has not been produced in any other form. Therefore, the fear of oversimplification is up to the teachers to solve by finding comics that are original and not simplified versions of something else.

When it comes to the point about creating your own mental images of a text, this might be a valid one if we read a comic that illustrates the characters well; however, there are other things that one does when reading a comic which is less common in other texts. Closure, as McCloud describes it (see p. 11), is when we only see part of something but still understand what it is supposed to portray based on our past knowledge and experiences. This is something that other media also use; however, comics are based on closure, and if this is not taken into consideration, it becomes quite difficult to understand what one is reading. So

instead of focusing on the things that comics do less well than other types of media, we should focus on the things that comics do well.

Losing practice of reading texts of a particular length was the final issue brought up by one of the participating teachers. Pupils at a high level who like to read in the first place might not see the relevance of reading comics as a substitute for ordinary texts; however, that is not how comics should be considered, they should instead be considered as another genre to read, as a free-standing supplement to other types of text. For pupils at a lower level, reading longer texts might be something that they are not doing in the first place, and therefore reading a comic might give them the motivation they need to at least read something.

Of course, using comics should not be the only way to teach English as a foreign language in the Norwegian upper secondary school; the goal is not to make comics the only teaching method but to show how using comics in the classroom could have its advantages. There does not seem not be a shared understanding among the participants' colleagues about comics being an asset to their teaching; they appear to be content with the teaching methods they are used to. For there to be a positive outlook on comics as an asset, teachers need to talk about it with each other. As P2T mentioned (see p. 39), it is easier to employ the methods that are already used by colleagues when one is a new teacher, and this suggests that in order for comics to be taken seriously and considered as an asset when it comes to teaching English to foreign language pupils, it is important to get the teachers who are already teaching interested in learning more about comics. By educating teachers and showing how they should use comics as an asset and not only see them as something funny and a break from 'regular' reading, there is hope that comics might become a real part of Norwegian EFL education, at all levels.

As stated earlier (see Chapter 2.3, p. 20), Leber-Cook and Cook discuss how comics scholars are trying to tell educators that comics are a legitimate part of reading, while the only point the educators seem to understand is that comics are worthy of being studied (Leber-Cook and Cook 2013: 25). When P6A denied the pupils' request to read a comic, this was not based only on the idea that comics have too many pictures and not enough text, the issue was that the teacher had not looked into how comics could be seen as a legitimate part of reading (see Chapter 5.2.1, p. 66). This again comes back to the knowledge that teachers have about comics; if they do not understand how comics can be an integral part of reading, then they will continue to regard comics as something that is inferior to other texts. Perhaps a pamphlet about comics from the ministry might be enough to make teachers curious about them and test them out in their classrooms.

During the interviews, the participants were also asked if they had any thoughts about how comics should be used in English education, and then specifically in the upper secondary English EFL classroom. Some of them brought up that there should be a purpose behind the use of comics, that there could be more of it, either used as a supplement, used to sum up or used for enjoyment (see Chapter 5.2.1, p. 65). Having a purpose behind the utilisation of any text is important when a teacher brings any text into the classroom; this is not something that only has to be regarded when it comes to using comics in their teaching. Whether we should see more comics in the classroom is now up to the teachers; however, there might be more use of comics if there were better examples of them in the textbooks, so in fact it is also up to the authors of new textbooks. If the teachers gain more knowledge about comics, there would hopefully be more comics in the classroom as well. If comics were to be used only as a supplement to other texts and as a way to sum up lessons, their full potential is not being explored; one might say that if pupils do not get to know comics on a deeper level there is not much point to using them at all.

Blanch and Mulvihill (2013: 45) made a point about comics teachers needing to keep educating themselves (see Chapter 2.3, p. 21). Children who grow up today are always stimulated by all kinds of media, and need to see how school is teaching them something that could be used in real life. By using comics, pupils could better recognise the facial expressions and gestures that characters make and see that they are also used in real life, and this might help them better understand native speakers and cultural references that are made. This may of course also be taught through real life encounters and through digital media such as television; however, with comics, the pictures are still, and this might make it easier to study the postures and gestures of the characters and understand the meaning behind them, which again might help them recognise similar facial expressions in real life (see Chapter 2.3, p. 20).

Multimodality is all around us, and it has become increasingly visible and common over the years, which is a reason for why it should be taught to pupils. If pupils are expected to understand and identify the main idea or spot specific information within multimodal texts, they need to be taught to become independent and critical readers of multimodal texts (see Chapter 2.2.3, p. 18). If the pupils know the parts that a comic consists of, it becomes easier to read a comic not only to remember the information that is being given to them through text, but also to understand the deeper meaning of all the elements of a comic combined (see Chapter 2.2.3, p. 18). Some of the content will be understandable even if one has not been taught the different parts of comics. Children start out reading picture books when learning to

read and find meaning in the pictures when the texts do not suffice, but there is still information to be gained through the teaching of comics. If pupils understand what choices lie behind what they are reading, information that might have gone by unnoticed before will come to light. When pupils are taught to read using word based literacy, the authors use tools to teach the pupils to read between the lines. One such tool is foreshadowing, which is often used but might be difficult to spot if pupils do not know that this is something they might want to look for in a text.

It is important to expose pupils to different genres, including comics; if pupils are not introduced to the different genres in a taught setting, they will have to find them on their own, which, in many cases, is not very likely. If teachers introduce them to several different genres, the possibility for them to find the genre that suits them the best is infinitely much better. However, if educators only introduce pupils to some particular genres, they are leaving the pupils more or less in the dark; in order to be able to understand more genres, the pupils also have to learn their characteristics, as well as how to interpret them and how to set them apart from other genres.

Versaci (2001) introduced the thought that pupils should be introduced to different kinds of texts in order to pick the ones that they find value in (see Chapter 2.3, p. 21), if the pupils are only given texts that they do not find value or enjoyment in, it might leave them thinking that there are no texts that are meant for them. It also becomes easier to think critically about a text if they are introduced to texts that are not seen as highly valued by the rest of society. There seems to be a common consensus about the value of for instance Shakespeare, and it might be difficult for a 16-year-old to criticise something that seems to be valued by everyone else, and by adults in particular. If, on the other hand, they are given comics, it might become easier to criticise exactly because they see how adults seem not to read comics or take them seriously.

When it comes to enjoyment, this can be seen from different views. The goal should never be to find texts that are not enjoyed by the pupils, as enjoyment might fuel motivation, a point that most teachers would agree with. However, there will always be difficulties when teachers are trying to find texts which are supposed to motivate all the pupils in a class. In a table from Statistisk sentralbyrå[18] (the Norwegian Statistics Agency) from 2003, it is shown that the average class in upper secondary education in Norway contains 19,8 pupils in each class. It is evident that with almost twenty pupils in each class, it becomes difficult to find one

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[18] https://www.ssb.no/a/kortnavn/utvgs/arkiv/tab-2004-02-19-08.html (accessed 10.05.17)

specific text that would fit all the pupils. The goal is still to introduce all the pupils to different kinds of texts to enable them to find the ones that will lead to increased reading.

It seems like the teachers who participated in this study are more in line with Krashen's arguments about comics being a conduit to more reading than they are with Jacobs' arguments about comics needing to be seen as good enough on their own and worthy of being read. Jacobs argues for the use of comics, not only as a vehicle to get information about something else, but as a multimodal medium. As we already know, the multimodal medium has become much more visible around us than what it used to be. Even though the results from this study of six teachers and their textbooks is not applicable to every teacher of English in an upper secondary Norwegian classroom, the outcome of these results point in one direction. These teachers simply do not have enough knowledge about comics to see the larger benefits that it can provide in the classroom. If they had more knowledge about the medium, they might have brought up multimodality and thus would have been more in line with Jacobs and his arguments.

This last point applies to the present researcher as well: although Krashen's views also seemed reasonable, the more information about comics that was acquired during the research, the more Jacobs' arguments made sense. There is something about wanting the pupils to find motivation through one medium to become more interested in another. Teachers do not have to choose one over the other; the benefits to reading comics are visible through both Jacobs' and Krashen's views. For Krashen, the goal is to find texts, which encourage FVR (see Chapter 2.2.1, p. 13), which for many pupils might happen through reading comics. Being able to read extensively is a benefit in EFL education, and if reading comics leads to pupils reading other texts, there is nothing wrong with Krashen's views. If comics are indeed used as a conduit to reading more of other texts, there is nothing to stop the pupils from reading more comics as well, which, as argued by Jacobs, has other benefits. Using multimodal texts may be beneficial for the pupils both in terms of Krashen's and Jacobs' views, and comics should definitely be considered as a contender for the pupils to attain these benefits.

The insight the participating teachers gave suggests that with more knowledge about comics, their use in the classroom would be more common; the teachers also seemed interested in learning more and suggested that this might lead to changing their attitudes (see Chapter 5.2.1, p. 65). The aim of using comics should not only be to read more, but also to understand what you are reading, and to gain as much from what you are reading as possible.

In order for teachers to start using more comics in the classroom, Krashen's views of comics as a conduit might be the easiest place to start, especially if one has limited knowledge

about comics and their potential as a teaching aid. His views are easier to relate to, and people generally see comics as something that is motivating to read. Then, after having seen the positive outcomes of using comics as a conduit, Jacobs' views of really appreciating comics for what they are could be the next step; however, that would require the acquisition of a better understanding of the parts that make up a comic, as well as a realisation of the benefits, other than motivation, that are to gain from the use of comics in the classroom.

7 Conclusion

The present master's thesis aimed to find out about the attitudes towards comics of a selected group of teachers, and how comics are presented in their textbooks. More specifically, the study included six teachers at English upper secondary school in Norway and the textbooks they use in their English classrooms. The six teachers used three different textbooks: *Targets*, *Gateways YF* and *Access*, and they shared their opinion about the comics in their textbooks and comics in general.

The attitudes the participating teachers showed towards comics do not necessarily reflect how teachers in general view comics. Because there were only six teachers who participated in the study, the opinions they had reflect only their opinions and it gives a description of their personal reflections on the use of comics being used in the classroom.

In order to get the teachers in-depth reflections on the use of comics in the classroom a semistructured interview was chosen. The questions were set in an interview guide prior to the interviews taking place, to make sure that all the participants were given a chance to answer the same questions. However, the questions were not asked in the same way with each participant in order to make the conversation seem natural, and some follow up questions were asked when that seemed necessary.

The participants knew the present researcher to different degrees. They were found through contacts acquired over the years, and the reason for using participants who knew the present researchers prior to the interview was because most of the teachers who were contacted declined to participate, while others simply did not answer the request.

The present researcher did not choose the textbooks that were a part of this research. To be able to get the participating teachers opinions about the use of comics in textbooks, the textbooks that the participating teachers knew and used, had to be the textbooks used in the present research as well. By including the textbooks that were used by the participating teachers, it was highly likely that they were familiar with their respective textbook's content and would be able to criticise it properly.

The participants were asked to participate in an interview about their textbook, and there was no mention of comics prior to the interviews taking place. They were asked if doing the interviews through Skype was an alternative, since the cost of travelling to the location where some of the participants resided would have been inordinately high.

The findings show that comics are not given much space in the studied upper secondary level English textbooks. Other text types are more highly valued and are given more room in the textbooks. The limited amount of examples of comics in the textbooks leaves little room for interpretation, and they are simply not seen as important enough to be given more space in an upper secondary level English textbook.

Targets' comic, 'Hamlet – The Prince of Denmark', could have been given more thought prior to including it in the textbook. There seems to be little or no understanding of it being a different medium than the other texts in the textbook, except for referring to it as a cartoon. The limited understanding of the medium leaves the comic useful mainly for acquiring knowledge about the original Hamlet play. The participating teachers saw it simply as exactly that, a way to understand the main point of the original Hamlet play. Neither of the two participating teachers had used it, which suggests that it was not seen as significant enough.

Gateways YF was the one textbook that valued the fact that the comic the authors had chosen to be a part of their textbook was a comic, at least to a certain degree. This comic, 'Face Value', was not regarded as any other text. However, the comic was rather short, and teachers might have taken it more seriously if the chosen comic had been given more space in the textbook and if it had been longer. The participating teachers had not used it in their classroom, which suggests that it was not seen as worthwhile.

The last textbook that was looked at, *Access*, did not contain any examples of comics. The textbook clearly favoured other kinds of texts and made no reference to comics being a possible tool for the EFL classroom. Of the two participating teachers who were interviewed about this textbook, one of them thought it was a shame that comics were not included, while the other did not miss them.

When it came to the participating teachers' attitude to comics in general, their understanding of them was limited. The knowledge they had about their use, as a teaching tool was rather basic; the experience some of them had with regard to the use of comics in the classroom was also limited. As concerns the few who had in fact used comics in their classroom, all of them gave an explanation that pointed towards not seeing comics as a medium as the primary focus during their use of them, their focus was rather on understanding the content and getting to know the pupils. They saw comics as useful, but they were not well used.

The participating teachers' arguments for possibly using comics in the future was limited to their availability, whether or not they had the time, and if they saw them as useful

or not. On the other hand, they saw comics as fun, creative, conversation starting, different and engaging. The negative sides to comics that the participating teachers brought up were that they had less text, were less relevant, that they were an oversimplification, that they disturb image creation, and that they limit the practice of reading text.

Some of the participating teachers gave their view on how comics should be used in English education in upper secondary Norwegian school. These views focused on that there should be a purpose behind the comics if they were to be utilised in the classroom, that they could be used as a supplement, that they could be used to sum up and that they could be used as something that would be enjoyed by the pupils.

The views the participating teachers generally had about comics related to Krashen and his views of comics as a conduit, and did not venture further onto Jacobs' focus on them having their own worth, with a focus of understanding the different parts, which comics consist of. The knowledge was limited and this apparently led to the participating teachers using comics only to a small extent. If the participating teachers had known how to use comics as well as been aware of the positive sides there are to using comics in the classroom, they might have been more inclined to using them more.

After having reached out to eight schools to find teachers suitable for participating in this study and only receiving positive answers to participation from six teachers the present researcher has made some thoughts regarding possible reasons and solutions to gather a larger sample size in the future. By choosing to use interviews as the main method the limitations became more visible as it turned out many of the contacted teachers simply excused themselves with not having enough time to participate, this excuse was given several times even though the present researcher gave no limitations as to when the interviews would take place except for a time frame of within three months. The contacted people were also given information about the amount of time it would take to participate, which was stated to be maximum thirty minutes. If the present researcher had known from the beginning that it would be this difficult to gather participants I might have chosen a different data collecting method.

The advantage to using a quantitative study such as for example a questionnaire might have made it easier for teachers to consent with participation. To answer a questionnaire would have taken them less time, they could have done it whenever and wherever they saw fit, and they would not need to actually have to speak directly to another person. However, though the sample size might have been greater with a questionnaire the results would not have become as descriptive as they have become.

The limitation I set by primarily only contacting local schools became evident at a stage in the process, which would have been preferable to realise earlier. The sample size might have consisted of more teachers if more schools and teachers from around the country had been contacted. The video chat service 'Skype' made it simple to interview teachers who were difficult to reach with the means available to the present researcher, and it would have been just as simple with teachers from other parts of the country.

Out of the six who ended up as the participating teachers, four of them knew the present researcher to various extents. This did not seem to result in any significant differences between the participating teachers. My concern prior to the interviews taking place was that the participants that knew me best would be more inclined to speak than the other participants, however as it turns out all of the participants who ended up participating in the end were more than welcome to all the questions that were brought up.

As became evident after asking several upper secondary schools in the area, many of them used the same textbook. This also made the amount of different textbooks to look at limited to the two textbooks *Targets* and *Gateways YF* prior to the decision to contact schools outside of the county, which reviled the possibility to look at *Access*. It would obviously have been preferable to have even more textbooks in the study and teachers who could share their opinions about those textbooks use of comics.

As this thesis showed the participating teachers knowledge about comics in general, and the possibilities and advantages to using them in the classroom was limited. It would be interesting to see if further research of a greater sample size of Norwegian teachers either support these findings or that they find the opposite, which would of course only be a welcome result.

Another possibility could be a study of teachers who are given a presentation of or a pamphlet about comics, which showed the advantages to using comics in the classroom. It would investigate if more knowledge about comics would change the attitudes teachers had prior to having been given more information. This could also be a study of textbooks authors attitudes to comics, would their opinions about the comics they had chosen in their textbooks change after gaining more knowledge?

Even though the focus of this study has been the teachers' attitudes to comics it would be interesting to see what the pupils thought about the comics in their textbooks. Especially because of the presence of the comic intended for English speaking children in *Targets*. Beenfeldt and Brænden (see 2.4, p. 26-29) did look at comics and pupils, however they brought in comics and did not use the ones that were in the textbooks, which the pupils

probably used, and knew from their English lessons. Then the results could be compared to the present research to see if the pupil's attitudes to the comics in their textbook correlate with the teachers.

Finally, an investigation into more textbooks and their comics across levels would be interesting to see as the comics in the present researched textbooks were scarce. It could look at which textbooks regarded comics as a conduit, a simplification or a comic worthy of being studied on its own. A study of the comics in the textbook alone would be exciting, nevertheless the attitudes I would personally be most interested in seeing would be the textbook authors themselves, as the present research could only hypothesise what the reasons the textbook authors had behind the choices they had made.

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Appendix A: The interview guides

Textbook: *Targets*

The reason that I asked for this interview with you is because I would like to hear your opinion about *Targets*, what you think about the tings that have been included in it and what you think about things that are missing from it. The information that I gather will only be used in my master thesis, and your anonymity will be secured to the best of my ability; there will be no mention of your name or your school. Is it all right with you if I record while we talk? These recordings will be deleted as soon as I am finished transcribing their content.

1. We will be starting this interview with some general questions about you, first:
    1. What is your educational background?
    2. How long have you been teaching English?
    3. How long have you been using *Targets*?

2. Now over to the open questions, these are questions were I am looking for your opinion there are therefore no wrong answers.
    1. What is your general opinion about the texts in *Targets*?
    2. Do you miss anything?
        a. Are there any genres that you would have liked to see more of?
    3. Have you supplemented with other texts during your teaching?

3. Light reading
    1. How would you define light reading?
        a. Could you give me any examples?

4. Now I will ask you some open questions on your opinion on the use of comics in the textbook.
    1. Have you used the comics that are on pages 72-75 in your classroom?
    2. What do you think about the comics in *Targets*?
    3. What do you think about the way *Targets* has introduced comics?
        a. Do you miss anything?

   b. Would you have liked more information and guidance as to how they should be used?

5. How are comics used in the classroom and what are the teachers' attitudes to them.
  1. How would you describe comics in general?
  2. Have you used (other examples of) comics in your classroom?

If yes to question 2	If no to question 2
How did you use them? Did you find them useful? Would you like to use comics in your classroom again? (Why/why not)	Why have you not used other comics in you classroom? Would you like to use comics in you classroom? (why/why not)

  3. What would you say are some positive aspects and some negative aspects to using comics in the classroom?
  4. How do you think comics should be used in education?

6. Final question
  1. Do you have anything more you want to bring up, or ask about, before we finish the interview?

Textbook: *Gateways YF*

The reason that I asked for this interview with you is because I would like to hear your opinion about *Gateways YF*, what you think about the tings that have been included in it and what you think about things that are missing from it. The information that I gather will only be used in my master thesis, and your anonymity will be secured to the best of my ability; there will be no mention of your name or your school. Is it all right with you if I record while we talk? These recordings will be deleted as soon as I am finished transcribing their content.

1. We will be starting this interview with some general questions about you, first:
  1. What is your educational background?
  2. How long have you been teaching English?
  3. How long have you been using *Gateways YF*?

2. Now over to the open questions, these are questions were I am looking for your opinion there are therefore no wrong answers.

1. What is your general opinion about the texts in *Gateways YF*?
2. Do you miss anything?
    a. Are there any genres that you would have liked to see more of?
3. Have you supplemented with other texts during your teaching?

3. Light reading

1. How would you define light reading?
    a. Could you give me any examples?

4. Now I will ask you some open questions on your opinion on the use of comics in the textbook.

1. Have you used the comic that is on page 200 in your classroom?
2. What do you think about the comic in *Gateways YF*?
3. What do you think about the way *Gateways YF* has introduced comics?
    a. Do you miss anything?
    b. Would you have liked more information and guidance as to how they should be used?

5. How are comics used in the classroom and what are the teachers' attitudes to them.

1. How would you describe comics in general?
2. Have you used (other examples of) comics in your classroom?

If yes to question 2	If no to question 2
How did you use them? Did you find them useful? Would you like to use comics in your classroom again? (Why/why not)	Why have you not used other comics in you classroom? Would you like to use comics in you classroom? (why/why not)

3. What would you say are some positive aspects and some negative aspects to using comics in the classroom?
4. How do you think comics should be used in education?

5. Final question

1. Do you have anything more you want to bring up, or ask about, before we finish the interview?

Textbook: *Access*

The reason that I asked for this interview with you is because I would like to hear your opinion about *Access*, what you think about the tings that have been included in it and what you think about things that are missing from it. The information that I gather will only be used in my master thesis, and your anonymity will be secured to the best of my ability; there will be no mention of your name or your school. Is it all right with you if I record while we talk? These recordings will be deleted as soon as I am finished transcribing their content.

1. We will be starting this interview with some general questions about you, first:
    1. What is your educational background?
    2. How long have you been teaching English?
    3. How long have you been using *Access*?

2. Now over to the open questions, these are questions were I am looking for your opinion there are therefore no wrong answers.
    1. What is your general opinion about the texts in *Access*?
    2. Do you miss anything?
        b. Are there any genres that you would have liked to see more of?
    3. Have you supplemented with other texts during your teaching?

3. Light reading
    1. How would you define light reading?
        a. Could you give me any examples?

4. Now I will ask you some open questions on your opinion on the use of comics in the textbook.
    1. What do you think about there not being any examples of comics in *Access*?
    2. If there had been any examples of comics in *Access* what kind of guidance and information would you have liked there to be?

5. How are comics used in the classroom and what are the teachers' attitudes to them.
    1. How would you describe comics in general?
    2. Have you used (other examples of) comics in your classroom?

a. How did you use them?

b. Did you find them useful?

c. Would you like to use comics in your classroom again? (Why/why not)

3. What would you say are some positive aspects and some negative aspects to using comics in the classroom?

4. How do you think comics should be used in English education?

6. Final question

1. Do you have anything more you want to bring up, or ask about, before we finish the interview?

Appendix B: The interviews

Information which the present researcher regarded as something that might compromise the anonymity of the participants or others are labelled with: ███████ . When the participants are talking about something that might be unclear an explanation is given with in these brackets: [xx].

Date: 30.01.17
Where the interview was conducted: through Skype
I: Interviewer
P1T: Participant
Textbook: *Targets*

I: What is your educational background?
P1T: When it come to English I got English as a first year only actually, other than that I've got history and art history, which are my, sort of, subjects were I studied further, I'm not sure what their titles in English are, bachelor degree? I don't know what, yeah.
I: How long have you been teaching English?
P1T: 11 years. Turns out that they need more English teachers than historians, so.
I: How long have you been using *Targets*?
P1T: 3 years only.

I: Now over to the open questions, I'm looking for your opinion and there are no wrong answers. What is your general opinion about the texts in *Targets*?
P1T: Well, there are a lot of good texts in *Targets*, and fortunately too many, that you can't go trough all of them. I always find that a positive thing about a textbook, because then I can choose depending on my class and the focus of the year. I do miss a bit more, perhaps, better texts about a country and a feeling about society today, but there are some definitively. But there are a lot of texts also going back in history, depending on different chapters. What I do like about the new book compared to the older is that the *Around the World* chapter is better, I believe. But there are still major focus on the US and the UK compared to the rest of the English-speaking world and truth be told the old "læreplan" focused on the UK and the US only, whereas today we actually go all around the English speaking world and I do wish there

were, even more, focus on other countries besides the UK and the US. Other than that, the *Let's communicate!* chapter is okay, but we don't spend much time on it, to be honest. We do spend more on the English language chapter, which focus on the power of English and the flavours of English which, you know, is one "læreplanmål" in itself, so that's a good thing, I guess. And we can't forget that there's actually better online activities as well, and extra texts for us teachers that are being published as the year go, and I'm still, I was waiting for a text on Brexit for instance, but no, there never was a text that came, but we did get one on black lives matter, which is good. So yeah, it's a good thing that there is a, there are both fictional texts and factual texts and though some of the tasks are really good others are sort of repeating themselves there could be a bit more variation I believe, in the different tasks, there are a lot of tasks, that's not it, it's just, some of, sort of the same tasks throughout the book and I would like it to be more variated and a bit more creative perhaps sometimes. But there is definitively a progress within the book, which is good. And more focus on the grammar which lacked in the old book, which we need because truth be told when we get our students to even upper secondary they still need to learn more grammar some of them. They don't have everything, you know. So that's good as well, yeah, I like the before you read activities which can be found to every text, but, yeah, and the word banks are good

I: Do you miss any other types of texts?

P1T: Well, miss and miss, there were different types of stories in the old version, but again you have to, sort of, take some out to get, make room for new ones and I think that was needed. And, you know, sometimes we still make copies of the old texts, though, so we have that opportunity as well.

I: So you supplement with other texts?

P1T: Yeah, depending again on the class and what's happening in the world. I, this year we went back to, I can't remember the title but it's a text by Elisabeth George in the old version My Son something, which is about deciding whether or not to go to public or state school in the UK, and since we had an over focus on class system in the UK this year over the other years that one, you know, came in handy. But, you know, I didn't use that text the year before. The book is okay basically is what I'm saying, yeah. And more focus on today and less on history, but what I don't like is that there's still stresses, it looks at the sort of structure of society sometimes more than the society itself, to some degree. And I do especially in the US chapter *The USA - A Patchwork Nation* is a tough text to start off with for students I believe, they always struggle with that one, and perhaps the old version was a bit easier to understand, but on the other hand you do sort of understand the variety and how vast the

country really is so. But you need, as a teacher you need to prepare them for that text and really work on it, because it's quite a lot to deal with for a students on its own. I don't think any pupils can manage that text on their own. They still have these film texts, which, I don't know if I like that or not, you know, it's just, it tells about the film and than instead of, it doesn't give away a lot of the topic, I mean if you are to focus, like twelve years a slave, if I were to use that text from the book I would almost have to watch the film or give more information because the text in itself is not enough for the pupils to understand the topic I believe so I do miss a bit on that. And in general when it comes to the US chapter more on the African American history actually, but I do like the immigration part, I am an undocumented immigrant if you go into details. But more, when it comes to the US chapter more on the African Americans I believe, the Native Americans are okay. There are just a few, a bit about Canada but again it is over-focusing on the US and the UK, which is, you know, what we used to do anyway. And I don't know if there would have been better to have more texts on each country, I don't know, but it strikes me that there are two, a lot about the US and the UK which are countries they already learned a lot about in lower secondary as well. But yeah, but again the language work parts are good. Yeah, but that's sort of my thoughts of the book basically.

I: I have one question regarding light reading, how you would define light reading?
P1T: I don't, I mean, well I believe that when it comes to light reading or easier text they should have the same content, but simpler vocabulary and shorter text, so less word and simpler vocabulary basically. And, you know, focus on the main topic and not, you can sort of, you don't need all the details in a simpler text, and for many of these texts in the book there are simpler texts or easier reading texts online. Lighter reading, not all of them but most of them do have that with a vocabulary list if you open a PDF file, which I have used, because I teach night courses as well for adults, and they usually need the lighter versions. But for my usual day classes when it comes to they don't need that that often, to be true. I mean, "studiespesialiserende" is sort of, you ought to manage the texts as they are, and if you have dyslexia we either get, you know, they get internet access to the digital book so they can listen to the text instead, so, but we do have some texts that are really long so we can use it when it comes to that to pupils who got English as a third or fourth language, that's when we use it basically, yeah.

I: I will ask you some open questions regarding your opinion on the use of comics in the textbook. Have you ever used the comics that are on pages 72-75?

P1T: The Hamlet. Not in this book actually. I got a full version at home, which I used, but not on the hamlet play, but on Romeo and Juliet. But I always thought I should use it, but I never got as far as actually doing it, so. I think its okay that its there, but no I haven't used it.

I: Have you looked at it?

P1T: Oh yeah. I've, as I said I sort of intended to use it not this year because I knew we had less time and we were focusing more on other things, but last year I had intended to use it, but I never got as far as actually using it. Because it's a way to sort of read text in a different way, with pictures, which can be a good thing actually. And, I've, there is a book called *Stunt*, which is old now, but they've got the US history using cartoons as support, and that is also good text, because sometimes the pupils need pictures more to support their understanding and when it comes to the Hamlet text it's more about making a play easier to read to them. And yeah.

I: Would you like to use that comic in the future?

P1T: Yes. But I can't promise I will because at the end of the day you have to focus on the most important parts and also the every year it variates from what's happening in the world as well. So you sort of adapt your teaching to that as well. And, but yeah I probably will want to use it next year as well and then we'll see what it ends up with.

I: When you looked over it, did you miss any information, did you get enough information on how to use it, did you miss anything?

P1T: I can't say that I can remember that I felt like I did, because there is a text before the comic text that sort of explains that this is a play and the characters and such. So no, not that I can think of right now, but it's been awhile since I looked at it so there might have been something but I can't remember anything at the moment no. But you do need to read the two pages before the actual comic text to get an understanding of what is happening because if you start right on page 72 I think you will lose your pupils in the first box, actually in the first picture.

I: Now I will ask you some questions just regarding comics, not about the book. How would you describe comics, what are comics?

P1T: Well, comics are text thru both written letters, but also pictures. One very complicated thing can be explained thru simple means, and to me, comics is sort of its, you know, it's always associated with fun, because growing up you would read comics for fun and

sometimes funny as well, so some humour is expected to be there, I guess. Or at least some sort of entertaining, we are not that used to comics being serious, although recent years we have come across more and more comics taken up serious topics as well.

I: Have you ever used any other comics in your classroom?

P1T: Not tot study no. More like at the end of a task there will be a Tommy and the tiger comic just for fun, you know, in Norwegian that's Tommy and tiger, but not in English, but still yeah. But I haven't used it other than the one in Stunt on American history, and Romeo and Juliet once, which is the same as the hamlet in the book basically. But, no other than that.

I: Did you find them useful, when you did use them?

P1T: I think that to my pupils, some of them would find them easier to read I guess, others might not see the point perhaps, but most students them easier to read, so It would be sort of something that's more fun to read than a normal text. Yeah.

I: Would you like to use comics in your classroom, in the future?

P1T: Yes, if they were easier available I would, as of now its difficult to find good comics in English unless you actually buy them and bring them with you from either the UK or US or another English-speaking country. You have, you know, some comics in the textbooks but other than that it's not that easy to find. But you can have your students make comics as well and that would probably be fun to do at some point. But again, you have to always pick what to do and what not to do, because you are short on time all the time, and you want to do so many things that year. But comics, I mean, yeah I would consider using them, yeah.

I: What would you say are some positive aspects and some negative aspects to using comics in the classroom?

P1T: Positive is that to the pupils it's more fun and more creative, the negative aspect is that it's less text sort of, and you know, it's sort of limited how much information you can get thru a cartoon, or focus on literary devices if it's more that sort of text, so that's the negative aspect of it. So you can't only use comics but as a supplement it's great.

I: Do you have anything more you want to bring up or ask about before we finish?

P1T: Okay, no.

_____

Date: 17.01.17

Where the interview was conducted: through Skype

I: Interviewer

P2T: Participant

Textbook: *Targets*

I: First I will just ask you some general questions, what is your educational background?

P2T: A bachelor's degree and then PPU for 1 year.

I: How long have you been teaching?

P2T: I have been teaching for, this is my 4th year.

I: How long have you been using *Targets*?

P2T: I've been using Targets for those 4 years [3 years, changed her answer] when I have been teaching.

I: Now over to the open questions, these are questions where I am looking for your opinion there are therefore no wrong answers. And that's the general idea, whatever you say there are no wrong answers.

I: What is your general opinion about the texts in *Targets*?

P2T: General opinion is that the more informative texts are really good, I think they give the students a good base for the topics that we are going to discuss and work with, I don't really like all of the other fictional texts that´s in there, but some of them work well.

I: Why don't you like the fictional texts?

P2T: I don't know, I mean, some of them I feel maybe be too easy for my students, they should be a bit more difficult maybe, like some of them and some of them I feel like the students find them to be a bit boring.

I: Do you miss anything from the book?

P2T: Not really, I think.

I: Are there any genres that you would have liked to see more of for example?

P2T: No, I think it's a bit diversity in there with like poems and short stories and excerpts from novels, so I don't really miss anything when it comes to genre I think. If I should point to anything it would be that I would want more up to date texts, just to tackle some topics that are more common now, because I feel like some of the texts are a bit out-dated maybe.

I: Have you supplemented with other texts during your teaching?

P2T: Yes, yes yes yes. I have to go back to the other question about how long I have been using targets because for actually the first year we had another book

I: So three years?

P2T: Yeah so three years and that book was really bad so then I had to find a lot of other texts and tasks to use, but I still use them in supplement because I feel like they work well. So what I mostly use in *Targets* are the factual texts and then I supplement with fictional texts on my own.

I: I have one question regarding light reading and how you would define light reading?

P2T: Light reading, I would define that as a text that's not too hard to read but also that is not too complicated when it comes to the topic and the team. So I mean a text that doesn't really tackle the more though topics, maybe.

I: Do you have any examples, of a light reading text?

P2T: From Targets?

I: No, just in general.

P2T: No, not genre because I feel like there are examples of light reading texts across genres I would say. But one of the first short stories from *Targets* they define it as a short story but I would maybe call it a story because it is really not that complicated and not that detailed. So I would define that as a light reading text but I don't think I would base it on the genre of the texts.

I: Now I will ask you some open questions on your opinion on the use of comics in the textbook. Have you used the one example of comics in the book in your lesson? It's Hamlet Prince of Denmark.

P2T: I haven't used it. But it's not because it's a comic but its because I don't do Shakespeare too much.

I: Have you looked at it? And do you have any opinions about that particular comic?

P2T: I briefly looked at it and I think it's okay.

I: If you were to have used that comic do you think that you get enough information about how to use it?

P2T: It's mainly about understanding the text. I tend to skip the texts that are at the beginning of the book because I really don't feel like they do something for the students. It's not what I focus on for that chapter. There are still a lot of things to look at for the English language how it started out and how developed and difference between English and American. So we focus on other things and I tend to let those texts just I left them out.

I: Then I´ll ask you some questions about your opinions about comics in general not just that comic. How would you describe comics?

P2T: Though question. Just describe them in general?

I: Yes.

P2T: I mean comics are so versatile now so it's kind of hard to give a definition of that, but I don't know it's a combination of pictures and texts and there are so many different comics from different countries and different artists and can be used in a lot of ways if you wanted to teach comics. But I tend to use the pictures more than comics.

I: Have you used any other comics in your classroom? Except for the one in the book.

P2T: No. Sometimes the students get to draw comics but I haven't taught comics or I haven't used them.

I: Why haven't you used comics?

P2T: Don't know. There's not enough time to do everything and I don't know, it's uncommon maybe to use comics and then when you start out as the new teacher you just kind of grab what's already there, so if I wanted to use comics then I would have to come up with something on my own and that takes time and I haven't come around to doing that yet, but I have been thinking about doing that in my year 2 course.

I: Would you like to use comics in your classroom?

P2T: Yeah of course

I: If you had the time and…

P2T: Yeah it's not that I think that it couldn't be used because I know that comics can be used but I just haven't had the time to do that.

I: What would you say are some positive aspects and some negative aspects to using comics in the classroom?

P2T: I mean I think they can work as well as any other text, positive maybe that they combine pictures and texts so there is a lot to talk about, negatives I don't know if there are any negatives to using comics. I mean I just think that then if you use them then they should be good comics, so there's things to talk about and discuss and maybe there's something to talk about, not only talking about pictures but maybe also talk about the story that the comic tells so that we can talk about themes and characterisations and things like that as well. So it can function on several levels not only one.

I: How do you think comics should be used in education?

P2T: These questions are hard. I don't know I mean with everything you use and everything you bring to the classroom there should be a purpose behind it so as long as you use it purposefully and that you kind of know why you bring it to the classroom then that's one criteria at least. But I do think that we should see more use of comics, I know that for a lot time it has been like comics has been kind of placed like, it hasn't been defined as real literature. So that should change because now we know that there are a lot of merges between novels and comic books so it's definitively worth using that in the classroom I think.

I: Do you have anything more you want to bring up or ask about before we finish?
P2T: No, nothing.

Date: 20.01.17

Where the interview was conducted: through Skype

Interviewer: I

Participant: P3G

Textbook: *Gateways YF*

I: First we´ll just start with some general questions about you, what is your educational background?

P3G: Studied four years on lektor and "adjunkt programmet" on university of Stavanger, that's it.

I: How long have you been teaching?

P3G: About a year.

I: How long have you been using *Gateways YF*?

P3G: For about six months.

I: Now over to some open questions, these are questions where I am only looking for your opinion there no wrong answers, and that's the general idea for all of the questions.

P3G: Okey.

I: What is your general opinion about the texts in *Gateways YF*?

P3G: I used Gateways for students on a general lower grades so they struggled with a few of the texts, so my opinions about the book that would be its hard for the whole class to use the book and the stronger students benefits from most of the content in the book.

I: So you miss easier texts?

P3G: Yeah. Especially about the English culture, words and literature from English writers were too complex for the weaker students in class.

I: Are there any genres that you would have liked to see more of?

P3G: To be honest I don't remember, I don't have a clear answer for you on that question

I: Did you supplement with other texts during your teaching?

P3G: I did, but not a lot. I tried to use examples in the book because they fitted great together with information they had about the countries, culture, the USA and stuff. The topics and texts was great together, but as I said some of them are a little too hard. So sometimes I had to supplement with some easier texts for my students.

I: And now I will ask you one question regarding light reading. How would you define light reading?

P3G: I would define light reading as a text that you read or you can read on your spear time, as you read it as entertainment.

I: Now I will ask you some open questions on your opinion on the use of comics in the textbook. Have you used the one comic that was in your textbook?

P3G: I did not.

I: What do you think about that comic?

P3G: My first impression is that it's a nice way to illustrate the differences in the American society, yeah that would be my first impression. Showing the differences.

I: Do you think that you get enough information, if would use that comic you would have enough to work on with your students?

P3G: I think the tasks about the comics is very much about what's happening in the comic and not that much about the American culture and the African Americans. So this one could maybe be some extra activity for me but not something I would use mainly in class.

I: Would you have liked more information and guidance from the book on how they should be used?

P3G: Yeah, you can say that. As I said I think these tasks if you give this to a student they will work with it for 15 minutes tops, so it's a nice activity but you can't use it for giving them information about African Americans.

I: Now I will ask you some questions about comics only and how they are used in the classroom and what you think about them.

P3G: Okay.

I: How would you describe comics in general?

P3G: As an entertaining and more light read material than usual topic books or schoolbooks.

I: Have you used any examples of comics other than the one in your book in your classroom?

P3G: I´ve used very little comic books; I have to admit, not in English at least. So I would say no.

I: Why haven't you used any comics in your classroom you think?

P3G: I would think it's because as you said the whole Gateways have one comic book subject or task or what you would call it, so I don't really have time to use the comic book in a important topic as African Americans and I find a lot of other ways to do that in a better way, and I like for example a discussion topic instead of a graphic novel to discuss the African Americans, because it's a subject that the students usually have very strong opinions about and you can easily do it a lot more entertaining for them, they can share their opinions instead of watching pictures and describe what´s happening in them, like the one you showed me.

I: But, in general, why haven't you used other comics, as supplement texts for your classroom or your students?

P3G: It's hard to say, but I would say that mainly because I think that students benefits from other methods in the classroom.

I: Would you like to use comics in your classroom in the future?

P3G: As long as the content have a purpose, I wouldn't use comics because its fun for the students, but if learn something from it I will sure do.

I: What would you say are some positive aspects and some negative aspects to using comics in the classroom?

P3G: It's a good way for students to learn about analysing pictures so if I were to use graphic novels or comics books in the classroom it has to be related to analysing pictures, so not about African Americans but if you have a subject they were to analyse and see on how our pictures build up the different elements in the pictures, then I will, of course, use graphic novels.

I: And some negative aspects?

P3G: Maybe they, I would think that students maybe find it to irrelevant, that they don't see a, see on graphic novels as a school material, so they would skip out, don't do it

I: How do you think comics should be used in education?

P3G: As, I would think of them as a supplement in most cases, but as I said it can be a very big part of class when you are working with picture analysis, but all over it would be a nice twist maybe of your end of class, to sum up, or have a extra activity, then I can use graphic novels every time I´m in the classroom.

I: Do you have anything more you want to bring up or ask about before we finish?
P3G: No, I don't think so.

Date: 23.01.17
Where the interview was conducted: through Skype
Interviewer: I
Participant: P4G
Textbook: *Gateways YF*

I: We will be starting this interview first with some general questions about you first, so what is your educational background?
P4G: I am currently a master student or lektor student at the university of Stavanger were I have I currently doing a master in English literacy.
I: How long have you been teaching?
P4G: I´ve been a substitute teacher on and of for the last three years, but I, for the last year I´ve been teaching twenty percent position in English, so that's the longest period teaching.
I: How long have you been using *Gateways YF*?
P4G: For one year, 2016 January to December.

I: Now over to the open questions, these are questions where I am only looking for your opinion there are therefore no wrong answers, and you just speak as long as you please.
P4G: Okay. Well its been a while since I´ve had a look the book, but I, the book parted into three chapters so what I used the book for was basically following the theme of each of those chapters. And then, in the back of the book they have this grammar section that I used in the beginning of the semester. But, I didn't really like the book that much so I didn't use it a lot. There were some like for the *Spotlight USA* and the *Spotlight UK*, for example, used the pages about government and like the general thing about multiculturalism and how the nation works, kind of. And then I used some of the texts, the short stories mostly.

I: So your general opinion about *Gateways YF* is that you don't like it that much?

P4G: No, I think that it could have been, a lot of things could have been better.

I: Did you miss anything?

P4G: Yes, I did, because in other texts books that I´ve used before you had these, for each longer peace of text you had these simplified versions and I, and since my class was very diverse I had students that were on a very high level and students that were on a low level, so for those on the lower level it would be nice to have this, shorter version to work with. So that they could keep up with the team of the text as well since many of them would not be able to finish the texts and understand it at all, so that's one thing that I missed. That I can think of right now.

I: Are there any genres that you would have liked to see more of?

P4G: Well, I always think that short stories are great, and I don't know if I can complain because there were several short stories, I think, for each of the chapters. Could we come back to that question?

I: Sure. You said that you supplemented with others texts during your teaching, right?

P4G: Yes.

I: Now I will ask you one question regarding light reading. How would you define light reading?

P4G: I think that's individual, yeah, I think its individual taste, I think it should, light reading is something that you enjoy reading and people have different opinions about that. But maybe a not to long work, so short stories are what I usually think of as light reading, but that's my opinion, though. Some students can find that difficult because they have to analyse and search what it means. So I think that light reading is individual, it's something that should be enjoyable.

I: Now we´ll go over to your opinion about the use of comics in the textbook, so you haven't used this comic right?

P4G: No, I haven't.

I: What do you think about this comic now?

P4G: What do I think about it? Well, I think that this comic can definitely be a discussion starter in the classroom. Especially in the class that I had, from this comic, you can talk about prejudism [prejudices] and racism and societal issues in the U.S. So for this chapter and from the other texts that I've seen that are in that chapter this is a good supplement.

I: What do you think about the way Gateways has introduced comics or this comic?

P4G: Do you mean, how they introduce it at the top of the page? Or?

I: Yeah, does it help you in any way in how to use it as a teacher.

P4G: I think its, [P4G reading from p. 200 in *Gateways YF*] without looking at the text do you clear view of what the teams in this comic strip could be? So I think that is a good exercise. But I don't really know much about comics, and I, as you say it's the only one within the book. From my perspective I think, from what I know about comics, I think that this looks like a good idea.

I: Would you have liked more information on how you should use this comic?

P4G: Well, that you could say because its very open, its all open to interpretation and it doesn't give the teacher any information on how to go about this issue, because you can, the discussion of a difficult topic like this one can get out of hand and if the teacher is well prepared that can make a big difference. So yes, maybe there should be some guidance to the teacher on how to approach this.

I: How would you describe comics?

P4G: How I would describe them? Just like what are comics?

I: Yes.

P4G: Yeah. I feel like I have to come up with a really clear definition of what it is. When you usually think of comics you think of something that is supposed to be comedy or funny, but they don't necessarily have to be, right? They are illustrations together with text and a lot of students like that and will get other input than they do when its only text.

I: Have you used any other examples of comics in your classroom?

P4G: Yes, I used it on a task at the beginning of the semester, when the students were supposed to create, or to produce, a small story, so I gave them some comics without any text and then they had to come up with what it said.

I: And did you find that task useful?

P4G: I did, I think that was something that I did introductory to the course to kind of out what level the students were on, and what they most struggled with and I think from all the tasks that I did that day, to try to figure out those things, I think that one was the most useful. Because then the students had to produce by themselves and they had to understand what the pictures was about, so I got a clear vision of their language and also their understanding of the pictures, which could vary. I think it was a good test.

I: Would you like to use comics in your classroom again?

P4G: Yeah.

I: What would you say are some positive aspects and some negative aspects to using comics in the classroom?

P4G: Positive aspect is that its kind of, it's different to a lot of other things that we do, we do a lot of reading and a lot of discussing and listening and we watch tapes and recordings and films. So I think that having more comics would be a positive thing, or the students would think of it as positive. But a negative thing, I don't know, it could be that as opposed to reading a text, when they are just reading they are a bit freeer to imagine things, in stead of when they have visual aids.

I: So the positive aspect was that they´re different and the negative aspect was that it takes away imagination that they would use when reading a short story?

P4G: That sounded horrible. Well, no I don't want you to write that down. No! Because the first task that I did, when they had to work without the text and create a story on their own, I think that was really, some of the students were very creative and it, and I think frankly that the students enjoyed it as well because they could, they had few guidelines on what the story should be about but they are free to elaborate and to make the story into their own.

I: How do you think comics should be used in education, especially in your subject English?

P4G: Both for just enjoinment of narratives and also like in tasks like the one that I did were you work with and make your own comic. And I think that you can use it in many aspects. I don't really know how I think they should be incorporated into the syllabus, I think that you can use it more and of course if there were more comics in the textbook, and if you feel comfortable using the textbook a lot then it would probably enhance the use of comics in the classroom. But I don't have a clear answer on how I think it should be incorporated into any situation.

I: Do you have anything more you want to bring up or ask about before we finish?

P4G: Well, no.

Date: 25.01.17

Where the interview was conducted: through Skype

Interviewer: I

Participant: P5A

Textbook: *Access to English*

I: So what is your educational background?

P5A: To be honest I haven't studied English, my, the reason I became a teacher is I studied philosophy for a long time and then I started working with philosophy for children and so I started teaching history and philosophy and religion ethics and ███████████████████ ██ ██ ██ ██ ██ ██ ██ ██████████████████████████ I´ve been teaching for a few years, but I just did my teachers education two years ago, I finished it two years ago, and then I started working.

I: How long have you been teaching English?

P5A: Just since august this year, so this first year. But last year I did, I was a substitute teacher, for one month and then a few times, so I´ve just been substituting mainly until now, and I just have one class now.

I: How long have you been using *Access*?

P5A: Just since august, but did also use *Access* when I was a substitute teacher. So I´ve only been through chapters one and two and a little bit chapter three last year when I was a substitute teacher, but I find that I do use Access, but I also use different resources, you know, I do a bit of both, different things. I also sometimes, I also use Stunt, if you know that book?

I: Yeah.

P5A: Sometimes I copy stuff out *Stunt* and just use that as well.

I: Now over to the open questions, these are questions where I am looking for your opinion there are therefore no wrong answers here, so what is your general opinion about the texts in *Access*?

P5A: I think they´re good, I think, I really enjoy the short stories, many of the short stories are, I think suitable for the age group and they are engaging, they´re well written and thematically interesting, we can compare and contrast, you know, we can, we´ve been working a lot with the short stories and literary analysis with Access. Apart from that I think, I don't know it could be a little bit because I´m new, but I'm not sure about the structure, I

find it, in some other books it seems more structured in a way, that you know, geographically, this is British politics here, Britain is one, one chapter on Britain, one chapter on America, and that is the way many teachers here still teach, they still like to divide the subject into different geographical areas. So when I ask them for advice they will say: "Yeah, yeah, you can lead through Access and then you can find some stuff that is British and then you can do that and then next month you can look at America, and you can find also some other texts from Stunt or Targets and, you know, supply with that." I don't know, I had general feeling that when I started out I wanted to make the plan for the whole year and I wasn't really sure what was going to be in that plan, and I gave my pupils the plan from the Access website. But what I find is that the plan kind of repeats itself, I'm not sure exactly, you know, when are we doing literary analysis, when are we doing politics, when are we going to work on aborigines, etc. So yeah, I don't know if that makes sense.

I: Yeah, so you miss structure and you miss a better plan in the book?

P5A: Yeah, maybe some more about politics, British politics, American politics. Whereas I do think that, you know, the short stories are good and interesting. And I think also I´ve been using some of the exercises on writing, you know, how to make a good paragraph, how to make a thesis statement, topic sentences, that's been good I think. And I also think that some of the exercises, you know, improve your oral skills on the phone, this game at the beginning, what's it called? The discovery trail was fun, you know, there are some good games in there, some good exercises, for the classroom.

I: Are there any genres that you would have liked to see more of?

P5A: Well, I guess politics. Since we've been working a lot with the American election, you know, and it would be nice to do something more on the society, sociology, something like that. Maybe.

I: You said that you supplemented with others texts from other books, *Targets* and, do you supplement outside of the other books, do you find texts on your own?

P5A: Yeah I do. You know, news, I make some news projects, I get them to read news articles or, and stuff like that and bring it into class, and make presentations on the news. And the other teachers here have also given me projects on social issues, or youth issues, some of them call them youth issues or social issues that we give the pupils different articles about teenage pregnancy, you know, welfare benefits, unemployment, violence, etc. And then they work in groups, and I think that's just some articles that they have, I'm not sure where they found them.

I: Now I will ask you one question regarding light reading. How would you define light reading?

P5A: Light reading. I'm not sure actually, sounds to me like skim reading, sounds like they're asked to read something and to not read it in depth and to thoroughly but get a general understanding, yeah.

I: Okay, I don't know if you've seen or if you realise that there are no examples of comics in *Access*.

P5A: That's true. I did actually notice, because in Stunt they had some funny comics on Shakespeare plays and stuff, and I thought they were really nice.

I: Yeah, so I will ask you some questions about comics now. What do you think about there not being any examples of comics in access?

P5A: I would say that it's a bit of a shame when I'm mean I wouldn't, I haven't thought of it before you asked me, but I think that's a very interesting way of making literature accessible to 16-year-olds, you know, so it's a bit of a shame really.

I: If you could choose what kinds of comics would there have been?

P5A: I really like the one in *Stunt* were they; I think there was a comic of Macbeth or something like that. But also general comics that are part of the US or British culture I guess like Calvin and Hobs, anything really, superheroes could be.

I: If there had been any examples of comics what kind of guidance or information would you have liked there to be?

P5A: Probably, some exercises for the kids to sort of answer questions, I mean to sort of dig into, understanding the general message of this comic, what are they trying to say, how are they using humour to say something deeper, or how does this reflect US or British or, you know, culture, is this different to Norwegian values, you know, to use comics as sort of a gateway into the general culture of a place, to understand something deeper. I think that would have been fun. And also, you know, like I said with the Shakespeare comic, to understand profound literature through comics.

I: Now, basically, the rest of the questions are regarding comics, not just the fact that they're not present in the book, but I didn't want to tell you that part of the interview was about comics, because I didn't want you to read up on or think about it before hand. But, if you want to have some seconds after I ask the questions you are welcome to, or just spill out your thoughts. How would you describe comics in general?

P5A: In general, comics, how would I describe comics. Comics are sometimes funny, you know, they visualise material, to make it accessible in a different way than what you can with just words, you know, there are pictures as well. So it's about show don't tell, what can you read out of this photo, or how can we read it. It will engage more of your brain, than just reading something. Not all comics are funny, though, some comics are serious or sad, philosophical. I guess it's an art form, you know, and it can be easily accessible, it can be a part of popular culture, it can also be, they are artful comics as well, like the ones about holocaust and historical events. I've seen some comics on WW1 and WW2, they are interesting. Some of them are very violent. I'm just brainstorming right now, I don't know a lot about comics. I think, you know, comics, yeah, that would be, I should probably use comics more in my teaching.

I: So, have you ever used any comics in your classroom?

P5A: I often, when introducing pupils to a new topic I very often go on YouTube and find small cartoons, and stuff, to explain concepts, I find that it engages the pupils and they often make complicated ideas accessible, you know, but I haven't used that many comics, comic books. Usually, I use videos.

I: Would you like to use more comics in your classroom?

P5A: Definitely now that you mention it, yes.

I: What would you say are some positive aspects and maybe some negative aspects to using comics in the classroom?

P5A: I think some of the positive aspects would be what I already mentioned about engaging more of your brain, more of senses, and making complicated ideas or historical events or political whatever accessible. And negative I guess if you only use comics it could be that you oversimplify things or maybe not everyone understands I mean it could be some pupils are very receptive to this kind of thing, and they can understand, sometimes comics can be a bit complicated, you need to understand abstract things maybe, or you need to read stuff into it, and sometimes comics presuppose certain knowledge from before and they have to understand, maybe, so it would not be for everyone, I guess, to use all the time. We also need, and I guess to make, if you oversimplify, you know, if you take Shakespeare and you make a comic strip out of it that could be great because you will, some pupils will learn about Shakespeare and maybe they'll, they have never heard about him before, and maybe they wouldn't have understood anything if they tried to read it or watch a play, but on the other hand it could be that you reduce things and make them to simple and if you always show images then maybe you destroy the ability to create your own images, just reading texts and

creating your own images by yourself, that's something that we should develop too. And to actually encourage students to read something complicated, you know, it looks boring, but ones they get started maybe they will get some enjoinment out of it and start understanding things, as well.

I: Do you have any thoughts about how comics should be used in English education?

P5A: I haven't, you know, since I haven't thought about it that much from before, and I suppose to me it would be, I think comics are all art a gateway into the culture and the sort of the mind of a language or a country. So it would probably, I would just of the top of my mind, I would have thought that for example the, looking at British comic books for example and then associate that with British culture, British values, British politics, maybe looking at films from Britain at the same time, it could be sort of tied together in that way. Or American, you know, Australian.

I: If you don't have anything else that you would like to ask about or bring up then we are finished.

P5A: Oh really! What I was thinking right now was that I actually haven't done, you know, English didactics, fagdidaktikk, I haven't taken that course yet so, there could be that I could have said something more related to that. Because I'm just saying thing on the top of my mind and I'm sort of improvising and asking my colleagues all the time. I think from my childhood we are much more used to looking at text and making our own images and I think these kids now they really need images, more than we do, more than I did when I was a kid and I have to understand that, and that's way I try to bring them YouTube videos and it would be good I think to engage more their senses, I think they understand visually more than we do. So I think that's a great idea, to use comics.

Date: 26.01.17

Where the interview was conducted: through Skype

Interviewer: I

Participant: P6A

Textbook: Access to English

I: What is your educational background?

P6A: I have a master's in American studies ██████, which has been found as the equivalent of a mellomfag in Norway, and I have a master's degree in Nordic and medieval Viking studies at the University of Oslo, and then I also have Italian. So in terms of English, that's the education I have.

I: How long have you been teaching English?

P6A: 11 years.

I: How long have you been using *Access*?

P6A: I started using *Access* last year, so I've been teaching and using Access for two years. We started last year because we work with Theresa, one of the co-authors, she is our colleague, and we, it was always useful to have discussions with her and ask her about the background, and the thoughts behind the texts they choose. Before that we had *Stunt*.

I: Now over to the open questions, these are questions where I am only looking for your opinion there are therefore no wrong answers, and that's the general idea for the rest of the questions. What is your general opinion about the texts in *Access*?

P6A: At first I found them interesting as a teacher, so they satisfied my style and my taste. But in practice with the students I realised that they found them a bit odd, to say the least strange. Sometimes difficult to understand or to grasp the message of what the author was on about, I'm referring in particular to the short stories of the textbook *Access*. And to give you some examples, when I had a project before Christmas I gave them a choice of, well, five short stories they were supposed to choose one and analyse it and discuss it in groups. They were, Powder an American short story, the other one was the Luncheon which appeared to be very difficult for them to understand, set in the thirties and there was Asimos true love and there was another one, Blackout set in Jamaica. Of these ones they could easily refer to Asimos because they could relate to, I mean, to Asimos, because they could associate it to Siri on our iPhone, that you could talk to your IPhone's. But it was more difficult to find messages or anything in depth in the Luncheon for example. So at that point, I realised that maybe the short stories didn't appeal to them that much as I know short stories in Stunt did. Such as the end of something.

I: So you miss some better short stories, do you miss anything else?

P6A: I do. So I miss some better short stories and some factual texts about culture and civilisation. There is a part about the life and work of freedom fighters, we have Mandela, and the other two of course, Martin Luther King Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi, but there is no specific information about British and American society as I had in the other textbook, so that is

something that I miss, and activities related to that. Actually that is the thing I missed the most the factual texts about culture and civilisation, but then I know that the curriculum doesn't relate to that anymore, it's not just about Britain and the US. it's more a general understanding of the English speaking world so it's not wrong, but I'm just referring to the way I used to work and then that by changing textbook we also had to change approach or style of teaching.

I: So you have supplemented with other texts?

P6A: Yes I did. I continued using activities that I made based on Stunt, I have taken some texts from Stunt, some short stories as I mentioned The End of Something, witch I still use, so I make copies and scan them and then the students can have them in its'learning the platform we use. And I also use the Internet I use NDLA for exercises. But that's actually it so the factual texts are the things that I miss the most from the division Britain, the U.S., Australia, Canada, and going in depth in the different English speaking countries. But there is a lot that the textbook has as well. *Access* has; for example, a part on values all be it a bit general because it's just a text about what values are and how they could identify values and define values and choices, witch is a text they understand very easily. In *Stunt,* I keep comparing but that's because I worked a lot with it, we had specifically a text on American values and on British values, so to paint an ideal textbook it would have been nice to have this introductory text about values from *Access* and the two texts from Stunt with British and American values, so that would have been perfect in a way. But there is a lot of music or lyrics in Access, I don't teach the music students in our school, but all the students like music so lyrics are useful, they could use these and refer to other songs they like, so that's, that's very useful and its something that I like about Access the focus on music. And of course there is the writing course at the end of each chapter witch is very relevant for the written test or the writing sessions, and the exercises on the end of each lesson there are exercises and activities, language exercises, although I don't do them right away I discuss, for example, I do activities based on reading or comprehension or for example speaking freely, expressing thoughts and interpreting a text, and I don't always do the language exercises, but I have collected them in a list witch I use in a word document with the students, and whenever I see that they have, that they struggle with a certain topic or grammatical error I can refer to a certain table of contents, in you textbook Access you have exercising with deal with mean and think so that you learn the difference or prepositions. So I still use them, but not always after each lesson. Maybe there are other questions that you would like to ask?

I: Yeah, we can move on a bit from the book and what's in it and I have one question regarding light reading. How would you define light reading?

P6A: The reading that the students do with, well, how should I put it? That they do without being/feeling constrained to do so, that I force them into it, and that, of course, has not a basic, but an intermediate vocabulary which they can relate to easily without having to look up to much, and whose length is not 300 pages. So somewhere in-between an easy reader and novels, but light, I suppose it is something that gives them pleasure first and foremost that they read so that they could enjoy it, first and foremost.

I: No I will ask you some questions about comics, I don't know if you have seen or realised, but there are no examples of comics in *Access*.

P6A: I've seen that, and we had some in *Stunt*.

I: What do you think about there not being any examples of comics?

P6A: My students haven't missed it, but it's because they probably don't know that other textbooks have comics, some of them read comics, because I, when I asked them what they read when the choice was to pick a novel and to read it and analyse it over Christmas by January, some of them asked if they could read comics, if that was a valid choice and I said no because, well, my argument was that there are more pictures and less text, and they should relate to a novel of a certain length, which should be fiction and in English. So that's the point when I realised that they actually read comics. But since I didn't use it myself in my lessons, and I don't do that so much, I didn't really miss them, but it's probably a way, in a way what you called light reading, it could be light reading. So, I would just say that I've realised that it's missing but I haven't really missed it myself.

I: If there had to be any comics in *Access*, what kinds of comics would you have liked it to be?

P6A: Like the ones in for example in *Stunt*, there was a comic about Macbeth, which probably would have been difficult for the students to read and understand. Comics to show a historical event, or to show the storyline in a short story or a novel. So I guess that would be my expectation of a comic, of comics in general in textbooks.

I: If there had been any examples of comics what kind of guidance and information would you have liked there to be?

P6A: Maybe just a description of the characters with their pictures, so the first two pages with the drawings and the name underneath and maybe just a short description of who the

character is and its role in history if its history or character in the short story if it's a short story. So just a the characters with a short description.

I: Now I will ask you some questions completely away from the textbook, but just regarding comics. How would you describe comics in general?

P6A: Easy to read, it gives you a sense of completing or reading through a text easily and quickly. In a way the kind of text that sums up, lets say that if you have a novel which is written in a comics version, you would not have the entire novel because otherwise the book would be too thick or you would have several volumes, a book that sums up the content of a novel, for example. Or, I see them as very suitable for students at beginners and intermediate level, I know that they are used a lot in Italian beginners, there is a editing house that actually uses that a lot and I have used it with students, they have also made films out of it, filming the pages and there is a voiceover telling the story reading from the book, so one sees both the text and hears the voice and they are very useful especially for beginners for those who learn a language for the first time, and of course for the students who are less motivated to read literature in general, short stories and novels of any kind and no matter the length. I read, but not too many comics, as I said I'm used to them in teaching Italian as a second language or as a foreign language, not a second language necessarily, but other than that I've used them very little in English.

I: Have you ever used it in English?

P6A: I used the, what I had in Stunt, the comic on Macbeth, that was the only one. And since I only used it once or twice I don't remember exactly the experience was I asked them to read, they did it quickly and they laughed because it was, well, a way of reading quickly and understanding the content, but that was actually the point, that they should get the message quickly, and they did.

I: So you found them reading that comic useful?

P6A: Absolutely! They enjoyed it.

I: Would you like to use comics again in your classroom?

P6A: I haven't been aware of its use really, or I don't know, I know that in my school we used the one we had in *Stunt*, but other than that I don't see my colleagues using it. So, I haven't thought about it that much. But, yes if there were books like the ones I have in mine, like the Italians, like the Italian ones I know, I would definitively use it because some students would in this way get to read more. So absolutely.

I: What would you say are some positive aspects and some negative aspects to using comics in the classroom?

P6A: Positive the fact that they would read more I suppose, and that they would continue the activity without losing track in the middle of the story or they would, it would be a page turner, they would continue reading until the end of it. So in, that would be easy reading I suppose or even light reading. The negative aspect would probably be that I if I use it too much they would not get the practice they need to read short stories and novels of a certain length, and in the regular way, holding a book or just reading the normal way.

I: Do you have any thoughts about how comics should be used in education, especially in English?

P6A: Actually not, in all the courses we had in PPU in Oslo we didn't, or I don't recall we did, I finished in 2006 that's when I had my pedagogical practice, but we didn't use comics that much. So to be honest I don't know, I would like to learn how to use them and to use them properly, to see the results and that the students improve their reading skills or that they get more interest in literature. If Shakespeare for example, were, and there is, of course, I'm not saying that there isn't, there are comics on Shakespeare, but I haven't used them, if I were to use that more they would probably be more interested in Shakespeare or get to know authors and their work in an easier way. But I'm not aware of how many comics there are, either based on classical novels or historical events and facts that I would prefer them in class with. So it's just the fact that I haven't used them that gives me the uncertainty of how exactly to use them and what the result will be.

I: If you don't have anything that you would like to bring up or questions then this is it.

P6A: Yeah, No I, Because at the point where you asked me about the textbook, what I missed and what there is new, I know that ██████ had a very good class activity based on Hunger Games, although, and we have the text, we have the novels, so a whole class could read the same novel and analyse it, and that was also one of the points that we know that she has analysed it with her students that she has activities related to it, we to be honest we still chose different novels, we ask the students to chose their own novel and then we analyse it in class or by giving them a test, a written test. But there is also, and there's always the possibility to use the activity which she made on hunger games, a lot of poetry, I don't know if I mentioned that, but I also have a workshop on poetry that they learn what poetry is, they make own poems, and they even tries to translate and I cooperate with the Norwegian teacher that they translate into Nynorsk for example, or the other way that the best ones could try and translate

from newer Norwegian into English, which is a great activity and there are, there is again, there are poems to chose from in Access, and I chose some others that I've worked with before, so that's also positive, I like the poems. And, yeah, I guess that's it.