

The graphic novel: multimodal reading in the Norwegian
upper secondary EFL classroom.

A case study.



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Abstract in Norwegian

Visjonen om at læring skjer i møtet med et bredt utvalg tekster fra ulike medier står som et sentralt element i Læreplanverket for Kunnskapsløftet (LK06). Hensikten med denne studien i engelsk fagdidaktikk har vært å se nærmere på engelskspråklige grafiske romaner (tegneserieromaner) som multimodal teksttype i det obligatoriske engelskfaget i norsk videregående skole. Selv om den nasjonale læreplanen i engelsk fremhever viktigheten av å utvikle språkelevens multimodale tekstkompetanse har tidligere forskning innen fremmedspråksdidaktikk i Norge i liten grad rettet fokus mot å undersøke tegneseriemediets potensiale i lys av disse ideene.

Målet med studien har vært å utforske hvordan grafiske romaner kan skape muligheter for å utvikle språkelevens multimodale lesekompetanse. Studien har også hatt en målsetting om å undersøke det bredere potensialet ved å bruke tegneserieromaner i undervisningssammenheng slik det fremkommer i mitt empiriske materiale.

Studien har benyttet et kvalitativt case-studie design. Undersøkelsen ble gjennomført ved en kombinert videregående skole og forskningsdeltagerne var elever fra to yrkesfaglige utdanningsprogram hvor forsker også var klassenes engelsklærer. Elevene deltok i et fem-ukers prosjekt der de leste og arbeidet med grafiske romaner i engelsktimene. Det empiriske materialet består av spørreundersøkelser, elevtekster, transkripsjoner fra fokusgruppeintervju og observasjonsnotater.

Studiens funn antyder at tegneseriemediets unike uttryksmåte kan gi rike muligheter til å videreutvikle språkelevens multimodale verktøykasse. Det blir i denne masteroppgaven argumentert for at utvikling av et felles metaspråk er viktig for å utnytte tegneseriemediets potensiale som multimodal klasseromstekst. Videre indikerer funnene at grafiske romaner er egnet for språkelever på ulike nivå, at det visuelle formatet kan fremme utveksling av ideer og at elevene opplevde leseerfaringene som positive. På bakgrunn av disse funnene gis det avslutningsvis noen didaktiske anbefalinger samt forslag til områder der videre forskning er nødvendig.

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Chapter one: introduction

1.1 Aim and scope

With the increasing impact of visual images and the interplay between multiple semiotic systems in digital and print media on twenty-first century communication, the ability to understand and analyse how meaning is represented and communicated within and across a variety of modes has become a matter of great importance. One implication is that foreign language educators must make it part of their pedagogical agenda to embrace new dimensions of reading literacy and provide language learners with opportunities for engaging in diverse forms of textual interactions in the English classroom. Taking this into account, the intention of the present master's thesis is to investigate the didactic potential of a multi-modal text form: the graphic novel.

More specifically, the main focus of the study is to explore how the graphic novel, a print narrative text simply defined here as “a book-length work in the medium of comics¹” (Chute, 2008, p. 453) could offer potential for developing upper secondary language learners' awareness to how five semiotic modes; linguistic, visual, audio, gestural and spatial, work separately and together to convey multimodal and literary meaning in a fictional, print text. For the present thesis, the term *multimodal text* is understood as print based, visual or digital texts “that utilize more than one mode or semiotic resource to present meaning potentials, where *mode* is defined as a socio-culturally shaped resource for meaning making” (Serafini, 2015, p. 412, my emphasis). The study is guided by the following overarching research question:

1. How could the graphic novel medium create opportunities for fostering students' multimodal reading literacy in the EFL classroom?

Given that no empirical research, to my knowledge, has specifically examined the use of graphic novels as reading material in an upper secondary school context, a second, subordinate research question takes on a broader perspective by asking:

2. What other didactic potentials as to engaging with graphic novels in the EFL classroom are identified in this case study?

¹ A further discussion of the concept *comics* will be provided in chapter two, section 2.2.

To meet these objectives, the study was designed as a qualitative, instrumental case study. The research was carried out at an upper secondary school in Western Norway which offers both general studies and vocational studies. Data was collected from twenty-six participants attending the second year (Vg2) of a vocational education programme.

1.2 Background and rationale for the study

Technological advances in communication and information media has fundamentally changed the way we read in the twenty-first century. This development is characterised by two major aspects. First, the primary medium for reading has shifted from the printed page to the digital screen (Kress, 2003). Second, as an implicit consequence, images and other non-verbal design elements have become increasingly salient as meaning making resources in representation and communication (Cope & Kalantzis, 2012; Kress, 2003; Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006; New London Group, 1996). In response to these changes, the American National Council of Teachers of English (2008, henceforth NCTE) issued a position statement describing the characteristics of twenty-first century literacies. Taking as its starting point that the concept of literacy is “a collection of culture and communicative practises shared among members of particular groups”, the NCTE posits that “[a]s society and technology change, so does literacy. Because technology has increased the intensity and complexity of literate environments, the 21st century demands that a literate person possesses a wide range of abilities and competencies, many literacies” (NCTE, 2008, para.5).

There are two significant issues arising from NCTE’s description of what it means to be literate in contemporary society that hold important implications for English as a foreign language (EFL)² pedagogy. The first relates to the diverse literate, cultural and technological experiences students bring to the upper secondary English classroom. Today’s generation EFL learners literally hold the world of knowledge at their fingertips. Constantly hooked up to smartphones and computers, they are ubiquitous learners who can access information from anywhere at any time. These young learners are flexible multitaskers whose attentions vacillate between digital notebooks, YouTube videos, Snapchats and updates on Facebook. They are cooperative learners who interact with others on social websites, blogs and through

² Because English is singled out as a unique foreign language in the current Norwegian national curriculum guidelines and holds a prominent position in in many parts of Norwegian society, the term English as a second language (ESL) is frequently used in educational contexts. However, as English has not been given status as an official second language in Norway, the traditional term English as a Foreign Language (EFL) will be used in this thesis.

gaming. They are agentive learners who design their own music playing lists and stream their favourite series to be watched when it best suits them. Still, just as constantly listening to music does not teach a person to critically analyse or compose music (Felten, 2008), one cannot simply assume that daily interaction with multiple modes of communication in digital or visual media automatically means that our students possess sophisticated multimodal literacy skills (Bland, 2013; Elsner, 2013; Skulstad, 2009).

The second issue relates to how the representation of texts in different media shape the way in which we read. It seems important to note that print and digital media texts are fundamentally different and consequently bring a distinct set of affordances and challenges to the reading process (Habegger-Conti, 2015; Skulstad, 2009). The printed page, which has a clear beginning and end, invites readers to follow a linear reading path (Kress, 2010). In contrast, the digital hyper-text, in which the linguistic mode interacts with a variety of other modes, has no clear end as such. Instead, the reader must study linear print text while simultaneously navigating the dynamic layout of the web-page with its hyperlinks and moving images (Cope & Kalantzis, 2012; Mangen, 2008). Given the increased use of digital media, some literacy scholars have expressed concerns that the processes involved in online hyper-reading, which promotes reading strategies such as skimming and scanning, might come at the expense of the deep, analytical reading processes (Habegger-Conti, 2015; Hayles, 2010). Contemplating the implications of these changes for upper secondary EFL education, Habegger-Conti (2015) makes an interesting point. “The problem of reading in the twenty-first century”, she argues, “is not how or what our students read, but how we as teachers will ensure that reading continues to be an important component of ESL instruction”.

To positively address the changes in reading literacy brought on by modern media and communications technology and to promote students’ thoughtful and informed contemplation of images, text and other design elements that might otherwise be read quickly and superficially, Habegger-Conti (2015) suggests that new pedagogical approaches to reading in the EFL classroom are needed. Such practices should aim to bridge the gap between the diverse textual realms of the screen and the page by including multiple forms of literature and by approaching these with an eye to cultivating EFL students’ abilities to ask not only *what* the multimodal text means, but to gain deeper insights by pondering *how* it means. This would create learning environments that take the students’ literacy experiences as a starting point, while simultaneously paying serious attention to promoting their reflective awareness to ways in which meaning is constructed and realised in the synergetic interplay of images,

words and other modes within and across a broad range of texts and media (Elsner, 2013; Habegger-Conti, 2015; Skulstad, 2009).

Against this backdrop, the overall purpose of the present thesis is to explore the phenomenon of graphic novel reading in the upper secondary EFL classroom through the combined lenses of multiliteracies and multimodality theories, comics theory and, albeit to a lesser extent, transactional theory. The simple, yet strong rationale behind my choice of sequential art as story-telling medium is offered by legendary cartoonist Eisner (2008b). Noting how “reading in a purely textual sense was mugged on its way to the twenty-first century by the electronic and digital media” (p. xvi), Eisner argues that the ability to process a combination of visual and verbal information “has entered the panoply of skills needed for communication. Comics are at the centre of this phenomenon” (p. xv).

1.3 Twenty-first century literacies and reading in EFL education

Addressing how language learners must draw on flexible literacy skills if they are to meet the demands of a rapidly changing knowledge society and be enabled to effectively participate in foreign language discourse communities, several scholars (Elsner & Vierbrock, 2013; Heberle, 2010; Royce, 2007; Skulstad, 2009) have urged for an extension of the concept communicative competence to incorporate a multimodal view of language. This means that foreign language teaching should include fostering the language learners’ “knowledge and use of language concerning the visual, gestural, audio and spatial dimensions of communication, including computer-mediated communication” (Heberle, 2010, p. 102). It follows from this definition that multimodal communicative competence not only relates to language learners’ interactions with digital media but also extends the realm of cyberspace to include other multimodal media such as comics.

The transition from viewing literacy in a narrow sense of reading and writing print text to the broader notion of multiple literacies is strongly reflected in the English subject curriculum of the *The Knowledge Promotion* (hereafter *LK06*), the current Norwegian national curriculum guidelines. In the purpose section, it is stated that “[l]anguage learning occurs while encountering a diversity of texts, where the concept of text is used in the broadest sense of the word” (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, henceforth NDET, 2013, p. 2).

Furthermore, with the implementation of LK06 in 2006, *digital skills* were introduced as one of five basic skills in all subject curricula, along with oral, reading, writing and numeracy

skills. However, while the English subject curriculum requires that language learners should develop the ability to “evaluate and use suitable reading ... strategies adapted for the purpose and type of text” (NDET, 2013, p. 10) in order to “create meaning by reading different types of texts” (p. 5), it offers little in the way of operationalising the concepts of reading on page and screen further. One must therefore turn to the *Framework for Basic Skills*, a document providing guidelines for the subject curricula groups responsible for revising all subject curricula in 2013 to find further elaboration of how reading literacy is conceptualised in the national curriculum documents:

“Reading means to create meaning from text in the widest sense. Reading gives insight into other people’s experience, opinion and knowledge, independent of time and place. The reading of texts on screen and paper is a prerequisite for lifelong learning and for active participation in civic life. To read involves engaging in texts, comprehending, applying what is read and reflecting on this. In the context of this Framework, texts include everything that can be read in different media, including illustrations, graphs, symbols or other modes of expression. Knowledge about what characterizes different types of texts and their function is an important part of reading as a basic skill” (NDET, 2012, p. 8).

There are some interesting aspects emerging from this description of reading as a basic skill that hold relevance for the present thesis. First, in affording equal prominence to the new medium of the digital screen and the traditional medium of the printed page, the multimodal and interconnected nature of reading is emphasised. Next, by highlighting that learners should be able to read and reflect on illustrations and other non-verbal modes, the importance of bringing visual narratives such as graphic novels into the EFL classroom is established. Finally, the notion of engaged reading which is included into the description of reading as a basic skill needs to be commented on in terms of limiting the present thesis’ scope. This multifaceted concept, which implies the motivation to read, was added to the Programme for International Student Assessment Framework (PISA)’s definition of reading literacy in 2009 (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2009). The concept includes a number of characteristics such as interest and enjoyment in reading and involvement in the social dimensions of reading. It should be noted that although this thesis is concerned with multimodal reading literacy, it is not within the aim nor the scope of the

present study to investigate graphic novel reading from the perspective of motivation in reading. Therefore, the complexity of the concept will not be theorised further.

There exists, of course, a second aspect to reading in the EFL classroom which is of importance to the topic under investigation in the current thesis; the reading of fiction. In the main subject area *Culture, society and literature* section of the national EFL subject curriculum it is stated that language learners should be able to “discuss and elaborate on different types of English language literature from different parts of the world” (NDET, 2013, p. 11). Interestingly, this competence aim is singled out from the subsequent one, which requires that students should be able to “discuss and elaborate on English language films and other forms of cultural expressions from different media” (NDET, 2013, p. 11). As noted by Habegger-Conti (2015), this distinction seems to suggest that although the Framework for Basic Skills (NDET, 2012) promotes an expanded view of text, the competence aims in the English subject curriculum narrows down the concept of literature to apply only to print prose. By exploring the didactic potential of fictional graphic novels, the current research will treat these two competence aims as interconnected.

Literature is considered an important element in the English subject curriculum. Reading authentic English language prose gives students a chance to develop their linguistic skills. Furthermore, authentic literary texts³, in all their forms, represent “the personal voice of a culture” (Fenner, 2001, p. 16). As EFL learners engage in reading literature mediated in the target language this constitutes a cultural encounter that brings possibilities for enhanced cultural awareness and intercultural understanding (Fenner, 2001; Hoff, 2013). Reading authentic works of fiction such as graphic narratives give students a unique opportunity “to gain insight into other people’s experience, opinion and knowledge, independent of time and place” (NDET, 2012, p. 8). Although these are important objectives in the national EFL curriculum, it is not within the scope of the current thesis to examine the graphic novel medium from this particular perspective.

Instead, the present study is interested in the interface between multimodal and literary reading; how the medium of sequential art could potentially function as a mediator between the information focused reading processes typically associated with multimodal reading (Habegger-Conti, 2015; Hayles, 2010; Mangen, 2008) and the deep, reflective reading processes inherent in literary reading (Fenner, 2001; Rosenblatt, 1994). In fictional graphic novels, multimodal reading enters into marriage with literary reading and approaching the

³ An authentic literary text is a text written for native speakers (Ibsen & Wiland, 2000)

graphic novel with an eye towards experiencing “the power of literature to carry us into new and broader realms” (Rosenblatt, 2005, p. 66) complies with LK06’s vision that reading literature should nourish EFL students’ insights and understandings as well as their joy of reading (NDET, 2013).

1.4 The graphic novel

A discussion related to the didactic potential of graphic novels in upper secondary EFL classrooms must of course rest on a common understanding of what the term *graphic novel* implies. As previously stated in section 1.1, the working definition for the current thesis is simply that graphic novels are book-length works in the medium of comics (Chute, 2008). However, defining the graphic novel is not as straightforward as one might assume. This is mainly due to an inconsistency of terms, epitomised in a long-term debate amongst cartoonists, scholars and readers which has yet to reach consensus (Chute, 2008; Tabachnick, 2009).

The concept *graphic novel*⁴ was first used as a marketing term for Eisner’s graphic short story collection *A Contract with God* (1978) in an attempt to gain acceptance for the art form and overcome the cultural stigmas and notions of childishness attached to the comics medium (Chute, 2008; Eisner, 2008b; Gravett, 2005). However, the label is an oxymoron, because contrary to what the word *novel* implies, the graphic novel is a format and not a genre as such (Chute, 2008; Gravett, 2005). In fact, diverse literary genres, serialised texts, biographical and auto-biographical works of non-fiction are presented as graphic novels. Consequently, some scholars propose the term *graphic narrative* as a more appropriate and less restrictive description (Chute, 2008; Postema, 2013), whereas many cartoonists seem to prefer the original term *comics* (Clowes, 2005; Gravett, 2005). Without taking a stand in the terminology debate, the terms *graphic novel*, *graphic narrative*, *comics*, *comic book* and *sequential art* will be used interchangeably throughout this thesis for the simple sake of variation.

Traditionally, the comics medium has suffered from being regarded as a debased form of literature and a low-prestige field of study often met with scepticism from scholars and teachers alike (Gravett, 2005; Jacobs, 2007b). It seems important to recognise that such prejudice is culturally contingent; in Japan, France and many South American countries, sequential art is highly valued as a narrative art form, incorporated into school curriculums

⁴ The term was originally coined by the American comics critic Richard Kyle in 1964 (Carter, 2007).

and read by young and adult audiences alike (Sabeti, 2011). Furthermore, contemporary graphic narratives constitute an instance of popular culture that has undergone a considerable re-evaluation over the past three decades (Chute, 2008; Gravett, 2005; Kukkonen, 2013; Sabeti, 2012). Having developed into a literary vehicle that raises serious questions related to human nature and our modern society, the modern day graphic novel is recognised as a form of contemporary narrative expression that holds high cultural significance (Gravett, 2005). Of course, as with all books there exists both quality and “trash” graphic novels. However, the narrative and artistic complexity of award-winning graphic novels such as *Maus* (Spiegelman, 1986), *Persepolis* (Satrapi, 2004) and *American Born Chinese* (Yang, 2004), to mention but a few, clearly demonstrate that this can be a sophisticated story telling format.

Internationally, comics conventions such as the prestigious San Diego International Comic Con and the Edinburgh International Book Festival’s comics section “Stripped” serve as potent debating grounds for contemporary comics scholars, creators and readers. Also, the increased scholarly interest in the comics medium has given rise to a number of peer reviewed comic journals over the past decade, many of which are published by university and academic presses. Crucially, the theoretical works and activities of comics scholars (i.e. Cohn, 2014; Eisner, 2008a, 2008b; Gravett, 2005; Kukkonen, 2013; McCloud, 1993, 2006) have served to legitimise comics as a serious and complex narrative medium worthy of both public and academic interest.

In a Norwegian context, the increased public and academic recognition of graphic novels as a serious art form is reflected in the fact that in 2013, the acclaimed cartoonist Steffen Kverneland was awarded “Brageprisen” for his non-fictional graphic novel depicting the life of Edward Munch. The following year, Norway’s first online comics journal “Empirix” was established and annual comics conventions are now held in cities like Bergen, Oslo and, as of 2016, also Stavanger. Surely, comics seems to be a sign of the times.

1.5 Why graphic novels in EFL education?

Traditionally, arguments for using comics in EFL education have celebrated their ability to facilitate young learners’ comprehension of authentic target language narratives, to motivate reluctant readers and to foster vocabulary retention for elementary language learners (Bland, 2013; Cary 2004). Scholars frequently highlight how comics’ dialogic text is useful to English language learners as it allows them to become familiar with the target language’s

conversational discourse through idioms, colloquialisms and slang used in authentic context (e.g. Cary, 2004; Ranker, 2008; Recine, 2013).

Among the proponents of comics in elementary EFL contexts is Krashen (2004), who argues that engaging language learners in comics reading is an effective means for developing their linguistic competencies. Having found that reading comics could increase language learners' vocabulary development as well as spark their interest in reading, Krashen (2004, 2005) advocates the use of comics to cultivate the literacy development of EFLs. However, his claim that "there is good reason to believe that comic book reading and other forms of light reading can serve as a conduit to 'heavier' reading" (2005, para. 13) indicates that he regards comics merely as a stepping stone to more valuable reading, thus indirectly implying that the medium has no inherent value in and of itself.

The current thesis is founded on a radically different view of comics as a storytelling medium. Rather than regarding graphic narratives as simplified and inferior reading material, the study is informed by a growing body of international publications that shies away from comparing these multimodal texts to traditional prose texts, acknowledging instead how sequential art constitutes a unique form of narrative vehicle in its own right, one which requires a different kind of reading altogether (e.g., Carter, 2007; Fisher & Frey, 2008; Jacobs, 2007a, 2007b; Monnin, 2010; Tabachnick, 2009; Versaci, 2008). Such an approach allows for a deeper understanding of the aesthetic value of graphic novels and the complex multimodal reading skills needed to design meaning from these texts, in which "two narrative tracks, one verbal and one visual, register temporality spatially" (Chute, 2008, p. 452). The end-goal of reading fictional graphic narratives could then be twofold: first, to foster language learners' engaged and critical reading of multimodal design elements and second, to develop language learners' awareness to how literary devices (i.e., foreshadowing and metaphors) function in modes other than verbal, written language. By extension, the multimodal design of graphic novels could offer a sense of relevancy to the study of English language literature by connecting the print literacy experiences in the EFL classroom to the digital world students are immersed in outside school.

It is interesting to note that while the graphic novel has been in vogue among American academics and educationalists for the past decade, it is scarcely discussed as a serious narrative medium in the discourse of foreign language didactics in a European context (Bland, 2013), which is the focus of the present thesis. Only recently have scholars started to embrace the idea that the graphic novel could be used to infuse the EFL classroom with a much needed multiliteracies focus that moves beyond surface level reading to exploring how

multimodal texts actually speak. The impetus for this development lies in a growing awareness that foreign language teaching must aim to prepare learners for the complex literate demands of the “multilingual, multimedial, multimodal and global discourses” they will be facing in the future (Elsner & Viebrock, 2013, p. 19).

Concerned with creating opportunities in the foreign language classroom for analytical reading of the interplay of semiotic resources prevalent in multimodal texts, Elsner (2013) suggests that graphic novels should be included into the foreign language curriculum to promote EFL learners’ ability to interpret and assess text, images and symbols in terms of their validity and how they can be manipulated. Bland (2013) concurs and extends Elsner’s (2013) arguments by suggesting that the multiple points of indeterminacies found in graphic novels’ visual, linguistic and graphic design elements could foster EFL students’ literary literacy, “the pleasure of constructing storyworlds and dialogic understandings, with the help of the imagination and the detective work of uncovering the text’s secrets” (Bland, 2013, p. 20). A common factor across Elsner’s (2013) and Bland’s (2013) work is their insistence that the graphic novel format could promote EFL learners’ higher order thinking dispositions; their ability to discover, compare and infer how meaning is expressed in the interaction of various modes, ultimately enabling them to “interrogate how multimodal ensembles influence the reader” (Bland, 2013, p. 17).

Writing from a Norwegian perspective, Rimmereide (2013) also makes a strong case for using graphic novels as multimodal, literary reading material in EFL classrooms. In the article “Graphic Novels in EFL Learning”, she explores how the conventions of the comics medium shape the multimodal processes involved in graphic novel reading, discusses why this matters in foreign language pedagogy and offers practical examples of how to include graphic literature in the EFL classroom. Focusing on visual literacy, Rimmereide highlights that the interpretation of illustrations in graphic novels is an active rather than passive process and that being able to analyse the meaning potential of images could prove transferrable to other media. Importantly, Rimmereide points to the need for further applied research on the use of graphic novels in EFL education.

To the best of my knowledge, only one empirical study has been carried out to investigate the pedagogical potential of the graphic novel in a Norwegian EFL context. Aiming to explore whether reading graphic novels could motivate EFL learners to read more in English, Aamodt Bränden’s (2015) master’s thesis examined how forty-one lower secondary pupils responded to reading a graphic novel adaption and watching a filmed version of *The Kite Runner* ((Hosseini, 2003) in their English lessons. While this study is

interesting because it shows that there is scholarly interest in the pedagogical use of graphic novels in a Norwegian EFL setting, it drew on data from a young adolescent sample and is therefore not directly relevant to the present study. Furthermore, although one sub-ordinate research question asked if the use of graphic novels could help cultivate multiliteracies, the study did not describe the various meaning making resources made available to the readers in the graphic novel format nor did it address how the pupils negotiated meaning from these semiotic resources, a limitation Aamodt Brænden (2015) also mentions. Instead, mirroring Krashen's (2005) view that comics are merely a means to an end, namely that of reading traditional prose literature, Aamodt Brænden concluded that "readers will hopefully reach a point where graphic novels have completed their motivating mission" (2015, p. 9). By all accounts, it would seem that there still exists a gap in research regarding the potential value of graphic novels as seen from the perspective of a multiliteracies approach to literacy.

In summary, although scholarly interest in the graphic novel medium is starting to emerge in the field of EFL didactics, there remains an open question regarding ways in which the multimodal format of graphic narratives could create opportunities for cultivating language learners' multimodal reading literacy. This question is something the present study aims to explore.

1.6 Outline of the thesis

Chapter two provides an overview the three theoretical frameworks guiding the study, with a particular focus on the relevance of these theories for graphic novel reading. Select empirical research on the educational use of graphic novels will also be reviewed. Chapter three presents the methodology, data collection and data analysis procedures employed in the study, along with a discussion of ethical considerations and issues related to the study's trustworthiness and possible limitations. In addition, it explains the pedagogical approach used to prepare the students for the graphic novel reading project and provides a brief presentation of the four graphic novels included in the study. In chapter four, the key findings of the research are presented and discussed in depth in relation to the theoretical perspectives outlined in chapter two. The concluding chapter sums up the key findings, discusses the pedagogical implications of the research and offers suggestions for future research.

Chapter two: review of literature

The current qualitative study investigates the phenomenon of graphic novel reading in an authentic upper secondary EFL context. Mirroring the complexity of the graphic novel medium and the interdisciplinary nature of scholarly works on graphic narratives the study draws on insights from several theoretical fields, each of which will be addressed in this review of literature.

The first section discusses theoretical perspectives on multiliteracies and multimodality as they pertain to graphic novel reading. Central frameworks in this section are the New London Group's (1996) pedagogy of multiliteracies and Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) social semiotic theory of visual grammar. Kress' (2003) theory of multimodal reading and contributions from other scholars within these theoretical traditions are also included. Together, these perspectives offer both teachers and learners a systematic and expansive tool kit for thinking and talking about print multimodal texts such as graphic novels.

The next second section of this chapter turns to the field of comics theory with the aim to investigate some medium-specific conventions and gain insight into how these design elements might impact on readers' interactions with graphic narratives. Central to this section are the theoretical works of cartoonists and comics scholars Eisner (2008a, 2008b) and McCloud (1993, 2006).

Third, to explore how literary meaning can be created from graphic novels Rosenblatt's (1994, 1995) transactional theory of reading is reviewed, with particular emphasis on the notion of aesthetic reading and its close conceptual connection to fictional graphic novel reading. To conclude the chapter, a selection of empirical studies addressing the use of graphic novels in educational contexts is presented and discussed, with special focus on research that may shed light on the multimodal reading processes involved in graphic novel reading and the pedagogical use of graphic novels in an upper secondary context.

2.1 Reading by Design

Writing for the National Council of Teachers of English, Jacobs (2007b) argues that, “[b]y situating our thinking about comics, literacy and education within a framework that views literacy as occurring in multiple modes, we can use comics to greater effectiveness in our teaching at all levels by helping us to arm students with the critical literacy skills they need to negotiate diverse systems of meaning making” (p. 21). The theory of multiliteracies, initially

sketched out by the New London Group (1996) in their position paper “A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures” and later reiterated by Cope and Kalantzis (2009, 2012) has much to offer in this respect.

As the New London Group (1996) conceptualised it, the term *multiliteracies* speaks to two major aspects of meaning-making prevalent in modern society. The first, which is the main concern of the current study, relates to *multimodality*; how different modes of meaning are integrated in communication and representation (New London Group⁵, 1996; Cope & Kalantzis, 2012). The second concerns *social, linguistic and cultural diversity*; how the conventions of meaning vary according to contexts and life experiences (NLG, 1996; Cope & Kalantzis, 2012). Working in concert, these two perspectives emphasise how meaning-making relies on the interaction of different semiotic resources and is always socially constructed. As such, the notion of *multiliteracies* captures what the New London Group identified as the twin goals of literacy education; to provide students access to new forms of meaning-making and to equip them with the necessary tools for active and critical engagement with these meaning making resources.

The multiliteracies scholars proposed that multimodal meaning-making should be conceptualised as a process of *Design*, “in which we are both inheritors of patterns and conventions of meaning and at the same time active designers of meaning” (New London Group, 1996, p. 65). Thus, deliberately drawing on the ambiguity residing in the term *design*, the New London Group construed the concept to denote both the structural design of multimodal ensembles and design in the sense of the active construction, or designing, of new meanings (1996, p. 74). In the context of the current study, which is concerned with the educational use of graphic novels as reading material, it is important to note how the multiliteracies scholars stressed that sense-making processes such as reading and thinking are equally productive forms of Designing as communicative processes such as writing and speaking (New London Group, 1996; Cope & Kalantzis 2012). This opens the door to considering the reading process adopted by students when engaging with graphic novels as a process of reading by design (Connors, 2010, Jacobs 2007a, 2007b). The New London Group proposed an open-ended and flexible metalanguage for conceptualising the process of *reading by design* that involves three interrelated elements: Available Designs, Designing and The Redesigned (NLG, 1996, p. 74), each of which will be presented and discussed in relation to graphic novel reading in the three subsequent sub-divisions of this section.

⁵ Henceforth NLG

2.1.1 Available Designs

When reading a multimodal text such as graphic narratives, readers interact with the “found and findable resources for meaning: culture, context and purpose-specific patterns and conventions of meaning making” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009, p. 176). Arguing that the term *grammars* which had traditionally been used to denote the systematic patterns of meaning in texts was restrictive in the sense that it held negative connotations to “formalized, monolingual, monocultural, and rule-governed forms of language” (NLG, 1996, p. 61), the New London Group instead coined the term *Available Designs* to emphasise how a text’s structures and conventions should be conceptualised as meaning potentials made available in communication (as opposed to a pre-existing, fixed set of meanings). This highlights how patterns of meaning in a text will always be influenced by its historical, social and cultural context as well as the experiences brought to the text by its reader. It is important to note how the concept Available Designs refers not only to the categories of meaning found in the text, but also to the readers’ existing knowledge, their available, “mental models of the world that tie these categories together” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2012, loc. 4200). The modes of meaning that are available to readers include linguistic, visual, audio, gestural, spatial designs (NLG, 1996), all of which are governed by a particular set of logics and hold different potential for expressing and representing various forms of meaning (Serafini, 2014). Joined together, these designs make up a text’s available multimodal design.

The idea that readers negotiate meaning from various available designs of multimodal texts is transferable to the comics medium. As first explained by Jacobs (2007a, 2007b), students may interact with all six available designs when reading graphic narratives. These patterns of meaning include the linguistic text found in speech bubbles and captions, the visual elements of the artwork, the audio of onomatopoeic utterances and sound effects, the gestural elements depicted through the narrative characters’ facial expressions and body language, the spatial mode represented in the page layout or the shape and sequence of comics panels and finally the text’s available multimodal design. The latter design is “of a different order to the other five modes of meaning; it represents the patterns of interconnections among the other modes” (NLG, 1996, p.78), it is where all the pieces of the semiotic puzzle come together to create the overall meaning in the graphic novel text. Based on Jacob’s (2007a, 2007b) insights, it is possible to visualise the New London group’s systematic conceptualisation of a multimodal text’s meaning making resources as they apply to graphic novels are presented in *figure 2.1*.

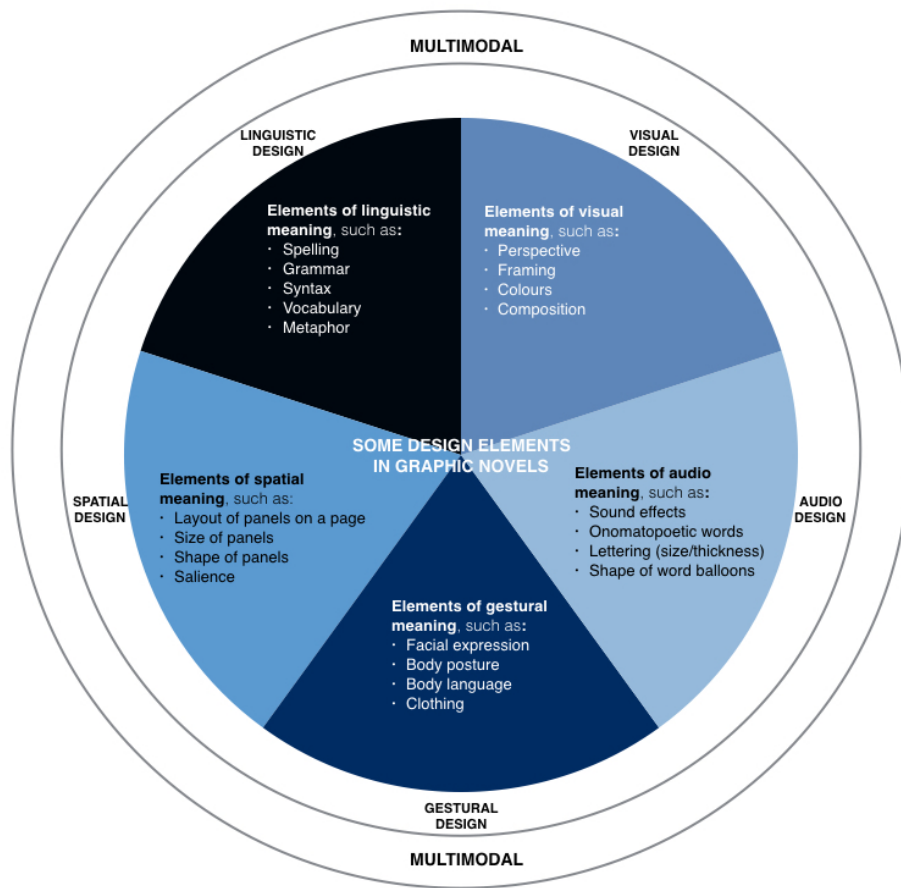


Figure 2.1 Metalanguages for available design elements in graphic novels (adapted from NLG, 1996, p.83)

Against this background, it becomes evident how the processes EFL students will engage in while reading graphic novels are quite complex. While students still have to decode and interpret the linguistic design elements; the English language text in the graphic narratives, they also need to juggle and consolidate meanings communicated by five additional available designs. Making full sense of graphic novels by reading the written text in isolation from the visual, spatial, audio, gestural and multimodal design elements is simply not possible (Jacobs, 2007a, 2007b). It follows that viewing graphic novel reading from a multiliteracies perspective makes it possible to move beyond the common assumption that such texts offer little more than simplified, lightweight reading to instead appreciating how they give students a chance to engage in highly intricate, multimodal literacy practises.

2.1.2 The Design process

Next, what meaning-makers do with the available designs of meaning is conceptualised as an act of *Designing*. Arguing that readers, “do not simply use what they have been given: they are fully makers and remakers of signs and transformers of meaning” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009, p.175), multiliteracies practitioners emphasise how students take on the role of active designers when shaping and reshaping meanings in their transactions with multimodal texts. During the design process, the reader is encouraged to question the relationship between form and function through a dynamic process of designing new meaning rather than merely replicating passively received conventions of the graphic novel text represented through its available designs. This implies that, “more than simply asking what modes or multimodal ensembles *are*, we need to be asking what multimodal ensembles *do*” (Serafini, 2014, p.45).

In order to make explicit what the various modes of meaning in multimodal texts *do* rather than simply identifying and describing their particular forms and characteristics, multiliteracies and multimodality scholars have adopted and adapted a key principle of Halliday’s (1985) theory of systemic functional linguistics which proposes that language simultaneously fulfils three situational macro-functions, or higher-order purposes (NLG, 1996; Cope & Kalantzis, 2012; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, NLG; 1996). Given that the artwork carries much of the communicational load in graphic novels, the present study is primarily informed by Kress and van Leeuwen’s extension of Halliday’s principle to the analysis of still images⁶.

Kress and van Leeuwen’s (2006) social semiotic theory of visual grammar propose that, “visual design, like all semiotic modes, fulfils three major functions” (p. 15). The *representational* metafunction relates to the question of how images represent ideas and concepts, construct narrative characters and suggest relations between the represented characters, places, events and objects. These are the *experiential* meanings in the text. The *interactional* metafunction has to do with how images construct imaginary relationships between the reader and the represented characters and their story world. These are the *interpersonal* meanings in the text. The *compositional* metafunction concerns how the various elements in the image or page relate to each other and are spatially organised to create a coherent and cohesive whole. Meanings expressed through the compositional metafunction

⁶ Halliday’s (1985) original terms are: the ideational metafunction, the interpersonal metafunction and the textual metafunction.

are *textual* meanings (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Cope & Kalantzis, 2009, 2012; Serafini, 2014).

In more practical classroom terms, Macken-Horarik and Unsworth (2014) suggest that teachers and students may view each metafunction as offering a different perspective, or “lens on meaning” (p. 234) which allows one to move beyond a surface level appreciation of the graphic story world (what happens in the story) to explore the meaning making choices made by the comics artist (how the story world is created) and to reflect on the effect these choices have on the larger patterns of literary meaning in the graphic text (why the artist chose to present the story world in this particular way). Consequently, when readers of graphic novels “put on” a *representational* lens, they are experiencing and reflecting on how the comics panels represent narrative meanings; the characters that are involved in the story and how they relate to each other, the events that unfold, the circumstances in which they occur and why they happen. For instance, readers may interpret a graphic narrative character’s personality by observing his or her facial expressions, body posture and clothing. They draw a sense of the story’s setting through the manner in which the artist has illustrated locations and backgrounds and infer symbolic meanings from conceptual images; images that do not depict action, but ideas (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). As such, the representational lens highlights how graphic novels communicate experience, “a slice of life in a possible world” (Macken-Horarik & Unsworth, 2014, p. 234).

The *interactional* lens draws attention to how graphic design elements position the reader to observe, interact with, and respond to what the narrative characters say and do. In sequential art, this imaginary relationship between the reader and the text is commonly realised through the artist’s choice of *perspective* (the angle) and *framing* (the distance) from which the reader sees the depicted characters and scenes in the panels (McCloud, 1993). Readers may reflect on how various angles such as high angle or low angle shots affect the power relationship between the reader and the depicted character, and how one’s sense of social distance becomes affected if the artist portrays a character using a close-up shot rather than a long-shot. Readers may also consider how a panel invites them to adopt a particular view-point - whether they are looking at events through the eyes of a character or from a more objective, detached stance - and then reflect on how this impacts on their engagement with the narrative characters. In addition, reading through the interactional lens, readers may focus on the effect of a character’s direct gaze or how colours have been used to work on the readers’ emotions (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006; McCloud, 1993). Reading through the interactional

lens allows readers to engage in deeper interpretations of the narrative values in their graphic novels (Macken-Horarik & Unsworth, 2014).

Finally, the *compositional* lens sheds light on the textual structure of the graphic narrative. In graphic novels, readers may for instance contemplate how salient elements within each panel highlight a particular point, how the sequential organisation of panels or the page layout may affect their reading path and how the size and shape of panels influence their reading flow. Viewing graphic narratives through a compositional lens, then, allows readers to consider the narrative craftsmanship of comics artists; the artistic techniques employed when juxtaposing words and images and arranging them in sequence in order to convey a meaningful story (McCloud, 1993).

It must be kept in mind that although these three meta perspectives on meaning are presented separately, they always operate simultaneously in texts. It is also important to understand how reading when it is conceptualised as a process of design essentially becomes a matter of making choices among the many alternative meaning potentials offered by the text's available designs (Cope & Kalantzis, 2012). It follows that a crucial element in the design process is the reader's ability to creatively and critically select strategies for negotiating meaning that are inspired by the graphic novel's available designs but not defined by them. In doing so, students become co-designers by consistently drawing from their own available designs for meaning-making; their cultural experiences and insights gained from prior encounters with visual and multimodal texts such as photographs, websites, computer games, films and, of course, comics (Cope & Kalantzis, 2012).

A key asset of adopting a multiliteracies' approach to graphic novel reading in EFL classrooms, then, lies in the framework's insistence that what the students bring to bear on the graphic texts, "the different *subjectivities* – interests, intentions, commitments, and purposes" (NLG, 1996, p. 72, emphasis in the original), are considered legitimate and important resources for meaning-making and learning. This forges an important bond between the EFL classroom and the students' world beyond that classroom, and opens opportunities for creating learning spaces that are more relevant to the digitally conversant students of the twenty-first century. An added benefit for language learners lies in the fact that they may approach English language fictional texts communicated through a multimodal format with a pre-existing sense of confidence in their own interpretive responses (Bland, 2013; Chun, 2009).

2.1.3 The Redesigned

Ultimately, the process of Design results in *The Redesigned*; a transformation of both text and reader through the development of new insights, new perspectives and new meanings. Since meaning-making happens as the historical and cultural conventions of language, space, sound, images and gestures intersect with the reader's agency, it stands to reason that the degree to which the redesigned resembles the available designs will vary but never be exactly the same (NLG, 1996; Cope & Kalantzis, 2012). Importantly, the redesigned forms the basis of new available designs which then become valuable new meaning-making resources that students may draw from in other contexts, for instance in their encounters with other forms of multimodal texts or in literary discussions of graphic novels in the English language classroom. As such, the process of reading by design might be instrumental in filling the students' reservoir of semiotic meaning making resources, enabling them to develop into innovative, flexible and strategic participants in instances of multimodal representation and communication (Cope & Kalantzis, 2012).

2.1.4 "Reading the world as shown"

To explain how multimodal reading places different demands on the reader than traditional monomodal texts do, Kress (2003) proposes that one might view this as a shift from "reading the world as told" to "reading the world as shown" (p. 117). Contrary to traditional written texts which compel a linear reading path because they rely on the logics of sequence in time, the multimodal narrative text is relatively open, merely encouraging a route for the reader to navigate through space (Kress, 2003 p. 3). This entails that the graphic novel reader, though prompted by the design elements of the graphic text (such as the sequence and size of panels, the salience of certain elements in the images) may participate more freely in the navigation and construction of his own reading path by actively choosing where to let his eyes wander across the layout of the page and within the images depicted in the panels (Sabeti, 2012).

Although this affords the reader much agency in the reading process, consolidating and making sense of the interplay between fundamentally different linguistic and visual modes might nevertheless prove challenging for the inexperienced reader. As noted by Chute (2008), the reader of graphic narratives "works with the often disjunctive back-and-forth of *reading* and *looking* for meaning" (p.452, italics in the original). Because the visual and verbal modes of comics do not simply blend or serve to illustrate each other but are often

presented non synchronously, the act of reading comics requires of readers to make meaning from the complex process of integrating visual and textual information (McCloud, 1993).

In this respect, it is interesting to note that several scholars have compared the reading processes involved in comic book reading to those performed as readers navigate webpages on a screen (e.g., Bland, 2013; Gillenwater, 2010; Versaci, 2008). As Cope and Kalantzis (2009) point out, although these webpages often contain large amounts of written text, “the logic of their reading is more like the syntax of the visual than that of written language. Reading the screen requires considerable navigational efforts” (p. 181). Since webpages are based on a graphical interface which is densely packed with visual and written information, readers traverse the page from top to bottom and from side to side with much the same eye movements as readers of graphic novels employ when they navigate within and between panels (Versaci, 2008). This commonality between print and digital multimodal navigation processes makes comics an interesting medium for developing EFL students’ multimodal reading competence outside the digital sphere.

A further implication of Kress’ (2003) notion that “[t]he world told is a different world to *the world shown*” (p.1, italics in the original) is that to make sense of the world shown, the students must develop the ability to read images. Interestingly, Versaci (2008) suggests that graphic narratives more than any other visual medium, “allow teachers to pose questions that help students do two things: understand how images produce meaning, and become engaged in the search for this meaning” (p. 96). The reason why the comics medium is particularly suited to foster students’ visual literacy, Versaci claims, is its static, print format which unlike film or other visual media allows readers full control over the speed with which to process the images depicted in the panels.

Although the multiliteracies and multimodality scholars warn that one should not single out one particular element of multimodal literacy as the various modes of meaning always work in concert to communicate meaning, it seems particularly important that EFL students “learn how images speak” (Serafini, 2014, p. 44) to become visually literate if they are to move beyond the mere perception of representational meanings communicated by the multimodal ensembles they engage with. There seems to be little consensus among scholars regarding what the multidimensional term *visual literacy* should encompass. However, drawing on the work of Avgerinou & Petterson (2011), Serafini (2014) posits that most definitions of the concept share some common conceptual elements that include visual perception, visual language, visual learning, visual thinking and visual communication. With this perspective, Serafini proposes a definition of visual literacy to denote “the process of

generating meanings in transactions with multimodal ensembles, including written text, visual images, and design elements, from a variety of perspectives to meet the requirements of particular social contexts” (p. 26).

Serafini’s (2014) conceptualisation of the term resonates strongly with the current study as it expands the notion of visual literacy to capture some unique conventions of the comics medium. A particularly noteworthy aspect of Serafini’s definition in this regard is the explicit incorporation of linguistic text into the concept of visual literacy. Arguably, the representation of written language has always been visual as it consists of printed signs in the form of alphabetic letters, font, dots and spacing (Cope & Kalantzis, 2012). However, in the comics medium, the visual representation of alphabetic text serves an expanded function, a point which will be addressed in greater detail in section 2.2.2. of the current chapter.

2.1.5 A pedagogy of multiliteracies

How could the complex demands of the multimodal reading processes involved in graphic novel reading best be catered for in the EFL classroom? To answer this question, the present study is informed by the New London Group’s (1996) accompanying pedagogical framework which was designed to facilitate multimodal learning and teaching. The framework is grounded in a socio-cultural view of language and learning (Vygotsky, 1978) and holds at its core that the construction of knowledge is always embedded in social and cultural contexts. Learning, then, becomes a social experience which is constructed as people of varying degrees of experience and knowledge actively engage in collaborative interactions aimed at common endeavours (NLG, 1996; Lave, 1991; Vygotsky, 1978). A fundamental premise of a pedagogy of multiliteracies is that teaching practises and teaching materials have to “engage with the students’ own experiences and discourses” (NLG, 1996, p. 88).

As outlined by the New London Group (1996) and later re-iterated by Cope and Kalantzis (2009, 2012), a pedagogy of multiliteracies rests on four interwoven (not necessarily linear) stages or pedagogical techniques that teachers may use to guide their practises. The first dimension is *Situated Practise*, which entails that students are immersed in “meaningful practises within a community of learners who are capable of playing multiple roles based on their backgrounds and experiences” (NLG, 1996, p. 85). For the teacher, this means fostering a safe learning environment which encourages cooperation both among students and between students and teacher, and which includes authentic communicative classroom activities that are grounded in the students’ diverse interests and experiences.

The second dimension is *Overt Instruction*, in which “students shape for themselves an explicit metalanguage of Design” (NLG, p. 83). Contrary to what the term might imply this process does not entail direct transmission or replication of rules and conventions. Instead, when coupled with situated practice, which holds at its core the students’ own experiences and interests, overt instruction becomes a collaborative effort between teacher and students aimed at developing a conscious awareness to the form and function of the meaning-making resources found in multimodal texts.

Next, the dimension of *Critical Framing* “relates meanings to their social contexts and purposes” (NLG, 1996, p. 83). For the teacher, this involves designing activities that encourage the students’ ability to functionally explore and critically analyse how conventions projected by the text influences the meaning-making process and to connect the learning experiences to the wider social and cultural context in which they are constructed and function (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009).

Finally, the fourth dimension is *Transformed Practise*, where the learners transfer and apply “the transformed meaning to work in other contexts or cultural sites” (NLG, 1996, p. 88). This includes (but is not limited to) making new reflections on works previously studied, participating in discussions, transforming new understanding into pieces of writing or drawings, making interdisciplinary connections (for instance to other school subjects) or relating multimodal understanding to other types of multimodal texts from different media.

To prepare the participating students before they started to engage with the graphic novel in the classroom and to organise learning activities during the reading project (which also formed part of the data corpus collected for the current study), graphic novel reading in the English classroom was approached using a pedagogy of multiliteracies (see table 3.1).

2.2 Comics theory: the visible and invisible language of sequential art

To understand how the graphic novel communicates meanings on literal, aesthetic and metacognitive levels, this section looks into a selection of central theoretical comics concepts. In keeping with the increased popular and academic recognition of graphic novels’ artistic and narrative qualities, several robust scholarly works have been published recently which all theorise the formal qualities and nature of the comics medium in great depth (e.g., Cohn, 2014; Kukkonen, 2013; Postema, 2013; Wolk, 2007). However, given the didactic nature of this study, the theory discussed in this section relies primarily on insights gained from Eisner’s (2008a, 2008b) and McCloud’s (1993, 2006) early mediations on the formal qualities

of the comics medium. Effectively deconstructing his own medium through a comic book format, McCloud in particular offers a highly pedagogically applicable theoretical approach with which to unveil the inner workings of sequential art.

2.2.1 Gutters and closure

As invoked by its title, McCloud's seminal meta-comic book *Understanding Comics, the Invisible Art* (1993) seeks to identify the design elements that constitute the specific language of comics and to demonstrate how comics artists employ these conventions to manipulate a response in the reader. Inspired by Eisner's (2008a) description of comics as sequential art; stories told through series of images, McCloud (1993) defines comics as "[j]uxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence, intended to convey information and/or produce an aesthetic response in the viewer" (p. 9). It is important to note that McCloud defined the art form as a *medium*; "a vessel which can hold any number of ideas and images" (p. 6). His conceptualisation of comics⁷ opens for any genre, artistic style and subject matter to be expressed in the comics medium, yet rules out one-panel cartoons.

The sub-title of McCloud's (1993) book, *the Invisible Art*, touches on the very lifeblood of graphic narratives and suggests that there might indeed be more to this highly visual medium than meets the eye. Essentially, what first meets the eye of the reader as she dives into a graphic novel is the fractured and multi-layered layout of the comics page consisting of sequences of panels which each presents snapshots of the narrative action. Panels are, claims McCloud, the most important icon in comics. Ironically, this is so partly because of the empty voids occurring between the panels as they are organised into sequences. These blank spaces, termed *gutters* (p.66), fracture the narrative flow and constitute the medium's primary way of simulating the passing of time and movement (p. 69). The gutters are instances of indeterminacy in literary texts where the reader must actively fill in what the text has left unspoken (Rosenblatt, 1994, 1995).

The process in which the reader evokes the invisible meaning residing in the gutters is called *closure*, and constitutes the grammar of comics (McCloud, 1993, p. 67). The term refers to the complex process of "observing the parts but perceiving the whole" (p. 63) and implies that readers draw on their past experiences and imagination to mentally complete what is left incomplete. In comics, to fill the temporal and spatial gaps created by the gutters and establish a sense of continuity in the narrative sequence the reader has to activate both

⁷ The term *comics* is "plural in form, used with a singular verb" (McCloud, 1993, p. 9).

real-world knowledge and imagination to literally read between the juxtaposed panels. McCloud describes the process of bridging the empty conceptual territory of the gutter as a dance between the visible and the invisible; between reader, imagination, illustration and text. It is here, “in the limbo of the gutter”, he says, that “human imagination takes two separate images and transforms them into a single idea” (p. 66). McCloud’s two-panel illustration reproduced below serves as an excellent point in hand, exemplifying how the reader by making connections and drawing conclusions about what has happened in the gutter in effect becomes a narrative partner in crime:



Figure 2.2 *Understanding Comics* (McCloud, 1993, p. 68)

Even though no actual murder is depicted in these two panels most readers would infer that such a crime is exactly what has been committed, leading McCloud to conclude that, “I may have drawn an axe being raised in this example, but I am not the one to let it drop and decide how hard the blow or who screamed and why. That, dear reader, was your special crime, each of you committing it in your own style” (p. 68). Viewed in this light, it becomes apparent how the complex act of closure requires the enactment of the reader’s imagination⁸.

2.2.2 Visual iconography

If the concept of closure constitutes comics’ grammar, then *visual iconography* – the most potent design element of the comics medium - is its vocabulary (Eisner, 2008a; McCloud, 1993). Broadening the traditional understanding of the concept, McCloud uses the word icon to denote “any image used to represent a person, place, thing or idea” (1993, p.27). His

⁸ To fully explore how the sequencing of panels affect the reading of comics, McCloud’s systematic analysis of various panel transitions should have addressed in this context. However, given the limited scope of the present thesis, this was not feasible. Interested readers are advised to consult chapter three in McCloud’s (1993) original work *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*.

conceptualisation of the term encompasses three categories of icons: *symbols*, or images that represent concepts and ideas, *pictorial icons* which are images designed to resemble their subjects with varying degrees of abstraction and finally *practical* (non-pictorial) *icons* such as alphabetic letters, numbers and communication icons.

Perhaps the most common symbolic icon in graphic narratives is the *word balloon*. Eisner (2008a) succinctly calls the balloon “a desperation device” (p. 24) seeing as its primary function is to capture and visualise the ethereal element of sound. Working in close concert with text, the form of the word balloon adds depth and emotion to characters’ utterings or thoughts. McCloud (1993) offers the following example of how the word balloon’s shape holds the symbolic power to inform the reader’s understanding of the seemingly innocent phrase, “Oh, it’s you” (p. 134). Cast in a word-balloon dripping with icicles the phrase turns into an ice-cold, mocking greeting. Certainly, if framed by a heart-shaped word balloon it would read as a more loving welcome.

It is important to note how linguistic text is represented in graphic narratives word balloons takes on an expanded symbolic representation. Often hand-written, the style of lettering forms an essential part of the aesthetic expression of sequential art, transforming the linguistic text into “an extension of the imagery” (Eisner, 2008a, p.2). In fact, words in comics have onomatopoeic and metaphorical synaesthetic qualities; they visually simulate the level of sound and the nuances of emotions. This basically means that what you see is what you hear in your mind’s ear. For instance, large letters in bold print signify louder speech or screaming whereas small, thinly drawn letters indicate whispering (McCloud, 1993). Juxtaposing conventional terms to illustrate how the comics medium renders the boundaries between words and images fluid and blurred, Abel and Madden (2008) describe the art of creating comics as “drawing words” and “writing pictures” (p. xiv). Thus, they emphasize how the linguistic text is part of the visual language of graphic narratives and how the images carry as much meaning as conventional words.

Another distinguishing feature of the comics medium is a group of symbolic icons called “emanata” (Abel & Madden, 2008 p. 8), an umbrella term referring to symbols employed by comics artists to make visible the invisible world of emotions and senses. A typical example is sweat beads emanating from an anxious character’s head. Like the word balloon many of these symbols have synesthetic qualities, allowing the visual mode to speak for all five senses. An illustration of an overfilled garbage can encircled by small flies and wavy stink lines, for instance, alludes to its rotten smell. This idea that a picture can evoke a sensual response in the reader, McCloud (1993) claims, is “vital to the art of comics” (p. 121)

and affirms Kress' (2003) point that in multimodal ensembles, “the possibilities of supplementing messages with meaning multiply, and incorporate the demands and the potentials of imagination of all the modes involved” (p. 145).

Elaborating on the unique power of comics to foster active audience involvement in the reading process, McCloud (1993) describes how comics artists employ a form of iconic abstraction, or *cartooning*, when drawing the characters in the story. In short, this entails that instead of aiming towards realistic depictions of features such as a face, the artist reduces the resemblance by stripping the illustration down to its most basic elements. Cartoon images are deceptively simple, though. The essence of iconic abstraction is “amplification through simplification” (p. 30) because simplified cartoon images, “by de-emphasizing the appearance of the physical world in favour of the idea of form” (p. 41) require deeper interpretive engagement on the part of the reader. As McCloud asserts, “icons demand our participation to make them work” (p. 59), and one way in which the reader designs meaning from iconic abstraction is, again, by committing closure. Crucially, iconic abstraction holds the power to greatly impact the readers’ emotional engagement with the story in the sense that a simplified, cartoony figure could represent any universal human being, thereby encouraging the readers to identify with and indeed see themselves in the character:

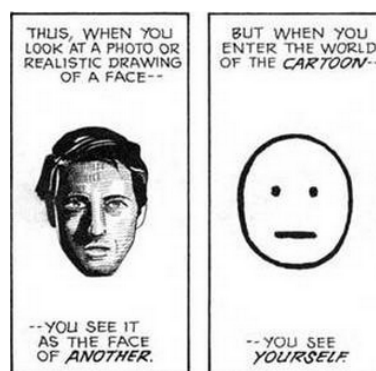


Figure 2.3 *Understanding Comics* (McCloud, 1993, p. 36)

2.2.3 Framing and perspective

In graphic novels, each panel functions as a “window” on a visual scene, thus controlling the reader’s viewpoint as well as the perimeter of her vision (Eisner, 2008a; Cohn, 2014). The comics artist directs the reader’s attention with his choice of *framing* (the distance from which to depict a scene in a panel) and *perspective* (the angle of the camera shot). Eisner (2008a) considers framing and perspective as powerful rhetorical devices that comics artists employ to

manipulate and evoke various emotional states in the readers by predetermining their viewpoint and positioning in the fictional world. McCloud (1993) concurs, explaining that artists use perspective in images to establish relationships between the characters in the narrative as well as illusionary relationships between the audience and the story's characters.

Cartoonists and scholars draw from film terminology when describing the different framings and perspectives employed in panels to direct the reader's orientation in accordance with the artist's narrative plan. Scenes in the graphic narrative may be framed using a long shot to establish an overview of the setting, or scene, or a medium shot to focus on dialogue or action. Furthermore, close ups and extreme close ups are used to signal intimacy and create a sense of empathy. Likewise, *perspective*, or *camera angles* are employed to establish a sense of mood and emotional state in the readers. According to Eisner (2008a), perspective combined with the shape of the panel promote affective reactions that touches on deep, primitive feelings in the readers. For instance, a worm's eye view will add power to the depicted character or object and create a sense of fear in the reader who feels belittled when viewing the scene from below. Furthermore, because humans are responsive to our environment, a low camera angle employed in a tall, narrow panel will evoke in the reader a claustrophobic sense of being confined and virtually "hemmed in" by the frames of the panel, leaving little room for escape (Eisner, 2008a, p. 92). Tilting the camera angle will add to the feeling of instability and threat in a world gone askew. In contrast, depicting the same scene from a high bird's eye view will allow the reader to rise above the situation with a sense of safe detachment (Eisner, 2008a).

How the artist's use of framing and perspective affect reader involvement and add depth to the graphic narrative is, of course, best illustrated through visual examples. The two panels reproduced below are from the graphic short story "Hurdles", created by Kim (2004)⁹. Kim's eight-panel coming-of-age story, powerfully rendered in stark black and white colours, deals with issues of identity and discrimination, and depicts how a young American-Korean boy is faced with prejudice and blatant racism from the coach of his hurdles track team:

⁹ Please note that in Kim's original story, these panels are larger and presented vertically, one beneath the other. They are diminished somewhat and presented horizontally here due to lack of space. The text in its original form can be viewed online: <http://digitalis.nwp.org/sites/default/files/files/20/HurdlesText.pdf>



Figure 2.4 *Hurdles* (Kim, 2004, unpaginated)



Figure 2.5 *Hurdles* (Kim, 2004, unpaginated)

As noted by Schwartz (2006), Kim's deliberate choice of framing and perspectives in these panels is a significant visual resource in conveying the story's mood and message. In figure 2.4, the coach is portrayed through an extreme close-up. As readers we are positioned to look him straight in the eye, yet because his gaze is hidden behind sunglasses he becomes almost dehumanised. The extreme close-up has another effect – the coach is simply too close, adding to the readers' feeling of discomfort by virtually invading their personal space. In contrast, the panel reproduced as figure 2.5, is shot from a high angle, leaving the protagonist to squint up into the coach's eyes. While this could be said to reflect how any boy would look up to his coach in respect, its primary purpose in this context is to situate the reader in the subjective position of the coach, effectively towering over the boy while literally and symbolically looking down on him. The high angle in this panel underscores the vulnerable position of the young boy and emphasises the sensation of menace looming over this encounter. The artist makes utterly clear that our protagonist is faced with significantly tougher challenges to overcome than the physical hurdles on the track.

To conclude, by bringing some important comics conventions into focus, the comics theory discussed in this section underscores how graphic novels rely on conventions that are unique to the medium. The comics format is not simply a static version of film or a visual representation of prose text. Rather, comics is an original medium in its own right; a form of art, a creative method of communication and an aesthetic literary format which presupposes active reader participation. Sequential art is, in many senses, an art of illusion relying on its readers to construct meaning from subtle cues ingrained in the artwork or hidden in the gutters between panels. Sequential art is also a "medium of fragments" (McCloud, 2006, p. 129), in which words, illustrations, icons and sequence all work seamlessly together to create meaning. The reader is left to interpret the cues projected by the various design elements and to assemble meaning from the interaction between linguistic and visual semiotic modes. This makes comics a truly interesting media for developing students' awareness to how images are

not simply a complementary partner to text, but rather an equal partner in the interplay of available design elements which create the overall meaning of all multimodal texts.

2.3 Transactional theory

The present study is concerned with fictional graphic novels where the visual mode enters into marriage with the linguistic mode to communicate not only meaning, but also literary meaning. Reading literature through the graphic novel format requires the reader to draw on a wide range of semiotic resources beyond that of written language to negotiate meaning in a text which superimposes the parameters of the arts (i.e. colour palette, perspective and lines) with the conventions of literature (Eisner, 2008a). This entails that instead of primarily interpreting figurative prose language as in traditional literature, students must also design literary meaning from visual metaphors, the symbolic representation of colours and intertextual references found in the text's visual design.

What seems to be lacking, then, for the multiliteracies approach to adequately apply to the topic under investigation in the current study is a specific literary focus. Thus, to understand how literary meaning could be created from fictional graphic novels, this section will briefly discuss how juxtaposing Rosenblatt's transactional with contemporary comics theory may yield insight into the literary aspect of graphic novel reading.

2.3.1 Aesthetic reading

Rosenblatt's (1994, 1995) transactional theory of reading shares a central commonality with the theoretical frameworks guiding this thesis' understanding of multimodal comics reading; that meaning does not reside in the text waiting only to be excavated by a competent reader, but is instead created in a constant dialogue, or transaction, between text, reader and context. What makes Rosenblatt's conceptualisation of the reading process a particularly useful lens for understanding how students could move beyond reading illustrations and other design elements in graphic novels at a superficial "what you see is what you get" level to instead negotiating deeper, literary meanings is the distinction she draws between efferent and aesthetic reading processes.

To explain how a single text might have multiple and even contradictory meanings, Rosenblatt posits that the same text could be read and experienced in different ways depending on the reader's overarching purpose for reading. Put simply; depending on the

reader's purpose, a weather forecast could be read as a factual predication of storms ahead or it could be experienced as a poem depicting a sense of powerful inner turmoil (Rosenblatt, 1994, p.184). What potential meanings the reader chooses to focus attention on falls along a continuum framed by two poles, the efferent and the aesthetic, both of which will be present in any reading event. If the reader is looking to take away knowledge from the text she will approach it with a predominantly *efferent* stance (or mind-set), "abstracting the information or ideas or directions for action that will remain after the reading is over" (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 32). Conversely, if the reader is looking to experiencing the personal "feelings, attitudes, sensations and ideas" (Rosenblatt, 1994, p. 184) aroused during the reading, she will adopt a predominantly *aesthetic* stance. Shaped by the reader's emotions and past experiences, this aesthetic stance is what *evokes*, or brings to life, the literary meanings of the text.

Several interesting connections exist between Rosenblatt's notion of aesthetic reading and comics theory in a McCloudian sense. As readers will recall, McCloud's (1993) definition of the comics medium alludes to this close relationship as it highlights the potential inherent in sequential art for promoting the reader's aesthetic response (section 2.2.1). Importantly, at their core, both theories rest on the assumption that reader engagement is a necessary foundation for, and natural outcome of, the reading process. Emphasising how "a novel, poem or play remains merely inkspots on paper until a reader transforms them into a set of meaningful symbols" (1995, p. 24), Rosenblatt holds that literary meaning is evoked only when the conventions of the text enter into dialogue with the reader's intellect and emotions; her linguistic-experiential reservoir of prior knowledge and experiences with language and literature as well as life itself. Describing the meaning-making processes taking place during comics reading, McCloud (1993) makes a similar claim, explaining that "[w]hat you see is seldom what you get if all you're seeing (seeing even now) is just ink and paper. In the end, what you get is what you give" (pp. 136, 137). At the heart of McCloud's argument is the assumption that what the reader brings to the meeting with the graphic narrative is central to evoking its potential meaning and that the power locked in comics medium's visual design is "releasable only by the reader's mind" (p.45). Simply put:

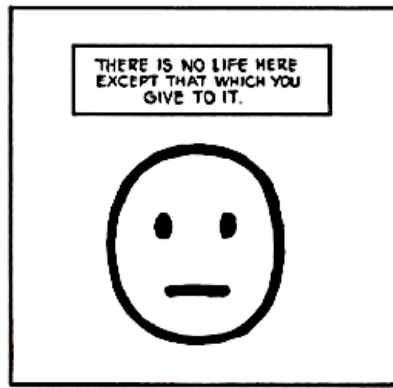


Figure 2.6 Understanding Comics (McCloud, 1993, p. 59)

Another aspect of Rosenblatt's theory of aesthetic reading which ties in closely with comics theory is her firm conviction that aesthetic encounters with literary texts are particularly suited to develop the reader's sense of empathy and insights into human nature because "the reader's attention is centred directly on what he is living through during his relationship with that particular text" (1994, p. 25). This perspective touches at the core of graphic novel reading. Conceptualising empathy as "the visceral reaction of one human being to the plight of another" (2008b, p. 47), Eisner argues that evoking the reader's feelings of empathy through images is one of the most powerful tools available to a graphic storyteller. In essence, the visual images of graphic novels speak to the commonality of human experience by appealing to our senses (McCloud, 1993). This is so, says Kukkonen (2013), because the reader's schemata – all the prior life experiences he brings to the encounter with the graphic narrative – are activated by the visual representation of the comics characters' facial expressions, gestures and postures, giving rise to the reader's intersubjective empathy with the characters and their underlying motifs in the text. Enhancing students' capacity for narrative empathy is harmonious with developing essential aspects of personhood such as identity, moral and social imagination and is reflected in the English curriculum's general aim asserting that literary reading should foster "a deeper understanding of others and of oneself" (NDET, 2013, p.1).

It is important to recognise that although the reader's personal associations and affective response are central elements in aesthetic reading, this does not imply that the text and its conventions become insignificant nor does it exclude deep pondering about textual elements. Indeed, Rosenblatt several times confronted what she regarded as complete "relativism" (1994, p. 182) in some realisations of reader response theory which she found to focus solely on readers' subjective associations without taking the contributions of the text

itself into consideration. Such an approach, Rosenblatt (1994) states, “[w]ould not be reading at all in the transactional sense. The concept of transaction emphasizes the relationship with, *and continuing awareness of, the text*” (p. 29, emphasis in the original).

Viewing graphic novels through a transactional lens suggests that these visual works of fiction offer readers ample opportunities to experience “all the sensuous, kinaesthetic, imaginative richness” (Rosenblatt, 1982 p. 273) implied in aesthetic reading. From a didactic perspective, the idea that the visual design of comics might spur students to adopt an aesthetic mind-set at the outset of the reading event is highly intriguing. As Rosenblatt (2005) emphasises, fostering students’ sensitivity to formal aspects of the literary work such as themes and metaphors is rendered into an efferent, technical practice unless “the live circuit” (p. 66) between the reader and the text has first been established to evoke the literary meaning potential of the textual encounter. “If something is to be interpreted as a work of art”, Rosenblatt reminds educators, “it must first be read with attention primarily to what is being lived through” (1994, p. 185).

To sum up, the transactional theory, with its emphasis on the reciprocal relationship between the conventions of the text and the reader’s personal and cultural experiences, opens up for new ways to combine a reader centred approach to studying graphic narratives with deep readings of the multimodal texts’ available design elements. Upon concluding his foreword to the fifth edition of *Literature as Exploration* (Rosenblatt, 1995), literary critic Booth made clear this strong connection between Rosenblatt’s transactional theory and modern media by urging educators to profit from her insights to help students reflect critically on their responses to the visual texts that dominate contemporary society. Emphasising how Rosenblatt’s conceptualisation of aesthetic reading involves the readers’ continued attention to textual conventions, Booth suggested that the act of viewing should be reconceived as a transactional event to counteract otherwise superficial and passive absorption of images by speculating: “Can we hope for a generation of viewers who engage fully in thinking through their emotional responses, moving toward deeper self-knowledge?” (p. xiii).

2.4 Review of related research

In keeping with the present study’s concern with understanding how the graphic novel medium could create opportunities for cultivating EFL students’ multimodal reading literacies, the selection of scholarly research included in this review of literature is limited to recent applied studies that move beyond seeing graphic narratives merely as simplified,

illustrated versions of verbal print texts. Instead, a common factor across the selected studies is their aim to shed light on the possibilities for complex multimodal reading inherent in the graphic novel's form and how graphic novels could be put to use in an educational context. Since Norwegian research investigating the graphic novel from a multiliteracies and multimodality perspective remains scant, the review mainly addresses international studies conducted in L1 contexts. Taking into account that the present study concerns upper secondary level EFL learners who have had mandatory English instruction at school for eleven years I believe this research to be relevant.

A recent study which has provided the present research with valuable insights into the multiliteracies practises readers engage in while transacting with graphic literature is Romanelli's (2009) doctoral dissertation, which documented the reading strategies that nine experienced comic book readers used to make sense of graphic novel texts. Drawing on data from think-aloud protocols, surveys and subsequent in-depth interviews, Romanelli identified six groups of general reading behaviours the participants engaged in while reading graphic novels. These reading behaviours included: consciously directing one's attention, constructing meaning, using prior knowledge, monitoring one's understanding, critiquing the content and aesthetics of the text and demonstrating emotional involvement (p. 171). These were further categorised into twenty-eight specific reading actions such as cueing from colour, observing image details and evaluating comics conventions. In light of these findings, Romanelli (2009) concluded that graphic novel reading was "an interactive, problem-solving kind of process that involved a tremendous amount of close reading" (p. 291) and urged educators to pay greater attention to the potential of this kind of reading as it "is more than just a process that leads to gaining information; it is a means by which life-long learners are created" (p. 1).

Sharing Romanelli's (2009) concern with understanding the multimodal strategies readers employ when transacting with graphic texts, one strand of Connors' (2010) qualitative case study sought to uncover the semiotic resources six proficient high school students drew on while reading four graphic novels in a voluntary after-school reading group. Having analysed his data, which was collected from interviews, observations and written student documents, Connors emphasised the active role students engage in while transacting with graphic narratives. Interestingly, his findings also affirmed Jacobs' (2007b) theoretical argument that graphic novels engage multiple literacies because readers must interact with up to six available designs (visual, audio, gestural, spatial, linguistic and multimodal) to create meaning. Connors specifically pointed out how the participants were able to weave multimodal meaning by synthesizing the individual meanings communicated by these

“complex constellation of signs” (p. 311), leading him to propose that the students “constructed interpretations that surpassed the meanings any one resource alone conveyed” (p. 310). On a slightly different note, Connors (2010) also discovered that a majority of the participants “credited their involvement in the reading group with having given rise to changes in the way they transacted with graphic novels” (p. 299). Based on this finding, Connors argued for the potential for multimodal learning that exists in the interactions between learners.

Following a similar track, Sabeti’s (2011, 2012) research also highlighted the importance of providing learners with opportunities to cooperate and build from each other’s repertoire of multimodal reading strategies. Conducted at a Scottish independent school, the data collected for this ethnographic research project included interviews with ten students and transcripts from six reading group discussions. Interested in understanding reasons why the participants enjoyed reading comic books, Sabeti discovered that the medium’s appeal was closely related to its multimodal form. The students particularly valued how the format invited them to engage in a different kind of reading by offering more choices in terms of reading path and reading speed (i.e. they could choose to linger on images). In summing up her findings she pointed to the pedagogical potential of the graphic novel by stating, “the fact that comics are better remembered, easier to discuss, ‘give you more scope for thinking’, *must* be of value in the learning and teaching context” (2011, p. 147).

Whereas the above cite studies offer interesting testimony to the potential of the comics medium for facilitating engaged multimodal reading and provide the current study with interesting examples of the nature of students’ transactions with the graphic novel medium, the value is somewhat limited as they were conducted in extra-curricular educational environments and drew on data from proficient readers, not diverse readers in a conventional classroom setting which is the context of the current study. Research carried out for Mortimore’s (2009) doctoral dissertation, in contrast, took place in two traditional educational environments; one high-school and one college classroom. Recognising the need for empirical research investigating how the comics medium could be put to use in authentic classrooms and the potential impact reading graphic narratives could have on students’ critical and multimodal literacies, Mortimore’s auto-ethnographic study examined ways in which the participants engaged with three graphic novels. The aim was to understand how approaching the graphic texts through a multimodal lens could “compel readers to *slow down, enjoy and interpret*” (p. 255, emphasis in the original) the various design elements. Having analysed data collected from observations, teacher interviews as well as students’ written assignments

and informal blogs, Mortimore argued that “the graphic narrative provides ample opportunities for students to engage in meaningful critical discourse regarding the complex, interconnected, thematic, and highly visual/verbal language of these texts” (p. 17).

Similar findings emerged from Hammond’s (2009) qualitative reader-response study which sought to determine how twenty-three high school students made meaning from and responded to reading an art graphic novel in a political science class. Hammond’s research is interesting from a didactic perspective because amongst other things, she sought to investigate how knowledge of comics conventions (or lack thereof) impacted on the participants’ reading experiences. To accomplish this, written student responses collected after a first reading of a graphic novel were compared to responses after a second reading of the same text which occurred after a lesson in comics conventions. Having found that students gained new insights and knowledge upon the second reading, Hammond concluded that her research “supports the benefits of teaching comics conventions and reading graphic novels as part of the curriculum to improve multimodal literacy skills” (p.iii). While this finding is interesting as it points to the important role knowledge of comics conventions plays in students transactions with graphic novels, the research drew mainly on individual reader’s responses to the graphic texts and did not consider the social, cooperative aspect of multimodal reading which is a key element of the pedagogy of multiliteracies (NLG 1996; Cope & Kalantzis 2009, 2012) which has informed this study (see section 2.1.5).

As far as the present study is concerned, the qualitative case study that Krinsky (2012) carried out for her doctoral dissertation is more relevant because it is firmly rooted in a multiliteracies view of literacy and learning. Documenting how a class of twelfth-graders worked with graphic novels in their ELA classroom, Krinsky was concerned with the two-fold aim of exploring how the students adjusted to the multimodal format of the texts and how instruction impacted on the learning. To meet these objectives, Krinsky collected data from teacher and student interviews and several types of written student documents. Findings and conclusions drawn from the research lead Krinsky to confront “the seemingly widespread assumption in the field of literacy education that graphic novels are somehow easy to read” (p. 104). Having observed that several participants struggled with exploring central design features of the medium, Krinsky posited that “students may require text-specific strategies to access the unique textual features of the graphic novel” (p. 105), thus challenging Connor’s (2010) argument that instruction of comics conventions might not be called for. Instead, Krinsky (2012) suggested that to expand student learning, instructional practices should be situated within a pedagogy of multiliteracies to allow for the construction of a basic

metalanguage of comics, not through explicit top-down instruction, but through cooperative and dialogic interactions between teachers and students.

Writing from an English as a Second Language (ESL) perspective, Chun (2009) supports Krinsky's (2012) view. His case study research examined how ESL learners responded to reading *Maus* (Spiegelman, 1986) in the context of an American high-school. The history lessons were designed according to the four-dimensional instructional framework of a pedagogy of multiliteracies (see section 2.1.5). Having found that the students' readings and discussions evolved from an initial appreciation of the graphic novel's illustrations to engaged and critical interpretations of the text's visual metaphors, Chun argued that a key benefit stemming from a multiliteracies approach was that it allowed for the cultivation of "students' critical awareness of multimodal texts by using students' own resources" (p. 152). This, he stated, could encourage language learners to "acknowledge their own power as co-creators of knowledge in the classroom and beyond" (p. 152). To the present thesis, Chun's and Krinsky's (2012) research served to validate the pedagogy of multiliteracies approach chosen for the graphic novel reading project (see section 3.3.1).

To sum up, although the preceding review of related applied research only scratches the surface of important issues related to graphic novel reading and the use of graphic narratives in upper secondary/high-school contexts, it nevertheless pulls together some central ideas concerning the potential of graphic novels to sponsor twenty-first century reading literacies. In short, the cited studies highlight how graphic novel reading is an active, complex process where the readers draw on the text's available meaning making resources in addition to their existing literacy repertoire and personal experiences to fill narrative gaps, make inferences, draw conclusions, question and evaluate the text; processes which suggest sophisticated multimodal literacy practises (NLG, 1996) as well as being hallmarks of aesthetic reading (Rosenblatt, 1995). Some studies (Krinsky, 2012; Mortimore, 2009;) also report of possible caveats for educators who wish to implement graphic novels in their classrooms, mainly directing attention to the need for teachers to provide opportunities for cooperative classroom activities aimed at creating a shared metalanguage for thinking about and discussing the unique conventions of the comics medium.

Ultimately, the review of scholarly research also serves to indicate that despite the undeniable importance of creating learning experiences that could draw on and further cultivate EFL students' multiliteracies practices, little research has been conducted to investigate the use of the comics medium as a multimodal textual resource with English

language learners at upper secondary level. Consequently, the didactic potential of the graphic novel in a Norwegian upper secondary context warrants further investigation.

Chapter three: methods and materials

The present study was designed to explore the potential of the graphic novel medium as a multimodal textual resource and was carried out in two upper secondary vocational EFL classes. To leave what Merriam (2009) terms “an audit trail” (p. 229), this chapter provides a detailed account of the research methodology used throughout the study and is divided into seven sections. To begin, the rationale for employing a qualitative case study design is discussed. Secondly, an overview of the study’s context and the study’s sample is provided. The third section presents procedures related to the reading project, including preparation of study participants and selection of texts. This is followed by a description of data and data collection procedures. In the fifth section I explain how the data was analysed. Next, ethical considerations related to the inquiry and my dual role as teacher and researcher are discussed. To bring the chapter to a close, the final section covers issues of trustworthiness and the study’s limitations.

3.1 Rationale for choice of method and research design

The purpose of this inquiry was to explore graphic novel reading in an upper secondary school context. To meet this objective, a qualitative research approach was chosen. A central asset of qualitative research is that it may provide a window into the deeper processes involved in a phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). Furthermore, qualitative research assumes that knowledge is created through interaction between individuals in specific contexts and that there are “multiple realities, or interpretations, of a single event” (Merriam, 2009, p. 8) and is thus in accordance with the theoretical frameworks informing this study (see chapter two).

Given the specific nature of this study’s applied classroom research there are several research designs within the qualitative research framework that could be employed. For instance, because the study is conducted as fieldwork involving my own students I could have chosen to use an action research design. Action research is a cyclic and reflective research model frequently used by educators to explore a specific problem of educational practice with an aim toward developing a solution to that problem (Creswell, 2014). Though I am concerned that there seems to be little focus on fostering multiple literacies in the teaching and learning of English in upper secondary education, this study is not undertaken in order to reflect on and develop my own “practise of taking action” (Creswell, 2014, p. 609), a key premise for conducting action research. Instead, the study should be conceived as a journey of

discovery, aiming to explore the potential of a multimodal print medium which to date has received little attention from researchers in the field of foreign language didactics in a Norwegian context. In order to investigate the questions driving this study, which asked how the graphic novel could create opportunities for fostering students' multimodal reading competencies in the EFL classroom and which also looked to uncover other didactic potentials engaging with the graphic novel in this context, the empirical data I sought to gather was rich and varied descriptions of how a selection of upper secondary students' created meaning with the multiple modes made available to them in the graphic novel medium and how they engaged with graphic novel reading in the EFL classroom context. This is a research focus that might not lead to clear cut answers. For this reason, a qualitative case study design seemed the most appropriate plan for addressing the study's purpose and aims.

According to Yin (2014), a case study is “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident” (2014, Loc.No 958). It seemed safe to assume that the phenomenon being studied in the present research would be influenced by the classroom context within which it was situated. Utilizing a case study approach allowed me to cover and understand contextual conditions pertinent to the processes under investigation.

Because the central focus of this investigation was to advance an understanding of a particular issue; graphic novel reading in upper secondary EFL education, I chose to follow Stake's (1994) typology of case study design and undertake an *instrumental* case study with two embedded units. Stake identifies the instrumental case study as one that provides insight into an issue or phenomenon (p. 237). The case (here: the vocational EFL students participating in the study) is studied because it gives an opportunity to foster our understanding of that particular issue. In contrast to the *intrinsic* case study where understanding the particularities of the case itself is the main focus, the case in the instrumental case study is of secondary interest, playing instead an important supportive role in facilitating our understanding of the phenomenon being explored (Stake, 1994; Merriam, 2009).

A central feature of case study research is the binding, or delimiting, of the case under investigation (Creswell, 2014; Merriam, 2009; Stake, 1994; Yin, 2014). In the current study, twenty-six students attending the second year (Vg2) of the vocational education programme Electricity and Electronics constituted the bounded case, with one class of students

specialising in Electrical Engineering and one class of students specialising in Automation forming the two embedded units of analysis. The case was also singled out for research in terms of place (one upper secondary school only) and time (the reading project and data collection occurred during five consecutive weeks) and was limited to the specific graphic novels we were studying.

Anchored in real-life situations, the instrumental case study approach offered me a chance to gain a holistic perspective on the unique phenomenon of graphic novel reading as I could “spread the net of evidence widely” (Merriam, 2009, p. 46) and gather data through multiple means such as interviews, observations, documents and surveys in order to discover and describe the participants’ graphic novel reading experiences within the context they occurred (Yin, 2014). A further advantage of the qualitative case study format is that it is based on a close collaboration between researcher and participating students (Merriam, 2009).

3.2 The study’s context and participants

Research for this study was conducted at an upper secondary school in Western Norway. The school has 1090 students and offers both general studies and vocational education programs. Because this research project aimed at examining the potential of graphic novels as multimodal reading material in an upper secondary EFL environment, I used a purposeful convenience sampling strategy to recruit participants that could best help me understand the central phenomenon (Merriam, 2009). Thus, participants were recruited from two heterogenic, mixed ability vocational classes where the researcher was also the English teacher. One class consisted of thirteen students (age 17-18) attending Vg2 Electrical Engineering, the other class comprised thirteen students (age 17-18) attending the Vg2 education programme Automation. These are predominantly male dominated vocational studies and this was reflected in the study’s sample, which consisted of twenty-three male students and only three female students, all of whom attended Vg2 Automation. While it is not within the scope nor the aim of the present research to investigate whether gender played a part of the students’ experiences with the graphic novel medium, and though I did not detect any gender differences in the participants’ interactions with, and perceptions of, the comics medium, it should nevertheless be noted that the gender biased sample population might have influenced the study’s findings and conclusions.

In vocational education programs, the mandatory English subject runs over two years with 56 of the total 140 teaching hours (given in sixty minute units) assigned to the second

year. The course is normally organized in one ninety minutes period per week. This study was planned for five such classroom periods in each class and was conducted during five consecutive weeks in February/March 2015. The participants' English language skills and reading competencies varied greatly, including both highly proficient and struggling readers. Consistent with the aims and characteristics of qualitative research, this heterogeneity allowed for diverse voices to be heard and gave me a chance to collect data from multiple realities (Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2012; Merriam, 2009).

Since this is an instrumental case study in which the classes were treated as two whole, embedded units of analysis (instead of focusing on the experiences of single students), no further details will be given about individual participants (Krinsky, 2012). However, as case study research relies on sharing with the readers the contextual, real-life conditions of the bounded case, some more information about the case is required. Since both groups attended vocational education programs, the students were used to cooperating and solving tactile problems together in their respective workshops. This greatly influenced the social environment in both classes; the students were comfortable together and functioned as well-organised teams. The rate of attendance in both groups was excellent; during the course of the study only one student was absent from class and he let me know in advance, excusing profusely for having to skip the lessons in order to take his driver's licence.

As for the students' prior experiences with the comics medium and their general attitudes to reading and working with English language literature, the pre-unit survey which was carried out to gain background information about the participants constituting the case (see section 3.4.1) showed that many of the students had never read a graphic novel before. The survey also revealed that several students in both groups found reading English language literature to be somewhat difficult. The participants' attitudes towards reading literature were diverse and many students in both classes reported that they did not enjoy doing so. When asked in an open question what it would take for a literary text to engage them the responses in both groups were quite similar, with the students pointing to the significance of the text being exciting, well written and relevant to their age group and interests.

In a qualitative case study, the researcher must also be considered a participant in the research and my prior experiences will most certainly have shaped the approach to this study. I believe a very brief synopsis is adequate in this case; I have been teaching English at all levels in upper secondary school for the past twenty-five years and I also teach social science and French. My love for reading was kindled at an early age by picture books and comics, and

my curiosity concerning the didactic potential of graphic novels is therefore rooted in a long-held respect for the storytelling medium of comics.

3.3 Procedures

3.3.1 The reading project

As context forms an undistinguishable part of the phenomenon being investigated in case studies (Merriam, 2009), this section provides a general description of how the participants were prepared prior to reading the graphic novels and how the reading project was organised. The in-class environment I aimed at creating was consistent with the New London Group's (1996) pedagogical framework described in section 2.1.5. The aim was to “design learning experiences through which learners develop strategies for reading the new and unfamiliar, in whatever form these may manifest themselves” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009, pp. 176-177).

The reading project was designed to be an integral part of the ordinary English lessons and focused on implementing LK06's broadened perspective of literacy and reading (see section 1.3). Briefly put, *being able to read* in English means “the ability to create meaning by reading different types of texts” (NDET, 2013, p. 5) and involves the ability “to understand, explore, discuss, learn from and to reflect upon different types of information” (p. 5). More specifically, the graphic novel project sought to meet pedagogical objectives related to two competence aims in the main subject area *Culture, Society and Literature* which state that, “the pupils shall be able to discuss and elaborate on different types of English language literary texts from different parts of the world” and “to discuss and elaborate on English language films and *other forms of cultural expressions from different media*” (NDET, 2013, p. 11, my emphasis). How the reading project was organised in class is briefly outlined in the table below. The procedures were the same for both classes.

Table 3.1 Outline of the reading project procedures

Session	Aims	Types of activities
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activate students' prior knowledge. • Raise awareness of central comics conventions. • Model and scaffold strategies for reading graphic novels through situated, cooperative learning activities. • Develop a shared metalanguage for discussing graphic narratives, with a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PowerPoint presentation including “teacher think aloud”, a strategy where the teacher shares her thinking in a conversational manner while reading images (Brozo et al., 2014, p.33). • Full class discussions of artistic conventions used in comics illustrations. • Pair work focused on camera shots:

	particular focus on visual design elements.	framing, perspectives and angles. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared reading of Kim’s graphic short story <i>Hurdles</i> (2006). Prior to reading the full story, the students were engaged in a variety of activities (see appendix 5).
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a shared metalanguage for discussing graphic narratives, with a particular focus on colour as a meaning-making resource and how panel shapes affect reading speed. Model and scaffold strategies for reading graphic novels through situated, cooperative learning activities. Interact with the meaning potential of the graphic novels’ available designs. Design and re-design meanings. Reflect on, discuss and analyse some aspects of the graphic narratives in a community of learners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mini-lecture, again including teacher read-aloud and plenary discussions. Students started individual readings of the graphic novel they had selected. Peer group discussions (discussion prompts for each graphic novel are provided in appendix 6).
3 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interact with the meaning potential of the graphic novels’ available designs. Design and re-design meanings. Reflect on, discuss and analyse some aspects of the graphic narratives in a community of learners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual readings Peer group discussions
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interact with the meaning potential of the graphic novels’ available designs. Design and re-design meanings. Reflect on the graphic novel reading experiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual readings The students answered the survey interview (appendix 7) shortly after having finished reading their books.

3.3.2 Presentation of the graphic novels used in the study

Several considerations guided the selection of texts to be included in the study. For instance, some practical matters needed to be kept in mind. Due to the limited time allotted to English lessons in Vg2 and the time constraints of the project, the texts could not be too comprehensive (maximum length 200 pages). Moreover, I wished to include more than one graphic novel in the study because as McCloud (2006) notes, “[I]f one flavour of comics is all you try, you might never taste the difference” (p. 228). Since the students would be reading different books in class, the four graphic novels selected had to be of approximately the same length and complexity. Given that I had not previously used graphic novels as reading material in the English classroom, my list of criteria for selecting texts was informed by guidelines developed by other literacy researchers (e.g., Brozo, Moorman and Meyer, 2014;

Chandler-Olcott, 2008; Connors, 2010). These were adapted to suit the needs and purposes of the present study. The graphic novels chosen for the study should:

- Be created exclusively for the medium (ruling out adaptations of prose novels).
- Show varied use of comics (and artistic) conventions, i.e. the size and shape of speech balloons and panels, page layout, perspective and framing.
- Contain high quality artwork. In the context of this study, this meant that the graphic novel illustrations, colouring and lettering should function to add layers of depth to the characterisations and themes of the graphic narrative.
- Be from the English-speaking world (i.e., ruling out Manga from Japan) and present themes or represent genre qualities relevant to the English curriculum.
- Raise issues and themes that were complex enough to inspire the intended audience to engage in thoughtful discussions and diverse interpretations (Rosenblatt, 1995).
- Represent a range of genres in order to fully capture the textual diversity of the medium.
- Be critically acclaimed and/or recommended by professional organisations such as YALSA (Young Adult Library Services Association, USA).

The selection of graphic novels employed in the study adhered to the criteria listed above, and was further guided by the participants' responses to the survey asking about their reading habits and attitudes which was distributed prior to the start of the reading project (see section 3.4.1). This questionnaire revealed that the students in both groups preferred the following genres: fantasy, adventure, science fiction, mystery and horror (appendix 11). Thus, I attempted to find graphic novels in these genres which also complied to the criteria listed above. The four graphic novels included in the study are briefly presented in the following sections.

Pride of Baghdad

The social and political allegory *Pride of Baghdad* (Vaughan & Henrichon, 2006) addresses two fundamental, universal questions: what are the ultimate costs of war and the true nature of freedom? Listed in YALSA's 2007 "Top Ten Great Graphic Novels for Teens", this anthropomorphic graphic novel documents and explores the experiences of a pride of lions for the best part of a day following the American invasion of Iraq in 2003. The novel is based on actual events from April that year, when four lions escaped Baghdad Zoo in the aftermath of

an American bomb raid. *Pride of Baghdad*'s plot revolves around the pride's struggle to survive and find safety in a society ravaged by war and readers are invited to closely follow the small family of lions as they struggle to prevail in an unknown, hostile world where their natural instincts are called into question. Through its allegorical portrayal of the animal protagonists and their conflicting perspectives on freedom the graphic novel affords the readers a glimpse into Iraqi civilian life during times of war and deals with complex issues related to the nature of occupation, war and freedom.

Henrichon's artistic choices concerning the graphic novel's colour palette contributes greatly to establishing *Pride of Baghdad*'s tone and mood. Throughout the story, detailed natural surroundings are subtly and intricately rendered in an earthy palette of muted browns and greens which serve as a powerful contrast to the fiery red and orange colour scheme used in scenes depicting the violent, chaotic atmosphere in war ravaged Baghdad. Variations in panel size reflects changes in the narrative pace, with large double-splash pages (often bleeds) used to emphasise more contemplating moments or particularly powerful scenes in the story. Henrichon's detailed illustrations give life to each lion's unique personality and contribute to expressing their respective perspectives on freedom gained through war as opposed to the safety of captivity. Frequent use of close-up shots depicting human-like emotional states in the lions' faces serves to amplify the impact of the pride's struggles. Replete with visual symbolism and metaphors, this graphic allegory offers readers a chance to explore how the literary device of anthropomorphism could be used in graphic novels as an effective tool for making statements about controversial social and political issues which might otherwise be difficult to debate.

Fables 1: Legends in Exile

This fourteen times Eisner Award¹⁰ winning series *Fables* (Willingham, Medina, Leiahola, Hamilton 2012) spins a revisionist fantasy tale set in contemporary New York, where well-known characters from folkloric myths, legends and fairy tales are forced into exile from their original homelands. United by a common fate they now live in secret coexistence with "the mundies" (humans) in a highly advanced community called Fabletown. Their struggle to come to grips with the demands of modern life and their role as fictional characters hiding as refugees in a real world is one of the driving themes of the series, and the manner in which archetypal characters from different literary works are made to interact and forge new relationships form part of the series' depth. The trade paperback *Fables 1: Legends in Exile*

¹⁰ The Eisner Awards is the American comic industry's equivalent of the Oscar Awards.

(2012) collects the first five issues of the series and could be read as a stand-alone graphic novel. On a superficial level, the plot is in many respects a traditional “who-dunnit” where the readers are invited to join sheriff Bigby Wolf (the Big Bad Wolf of the fairy tales) to search for visual and textual clues in the hunt for the alleged murderer of Snow White’s sister Rose Red.

The artwork in *Fables 1: Legends in Exile* is created by a team of artists and their collaborative efforts include making innovative use of medium specific conventions such as the traditional panel grid layout – or in this case, oftentimes lack thereof – to add to the surreal sense of the Fables’ fantasy world. Also, elaborately ornate panel borders are used to signal flashbacks in the narrative or to remediate scenes from the time of fairy tales. Above all, the artwork and iconography (such as costumes and interiors) add unique layers to the multiple intertextual references found in the graphic novel’s linguistic design by visually alluding to characters and themes from the original tales. This means that *Fables 1: Legends in Exile* could provide readers with a good starting point for exploring the notion of intertextuality and how one’s understanding and interpretation of a text is influenced by one’s cultural knowledge of other texts.

Severed

Severed (Snyder, Tuft and Futaki, 2013) is a dark, historical horror tale that touches on “fundamental human concerns – fear and curiosity” (Eisner, 2008b, p. 76), in this case; the fear of the unknown, the invisible evil, and the anticipation that comes with knowing more than the story’s young protagonist. In flashbacks, *Severed* tells the story of twelve years old Jack Garron, who upon finding out that he is adopted sets out on a quest to discover his true identity and re-join with his birthfather, only to find the hopelessness of the American Dream amid hobos and poor travellers struggling to make a living in the grim social reality of America in 1916. More character driven than most traditional horror comics, *Severed* slowly builds up tension and a sense of psychological terror as the reader watches young Jack naively form a close relationship with the man whose background is kept a mystery, but who literally intends to devour him.

Futaki’s detailed and naturalistic artwork gives readers a glimpse into a long bygone era of American culture and history. The art is also what truly brings to life the sense of ambiguity and fear which looms over the story. Though the book does have some disturbing illustrations, the artist does not rely on explicit depictions of horror to create a sense of suspense and fear. Instead, tension is built through careful choice of perspective and framing

in the panels. Notably, Futaki's illustrations carry much of the eerie atmosphere which characterises *Severed*'s story world; dark colours connoting danger coupled with low-key lighting and shading is frequently used to mask the characters and settings, blurring the reader's sense of reality and suggesting instead a foreboding feeling of evil lurking in the shadows. As such, the sense of terror in *Severed* draws most of its lifeblood from the reader's own imagination and the book offers readers an interesting example of how suspense may be narrated and visually created in the storytelling medium of comics.

Who is Jake Ellis?

The key puzzle of this action-filled graphic novel is captured in its title: *Who is Jake Ellis?* (Edmondson & Zonjic, 2012). The trade paperback, which collects all five issues of the original mini series, tells the story of CIA analyst and mercenary for hire Jon Moore who finds himself criss-crossing Europe in an attempt to escape people who are intent on capturing him. The central twist of the story lies in the paradox that while Jon is considered the best man in his field he has survived to become so mainly due to the advice and protection from Jake Ellis, a character invisible to everyone else and whose personality is a mystery also to Jon. The question pertaining to the identity of Jake Ellis and the actual nature of his relationship with Jon lends to the narrative a certain philosophical flair; is he simply a case of doubling, a personification of Jon's two selves, or is he in fact a real person? While the story is too action-primed to allow for any three-dimensional character development, the dialogue between Jake and Jon, tightly rendered in Edmondson's clean prose, offers the readers insights into the mysterious nature of their relationship.

The appeal of this particular graphic novel rests not on its literary depth but on its artistic merit. What the book has to offer its readers is a highly original, almost conceptual take on the graphic novel medium's ability to convey narrative action, mood and movement through its artwork. Visually striking, Zonjic's illustrations are raw, simplistic and devoid of any unnecessary details and the artist creates a sense of fluid movement through deliberate changes in pacing, perspective and panel size which lend to the graphic narrative a certain cinematic feel comparable to that of watching an animated film (Brothers, 2011). Add to this Zonjic's innovative use of colours, for example to signal narrative shifts such as flashbacks or change of scenes, and the graphic novel becomes a truly interesting pick for exploring how spatial, visual and linguistic design elements cooperate as story telling partners in graphic novels.

3.4 Data collection

To fully illuminate the issue under investigation, Yin (2014) states that case study inquiry relies on many types of data, which with data needing to integrate in a triangulating fashion. Consequently, the following empirical data was collected in the field to shed light on the study's purpose and research questions: a pre-unit background questionnaire, a written survey interview, observations and field notes, written student documents and two semi-structured focus group interviews. This section accounts for the data collection strategies utilised in the study¹¹.

3.4.1 Survey interviews

Two survey interviews were distributed to participants during the course of the present study. First, as mentioned in section 3.2, a brief questionnaire (appendix 4) was distributed to the participants prior to the start of the reading project. This was done in order to contextualise the case study and gain insight into the participants' prior knowledge of graphic novels, their reading preferences and their attitudes to reading literature and what genre of graphic novel they would prefer to read. Based on the participants' responses (appendix 11), I made the final decisions regarding reading material and didactic approach to the graphic novel project. A second written interview survey was distributed to participants to be answered in class immediately following the conclusion of the graphic novel reading project (appendix 7). This survey consisted of fourteen questions which sought to gain insight into the participants' positive as well as negative experiences with reading an English language graphic novel. To ensure that the surveys would be comprehensible and easy to answer for all students regardless of their English language competence as well as to signify that they were not part of the ordinary English lessons, both were written in Norwegian.

The design of the final survey interview included seven close ended questions (with room for elaborating comments) and seven open-ended questions. I am aware that using quantifiable data is contested in qualitative research where numeric data is commonly used only to provide demographical information (Maxwell, 2010). However, as part of a broader discussion of the use of numerical data in qualitative research, Maxwell (2010) notes that "the use of numbers is a legitimate and valuable strategy for qualitative researchers when it is used

¹¹ Please note that given limitations of space in the present thesis, it was not possible to include the full set of survey questions, discussion prompts for each of the four graphic novels and focus group interview guide in this section. Instead, these documents are enclosed in the appendices section.

as a complement to an overall process orientation to the research” (p. 480) provided researchers are aware of potential dangers such as making inappropriate inferences based on quantifiable data. My intention when including the close-ended questions in the final survey was not to imply “the existence of a single, ‘objective’ reality that can be measured and statistically analysed to reach generalizable conclusions” (Maxwell, 2010, p. 475), or to distract from the value of the rich, qualitative data collected through interviews, observations, documents and open-ended survey questions. Nor was it intended to introduce a mixing of qualitative and quantitative methods.

Instead, my aim was two-fold. First, being aware of potential pitfalls related to my dual role as teacher/researcher and the fact that I was a novice to the field of applied research, I believed that having all participants answer the same close-ended questions could capture important instances I might have overlooked and function as a safeguard against potentially selective observations stemming from having just one researcher in the classroom, thus supporting the internal credibility of the study. Second, I believed that incorporating some numerical data would facilitate the recognition of regularities or diversities in the participants’ perceptions and reveal clear patterns of distribution *within* the study’s sample and extensive data corpus (Maxwell, 2010). Failing to provide such general descriptions to contextualise the raw data such as participant quotes, Merriam (2009) writes, is a typical weakness in reports of fieldwork research (p. 255).

However, on hindsight I recognise that my aims could just as well have been accomplished by designing these questions differently. For instance, upon the first reading of the final survey I discovered that no participants had written comments that could elaborate on their close-ended answers. Instead, they had moved straight on to answer the open-ended questions in the second part of the survey interview. Looking back, I realise I should have anticipated this and specifically instructed participants to support their “tick-off” answers in writing instead of just leaving an open space for random comments. Or perhaps even better; I could have avoided this type of closed questions altogether and instead designed fully open questions also in the first part of the survey. Recognising this weakness in the survey design I wish to emphasise that no inferences should be made as to the generalisability of these particular findings to other contexts beyond the study’s sample. Furthermore, to underscore the process-oriented, qualitative nature of the present study, the findings from this part of the data set will in chapter four be reported using appropriate non-specific terms such as “many”, “few” and “several” (Maxwell, 2010).

3.4.2 Documents

Twice during the reading project, participants studying the same graphic novel were organised in peer groups during class. The groups were heterogenic and consisted of three to five students each. The discussion prompts for each graphic novel (appendix 6) were designed to provide participants opportunities to share their thoughts and impressions and were meant to serve as springboards for students' aesthetic and analytical exploration of the graphic novels. Amongst other things, the questions focused on elements of the graphic narratives' available design elements and the students' responses to the multimodal texts. After the peer group meetings, in which the students discussed their thinking and collaborated to design new reflections on the works they had studied, the participants were asked to write brief notes in English summing up their thoughts and ideas on the issues they had been discussing (appendix 13).

Other written student documents include participants in class A's written answers to the discussion questions for Kim's (2004) graphic short story *Hurdles* (appendix 5). Originally, I had not intended these questions to be answered fully in writing. However, during the plenary discussion with class B I realised how difficult it was to capture the students' reflections and comments in my field notes while I was also acting as discussion facilitator. I therefore asked participants in class A to write down some thoughts (in English) to the discussion prompts prior to the full class discussion (appendix 12).

Data from both sets of student documents helped me obtain a more detailed understanding of how the the graphic novel medium offered participants opportunities to interact with a variety of available design elements and how participants designed and redesigned meanings with these meaning making resources.

3.4.3 Observations and field notes.

Observations take place in the actual real-world context in which the phenomenon under investigation occurs and thus represent an important first-hand encounter with the processes of interest. In this case study, observations and field notes were useful supplements to data collected through interviews, documents and surveys (Merriam, 2009). Observations were conducted throughout the study, and my role as observer constantly adapted to the situation in the classroom. Because I was acting as both teacher and researcher, I most frequently took on the role as a participant observer, facilitating learning activities at the same time as I was observing and taking notes of students' comments and the classroom environment (Creswell,

2014). When the students were engaged in peer group discussions, I adopted a more withdrawn stance, circulating the classroom only to become involved if directly called upon to do so. While the students were reading the graphic novels in class my role shifted to that of a non-participant observer, recording their reactions and reading behaviour from a distance (Creswell, 2014).

During observations I attempted to keep a focus on issues relevant to the study's research questions by concentrating on two main factors; student behaviours (i.e. how they acted while they were reading, how they interacted in the peer groups) and the ideas they shared during class discussions. As I was often required to organise activities while conducting the observations, I found it hard to maintain comprehensive field notes during class. Some direct quotations (and sometimes only the main points) of participant comments were noted down, and immediately after class I composed more extensive field notes. In addition to providing factual descriptions from the classroom these include a reflective component (Merriam, 2009). The informal reflections were set in italics in the running narrative of my field notes to distinguish them from the more factual descriptions.

The nature of the field notes, which contained quite detailed accounts of participants' actions and interactions in addition to my subjective, interpretive reflections on these issues, could make identification of individual participants possible (for instance by a participant audience) if published with this thesis. The information letter (appendix 3) signed by participants prior to the study, on the other hand, ensured them full anonymity. With reference to researchers' obligation to respect the integrity of human participants who are subject to observation and interpretation, the advice from National Committees for Research in Norway (2006) in matters where conflicting considerations must be weighed against each other is clear; "due caution is required, especially when an individual is identifiable, e.g. when individuals and groups can be recognised in research reports" (p. 11). Therefore, the full transcript of the field notes is not included in the present thesis. I am aware that this might reduce the transparency of the data analysis by not providing readers with the opportunity to follow the derivation of evidence gathered from this supplementary set of data (Yin, 2014). Thus, to offer readers at least some insight into the nature of the field note transcripts, an example page is attached in appendix 10.

3.4.4 Semi-structured focus group interviews

To corroborate and elaborate on the information gained from observations, student documents and the second survey interview, two focus group interviews including five participants each were held shortly after the conclusion of the graphic novel reading project. According to Creswell (2014), focus groups are to be preferred “when the interaction among interviewees will likely yield the best information and when interviewees are similar to and cooperative with each other” (p. 240). In this case, I hoped that a focus group design would allow the students to share their reflections more freely and spontaneously than they would have in an individual interview with a researcher who was also their teacher. I also believed that the social interaction between the focus group participants might help construct valuable knowledge about issues involved in graphic novel reading.

Ideally, I would have employed a sampling strategy drawing on information from the students’ written documents as well as insights gained from classroom observations when selecting the five participants for each of the focus group interviews. However, ethical considerations made this impossible since I had promised the participants full anonymity in all written data (see section 3.6). Instead, I aimed at creating a focus group comprised of students who were comfortable together and confident enough to stand their ground if differences of opinions occurred. I also sought to have readers of various graphic novels represented and to include students with varying degrees of English reading competence. Finally, to avoid a biased sample, I took care to create groups consisting of students who I felt had expressed nuanced perspectives on the experience of reading graphic novels during the course of the study and made it a point to include two female students from group A.

According to Yin (2014), interviews in case study research will be more like guided conversations than structured queries. To guide the conversation in the focus group, I created a semi-structured interview guide (appendix 8) focusing on issues relevant to the study’s research questions. Conducting a semi-structured focus group interview was advantageous as its flexibility allowed me to pose additional questions to probe for clarification or follow unexpected, interesting turns in the conversation. The tone of the interviews was informal and the conversation among the students flowed naturally as they offered their opinions and followed up on each other’s thoughts and ideas. Given the diversity of the students’ reflections and the unpredictable nature of their responses, the interviews frequently took other directions than I had anticipated and included more questions than indicated in the interview guide. I consider this to be an asset of this particular form of interview; that new

knowledge is spontaneously constructed in the interaction between participants. However, when reviewing the recordings from the first interview conducted in group B, I realised that my lack of interview experience and my intention not to intrude unnecessarily on the participants' exchange of meanings had at times caused the discussion to waver too far beyond the intended track. While all original issues and questions were covered and the diversions yielded interesting pieces of information, I attempted to keep a more structured focus in the second focus group interview with group A.

Both focus group interviews were held in Norwegian (see section 3.4.1). Focus group A's interview lasted for approximately fifty-two minutes while the interview with focus group B lasted for forty-seven minutes. With the participants' permission the interviews were recorded and then transcribed verbatim by the researcher to provide the best database for analysis (Merriam, 2009). Again, with the participants' permissions, the full transcripts of both interviews are included in appendix 15. The students are referred to using pseudonyms.

3.5 Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis, says Merriam (2009), involves “consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read – it is the process of making meaning” (p. 176). In my quest for meaning – and ultimately; tentative answers to my research questions, I followed Creswell's (2014) outline of six interwoven steps involved in analysing and interpreting qualitative data, which include preliminary reading, coding, thematic development, representation, interpretation and validation.

To get a general feel for the material, I started preliminary readings and organizing of data (e.g. transcribing the interviews and typing out field notes) immediately after collecting the information. Because case study research involves collecting an extensive amount of data, I heeded Yin's (2014) advice on how to keep track of the various information sources by bringing them together in a case study database. The data from the two embedded units of the case were stored in two separate folders in the protocol and analysed separately, then compared.

Yin (2014) suggests that novice researchers might use the study's guiding questions as their point of departure when analysing the extensive amount of case study data, which is what I did. In the coding and thematic development stages I employed a constant-comparative

approach¹² to the analysis, a strategy frequently used in case studies (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2014). To explore the first question, which sought to uncover how graphic novels could create opportunities for cultivating EFL students' multimodal reading literacies, I chose a deductive approach by using the already existing categories of Available Designs developed by the New London Group (1996) as a guide when organising the data. This would allow for a systematic exploration of the semiotic meaning making resources the students drew from as they were engaging in multimodal reading of graphic novels. For instance, any reference the participants made to colour as a meaning making resource was grouped into the category "visual design", as were comments about how perspective affected their understanding of the story's characters and their relationships. This was done by colour-coding the data from the written student documents and interview transcripts. An example of this colour-coding is provided in appendix 9.

The procedures outlined above were for the most part replicated for the second research question, which asked how the students experienced reading English language literature through the medium of graphic novels. However, this time the data material was analysed in an inductive process instead of relying on predetermined categories. The initial open coding involved "playing" with the data (Yin, 2014), scrutinising chunks of evidence and comparing these with other material to look for instances and initial patterns that might capture how the students perceived of their interactions with the graphic narratives and how they reflected on their reading experiences. Interesting findings were underlined and reduced to preliminary code labels written in the margins of the transcripts, field notes, interview surveys and student documents. Throughout this process I kept making reflections and asking questions, trying to make the invisible visible. Next, I looked for connections between the initial open codes and grouped these together in order to develop broader, less descriptive themes (Merriam, 2009).

3.6 Ethical considerations

When conducting qualitative research involving human participants in an educational setting, there are several ethical questions to consider. Respect for individuals participating in the research is paramount and this includes an obligation to respect the informants' integrity, their right to free, informed consent and protection of privacy through confidentiality (National Committees for Research in Norway, 2006). Since I was drawing on information from my

¹² Originally developed by Glaser and Strauss in 1967

own students, ethical issues regarding the dual role of teacher and researcher were taken into account and reflected upon throughout the whole research cycle (Skaalvik, 1999). Because this project involved gathering personal data by using a computer it was subject to notification to the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD). Permission was granted from NSD in September 2014 (appendix 1). Permission to conduct the study was also obtained from my school's headmaster (appendix 2).

Several steps were taken to protect the rights of participants during this research. Consent letters describing the purpose of the study and the measures taken to protect the participants' anonymity and confidentiality were distributed after I had presented and discussed the study in class, emphasising that participation was voluntary (appendix 3). These were signed and returned to me prior to the start of the research. All students in both classes volunteered to participate. At the onset of each stage of data collection, I reminded the students that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the research at any time. To ensure anonymity, pseudonyms were used in all written data and the school's name is not revealed.

Despite the measures described above there were still some inherent ethical concerns related to this study, mainly concerning the issue of power relationships as I was the participants' teacher as well as researcher. To minimise this issue, the students created their own pseudonyms to be used in all written data so their responses would be kept anonymous also to me. Furthermore, I repeatedly stressed that their work during the reading project would not be subject to any kind of assessment, and that there were no right or wrong answers to any of the questions asked. My dual role as researcher and teacher in the participating classes also made it particularly important to clarify to the students when my role as researcher applied (National Committee for Research in Norway, 2006). One way I sought to achieve this was to conduct the survey interviews and focus group interviews in Norwegian.

A related concern was a methodological threat identified by Yin (2014) as reflexivity. Reflexivity is closely related to the notion of a researcher's potential bias, entailing that a participant replies what he or she believes the researcher wants to hear during interviews. These responses then influence the researchers' line of inquiry. To mitigate this risk, I repeatedly emphasised to the participants that in order to fully understand the didactic potential of the graphic novel medium – both its possibilities and limitations - I was looking to learn from their negative as well as positive experiences concerning graphic novel reading.

3.7 Trustworthiness and limitations

To enhance the trustworthiness of this qualitative research, a number of validation procedures were integrated into the study design. According to Yin (2014), rigorous case study research relies on establishing a firm theoretical platform by providing an intensive literature review. Thus, in order to situate my study within the knowledge base of the field I conducted a thorough review of related theoretical and empirical literature (presented in chapter two) during the planning stage of the study (Merriam, 2009). In addition to helping me to identify a research gap and refine my research questions, entering into dialogue with previous research also allowed me to make informed decisions regarding methodological choices such as research design. Furthermore, to secure credibility and dependability¹³ through *triangulation* (comparing and cross-checking) of data, the data corpus was collected using a variety of methods (described in section 3.4). To build a deeper understanding of the issues under investigation and to add opportunities for contrasting and corroborating findings, two embedded units of analysis were incorporated into the single case study (Yin, 2014). To ensure a balanced investigation of the phenomenon of graphic novel reading and to mitigate potential biases, I looked for *negative cases* (data that support alternative explanations) during the data analysis process (Merriam, 2009).

In this study, the researcher was the primary instrument of both data collection and analysis. To counter misinterpretations that might arise from having “only one pair of eyes in the room” (Krinsky, 2012, p. 75) and to check if my interpretations were representative of the participants’ views, I conducted several *member checks* (Yin, 2014). During the focus group interviews I posed interpretive questions to ensure that I had captured the participants’ ideas correctly (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2009). I also solicited feedback on my preliminary notions of categories and themes by discussing these with the participating students in class at the end of the project. Furthermore, I sought to gain new perspectives and validate the plausibility of my interpretations of the raw data by discussing them with my thesis supervisor, a strategy labelled “peer examination” (Merriam, 2009, p. 220). In a similar vein, I elicited the help of a “critical friend”, a fellow English teacher with whom I discussed my initial understandings and who also assisted during translations of student quotes to be used in this thesis. To ensure that important meanings would not get lost in translation, my colleague “back-translated” my

¹³ *Credibility* (or internal validity) refers to whether the study’s findings are trustworthy given the data presented. *Dependability* deals with the issue whether the findings and conclusions of the study are consistent with the data collected (Merriam, 2009).

English back into Norwegian to see if the translations were close enough to the original to be reliable.

The present study was limited to the experiences of two groups of vocational students in one upper secondary school only. The findings are case specific and not directly transferrable to other contexts. However, as pointed out by Merriam (2009), “the force of a single example is often underestimated” (p. 53). Though case study research may not be generalizable to other situations, the uniqueness of the case may “add situational examples to the reader’s experience” (Stake, 2010, p.23). By providing rich descriptions of this empirical study’s theoretical underpinnings, its context, methods, themes and findings I have attempted to make the research robust and transparent enough to be trustworthy. Hopefully, this will also make the lessons learnt from the study relevant and useful contributions to the knowledge base in the broader field of EFL didactics.

Chapter four: presentation and discussion of findings

This chapter will present and discuss the key findings of the current qualitative study investigating the potential of the graphic novel as a multimodal reading material in an upper secondary EFL context. For organisational purposes, the findings are presented thematically by the two research questions guiding the study which asked how the graphic novel could create opportunities for fostering students' multimodal reading literacy and what other potential educative benefits graphic narrative could offer to the EFL classroom in the context of this case study (see section 1.1). A brief introduction will be provided for each section, followed by a presentation and discussion of recurring themes emerging from the empirical data collected in the two vocational classes, or sub-units, which constituted the case.

It should be kept in mind that since the present research is designed as an instrumental case study (Stake, 1994) in which the aim is to investigate the phenomenon of graphic novel reading in an educational context and not the unique reading experiences of individual students, the findings presented in this chapter draw from the full choir of student voices that constituted the case. In order to retain the authenticity of this panoply of voices, participants' written responses from classroom work (appendices 12,13) are quoted as they were written, including instances of grammar and spelling mistakes. As explained in sections 3.4.1. and 3.4.4., the survey interviews and focus group interviews were conducted in Norwegian. Student quotes from these documents (appendices 11,14,15) are presented as they were translated by the researcher following the validation procedures described in section 3.7. Student responses are coded as follows: sAb means 'student A in class B'. The coding is consistent within each data set (student A is the same throughout) but not across data sets.

Following Merriam's (2009) advice on how to present evidence in qualitative research reports, the student quotes will be woven into the running narrative (p. 254). To protect the anonymity of the three female students who participated in the study, all participants will be referred to as male. Ideally, the findings from each sub-unit should have been presented separately before being compared through cross-unit analysis (Yin, 2014). However, the limited scope of the present thesis refrains me from doing so. Hence, themes emerging from the cross-unit analysis following the initial analysis of the two unique sub-units constituting the case are what will be discussed in the subsequent sections of chapter four.

4.1 Reading graphic novels by Design

One strand of the present study sought to explore how the graphic novel medium could create opportunities for fostering EFL students' multimodal reading literacy. In the following six sections, I will report on the main themes emerging from the data set and discuss these findings through the lenses of the multiliteracies and multimodality frameworks, the comics framework and the transactional framework presented in chapter two.

As described in section 3.5, the empirical data collected in order to understand how the multimodal format of the graphic novel could offer the participants possibilities to read by design, a process that involves creating multimodal meaning with a variety of modes, was organised into the already existing categories representing the available designs of multimodal texts (NLG, 1996). These integrated meaning making resources include the graphic texts' visual, gestural, spatial, audio and linguistic modes multimodal design (see figure 2.1). It should be noted, though, that all these design elements are represented through the graphic narratives' visual format and work in concert to realise the texts' full multimodal meaning potential.

4.1.1 Available visual design

The available visual design resources in graphic novels - the found representational forms which the readers may draw upon when designing and re-designing meanings – include elements such as framing, perspective, colours and lighting (Jacobs, 2007a, 2007b; NLG, 1996). For the sake of clarity, the discussion of findings related to graphic novels' visual design resources is divided into two sub-sections; *perspective and framing* and *colours*.

4.1.1.1 *Perspective and framing*

During plenary and peer group discussions, in their written notes following these discussions and during the focus group interviews, the participants constituting the case in this study shared how they negotiated meaning from aspects of the graphic texts' visual design elements. The responses suggested that the elements of *perspective* and *framing* in panels served as important visual meaning making resources to the students. As discussed in section 2.2.3 of chapter two, a useful metaphor for understanding the concepts of frame and perspective in graphic narratives is to think of them as “the reader's camera” (McCloud, 2006, p. 24), indicating from which distance the scene is depicted and from which angle the scene is

observed. The manipulation of the reader's viewpoint through perspective and framing is, according to Eisner (2008a), a powerful narrative device frequently employed by comics artists "to manipulate and provoke various emotional states in the reader" (p. 92).

In the current study, participants in both classes seemed to negotiate experiential meanings from the representational metafunction (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) of framing and perspective to infer relationships between the graphic narratives' characters. Furthermore, the data set also suggests that participants drew interpersonal meanings from the interactional metafunction of perspective and framing to understand how they as readers were positioned and to reflect on the impact this had on their imaginary relationship with the depicted characters and the narrative world.

The first indications of how students were sensitive to experiential meanings communicated through the creators' choice of perspective and framing occurred during the initial phase of the reading project, as the students engaged in a shared reading of Kim's (2006) graphic short story *Hurdles*. After reading, they were asked to discuss their impressions of the story's main antagonist (the coach of the school's track team) based on the visual design elements in the illustrations. Critically reflective in their subsequent written responses, participants in class A shared ways in which perspective and framing impacted on their interpretations (appendix 12). For instance, one student noted that,

"[p]utting the coach in the middle of the frame makes him look important. The artist also used ultra-zoom shots which makes the coach seem dominating. And he makes the boy feel really small by using frog-perspective. This shows that the coach is the boss and the boy can't do nothing about it" (sGa, appendix 12).

By drawing attention to how the framing and camera angles chosen for these panels add to the reader's recognition of the power imbalance governing the relationship between these two characters, the student seemed to be aware that the visual representation in these panels is not coincidental but constitutes a deliberate narrative choice made by the artist.

Next, participants responded to interpersonal meanings communicated through visual design elements such as framing, angle and perspective. In particular, the cartoonists' use of close-up framing in which the represented narrative character looks directly on the reader seemed to affect participants' emotional and affective engagement with the graphic story's characters and story world. As explained by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), positioning the reader so that she meets the direct gaze of the depicted character is a rhetorical device which serves two main purposes. First, it addresses and acknowledges the reader with a visual "you"

(p. 117). Second, such direct eye contact is intended to engage the reader in an imaginary social relation with the depicted character. In other words; the gaze “demands” the reader’s attention. One participant’s written comments following the peer group discussions in class B make explicit how this visual arts technique served to evoke a sense of personal intimacy between the readers and the narrative characters in *Pride of Baghdad* (Vaughan & Henrichon, 2006)¹⁴. “They look at you”, the student noted, “and it feels like you know them” (sCb, appendix 13). In a similar vein, other participants argued that such illustrations made them “feel like we connect in some way” (sBa, appendix 13), as if the lions “want to tell you something” (sAb, appendix 13).

Foregrounding how meeting the eyes of the anthropomorphised lions at close range served to create a shared bond between the readers and the big cats, the students’ reflections put the spotlight on the key communicative power of “the gaze”: it serves to imaginarily put the reader “in the position of a friend” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 116). Consequently, the readers’ feelings of compassion for the fictional characters are evoked, fostering a stronger sense of personal engagement with the text. The emotional impact of the gaze is incredibly strong, leading Keen (2011) to suggest that such graphic novel illustrations actually serve as “fast tracks to narrative empathy” (p. 1).

According to McCloud (2006), the narrative power of sequential art rests on “how the reader’s mind is persuaded to care about what it sees” (p. 3). A participant’s written reflections to question thirteen in the final survey encapsulates this notion of narrative empathy which also comics artist Eisner (2008b) holds to be a core asset of the comics medium. Asked to reflect on a particularly powerful illustration from their respective graphic novels, this student described a large panel in the final pages of *Pride of Baghdad* (Vaughan & Henrichon, 2006) which depicts the small lion pride in the very moments before they are shot dead by American soldiers. Explaining why this image had moved him, the student wrote: “it becomes extra horrible when he is suddenly shot, when you have met that gaze, then it becomes personal and it really hurts when he has to die in such an unnecessary way” (sBa, appendix 14). As indicated by this response, locking eyes with the young lion cub during the tragic climax of the story seemed to call on the student’s affective as well as emotional associations; his instant recognition of the thoughts and feelings of a narrative character outside his own immediate social reality and how this experience moved him. To use a phrase of Rosenblatt’s (1995), the participant seemed to respond to “the power of

¹⁴ An example of how Henrichon uses the technique of the gaze can be seen in the inserted close-up of Zill in figure 4.1, p.63.

literature to develop capacity for feeling, for responding imaginatively to the thoughts and feelings of others” (p. 227).

How looking directly into the eyes of depicted characters seemed to hold a particularly powerful interpersonal significance to the readers was, rather ironically, made obvious in instances when they were deprived from doing just that. Readers of *Hurdles* (Kim, 2007) and *Severed* (Snyder & et al., 2013) alike reported of a general sense of unease and distrust in characters who directly addressed them from behind shielded eyes in close-up shots. For instance, commenting on how the sunglasses worn by coach “Pearnose” in *Hurdles* (see figure 2.4) served to effectively shut down any possibility of readers making eye contact with him, a participant in class A explained how this impacted on his imaginary relationship with the character. “He uses sunglasses”, the student wrote, “and then you can’t see his eyes. That makes me a bit unconfutable¹⁵, because you can’t connect with him” (sCa, appendix 12). Also readers of *Severed* described how they were left with an uncomfortable feeling if they were robbed of the opportunity to meet the gaze of narrative characters in scenes when they as readers were positioned to do so. In the first chapters of this graphic novel the antagonist – masked as a gentle old salesman – is consistently portrayed wearing a large-brimmed hat concealing his eyes. During their first peer group meeting one participant in class B broached this point with his classmates, exclaiming: “[N]otice how he always hides his eyes under that hat? He’s no good, I tell you. I never trust a man if he won’t look me in the eye. No, he’s the bad guy, I’m sure, they’re just making him out as a kind old guy to fool us” (fieldnotes 25/2). Though the student did not articulate it directly, his remark suggests a critical awareness to how the comics artist’s choice of visual representation impacted on his interpretations, making him doubt the intentions of the depicted character long before it was revealed in the story that the salesman is indeed a truly dark character.

Finally, the data set suggests that the comics artists’ use of *tilted camera angle* was used by participants as a visual design resource which they imbued with symbolic narrative meaning. An instance exemplifying this happened during the focus group interview in class B as the participants were asked to give specific examples of conventions that comics artists might use to influence the readers’ perceptions of a scene. Speaking to this point, a student showed to the group the double splash panel from Vaughan and Henrichon’s (2006) war allegory *Pride of Baghdad* reproduced as figure 4.1. The scene, which occurs at the very

¹⁵ To retain the authenticity of student quotes, everything is given exactly as the students wrote it, including any typos.

beginning of the graphic novel, depicts the old male lion Zill as he first becomes aware that life as he knows it inside the walls of Baghdad zoo is about to change dramatically:



Figure 4.1 *Pride of Baghdad* (Vaughan & Hanrichon, 2006, unpaginated)

After first explaining how he interpreted the tilted camera angle as an indication that something was wrong in the narrative world, the student continued by describing the feeling this evoked in him: “you become uncertain, and you think something is happening, you notice that something is going on”. This, he argued, was because humans “want it level” (sLb, appendix 15). At first sight, the student’s final reflection may come across as somewhat naïve. However, he is in fact responding to the craftsmanship of the comics artist, who by positioning the reader’s viewpoint into the scene from a low, skewed angle aims at evoking what Eisner (2008a) calls “deep-seated primitive feelings” of insecurity and fear (p. 92). Such feelings are produced because readers tend to perceive of illustrations and images as extensions of the real world in which flat, horizontal lines signal stability whereas tilted lines accentuate notions of instability, unease, tension and movement. Put simply, tilted ground levels may be associated with the fear of losing control, of physically falling (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). In the sense that the tilted angled utilised in this panel acted on the reader’s feelings by creating a sense of insecurity, the visual design convention here served an interactional purpose by evoking the reader’s emotional engagement with the text.

Interestingly, referencing the same graphic novel another focus group participant built on his classmate’s observations to show how a skewed angle could also serve a compositional purpose. The student argued that the tilted angle used in a panel depicting the pride of lions’ encounter with the blood-thirsty bear Fajer could be interpreted to foreshadow that they were going to die (sEb, appendix 15). Together, these two learners’ observations suggest their awareness to the rhetorical function of the artists’ choice of camera angle and indicate how

they, by interpreting interpersonal and even textual meanings from the particular angle and perspective employed in these panels, designed meanings which were not otherwise stated in the graphic novel's text.

4.1.1.2 Colours

Another dimension of the graphic novels' visual design from which participants in this study negotiated meaning was the *colours* used in the artwork. In their extensive analysis of the communicative functions of colour, Kress and van Leeuwen (2002, 2006) suggest that while the communicative power of colour is commonly related to that of affect, which is an aspect of the interactional metafunction, it is not restricted to this dimension. Colour may also take on a representational function, for instance to denote places (such as in maps) and ideas (such as the colour red used to signify danger or love). Furthermore, colour could function at a compositional level by organising and creating coherence in texts through a specific colour scheme or by signalling narrative shifts through the repetition of certain colours. Indeed, speaking from a comics artist's perspective, McCloud (1993) proposes that, "color can be a formidable ally for artists in any visual medium", a veritable "pot of gold" (p. 185).

Consistent with Kress and van Leeuwen's and McCloud's arguments, the findings from this study suggest that participating students perceived of the graphic novels' colour palette as an important element carrying narrative significance on several levels. First, readers of *Who is Jake Ellis* (Edmondson & Zonjic, 2012) seemed to cue from the artists' symbolic use of colour to infer experiential information about the mysterious main character's state of mind. As mentioned in chapter three, even though this is a relatively action-packed graphic novel its central conflict revolves around the question of identity. As illustrated in figure 4.2, the mysterious figure Jake Ellis is throughout the graphic novel depicted in a flat, grey colour, a visual cue which seemed to prompt the participants to contemplate on the elusiveness of his character. "He's dark, sort of like a shadow", one student reported in the journal (sBa, appendix 13). Likewise, noting initially how the grey colouring made Jake Ellis come across as "kind of ghostly", a student in class B went on to suggest that "[h]e seems to not have any types of emotions" (sAb, appendix 13).

Affirming how they perceived the creators' choice of grey to be narrative convention laden with significance, other students claimed that it made Jake Ellis come across as a cold man who "don't care about the rest of the people" (sDb, appendix 13). These responses suggest that the artists' choice of the colour communicated experiential meanings by calling

on the readers' culturally shared associations regarding the colour grey (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2002), and this appeared to strongly influence their interpretations of the narrative character's personality.



Figure 4.2 Who is Jake Ellis (Edmondson & Zonjic, 2012, unpaginated)

Next, participants reading *Pride of Baghdad* (Vaughan & Henrichon, 2006) and *Severed* (Snyder et al., 2013) indicated in their peer group discussions and reading journals that colour was a visual resource which influenced how they established and connected emotionally to the sense of mood in the graphic narratives. Examples of how participants inferred interpersonal meanings from colours could be seen as students reading *Pride of Baghdad* discussed artist Nico Henrichon's (2006) consistent use of a deep red and orange colour palette in scenes depicting the lion pride's experiences in the midst of war ravaged Baghdad. To give readers a sense of this graphic novels' lush, intense colour scheme, a visual example of this particular palette is provided in the panel reproduced as figure 4.3 below:



Figure 4.3 *Pride of Baghdad*, (Vaughan & Henrichon, 2006, unpaginated)

Participants in both classes shared how they associated the frequent use of dark red colours with ideas of danger, fear, fire and blood. These connotations impacted on their interpretation of the story's mood, which one student described as being "tragic and dangerous" (sCa, appendix 13). Tracing the idea that the colour red connotes danger back to Medieval times when it was regarded as a symbol of the Pentecostal fire, Kress and van Leeuwen (2002) explain how its historical meaning still resonates in our intuitive understanding of contemporary red-lined warning signs. One could argue then, that the participants seem to have responded to colours as integral elements of the graphic texts' culturally and historically received patterns of meaning (NLG, 1996).

Interestingly, students reported an awareness to how these experiential colour connotations translated into emotional responses to the story's mood, which is the domain of the interactional metafunction. As one participant noted in his journal, "[T]he colours do really make a difference. They make the seen feel real and intensifies the situation" (sCb, appendix 13). Similarly, another student commented on the artist's use of red colours that "this makes the reader feel like it is danger and also it makes the explosions feel real because it's the colour of fire..." (sDa, appendix 13). The potential of colours to create a specific sense of mood seemed to provide participants with a springboard for further reflections on the literary significance of such visual conventions. This was evident, for instance, when a student during the focus group conversation foregrounded how he believed the creators of *Pride of Baghdad* (Vaughan & Henrichon, 2006) had chosen the deep red colour palette to, "emphasise the theme" (sCa, appendix 15). Elaborating his argument, the student proposed that feelings of anger and anxiety commonly associated with warfare could be inferred from these colours. Driving this point home, he concluded by stating that, "Yes, everything the book addressed could connect to the colours. It gives you a frame of mind" (sCa, appendix 15).

Similar responses to the experiential and interactional meaning potentials found in the colours of graphic novels' artwork were shared by readers of *Severed* (Snyder et al., 2013), who discussed how dark colours and shadows were central elements in creating an ominous feeling in horror stories. As one participant in the focus group interview described it, "if there is some kind of light that makes the images pleasant, then you know that nothing scary is going to happen. If it's dark with lots of shadows and cold colours, then you sort of know that something 'bad' may happen" (sHa, appendix 15).

His remark is reflective of Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) contention that light backgrounds in images are perceived as safer than dark, simply because "in the lives of all

human beings light and dark are fundamental experiences” (p. 233) and brings to mind McCloud’s (2006) argument that the artwork in comics communicates meaning and provoke emotions “by tapping into common heritage and experience” (p. 150). The notion that the readers’ emotional and intellectual experiences constitute the spark which ignites the potential for meaning dwelling in the symbols on a page is a fundamental ingredient in what Rosenblatt (2005) calls “the organic relationship” between reader and text in aesthetic reading (p. 63).

Finally, in their discussions and interpretations, participants reading *Who is Jake Ellis?* (Edmondson & Zonjic, 2012) shared how they became cognisant of ways in which significant shifts in colour schemes were employed as a narrative device that influenced their negotiation of meaning at a textual level, informing the readers about distinct time sequences in the story line. In this graphic novel, creators Edmondson and Zonjic make use of red as the predominant colour in a sequence of panels to visually indicate flash-backs in the story’s narrative. How this colour coding informed the participants’ readings was first addressed in the peer groups, as the students debated elements of the story that they found confusing. In both classes, students debated how to interpret the red flashback sequence and in the final survey, one student chose to highlight this particular scene as the visual element in the graphic novel that had made the most significant impression on him. Expressing his utter confusion when first encountering these red-coloured panels he confessed that, “I have never thought this hard before! That’s why it made an impression” (sDb, appendix 14). The participant’s reflections are highly interesting because they demonstrate how comprehending the conventions and narrative devices employed in comics can be a challenging task (Eisner, 2008a). Also, by emphasizing how he became intrigued by the challenge of interpreting the meaning of these colour coded panels, the student indicated a high cognitive and emotional engagement in his interactions with the graphic narrative text, consistent with aesthetic reading processes (Rosenblatt, 1994,1995). In many respects, his comments lend credence to McCloud’s (1993) sardonic remark that, “understanding comics is serious business” (p. 197).

4.1.2 Available audio design

The New London Group (1996) proposed that modes of meaning represented in a text’s audio design include the elements of music and sound effects. The idea that readers may negotiate meanings from the audio design of a print medium which is completely bereft of sound might literally sound strange. However, some interesting observations surfaced during the first day of the reading project as the students were asked to assign roles and read a couple of pages

from their graphic novels out loud in their peer groups. Almost instantly, the classroom transformed into a space filled with strange, unfamiliar voices as the participants took on their different roles. In class B, several boys were speaking in falsetto to depict the voices of females or young characters in the narratives, while others lowered or otherwise changed their voices to adapt to the role and perceived personality of their assigned male characters. There were shouts, there were whispers, there were bouts of laughter as the participants in both classes wholeheartedly engaged in the tricky task of articulating the onomatopoeic utterances in their stories (field notes 25/2). It became clear that in acting out these sounds (and voices), the participants were responding to the primary means with which the static medium of comics alludes sound; its “soundtrack” of synesthetic cues projected by the style of the lettering, the shape of the speech balloons and sound effects such as the ominous “creeeeeeak” of a door sliding open in the dark (McCloud, 1993).

These first indications of how the participants interacted with the soundless audio design of graphic narratives in interesting ways were substantiated and elaborated further in the two focus group interviews. Although the participants were not specifically asked how they reacted to the “audio track” of their graphic novels, the notion of sound was addressed by several students. For instance, reflecting on how comics’ visual format allowed for a more immediate entry into the graphic novel’s story world, one participant commented, “you see at once what it looks like, you create impressions in your imagination about, yes, what sounds are there, yes, you see for instance a black cellar, kind of, and you sort of hear that it’s all quiet there”. In that way, he continued, you are not “locked into” the text, but are still free to “create the world on your own” (sHa, appendix 15). Discussing conventions used to build suspense in graphic horror novels, the same participant contemplated how horror films often rely on sound and music to create a sense of tension, while this is not possible in comics. Still, he argued, while reading “you make these sounds yourself” (sHa, appendix 15).

Building on this notion of “invisible” sound projected by the graphic novels’ audio design, another student later in the same interview told how his main way of establishing a sense of connection to the characters and the mood in the story involved, “making individual voices for each of the characters” (sWa, appendix 15). He went on to explain how these voices, as well as his own thoughts and reflections while studying the comic book art were in English, prompting two other participants to shared similar experiences. “It becomes natural”, remarked C, “because you read in English, you become engaged in the story, so the thoughts and voices, in my head at least, it becomes wrong to think in Norwegian” (sCa, appendix 15).

There are two important ideas extrapolating from these participants' quotes. First, their reflections connect with Eisner's (2008b) argument that in the static panels of graphic narratives, "[t]he reader must internally provide sound and action in support of the images" (p. 69). Indeed, the "soundless" sound of the graphic novel story world was only evoked as the students entered into a dialogue with the elements of its audio design. In doing so, participants engaged in an aesthetic reading of the multimodal text, whereby "we listen to the sound of words in the inner ear; we lend our sensations, our emotions, our sense of being alive, to the new experience which, we feel, corresponds to the text" (Rosenblatt, 1982, p. 270). The participants' mediations also revealed that they seemed to be acutely aware of how their active participation, in concert with the text's design elements, were instrumental in shaping the reading event and bringing the graphic narrative to life.

Second, by explaining how they produced and inwardly articulated these silent sounds the participants indirectly confronted a commonly held prejudice; namely that the visual format of the comics medium leaves little to be added by the readers' own imagination. Instead, their experiences lend credence to Kress' (2003) suggestion that one should not question whether or not there is imaginative space in multimodal ensembles, because there always is. A more constructive approach would be to ask "does imagination have different form or shape or characteristics with different modes?" (p. 144). While written text invites its readers to re-represent lexical units through inner visualisations (Kress, 2003), the graphic narrative adds to that by asking its readers to imaginatively bring to life the represented story world through other processes (McCloud, 1993). Even though images, as Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) note, are semantically full, drawing meaning from the comics' panels is by no means a simple case of "what you see is what you get". The images do not represent reality, but a slice of the comics' artists' illustrated version of that reality. As previously discussed in section 2.2.1, spaces are still left open for the reader to complete. This may be through committing closure, for instance by imagining the world outside the panel borders of a close-up panel or by fulfilling the virtual leap in time that has passed in the gutters between panels.

Crucially, as the above cited reflections highlight, readers are invited by the available audio design of their graphic novels to transform the depicted story world through the imaginative process of synaesthesia, "the transduction inwardly, in interpretation, between modes" (Kress, 2003, p. 145). Creating a sound track from still images is only possible if the readers actively engage their full perceptive and imaginative faculties when responding to the cues of the text to make the story world come alive. Thus, instead of closing off the

possibility of imaginative work, the design conventions of graphic novels could be seen to open up the imaginative space to include other forms of re-representations within and across modes. One might argue, then, that the field of imagination is in fact broadened to become a matter of perception rather than merely a process of inner visualisation as the reader's imagination is assigned new roles to play and new modes to play with (Reid, 2011).

4.1.3 Available gestural design

The term *Gestural Design* is somewhat misleading, as it seems to imply the traditional understanding of the concept “gesture” which refers to an individual's hand and arm movements (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). In the Multiliteracies framework, however, gestural representation takes on a broader, metaphorical meaning to denote the “physical act of signing”, as in “a gesture to...” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009, p. 178). This means that elements of a graphic narrative that embody its gestural design include (but are not limited to) the characters' facial expressions, body postures, body language and clothing (Jacobs, 2007b).

When skilfully done, comics artist Eisner (2008a) says, gestural aspects of graphic novels' artwork “can carry the narrative without resorting to unnecessary props or scenery” (p. 114). This is so because gestural design elements draw meaning from the reader's life experiences and stored memory of human conduct. From infancy, we are accustomed to observing people's non-verbal expressions, reading meaning into the silent language of gestures and facial expressions. By decoding subtle and often unconscious gestural signals we seek to deduce the hidden meanings that words so often belie. Put simply, we engage in the process of “reading and misreading minds” (Zunshine, 2011, p.116).

There were several manners in which participants in the present study responded to the tell-tale signs and experiential meanings communicated through the gestural design elements of their graphic novels. In particular, the narrative characters' faces were given a lot of attention and seemed to be perceived by readers as providing important pathways into the characters' individual personalities, a view that complements Eisner's assertion that in sequential art, the characters' facial expressions provide a “window to the mind” (Eisner, 2008a, p. 114).

Reflections from a student in class A exemplify how participants engaged in this game of mind-reading. Describing to the focus group participants how he spent much time close-reading the faces of characters in the graphic novel *Severed* (Snyder et al., 2013), the student explained why this played an important part in his reading process by arguing that,

“[A] facial expression can tell a whole lot, I believe, what they are thinking. You can analyse the person based on the facial expressions. I did that a lot.” (sHa, appendix 15). His argument was taken up by another student in the focus group, who called attention to how the visual rendering of facial expressions, frozen in time in the graphic novel’s panels, communicated emotions more readily than verbal descriptions. Making this point, the student stated, “[I]t’s not like you have a narrative voice telling you what they are thinking. They don’t say it, you just see it in their facial expressions and in a way you just understand it. It becomes something different” (sCa, appendix 15).

As indicated by the remarks cited above, facial gestures seemed to function as visual conduits into the fictional characters’ personalities, thus fulfilling a representational metafunction. The power of facial expressions to strike a cord of recognition with the students is perhaps not so surprising, since the human face has a particular ‘psychological salience’ for viewers (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 63). However, while the readers’ instant recognition of thoughts and feelings that are encoded in the graphic characters’ faces might seem to be an unconscious process, it should be kept in mind that when interpreting these non-verbal signals “a reader must not only draw on visceral reactions but make use of an accumulation of experience as well as reasoning” (Eisner, 2008b, p. 49). That is to say, the readers’ interpretations of these gestures are also based on the cultural and personal experiences they bring to the meeting with the graphic novel text (NLG, 1996; Rosenblatt, 1994, 1995). The shared understanding of these gestural features constitutes a silent “reader-storyteller contract” and is crucial to understanding comics (Eisner, 2008b, p. 49).

It is also interesting to note how participants reacted to instances where the graphic novels’ gestural design contradicted meanings conveyed through the story’s other design elements. Discussing ways in which the mysterious character Jake Ellis stood out from the rest of the characters in the graphic novel by the same name, one participant wrote that a distinguishing feature was how “his body language and facial expressions don’t matches the situations at all” (sBb, appendix 13). The student further explained how he found these visually represented contradictions confusing, fuelling his belief that the mysterious Jake Ellis might simply be a figure of the main character John’s “schizophrenic” mind (sBb, appendix 13). The participant’s reflections exemplify how he negotiated meaning by carefully contrasting the information communicated through the various design elements of the graphic novel.

Other students specifically reacted to the sense of ambiguity which was created when the characters’ facial expressions contradicted their words. For instance, discussing particular

features of the graphic novels that had caught his eye, one participant in the focus group interview explained how contradictions between the character's verbal utterances and facial expression caused him to ponder more deeply the character's emotional state, "I wasn't sure about what he felt... it made me think a bit extra, somehow" (sMa, appendix 15). The student's response seems to indicate that to him, the mismatch between the graphic novel's linguistic and gestural design evoked a sense of narrative ambiguity which made him engage more deeply with the text.

4.1.4 Available spatial design

A multimodal text's available spatial design refers to "the meanings of environmental spaces, architectural spaces" (NLG, 1996, p. 80). In graphic novels, spatial meanings are conveyed through "the layout of panels on the page and the relation of these panels through the use of gutters" (Jacobs 2007 b, p. 22).

According to McCloud (2006), panel shape and size are design elements in graphic narratives that invariably affect the pacing of the story and also the reading flow. As mentioned previously, each panel depicts a particular moment in time, and narrative action is created through the combination of panels. When readers move their eyes along a sequence of panels, they draw from the information given in each panel and connect it to the preceding and subsequent panels by mentally providing the missing pieces of information residing in the empty gutters separating each panel. This intricate process, which McCloud calls closure, is what allows the narrative action to unfold and "is comics' primary means of simulating time and motion" (McCloud, 1993, p. 69).

Participants in this study seemed to engage with the compositional meanings of graphic narratives in two distinct ways. First, the graphic novels' available spatial design elements, in particular the shape and size of panels (and consequently the gutters separating them) seemed to be perceived by students to influence their sense of action as well as their reading speed. In one instance, a group of students reading the graphic novel *Who is Jake Ellis* (Edmondson & Zonjic, 2012) started discussing how a particular page layout comprised by a series of several small panels made for "a kind of quick, jumpy rhythm" (fieldnotes 23/2). This, they argued, was instrumental in driving the narrative forward at a fast pace, creating a sense of urgent action in keeping with the genre of the text.

Interestingly, one of the students participating in this discussion exclaimed that the compositional layout caused him to "hurry from panel to panel quickly, it's almost making

me feel stressed”, alluding to an almost physical sensation of action inferred from interacting with the spatial design of the text (fieldnotes, 23/2). His reaction is evocative of Rosenblatt’s (1982) assertion that in aesthetic reading, “‘Form’ is something felt on the pulses, first of all” (p. 276). Furthermore, the participant’s observation also ties the readers’ interactions with this particular compositional layout to notions of rapid movement. As McCloud (2006) explains, if cartoonists seek to create a sense of fast-paced narrative action, they may employ many small or narrow panels in a sequence to break the reading flow into “fast, choppy” bursts (p. 54). This requires the reader to commit a series of closures in order to “mentally construct a continuous, unified reality” (McCloud, 1993, p. 67) from the unconnected moments depicted in the sequence of panels. In other words, the reader’s imagination is the fuel that allows a sense of movement to be created from the still sequence of panels.

Herein, Eisner and McCloud both argue, lies a unique aspect of the comics medium; that unlike other visual media such as film and television which carry the audience through the visual narrative, the comics medium’s inherently static nature calls upon its readers to become “willing and conscious collaborator[s]” (McCloud, 1993, p. 65) in the creation of motion. This implies that the graphic novel reader takes on the role of an engaged designer (NLG, 1996) rather than that of a passive consumer, a notion which was substantiated by a focus group participant in class B. Reflecting back on his reading experiences, he explained how, “a graphic novel is not exactly like an ordinary book, it is more like a film that you sort of create in your mind as you put together the images and text and such” (sEb, appendix 15). By indicating how he cognitively connected the sequence of panels into something best described as an animation, the student shed further light on the imaginative work that readers of sequential art may be engaged in.

On other occasions, participants contemplated how larger panels caused their reading process to slow down, inviting them to dwell on the depicted scenes. During the first peer group meeting, students who were reading *Pride of Baghdad* (Vaughan & Henrichon, 2006) were asked to discuss a double splash panel (a large illustration covering two pages) illustrating the bombing of Baghdad Zoo in 2004. The image, rich in colour and details, shows the small pride of lions as they quietly stand observing the chaos occurring as hoards of animals escape from the tumbled down walls of the zoo. In their reading journals, many students specifically mentioned how this double-page bleed slowed down the narrative pace by inviting them to linger on the details in the image. “There is so much going on”, one student wrote, “you have to slow down just to observe all that is going on in the pictures” (sEa, appendix 13). In general, participants’ observations could be seen as asserting

McCloud's claim that wider panels or large full-page panels are used for "moments that should pass more slowly" (2006, p. 54), as the absence of gutters leaves the eye time to linger on the illustration, consequently slowing down the reading pace.

Second, readers of *Severed* (Snyder et al., 2013) considered how the shape of panels affected their reading experiences by adding depth to their interpretations of certain scenes. Specifically, participants discussed a series of four tall and narrow panels depicting the young protagonist Jack as he escapes from his home in the depth of night to go looking for his birth father. Covering almost a full page, the perspective in the panels shifts between a low and a high angle as Jack is shown climbing out of his bedroom window from the second floor of his mother's house. Commenting on how these vertical panel shapes served to create an illusion of height, participants seemed to interpret this as an artistic choice that served an interactional purpose. As one student put it: "they are high and narrow so we feel how high and dangerous it is" (sBb, appendix 13). Sharing how the panel shapes together with visual perspective informed his reading of this particular scene, another student wrote in his journal following the peer group discussion that, "[t]he tall panels help give the reader the feeling of height. When you see jack on the ground, he is very small. Therefore it could be a metaphor for jack going into the big world while he's still so small" (sAs, appendix 13). His thoughtful observation draws attention to how he related the form and function of panels to more abstract themes and higher level meanings in the text. In drawing these kinds of inferences based on the spatial design elements of the graphic novel, the student demonstrated a unique awareness to how the comics artist's choice of panel shape and size might actually serve a similar purpose to literary devices such as metaphors in traditional fictional texts.

4.1.5 Available linguistic design

The available linguistic design of multimodal texts embraces a variety of elements such as vocabulary, metaphor, modality, information structures (how information is presented in sentences), cohesion and relations between clauses as well as the overall organisational properties of texts, e.g. genres (NLG, 1996, p.80).

As will be recalled, linguistic meaning (in the form of written text) in the comics medium is first and foremost represented in word balloons that either express narrative characters' dialogue or vocalise their inner monologue, and in captions that function in much in the same way as voice-overs in films. Frequently, verbal text also appears in the

represented story-world (for instance in the form of signs, newspaper headings or letters). Notably, because the lettering in graphic novels is often hand written and manipulated to evoke not only linguistic meanings but also visual and audio meanings, the linguistic design of graphic novels showcases the inherent multimodal nature of the written word and serves as a poignant reminder that “all written text is also visually designed” (NLG, 1996, p. 81).

Ways in which the graphic lettering worked to guide “the reader’s internal ear” (Eisner, 2008a, p. 129) has already been discussed in section 4.1.2 of the current chapter. Other interesting examples of how participants in this study attached symbolic meaning to the visual representation of verbal text in graphic narratives surfaced as students were asked to reflect on the style in which the title of Kim’s story *Hurdles* (2004) was written. In this graphic short story, the title is rendered in skewed, non-linear letterforms which resemble actual hurdles on a track course. Responding to the cue offered by the design of the title, one participant noted how the title was, “written in a ‘hurdley way’. The letters are not standing straight, but are tilted, to illustrate the meaning that it is not ordinary hurdles the text is about. But also hurdles like racism in the boy’s everyday life” (sKa, appendix 12). The student’s comment is representative of how participants in both classes moved beyond a mere surface level comprehension of the word “hurdles” to instead negotiate the deeper metaphorical meanings suggested by the visual dimension of the title.

Because a major part of the narrative is communicated visually, graphic novels do not rely on the long descriptive passages and the verbal text is economical and balanced against the other design elements. This does not mean, however, that traditional literary devices such as metaphor, symbolism and irony are not part of the medium’s repertoire. Readers of graphic literature must read between the lines in the traditional sense of the phrase in addition to read between the panels. How the available linguistic design of graphic narrative communicated meaning through traditional literary conventions was something participants reading *Pride of Baghdad* (Vaughan & Henrichon, 2006) addressed in their peer groups and during the focus group interviews. For instance, responding to question thirteen in the final survey which asked the participants to reflect on a particularly thought-provoking panel or illustration, a student in class B selected to comment on a striking manifestation of irony used as literary device. The panel, which is part of the political allegory’s climactic scene, depicts Ali and Noor’s instinctive first reactions as they realise that the older lions have been brutally gunned down and killed. While the young lion cub is left speechless, his mother snarls at the American soldiers: “**Animals!** You goddam...” (Vaughan & Henrichon, 2006, unpaginated, emphasis in the original). Picking up on the ironic implications of Safa’s utterance; that

humans instead of lions proved to be the ultimate predatory beasts in the story, the student wrote: “Ironic how they use ‘animals’ as an insult” (sIb, appendix 14, p. 77).

This kind of interpretive move, in which students negotiated literary meaning from the graphic narrative’s linguistic design elements, also became evident as readers contemplated the underlying, symbolical meaning of Noor’s assertion that, “Freedom can’t be given, only **earned**” (Vaughan & Henrichon, 2006, emphasis in the original). Her utterance, voiced as the lions suddenly find themselves released from the confinement of the zoo following the allied air raid on Baghdad in 2003 directly addresses the core conflict of this graphic novel; to what extent can freedom be gained through war? Asked to reflect on Noor’s statement, one student wrote that, “I think she didn’t feel that they deserved getting free from the zoo because they escaped because of the war” (sDa, appendix 13). In a similar spirit, a participant argued in the focus group interview that, “in a way they are free, because they aren’t in the cage any longer, but they are still not truly free, somehow the war has poisoned them” (sLb, appendix 15). What seems to emerge from these quotes is that the students interacted with the graphic novel’s verbal text in much the same way as they would with traditional prose texts, imbuing the linguistic design elements with meanings that went beyond the words’ purely lexical references (Rosenblatt, 1995; Connors, 2010).

4.1.6 Available multimodal design

A text’s multimodal design, states the New London Group, is “the most significant, as it relates all the other modes in quite remarkably dynamic relationships” (1996, p. 80). How the different available designs of graphic narratives combine to create multimodal meanings may be described and understood through two key concepts: hybridity and intertextuality (NLG, 1996).

In short, the notion of *hybridity* refers to the creative manner in which multimodal meanings are made by “articulating in new ways - established practises and conventions within and between different modes of meaning” (NLG, 1996, p. 82). Although the organisation of the present chapter might seem to suggest that the participants were interacting with each of the available designs of graphic novels in a fragmented and isolated manner, this was certainly not the case. They did not treat images, texts and other design elements as distinct entities participating in a “contest of semiotic dominance that asks what mode works better” (Serafini, 2014, p. 54). Instead, as the preceding sections sought to demonstrate, the students seemed to recognise how reading sequential art involves “the act of

weaving a fabric”, in which “each component pledges allegiance to the whole” (Eisner, 2008a, p. 127). Participants responded to the hybridity of the graphic novel medium by interpreting, transferring and synthesising the meaning potentials suggested by the texts’ various semiotic resources and unique comics conventions into multimodal meanings. Framing, perspective and gestures formed routes into the narrative characters’ feelings and relations. Colours and lighting translated into an immediate sense of mood. Linguistic text and visual icons combined to create inner sound. Size, shape and sequence of panels transformed into a sense of time and motion. By committing closure; “mentally completing that which is incomplete based on past experiences” (McCloud, 1993, p. 63), students seemed to transform the design elements found in this medium of fragments into a meaningful “single idea” (McCloud, 1993, p.66) so that a full narrative could take form. This process of hybridisation, in which the participants’ understanding of the text’s visual design elements converged with their interpretations of its linguistic, audio, gestural and spatial design elements, seemed to allow the readers to actively design more complex understandings of the graphic narratives they read.

In the current study, participants’ transactions with the graphic novel medium also showed how they designed meanings from intertextual aspects of the texts. The notion of *intertextuality* is defined by members of the New London Group (1996) as the complex ways in which meanings “are constituted through relationships to other texts (real or imaginary), text types (discourse or genres), narratives, and other modes of meaning” (p. 82). This means that intertextuality as conceptualised by the New London Group is a broad and multifaceted phenomenon which holds at its core that context always influences readers’ interpretation of meaning.

Intertextuality may take many forms in multimodal texts. In graphic novels, the most obvious are the intertextual relations found in the sequence of panels; how one panel evokes meaning not in isolation but in relation to the surrounding panels and the temporal gutters separating them, and how the various modes of meaning such as the linguistic text and the visual design elements within one panel are interpreted in light of one another as the reader re-designs new multimodal meanings from that single panel. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to consider fully how intertextuality operates in multimodal texts, so the following discussion will centre on ways in which participants responded to intertextuality in the sense of visual and linguistic references to traditional prose literature found in the graphic narratives.

How participants drew inferences from the graphic novels' intertextual chains - their relations with and references to other texts - was particularly apparent in comments from the three students reading *Fables: Legends in Exile* (Willingham et al., 2012). As first described in section 3.3.2, this trade paperback re-examines traditional myths and fairy tales, transforming characters as well as plot to explore the notion of archetypal fairy tale characters secretly co-existing with humans in modern day New York City. Participants reading this graphic novel first discussed how the linguistic design elements of the text such as its opening phrase "[o]nce upon a time" (p. 11) and the characters' names (either identical to the original stories or slightly changed) placed the text in the fairy tale tradition. Readers also noted how the phrase "no more happy endings" (p. 27) written in bold, blood-red letters on the walls of Rose Red's apartment negated the traditional genre characteristics of fairy tales where happy endings are the norm, adding instead a more realistic and modern twist to the story (appendix 13).

According to the students, meeting well-known literary characters from their childhood in new and unexpected roles and settings allowed them to view these characters in a new light, giving rise to interesting discussions in the peer group. For instance, participants debated how traditional gender roles were destabilised in the graphic novel. Addressing this point, one student wrote in the journal that, "[t]he fairy tale characters are different then they are in the ordinary fairy tales. Like Snow, she is mayor of the town and very secure and bossy, not just pretty like in the fairy tale" (sCa, appendix 13). Explaining how the portrayal of Snow White as a powerful, intelligent and agentive character changed the premise for her own engagement with the story, one of the participants in the peer group argued that he could more easily relate to "a woman who isn't only a pretty face waiting for a prince to come and save her. Life isn't like that anymore, you know" (fieldnotes, 23/2). The above reflections suggest that by drawing on their shared cultural knowledge of fairy tales, the students were able to juxtapose the characters of the original stories with the remediation of these characters in *Fables*, allowing them to question the authority of the traditional tales and thus reflect on their relevance in modern day society. In doing so, participants seemed to interpret the graphic novel in light of the traditional tales, negotiating meaning from intertextual references in a process that ultimately resulted in the designing of new meanings (NLG, 1996).

Next, participants responded to the visual representation of intertextuality explicitly incorporated into the graphic narrative's artwork. An example of how the visual design elements of *Fables: Legends in Exile* enter into dialogue with the original fairy tales is presented in the panel reproduced as figure 4.4. In this scene, detective B. Wolf and deputy

mayor Snow White are on their way to visit the flat where the alleged murder of Snow White's sister Rose Red took place. While all characters in *Fables* are rehabilitated and granted amnesty for their prior crimes and sins, the students picked up on the allusion to detective Wolf's predatory past visualised through the wolfish shadow on the wall. Reflecting on the significance of this cross-textual clue, one participant noted that, "I think the shadow on the wall is there to make us remember what Bigsby Wolf used to be, and that he can still be dangerous" (sCa, appendix 13). Continuing this line of thought, students speculated whether the intertextual reference in this particular panel could indicate that detective Wolf was not only on the hunt for a murderer, but that he might actually prove to be the killer himself. The discussion in these readers' peer group and their subsequent written notes bring to light their ability to literally *see* the relations between this post-modern tale and conventional fairy tales and contemplate on the narrative significance of the transformations worked upon the original texts.



Figure 4.4 *Fables 1: Legends in Exile* (Willingham et al., 2012, p. 26)

It is interesting to note that while students reading *Fables* seemed to cue from visual and linguistic allusions to the literary fairy tale genre, none of them seemed to recognise the intertextual references to the literary sub-genre of hard-boiled detective fiction and the discourse of film noir. As the panel reproduced in figure 4.4 shows, creator Willingham and his crew explore the narrative potential of the graphic novel medium to its fullest by transcending the textual tradition of fairy tales and explicitly weaving together various cross-references to hard-boiled crime fiction as well as the discourse of film noir. As mentioned in section 3.3.2, the artwork and iconography are heavily inspired by the aesthetics of film noir, portraying sheriff Wolf as a chain-smoking, slightly scruffier version of Sam Spade with Snow White visualised as the quintessential 1940's femme fatale (Kukkonen, 2013). How

participants failed to respond to ways in which *Fables* visually cross-references and imitates elements of other literary genres and media discourses suggest that these texts were not part of the young participants' prior literacy experiences. This finding serves as a reminder that the negotiation of meaning in graphic novels is a complex process which "relies on a visual experience common to both creator and audience" (Eisner, 2008a, p.1). Lacking the knowledge constructed from previous encounters with such texts, the students were not able to draw meaning from the artist's intertextual references and this might have impacted on the depth of their interpretations.

4.1.7 Students' perceptions

This section looks into participants' perceptions related to the first research question; how the graphic novel medium could offer opportunities for fostering multimodal reading literacies in the EFL classroom. The analysis of data from the final interview survey and the focus group interview indicated that reading and working with the graphic novel medium in the EFL classroom was perceived by many participants as having contributed to their ability to analyse images at a deeper level. Furthermore, the findings suggest that participants perceived of the development of a shared metalanguage for describing the various available design elements of the graphic novel (see figure 2.1) as having provided them with useful tools for understanding and analysing the narrative functions of these meaning making resources.

Asked in the final survey if they had become more aware of how specific devices are employed in illustrations to create a reaction or emotional response in the reader following the graphic novel reading project, all participants answered yes (appendix 14). Most participants also affirmed that they believed that it was important, or important to some extent, to have knowledge of comics conventions in order to analyse graphic novels, whereas one student in group A thought it was irrelevant (appendix 14).

The questions cited above were re-addressed in the two focus group interviews with the intent of gaining deeper insights into the students' perceptions. Students participating in the focus group interview affirmed the general impression gained from the data in the survey interview by sharing how they experienced that classroom discussions of images and comics conventions had offered them an expanded awareness to how these meaning making resources contribute to the broader patterns of narrative meaning in graphic novel. This seemed to have allowed the students to consider the texts with new eyes. For instance,

centring on the relevance of discussing comics conventions prior to reading graphic novels in class, a participant in group A compared his adolescent readings of manga and comics to ways in which he now had interpreted meanings from *Pride of Baghdad* (Vaughan & Henrichon, 2006). Arguing that learning about particular narrative devices in comics had afforded him a new route into the meaning potentials of the graphic novel, he stated:

“it has never made any sense before, for example when some panels have a square frame and some don’t, and then you may think back in a way, so you’re sitting there, thinking about the situation; so **that’s** why they used such panels, to give a feeling that this illustration is important or something. It was interesting, then, to get to know **why** they have done what they do” (sWa, appendix 15, emphasis in the original).

Implied in his comment is an increased awareness to the fact that when reading graphic narratives, the reader is always guided by the cartoonist’s selectivity, a notion which the other focus group participants appeared to agree with. Interestingly, it seems from the participant’s response that having developed a broadened understanding of how these multimodal texts communicate led him to make critically question the function of the cartoonists’ choices on meaning instead of being determined by them. This is a hallmark of the pedagogical dimension of critical framing (NLG, 1996) (see section 2.1.5) and indicates how the student took on the role as active designer of meaning rather than being determined by the design choices of the cartoonist.

The student’s critical stance was further substantiated by his response when the group members were asked if they thought that their ability to analyse and interpret images had changed following the reading project. Again, mirroring the views of his fellow group members, the student emphasised the importance of a broadened interpretive repertoire by stating that; “so when you understand what the various conventions mean, then in a way you become more deeply immersed in the setting and theme”. This, he argued, was because the cartoonists “know what they are doing, how to influence you” (sWa, appendix 15). Again, the student’s reflection seems to indicate a sense of empowerment (Bland, 2013) stemming from his expanded insider’s knowledge of how multimodal narratives communicate, enabling him to critically discuss the purposes and effects of the cartoonist’s visual and spatial design choices. Another student supported this sentiment by explaining how, “there were many things I hadn’t considered before, like for instance how the size and the shape of panels had something to do with, like, how quickly you read a page...” (sKa, appendix 15).

The above discussion connects to a fundamental idea informing a multiliteracies approach to reading by design is that learners must understand how multimodal texts work in order to participate in their meaning (Cope & Kalantzis, 2012). As mentioned in section 2.1.4, Serafini (2014) emphasises that for this to happen, students develop an understanding of how images and other design elements “speak” (p. 80). Although these are speculations on my part, it seems that some participants perceived of the graphic novel reading project as having promoted their multimodal reading in the sense that they were now acting more in the bifurcated role as “reader-viewer” (Serafini, 2012, p. 153), studying the design elements of graphic novels “with confidence, mindfully and critically” (Bland, 2013, pp. 15-16) as they designed and re-designed new meanings (NLG, 1996).

Interestingly, ways in which the focus group participants seemed to regard a shared metalanguage for reading and interpreting graphic narratives as a valuable asset also shone through as they were asked what advice they would offer to a friend who had never read a graphic novel before. To this question, several participants in both focus groups described how they would alert their friend to some typical comics conventions and advice him or her to read slowly and study the images carefully in order to gain a deeper perspective of the story. As one student fittingly phrased it, “in an ordinary novel, it is read between the lines, while here you may well have to read between the images” (sHa, appendix 15).

4.2 The graphic novel: further contributions to the EFL classroom

To develop a broader understanding of the graphic novel’s potential as reading material in the EFL classroom, the second, subordinate research question which guided this research focused on identifying other didactic potentials as to engaging with the graphic novel medium in the context of this case study.

The qualitative data analysis revealed that four major themes pertaining to the didactic potential of the graphic novel beyond the possible rewards for multimodal reading practises seemed to emerge from the students’ written work and responses to the final written survey, the discussion in focus group interviews and from the researcher’s observations. In short, the thematic breakdown of the data set indicated that in the context of the current case study, the graphic novel medium (1) facilitated pleasurable encounters with authentic English language works of fiction, (2) functioned as an equaliser between different level learners, (3) encouraged active student participation in discussions and (4) fostered transferrable

knowledge. These themes are what will be presented and discussed in relation to both theory and existing research in the subsequent sections of chapter four.

4.2.1 Pleasurable reading experiences

One central theme that emerged in the data set indicated that participants found their encounters with the graphic novel medium to be a positive experience. This first became apparent during my classroom observations. As the students' were reading their graphic novels, I was struck by the way they appeared to become quite engrossed in the reading; they seemed concentrated on the story unfolding before them and did not revert to small talk or attempt to sneak a peak at their laptops. Watching the students read, I noticed that although they were reading silently, many still seemed active in the sense that they would sometimes flick back to a previous page to study something more carefully (Fieldnotes, appendix 10).

Participants' responses to questions in the final survey largely offered support to what my classroom observations had indicated; that the students appreciated the experiences associated with graphic novel reading. Amongst other things, students were asked in the survey if the reading the graphic novel had offered them a good reading experience, a question to which all participants answered yes (appendix 14). An open ended question which asked participants if they would use graphic novels in their EFL classroom also suggested that they found the reading rewarding, as all but one answered that the graphic novel had a place in their imaginary English classroom. To argue his case, one student wrote, "[y]es, I would have made my students more interested and motivated" (sFa, appendix 14).

Furthermore, many students also responded that they might consider reading graphic novels in their spare time. Because no participants offered elaborating comments in this part of the written survey (see section 3.4.1), the topic of recreational graphic novel reading was also broached during the interviews. Interestingly, to one student in group A, the graphic novel reading experience seemed to have re-kindled a dormant passion for reading. Having shared early on in the interview that he used to be an avid reader in his early teens but hardly ever read anymore, the student told that he had recently got hold of Moore & Lloyd's *V for Vendetta* (1988) and was looking forward to reading it, smilingly adding that, "I have quite simply found a new interest" (W, appendix 15). By suggesting that his encounter with the graphic narrative in the English classroom could transfer into a reading habit, the student's comment indirectly confronts a commonly held prejudice against the comics medium; that the

combination of words and images is a simple and childish form of reading that young readers should “grow out of” (McCloud, 1993, p. 139).

So what exactly might have caused participants to embrace the graphic novel reading experience to such an extent? Students’ responses to the open-ended questions in part two of the final survey as well as reflections made during the two focus group discussions centred on one central idea; students seemed to largely attribute the increased sense of interest and reading enjoyment the visual format of the graphic novel. One aspect that seemed to entice participants was the fact that the unconventional format offered a reading experience that was, as one student put it, “a bit out of the ordinary” (sFa, appendix 14), a feature the participants in Sabeti’s (2011) study also highlighted as a major attraction of graphic novels. In particular, the EFL learners in the present study seemed to enjoy taking on the role as reader-viewers (Serafini, 2012), a notion epitomised by the following reflection from a student in group A: “I noticed that I became more engaged in the book and the reading, I wasn’t fed up so quickly and became a bit like a detective in a way, I tried to explore ‘clues’ in the images” (sJa, appendix 14).

Furthermore, participants emphasised that the graphic novels’ artwork was a significant contributor to their aesthetic appreciation of the texts. Interestingly, two students in focus group B revealed that the art was actually a decisive factor in their choice of graphic novel. “I thought about choosing *Fables*”, one of the boys explained, “but as I browsed through it, the art wasn’t right. There were these kinds of soft-ish colours and the drawings were subdued. I didn’t feel it was me, it wasn’t tempting” (sPb, appendix 15). These students’ reflections seem to indicate that graphic narratives could constitute valuable elements in promoting a more art-rich EFL classroom, bringing to the reading event a sense of aesthetic experience concerned with “the beauty and value of art and the way art impresses us and gives a sense of insight” (Ibsen, 2000, p. 137). After all, as Carter points out, graphic novels are “the perfect blend of word and picture, story as text and story as art” (2007, p. 7).

Next, participants also pointed out that they appreciated how the visual design of the comics medium made for a more immediate access into the story world, allowing the readers to become more quickly involved in the narrative because, as one student put it, “a picture is worth a thousand words” (sIa, appendix 14). This is not to suggest that participants seemed to regard graphic novel reading merely as “an easy way out” of reading authentic English language literature in the classroom. To the contrary, participants seemed to value how the combination of visual and other design elements challenged them in new ways. This seemed to pique students’ interest and add to their enjoyment of the graphic novels. A participant

made this sentiment clear as he was explaining to the group what caused him to engage deeply with the graphic narrative: "...you get a story with several levels, sort of, you have to read into, not just the text, but all that's embedded in the images too" (sCa, appendix 15).

It might certainly be tempting at this point in the discussion to simply conclude that the multimodal format of graphic novels was what served to foster the participating students' self-reported enjoyment and high level of interest in the reading process. However, there exists a rival theory (Yin, 2014) which needs to be addressed. As explained in chapter three, in order to explore different types of graphic novels, the participants in this instrumental case study were offered four books from different genres to choose from. Providing students with choice of reading material is, as literacy researchers point out (e.g. Guthrie, 2004), a powerful motivational resource¹⁶. Thus, to seek out how the element of choice might have impacted on the students' responses to the graphic novel reading experience, this topic was taken up in the focus group interviews. Participants in both groups explained that they did feel an increased sense of commitment to reading books that they had been involved in choosing themselves as it offered them a stronger sense of ownership to the reading project.

Still, whereas choice of which graphic novel to study may certainly have impacted on the participants' initial positive reactions, evidence from the full data set suggest that the enthusiastic claims students shared attesting to the pleasure gained from reading graphic novels were grounded in the diverse range of possibilities for textual interactions arising from the graphic novel medium's multimodal format. As was discussed in depth in section 4.1, the visual and gestural design elements of the graphic novel such as facial expressions and gaze invited the readers to engage emotionally with the characters in the story world, "living through" (Rosenblatt, 1994, p. 25) their experiences rather than observing them from a detached distance. Such personal engagement with a narrative text is at the core of pleasurable literary reading experiences.

Readers might perhaps question the didactic relevance of these findings; that reading graphic novels offered participants enjoyable encounters with fictional texts. After all, the present study concerns the reading of literature in an academic setting as opposed to reading for pleasure in an out-of-school context. However, as Rosenblatt (1982) maintained, there is no opposition between academic reading of literature and reading for pleasure. Indeed, by emphasising that the intrinsic purpose of an aesthetic stance is "the desire to have a

¹⁶ The importance of providing students with choices is a one of several elements in the notion of learner *autonomy*, a term originally coined by Holec (1981), as well as the notion of engaged reading (OECD, 2009). It is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss this possible connection further.

pleasurable, interesting experience for its own sake” (p. 275), Rosenblatt directly pointed to enjoyment in reading as an important aspect of the aesthetic reading experience; one which she claimed educators all too often overlook as learners mature. Moreover, as mentioned in section 1.3, reading for enjoyment is one of the many pieces in the large puzzle which is termed engaged reading. In light of the participants’ answers to the pre-survey (see section 3.2), which revealed that many participants did not enjoy reading literature (appendix 11), finding that participants reported of positive reading experiences in the graphic novel classroom and that the graphic novel reading project had piqued at least some students’ interest in further independent comics reading is indeed interesting from a didactic perspective.

4.2.2 Same text, different readers

McTaggart (2008) argues that the graphic novel medium may serve as an “equalizer” (p. 34) between academically achieving and struggling readers and proposes that teachers should use graphic novels, “because they *enable* the struggling reader, *motivate* the reluctant one, and *challenge* the high –level learner” (p. 32, emphasis in the original). Both Bland (2013) and Rimmereide (2013) posit that these ideas are transferrable to an EFL context, a notion that is strongly supported by findings from the current study. As described in section 3.2, the participants in the present study were from two heterogeneous classes and comprised students of varying ability levels of English. Describing the challenges probably faced by many EFL learners in upper secondary classrooms, a participant in the present study argued that struggling readers are often made to feel “stupid” (sKa, appendix 15) because they find it hard to interpret and analyse literary texts. Reflecting on how reading graphic novels differed from the texts usually studied at school, a participant put it like this in the final survey: “Much easier. Normally when we were going to read a book (especially in English) I have given up before I have begun. But reading this comic was actually good and I understood the story” (sAb, appendix 14).

The above learner’s comment indicates how encountering fiction in the form of sequential art fostered his endurance in the reading event. As Chun (2009) also notes, language learners “often face formidable barriers” (p. 146) in their encounters with authentic L2 narrative texts and the visual design elements of graphic novels may support as well as deepen the textual meanings, thus opening the door for struggling English readers to participate more fully in constructing and critiquing these imaginative worlds. Likewise,

Bland (2015) argues that images in graphic narratives can provide “a meaning-anchor effect” (p. 25) that may support language learners in their reading process. This is not to suggest that images merely mirror the same information as the written text, but that written meanings become contextualised when working in concert with the other design elements of graphic narratives.

The importance of this kind of contextualisation in facilitating readers’ comprehension of the graphic narratives was addressed directly by focus groups participants. Discussing how they had approached the challenge of understanding difficult or unknown English words and phrases in the graphic texts, students in group A emphasised how these words made sense when they were read in the context provided by the images. Comparing the reading of graphic novels to traditional, written texts, participants argued that the visual design of graphic narratives allowed them to associate the unknown words with a concrete situation and that this helped them understand the words. As one student put it, to the obvious amusement of his fellow students; “You can associate them [the words] with something. If you read a book you may need to use Google Translate. I believe you learn many words intuitively here, expand your vocabulary...” (sHa, appendix 15).

The role of the graphic novel’s visual format in facilitating struggling readers’ comprehension in ways that seemed to encourage both confidence and endurance in the reading process was brought up by participants on several occasions. One student made an especially striking comment in the final survey, stating that what he found most positive about the graphic novel reading project was the fact that he actually got to finish reading a book for the second time in his life (sHb, appendix 14). His triumphant comment seems to suggest that the multimodal format of graphic novels had offered him a rare opportunity to successfully engage in literary reading, and aligns with Hammond’s (2009) assertion that the comics medium “offer some students more opportunities for success” (p. 149). It seems that the increased sense of mastery fostered by reading literature in a multimodal print medium might serve as a first, important step in building these EFL students’ sense of *self-efficacy* (Bandura, 1994); their self-beliefs concerning their own capabilities to negotiate meaning from English language texts and to reflect on these meanings.

That the combination of visual and linguistic modes in graphic narratives may aid struggling readers and serve to entice reluctant readers into reading is not surprising and is supported by other scholars (e.g., Krashen, 2004; Monnin, 2010). Whatever benefits the comics medium could offer more advanced learners of English may at first sight be less clear cut. However, while high-level readers are already capable of understanding, making

inferences and interpreting traditional literature (Bland, 2013), the meanings communicated by the various design elements of the multimodal ensemble call for other types of competencies such as visual literacy. A student in group A pointed this out, stating that, “even though some [people] are good at reading ordinary texts they needn’t necessarily be equally good at reading images. So that’s why it becomes a challenge for them, too.” (sKa, appendix 15). In a similar vein, a group B student, himself an able and avid comic book reader, argued that graphic novels fit all types of readers, “because in these books the point isn’t just to read the text, you have to be able to read images, understand the gutters, speech bubbles and all that” (sLb, appendix 15). Interestingly, he continued by emphasising the sophisticated literary qualities of many graphic narratives, positing that working out the clues found in the intertextual references of graphic texts such as *Fables* (Willingham et al., 2012) would particularly appeal to advanced readers.

Furthermore, though arguably more economical than in traditional literature, the written text in graphic novels commonly includes advanced vocabulary (Krashen, 2004). In this respect, it is interesting to note that as participants were asked in the final survey what they considered to be negative about reading English fiction in the comics medium, only one student voiced that language-wise, “it was not very challenging” (sCa, appendix 14). When asked whether they thought graphic novels were suitable reading material for learners of diverse aptitudes, the focus group participants agreed that EFL students of all ability levels stood to profit from such multimodal reading experiences (appendix 15).

The thoughts these students shared are consistent with claims made by McTaggart (2008), who posits that the key to the equalising powers of graphic novels lies in the fact that they afford all levels of learners a chance to build on and develop their existing knowledge from prior encounters with not only written but also visual and multimodal texts. The multimodal format makes the texts both accessible and complex at the same time. In the present study, one particularly revealing incident demonstrating how the graphic novel medium served to bridge the gap between advanced and struggling English readers happened during the first peer group meeting in class B¹⁷ (fieldnotes 25/2). Observing one of the group’s discussion unfold, I was struck by the way in which two students who previously had been somewhat reluctant to take part in literary discussions and who had articulated several times that they found reading English language texts difficult this time took centre stage, sharing analytical and critical observations concerning the visual and spatial design elements

¹⁷ In order to preserve the participants’ anonymity, I will refrain from disclosing information about the class in which this incident took place and the name of the graphic novel these students were discussing.

of their graphic novel with their classmates. In this group, advanced and struggling learners demonstrated critical interaction with the graphic novel text on equal footing. It appeared that the multimodal features of the text made its literary meaning more accessible to students of diverse ability levels, enabling them to “engage in critical discussions in ways that are not always possible with only written texts” (Chun, 2009, p. 146).

4.2.3 Vehicle for discussions

As already indicated in the preceding section, one theme emerging from the analysis of data collected for present study indeed indicate that one benefit arising from the participants’ aesthetic encounters with the graphic novel format was that of engaged, meaningful discussions around narrative texts. A clear indication of how students responded to the comics medium as a mediating factor in facilitating discussions was found in their active contributions to conversations in the two peer groups meetings. As briefly sketched out in section 3.4.2, these small groups consisted of diverse level students who were reading the same graphic novel and the conversations were guided by, but not limited to, discussion prompts that focused on eliciting participants’ responses to the graphic novels’ various design elements and the relationship between form and content (appendix 6).

Observing the students’ interactions and listening in on their conversations I noticed how they freely offered their interpretations and built on each others’ observations in ways that suggested that they were invested and engaged in the task at hand. During these activities, students kept the discussion in English and offered ample textual evidence by pointing at illustrations while using appropriate terms to support their interpretations (fieldnotes). Intrigued by observing how the graphic novel medium seemed to hold the potential for stimulating rich and learner driven discussions in the target language, I decided to include some questions specifically designed to garner deeper information about this initial finding in the students’ response journals and the final survey. As participants were asked to voice their opinions concerning whether they found it easier to discuss graphic novels compared to traditional novels and whether talking about images made it easier to become engaged in these discussions of literary texts, some interesting patterns were revealed.

First, participants reported in their written notes that the visual format of graphic novels promoted shared discussions of the fictional works in the peer groups (appendix 13). Mirroring the views of many participants, one student explained it this way in his notes: “I think the images made for an easier discussion seeing as though you can simply point at the

picture you are talking about as opposed to commenting on a sentence or a page from a book” (sBb, appendix 13). The general impression that, as another student articulated it, “so we all had some opinions about the pictures and everyone talked” (sCa, appendix 13, p. 34) supports the notion that much of the increased potential for discussion which participants seemed to experience was ascribed to how the very existence of illustrations provided an important access point for interactive, collaborative readings and conversations about the graphic narrative texts. Participants’ reflections connect with Sabeti’s (2012) contention that, “[t]he fact that images can be perceived simultaneously by a number of individuals (their size and position will, of course, play a part) also means that interpretive acts can occur collaboratively” (p. 174).

Second, evidence from the data collected in the final survey suggest that to many participants, these discussions of graphic novels were experienced as relevant and meaningful. This was indicated as many participants agreed to question three in the final survey interview which asked, “[d]id you think that discussing a graphic novel (in peer groups and in class) was more engaging than discussing traditional literature? However, to complicate matters somewhat, responses from participants in the written journals were inconsistent when it came to pinpointing what exactly created this sense of engagement and to what extent they had become personally engaged. For instance, while agreeing that it was easier to keep the discussion going in the group when talking about graphic novels as opposed to conventional literary works, one participant reported in his written journal that this fact did not help him become more personally engaged in these discussions because, “in a literary text you have to read between the lines and you pictures everything in your mind. And no one else can know how you think things look” as opposed to visual texts where everyone “had the same picture of how characters looked and how the setting was” (sDa, appendix 13). It seems that this student might have taken the graphic narrative’s images at face value, finding that there was less interpretive work to be done and this impacted on his level of personal commitment in the peer discussions. It could also be that he had adopted an efferent stance, looking for literal information in the panels (Rosenblatt, 1995). His comment stands in contrast to responses from other members of the same peer group. A fellow student, for example, highlighted how the combination of visual and linguistic design elements entailed that, “[t]here are more angles on the story and therefore more angles to discuss” (sDa, appendix 13).

Last, but certainly not least, data from the students’ written work and the focus group interviews suggest that participants appreciated the opportunity to exchange opinions with

other readers in the peer groups because it served to open their eyes to new aspects of the graphic texts. Admittedly, one participant wrote in his journal that there was little to be learnt because he had understood everything from before (sAa, appendix 13). However, other participants shared examples of how talking about the graphic narratives in the peer group context had offered them new insights. Exemplifying this, a student wrote in his journal after having discussed *Pride of Baghdad* (Vaughan & Henricon, 2006) with his group that, “Peter¹⁸ said that the bird in the beginning was important because he warned about the war. He said it was like a ‘frampek’. I hadn’t thought about that but I see it now” (sCb, appendix 13). From the student’s reflective comment, it seems clear that interacting with fellow readers in the peer group had deepened his understanding of the fictional text, a notion which ties in with Rosenblatt’s belief that with older students, “sharing responses becomes the basis for valuable interchange. Discovering that others have had different responses, have noticed what was overlooked, have made alternative interpretations, leads to self-awareness and self-criticism.” (1982, p. 276).

Interestingly, like Connor’s (2010) also discovered in his research, it seemed that the peer group discussions affected the multimodal reading practises of some students. In the present study, students mentioned how input from fellow students prompted them to read more slowly and study the illustrations in the panels more closely. Explaining the impact these peer group discussions had on his transactions with the graphic narrative, one student wrote: “Some of my fellow students had noticed some parts of the story that I didn’t catch. That made me read slower, so that I would get the full story” (sAa, appendix 13).

Finding that the graphic novel peer group discussions served as breeding ground for new insights and new learning is highly interesting and connects directly to a key assumption of a multiliteracies pedagogy; that learning is socially situated and develop as “part and parcel of collaborative interactions” in “a community of learners engaged in common practices” (NLG, 1996, p. 82), see also section 2.1. In the current study, it seemed that a didactic potential of engaging with the visual format of graphic novels was that is fostered engaged dialogue between the EFL learners, allowing their exchange of thoughts and ideas to become the central tools of learning.

¹⁸ The original name of this student has been changed into a pseudonym by the researcher

4.2.4 Transferrable knowledge

A key idea that informs a pedagogy of multiliteracies is the innovative power inherent in the design process and its ultimate outcome; *The Redesigned*. As discussed in section 2.1.3, the redesigned is conceived as a cradle for new and transformed available designs of meaning which students may apply to different situations (NLG 1996; Cope & Kalantzis 2012). It follows that an interesting didactic potential of engaging with graphic novels in the EFL classroom would be if new multimodal reading skills gained from interactions with graphic novels could be transferrable to other contexts, other media, other texts. Fostering such flexible and versatile competencies in all school subjects to prepare students for life-long learning in an increasingly globalised and rapidly changing world is also a key premise in LK06's English curriculum guidelines (NDET, 2013).

An important observation to be made from this part of the study, then, relates to how participants shared that multimodal lessons learnt from the graphic novel project could indeed be transferrable to their encounters with other texts in different contexts. When questioned in the final survey if knowledge about how one reads this type of multimodal text could be useful in other contexts, most participating students affirmed that they thought it could (appendix 14). Asked to give specific examples of situations when knowledge about the available meaning-making resources of graphic novels might be useful, participants in focus group A mentioned that understanding the underlying rhetorical structures and purposes of visual elements in multimodal texts had come in handy while they were working on a project analysing music videos in their Norwegian lessons (appendix 15). Their observations seem to imply that the metalanguage developed through the graphic novel reading project was not limited to the reading of graphic novels in the English classroom but could also hold cross-curricular value to other school subjects. The ability to apply multimodal reading strategies acquired from close readings of graphic novels to new texts and contexts is supported by Mortimore's (2009) research which found that "the multimodal methods employed to create meaning through verbal, visual, spatial, gestural, and auditory cues provided students with a new set of skills" (p. 262) which her study's eleventh grade high school students applied when analysing literary devices such as poetic imagery.

Furthermore, focus group participants suggested that processes involved in graphic novel reading might be re-applied to art, images, commercials, films, computer games and websites (appendix 15). Importantly, commenting on the relevance of visual literacy for online reading, a student in group A explained that; "I believe that you'll find it useful, for

example a website, then you'll think more about what the image gives and the function it has and connect that to the text" (sCa, appendix 15). A similar point was made by a participant in group B's interview, who stated, "well, there are many times it could be useful to us when we are online, perhaps become more aware of what the images actually do. I certainly believe I'll be thinking a bit more like that, now" (sRb, appendix 15).

The above cited quotes encapsulate how the multimodal texts of graphic novels appeared to have served as springboards to developing the two students' attentiveness to the important function of the visual design elements in digital texts. The students' observations also suggest that participants, by connecting their own knowledge of multimodal resources to new insights gained from reading and discussing graphic narratives, had developed an increased critical attention to ways in which images in hypertexts accomplish their purpose of communicating a specific message to the reader. Thus, it appears from the students' remarks that the graphic novel medium might indeed make an interesting vehicle for nurturing students' digital reading practices, affirming Jacob's (2007a) assertion that the literate practices learned in reading comics "provide transfer value to other forms of literacy, both multimodal (such as the internet, film or television) and print" (p. 188). In light of the concerns some literacy scholars have raised regarding online hyper-reading¹⁹, the idea that the old medium of sequential art, whose roots stretch back to the Bayeux tapestry²⁰ and beyond (McCloud, 1994, p. 12) could have something to offer to students' interactions with the most modern of contemporary communication media; the Internet, certainly provides food for thought (Gillenwater, 2010).

¹⁹ See section 1.2

²⁰ This French tapestry depicts the Norman conquest in England in 1066 AD (McCloud, 1994)

Chapter five: conclusions and implications

This final chapter is organised in four parts. To begin, a brief summary of the study is given before an attempt is made to answer its two research questions by synthesising the main findings which emerged from the research. Following this, the study's implications for educators are outlined. Next, directions for further research are specified, followed by some concluding remarks in the final section.

5.1 Summary and conclusions

This study set out to investigate the phenomenon of graphic novel reading in an upper secondary EFL context. As explained in chapter three, the study followed two classes consisting of thirteen Vg2 vocational students each as they read and discussed one out of a selection of four graphic novels during five consecutive English lessons. The study employed a qualitative, instrumental case study design (Stake, 1994) in which each sub-unit (as opposed to each individual student) was treated as a collective unit of analysis. Data was collected from multiple sources including participants' written work, surveys, focus group interviews and observations and was gathered on site by the researcher who was also the English teacher in these classes.

The study was informed by three distinct, yet intersecting theoretical perspectives: theories of multiliteracies and multimodality, comics theory and transactional literary theory. The New London Group's (1996) conceptualisation of multimodal reading as a transformational process of design served as the study's operationalisation of the concept multimodal reading.

The first research question guiding this thesis asked: *how could the graphic novel medium create opportunities for fostering students' multimodal reading literacy in the EFL classroom?* The study's findings support Jacobs' (2007a) and Connors's (2010) claims that by approaching the graphic as a complex multimodal text and the reading of comics as an exercise of multimodal literacy, it opens possibilities for engaged multimodal and fictional reading experiences. As could be seen from the analysis of data that was presented and discussed in section 4.1, the graphic novel's visual format provided the participants with the possibility to design meanings with the full range of design elements which the New London

Group (1996) proposed make up the available meaning making resources in multimodal texts. Participants designed meaning from visual design elements such as perspective, framing and colours to gain a deeper sense of the story world and to understand how they as readers were positioned in that world. The graphic novels' audio design gave readers "a chance to listen with their eyes" (McCloud, 2006, p. 146) by engaging the process of synaesthesia, while the gestural design elements, in particular the characters' facial expressions, were available resources that readers' drew from to learn about the characters' inner thoughts and mental states. The graphic novels' spatial design conventions, including the layout of the page, the size of panels and the gutters separating them, were available resources that informed the participants' reading speed, their sense of narrative action and in some cases also served as literary metaphors adding depth to the students' narrative interpretations. The graphic novels' linguistic design elements functioned as traditional prose text, yet the verbal text in the graphic narratives was also read as "an extension of imagery" (Eisner, 2008a, p. 2) which added nuances to meanings made from other design elements. Finally, through the processes of hybridisation and intertextuality, multimodal meanings were made to realise the full narrative potential of the graphic novels.

In the context of the present case study, it appeared that the graphic novel medium offered ample opportunities for fostering the EFL learners multimodal reading literacy. The findings indicated that the EFL learners read deeply and reflected critically about how visual images, linguistic text and other design elements in their graphic novels worked alone and together to represent meaning. The students commented on the relationship between form and function, and drew on their prior literacy and life experiences to design, or in Rosenblatt's terms, evoke, new meanings from the invisible language of comics (McCloud, 1993).

Moreover, findings indicated that the collaborative classroom work aimed at constructing a metalanguage of design elements in the comics medium added to the students' multimodal literacy toolkit. Graphic novel reading in the present case study seemed to have contributed to developing the language learners' sensitivity to how textual features like images and other design elements "shape interpretation as powerfully as words" (Macken-Horarik & Unsworth, 2014, p. 232). Being able to discern how the conventions of such texts are used for a purpose and how the multiple modes work together to represent and construct meanings which transcend what could have been conveyed by any one mode on its own are considered to be crucial elements of language learners' multimodal communicative competence (Elsner et al., 2013; Bland, 2013; Skulstad, 2009). This indicates that the graphic novel medium warrants serious consideration if one is to take the philosophy of the national

curriculum seriously; that language learning happens as readers engage in the creation of meaning from a variety of texts (where the concept of text is used in the broadest sense) and that this is “a prerequisite for lifelong learning and for active participation in civic life” (NDET, 2012, p. 8).

The second question framing the study asked: *What other didactic potentials as to engaging with the graphic novel are identified in this case study?* In attempting to answer this question, four themes that were all related to the visual format of the graphic novel were identified and discussed in section 4.2. Findings indicated that engaging with graphic narratives fostered pleasurable reading of authentic English language works of fiction. The participants’ positive reading experiences seemed to be closely connected to the visual and aesthetic qualities of sequential art, which appeared to call on students to engage their perceptive senses and affective responses in the reading process. The visual format of graphic narratives also functioned as an incentive for the EFL learners to become more engaged in the peer group discussions. Furthermore, exploring literature through words and images was found in this study to bridge the gap between diverse level EFL learners. This is an important finding because as language teachers, our mandate is to make sure that every student has equal opportunity for success in our English classrooms (Ministry of Education and Research, 2005, p. 19). Finally, engaging with graphic novels seemed to foster versatile multimodal reading skills, adding to the fictional reading a sense of relevance and value. In sum, in the present study’s EFL classrooms, one significant didactic potential of engaging with the graphic novel was found in the power of sequential art to “bridg[e] the gap between new and old media” (Habegger-Conti, 2015, p. 106).

5.2 Implications for practice

There are several pedagogical implications emerging from the research which should be considered. First, it seemed that an important aspect of the participating EFL learners’ reading experiences was the fact that they could draw from and expand their existing knowledge of visual, linguistic, audio, spatial and gestural modes of meaning when engaging with the graphic literature. For teachers of English as a foreign language, providing learners with reading material that recruits “the different *subjectivities* – interests, intentions, commitments and purposes – students bring to the learning” (NLG, 1996, p. 72) is an important resource for learning because it will add to the students’ sense of relevancy in the literary readings. However, whereas the existing multimodal literacy repertoires students

bring to the graphic texts are indeed important resources, findings from the current study align with other applied research (e.g., Hammond, 2009; Krinsky, 2012; Macken-Horarik & Unsworth, 2014; Mortimore, 2009) in suggesting that teachers and learners must cooperate to develop a tool-kit of specialised terminology for describing the unique conventions and forms of meaning in graphic literature. Such a metalanguage is essential if learners are to move beyond surface level interpretations of images and other design elements to instead actively question the relationship between form and content and the purposes behind the cartoonist's representational choices. Recognising this, future graphic novel teachers should also centre on raising the students' awareness to the representational, interactional and compositional meta-functions with which multimodal texts communicate (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Focusing on the higher order, situational features of communication and the semiotic resources that express these will open up possibilities for critical and reflective engagement with graphic literature and inspire EFL students to new ways of thinking and reading (Macken-Horarick & Unsworth, 2014).

One ramification of the arguments put forward in the above discussion is that educators who wish to incorporate graphic novels into their teaching of English must also master the process of comprehending as well as deconstructing the complex ways in which sequential art communicates meanings. It is hoped that EFL teachers who are interested in embarking on a graphic novel journey with their students but who feel that the conventions of the medium are somewhat on the outskirts of their comfort zones may gain valuable knowledge from the comics scholarship discussed in chapter two of this study. In particular, the works of Eisner (2008a, 2008b) and McCloud (1993, 2006) will provide educators with a solid and pedagogically applicable theoretical foundation for understanding the unique qualities and conventions of this particular multimodal narrative format.

Next, an implication that EFL teachers must consider prior to the actual classroom studies of graphic novels concerns the choice of pedagogical approach. Findings from this study support observations made by graphic novels scholars (e.g. Connors, 2010; Chun, 2009; Krinsky, 2012; Serafini, 2014) who all argue that when using graphic novels in their teaching, educators should embrace pedagogical practices which acknowledge that meaning making is fundamentally multi-modal in nature, that multiple forms of texts and media are important resources in the language classroom and that collaboration in practise is a central element in learning (Cope & Kalantzis, 2012; NLG, 1996).

Data from the present research suggest that the four-dimensional socio-cultural pedagogy of multiliteracies (NLG,1996) which was employed in this study constituted a

valuable approach for supporting EFL students' engagement with the graphic novel medium. First, it allowed the teacher-researcher to draw from students' life experiences during the phase of *situated learning* and to build on these when introducing the learners to the notion of meta-languages through *overt instruction*. Second, data from the study suggest that the framework's focus on creating learning spaces which facilitate social interaction enhanced the learners' reading experiences. This was seen in the participants' reports of how they gained new insights from participating in a community of learners (NLG, 1996) in the social context of the classroom and the peer groups during the more reflective phase of *critical framing* and when re-designing and re-representing communicated meanings during the phase of *transformed practise*. For these reasons, teachers should consider adopting a pedagogy of multiliteracies (see section 2.1.5) if they aim to create a learning environment in the EFL classroom that fosters student centred, collaborative and critical readings and discussions of multimodal narrative texts.

A final important pedagogical implication to consider for EFL educators who wish to include graphic novels into their literary reading lists concerns the question of selecting appropriate graphic novels for classroom use. A primary concern must, of course, relate to how the graphic novel medium aligns with the requirements stipulated in the national curriculum of English. As was seen in this study, reading fictional texts in the graphic novel medium allowed for the combination of two competence aims found in the main subject area of the English subject curriculum "Culture, Society and Literature" which state that students should be able to "discuss and elaborate on different types of English language literary texts from different parts of the world" and "discuss and elaborate on English language films and other forms of cultural expressions from different media" (NDET, 2013, p. 11). Reading multimodal literature also complies with the curriculum's expanded idea of text and its claim that students should be able to use suitable reading strategies "adapted to the purpose and types of text" (NDET, 2013, p. 10).

However, as present study mainly addressed the graphic novel from a multiliteracies and multimodality perspective, the selection of graphic novels used in the study did not focus specifically on titles that would enhance students' understanding of a particular topic or theme. Pedagogical considerations made by future graphic novel educators should include choosing graphic texts that connect to the thematic units and broader aims of the English lessons. To exemplify, graphic novels like Gene Yang's award-winning *American Born Chinese* (2006) and Vera Brosgol's *Anya's Ghost* (2011) both deal with issues of cultural identity and ethnic stereotyping and would integrate well into lessons focused on exploring

themes related to immigration and ethnic diversity in the contemporary American society. On a similar note, educators who aim to nurture EFL students' intercultural awareness through reading texts "by and about indigenous peoples in English speaking countries" (NDET, 2013, p. 11) could incorporate *The Outside Circle* LaBoucane-Benson & Mellings, (2015) into the study unit. Written by an author of Métis descent, this graphic novel addresses identity issues and cultural challenges faced by Aboriginal youth in present day Canada. The artwork adds multiple layers to the narrative by drawing heavily on culturally significant First Nation's symbols and myths which could serve as entry points for exploring how images and text work together as cultural expressions.

The crux of the matter is that future graphic novel teachers should do what language educators always do; support the broader goals of their teaching units by including carefully selected works of literature that builds students' knowledge and fosters learner-centred, dialogic engagement with textual resources. As Botzakis (2009) notes, "[c]omic books may not be a silver bullet, but used mindfully and with an eye to students and their contexts, they may be powerful resources for sparking student interest and learning" (p. 58).

5.3 Suggestions for future research

This study's methodological choices and its relatively broad scope leaves a number of issues and themes related to graphic novel reading in the EFL classroom yet to be fully examined. First, as will be recalled, this case study was limited to a participant sample consisting of two groups of Vg2 upper secondary vocational students. More research is needed to understand how other groups of upper secondary students respond to reading English language fiction in the format of graphic novels. Recognising this, a future follow-up study should gather data from EFL students attending other education programs such as the programme for general studies, including any of its three English programme subjects (International English, Social Studies English and English Literature and Culture).

Second, because the overarching purpose of the current study was to explore the phenomenon of graphic novel as multimodal reading material in an upper secondary school context, the study employed a qualitative instrumental case study design (Stake, 1994). To gain a more complete picture of how individual EFL readers respond to and design meaning from graphic narratives, future research building on this study could instead be conducted as an intrinsic case study (Stake, 1994). Such a research design could be coupled with other types of data collection methods such as participant read-alouds from graphic novels to

provide a fuller understanding of the reading strategies individual EFL students use to negotiate meaning from the various available designs of graphic novels.

Furthermore, findings from the current study suggest that knowledge gained from reading and discussing the multimodal design features of graphic novels could be transferrable to other texts, contexts and school subjects. This could be seen to connect the literacy potential of graphic narratives to other subject areas and alludes to the possibility of integrating English language graphic novels from different genres into the curricula of disciplines such as social studies and history. As previously discussed in section 2.4., Chun's (2009) study demonstrated how reading Spiegelman's *Maus* (1986) breathed life into the history of Holocaust for American ESL learners. Thus, an interesting area for future research would be to explore whether the graphic novel medium could be an accessible and engaging English language textual resource in a bi-lingual Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) classroom²¹.

Finally, findings from this study indicate that the visual design elements of graphic narratives make these literary texts particularly suited to evoke readers' narrative empathy. Moreover, graphic novels are cultural artefacts whose combination of art and literature may provide language learners with new and valuable insights into an unknown culture. This makes the comics medium an interesting vehicle for fostering language learners' *intercultural awareness*; their "awareness of regional and social diversity in both worlds" (Council of Europe, 2007, p. 103). It would be highly interesting to see future studies that explore the potential of graphic novels for developing EFL students' cultural awareness and intercultural competence, both of which are central, overarching objectives in the English subject curriculum of Lk06 and crucial elements in EFL students' communicative competence.

5.4 Concluding reflections

A fundamental, underlying premise for the present research is the belief that today's language learners need to develop sophisticated understandings of how multimodal discourses work if they are to successfully navigate the myriads of ways in which literacy works in today's society (Cope & Kalantzis, 2012). As Gee poignantly remarks, in the 21st century, "anyone who cannot handle multimodality is illiterate" (Serafini, 2014, p.xi). This means that multimodal reading literacy should be included as a natural aspect of language teachers'

²¹ CLIL is a pedagogical approach to foreign language learning that requires the use of a second language (in this case English) to practise content in other subject domains (Paulsen, 2010).

pedagogical practices and that educators should open up the classroom space for the development of EFL students' ability to "read between the borders of visual images as much as how to read between the lines of written text" (Serafini, 2014, p. 3). Recognising that today's language learners need to develop a flexible and broad literacy repertoire, teachers should encourage learners to become flexible and critical thinkers by integrating a wide variety of texts into the learning environment. This study suggests that graphic novels should be considered by teachers of English as a potentially powerful narrative vehicle for connecting the teaching and learning of English language literature to the notion of multimodality.

This study has contributed to the field of EFL didactics by demonstrating how conceptualising the reading of multimodal texts such as graphic novels from a multiliteracies framework of Design opens the door to appreciating the active and agentive work language learners engage in as they negotiate meanings from these English language texts. This is an important step in addressing ways in which graphic novels could act as sponsors of EFL students' multimodal reading literacies. Furthermore, the study has shown how the visual format of graphic novels invite EFL readers to select a predominantly aesthetic stance as they join in the silent dance between "the visible and invisible" (McCloud, 1993, p. 92) to evoke literary meanings from the graphic texts. Thus, by exposing how students responded intellectually and emotionally to reading authentic English language graphic novels, the research has contributed to broadening the perspective of what constitutes valid literary reading material in upper secondary English classrooms to include alternative narrative texts in the form of sequential art.

Perhaps even more importantly, keeping in line with the New London Group's "epistemology of pluralism" (1996, p. 72), the present thesis has given voice to a group of EFL students whose words are seldom heard in contemporary literary and literacy discourses; vocational upper secondary students. It is my hope that by presenting and discussing these EFL students' rich web of thoughts and reflections regarding their graphic novel reading experiences, the thesis will provide future graphic novel teachers and scholars with valuable insights and inspiration.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. NSD approval

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS
NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES



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Aud Solbjørg Skulstad
Institutt for fremmedspråk Universitetet i Bergen
Sydnesplassen 7
5007 BERGEN

Vår dato: 18.09.2014

Vår ref: 39807 / 3 / KH

Deres dato:

Deres ref:

TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 12.09.2014. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

39807	<i>Graphic Novels as a Didactic Tool in the Teaching and Learning of English Language Literature in Norwegian Upper Secondary Education</i>
<i>Behandlingsansvarlig</i>	<i>Universitetet i Bergen, ved institusjonens øverste leder</i>
<i>Daglig ansvarlig</i>	<i>Aud Solbjørg Skulstad</i>
<i>Student</i>	<i>Christin Beenfeldt</i>

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger er meldepliktig i henhold til personopplysningsloven § 31. Behandlingen tilfredsstiller kravene i personopplysningsloven.

Personvernombudets vurdering forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, ombudets kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, <http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/meldeplikt/skjema.html>. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, <http://pvo.nsd.no/prosjekt>.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 01.06.2016, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Katrine Utaaker Segadal

Kjersti Haugstvedt

Kontaktperson: Kjersti Haugstvedt tlf: 55 58 29 53

Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering

Dokumentet er elektronisk produsert og godkjent ved NSDs rutiner for elektronisk godkjenning.

Avdelingskontorer / District Offices:

OSLO: NSD, Universitetet i Oslo, Postboks 1055 Blindern, 0316 Oslo. Tel: +47-22 85 52 11. nsd@uia.no
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TROMSØ: NSD, SVE, Universitetet i Tromsø, 9037 Tromsø. Tel: +47-77 64 43 36. nsdmaa@sv.uit.no

Appendix 2: Consent letter, headmaster

Til rektor ved X videregående skole

Forespørsel om å få utføre forskning på egen skole

Bakgrunn og formål

Som masterstudent i utdanningsvitenskap med fordypning i engelsk didaktikk ønsker jeg å gjennomføre et forskningsarbeid i to av mine klasser våren 2015. I prosjektet vil jeg undersøke hvordan engelskspråklige tegneserieromaner kan være egnet som pedagogisk, multimodal tekst i engelskopplæringen i videregående skole, og se nærmere på hvordan elever leser og arbeider med engelskspråklig litteratur gjennom slike multimodale tekster.

Hva innebærer studien?

I uke 9,10,11,12 og 13 vil klassenes engelsktimer gå med til leseprosjektet. Jeg utarbeider et didaktisk opplegg rundt utvalgte tegneserieromaner. Datamateriale samles inn gjennom:

- To spørreundersøkelser
- Skriftlige elevtekster
- Egne notater fra klasseromsobservasjoner
- To fokusgruppeintervju. I dette gruppeintervjuet vil samtalen bli tatt opp som digital lydspor.

Frivillig deltagelse

Elevene informeres om at det er helt frivillig å delta i prosjektet, og de trenger ikke å gi noen begrunnelse om de ønsker å reservere seg. Elevene kan også trekke tilbake samtykket underveis i studien.

Med dette håper jeg selvsagt på positivt svar. Dersom du har ytterligere spørsmål om studien er du velkommen til å ta kontakt med meg direkte på skolen eller via e-post:

christin.beenfeldt@gmail.com

Med vennlig hilsen,

Christin Beenfeldt

Tillatelese til forskningsarbeid ved X videregående skole

Jeg gir herved tillatelse til at Christin Beenfeldt kan gjennomføre forskning i egne klasser våren 2015.

15/8-2014

(Dato og signatur)

Appendix 3: Information letter, participants

Appendix 3

Til elevene i klasse XX ved X videregående skole
Forespørsel om deltagelse i forskningsprosjekt.

Bakgrunn og formål

Som masterstudent i utdanningsvitenskap med fordypning i engelsk didaktikk ved Universitetet i Bergen gjennomfører jeg skoleåret 2014/2015 et forskningsarbeid. I prosjektet vil jeg undersøke om engelskspråklige tegneserieromaner kan være egnet som multimodal tekst i engelskopplæringen i videregående skole ved å se nærmere på hvordan elever leser og arbeider med engelskspråklig litteratur gjennom slike multimodale tekster.

Hva innebærer deltagelse i studien?

I uke 9,10,11,12 og 13 vil klassens engelsktimer gå med til et leseprosjekt. Jeg utarbeider et pedagogisk opplegg rundt et utvalg tegneserieromaner. Hvis du sier deg villig til å delta i studien vil datamateriale samles inn gjennom:

- To spørreundersøkelser
- Skriftlige tekster fra timene
- Forskers notater fra klasseromsobservasjonene

På bakgrunn av dette materialet vil jeg invitere fem elever til et fokusgruppeintervju for å kunne danne en dypere forståelse av deres oppfatninger av tegneserieromaner som multimodal tekst i engelskundervisningen og deres erfaringer fra leseprosjektet. I dette gruppeintervjuet vil samtalen bli tatt opp i et digital lydspor. Samtalen vil foregå på norsk.

Hva vil skje med informasjonen fra deg?

Alle personopplysninger vil bli behandlet konfidensielt, og alle deltagere (både elever og skolen) vil bli anonymisert i oppgaveteksten. Alt datamateriale vil bli slettet når prosjektet avsluttes i juni 2016. Prosjektet er meldt til Personvernombudet for Forskning, Norsk Samfunnsfaglig Datatjeneste a/s.

Frivillig deltagelse

Jeg understreker at det er frivillig å være med på dette prosjektet, og du trenger ikke å gi noen begrunnelse om du ønsker å reservere deg. Du kan også trekke tilbake samtykket underveis i prosjektet.

Med dette håper jeg selvsagt at du ønsker å delta i studien. Dersom du har ytterligere spørsmål er du velkommen til å ta kontakt med meg direkte på skolen eller via e-post: christin.beenfeldt@gmail.com

Med vennlig hilsen

Christin Beenfeldt

Appendix 4: Pre-survey questions

1. Liker du å lese skjønnlitteratur?	
Ja	
Nei	

2. Hvor ofte leser du engelskspråklig skjønnlitteratur i fritiden din?	
Hver dag	
Ofte	
Sjelden	
Aldri	

3. Har du lest en roman i engelsktimene på videregående skole?	

4. Har du noen gang lest en grafisk roman (tegneserieroman) på norsk eller engelsk?	
Ja	
Nei	

5. Synes du det er vanskelig å lese engelskspråklig skjønnlitteratur?	
Ja	
Nesten alltid	
Noen ganger	
Nei	

6. Tror du det er mulig å lese bilder og illustrasjoner?	
Ja	
Nei	

7. Hvilken type tekst kunne du tenke deg å jobbe med hvis du skulle lese en grafisk roman i engelsktimene? (sett gjerne flere kryss)	
Fantasy	
Sci-fi	
Horror	
Mystery	
Romance	
Adventure	
Andre	

Kommentar:

8. Hva skal til for at du engasjerer deg i en norsk eller engelsk skjønnlitterær tekst?	

9. Læreplanen i engelsk sier at elevene skal kunne: <i>drøfte engelskspråklige filmer og andre kulturuttrykk fra forskjellige medier</i> ²² . Hva tenker du er "andre kulturuttrykk fra forskjellige medier"?	

²² Utdanningsdirektoratet 2013

Appendix 5: Class activities, *Hurdles*

HURDLES, by Derek Kim (2004)

1. Pre-reading: Think about a coach you have had some time in your life (for instance a football trainer, a ski instructor, a scout leader). Was your coach important to you? What was your coach like? Share your reflections with your partner.

2. “Tea party” activity (in pairs first, then in small groups of four students):

Together, you and your partner have a total of eight panels that make up the graphic short story called *Hurdles*. The panels have been cut up and the text has been removed, so it is your job to match them in some sort of chronological order so that they make up a full story line. Prepare to share your story with another group – and to explain your choices.

3. “Think, Pair, Share” (after reading the full story):

First, think about these questions on your own. Then discuss in pairs before sharing your thoughts in class.

A. What kind of a person is the coach?

- How can you tell from what he says?
- How can you tell from what he looks like?
- How can you tell from the way the artist has used particular camera shots and angles to depict him in the panels?

B. The word *hurdle* literally means *one of a series of barriers to be jumped over in a race*. Symbolically, *hurdles* refer to a difficulty or an obstacle to be overcome. What kind of hurdles do you think the young boy in the story is facing?

C. What do you notice about the style in which the title is written? What is the significance of the title?

Appendix 6: Discussion prompts, graphic novels

Questions for *Pride of Baghdad* (Vaughan & Henrichon, 2006)

1. What do you like about the book so far?
2. What, if anything, is confusing?
3. Study the book's cover: what are the first things you notice? What double meaning might the title have?
4. In your group, assign roles. Read pp. 22-28 out loud. Then discuss: how does the double splash panel on pp. 27-28 affect your reading.
5. There are many close-up shots of the lions' faces in this part of the book. Why, do you think?
6. What do you think Noor means when she says: "freedom can't be given, only **earned**" (panel 3, p. 24).
7. Turn to pages 19 and 20. Why do you think the artist chose an eye level shot for the first panel? What effect does it have on the reader?
8. How does the comic artist create a sense of action and movement on page 19?
9. Study the details of the third panel on page 20 closely. Discuss panel size, camera shot (framing, angle and perspective) and colours. Where are you as a reader positioned in this panel? What effect is created by the tilted camera angle?
10. How is the colour palette used on pp. 19-20 different from the colours on pp.16-18? What is the effect of this change in colours? Do the colours help create a certain the mood in the story?
11. Finally, after the group discussion, write down some thoughts on the following questions:
 - a. What (if anything) did you learn from the discussion with your fellow students that you had not seen or understood on your own?
 - b. What do you think about the graphic novel discussion in your group, was it easier or more difficult than discussing traditional literature?
 - c. Did you find it easier to take part and engage in the discussion of the literary text when you could talk about the images? Why/why not?

Questions for *Who is Jake Ellis?* (Edmondson & Zonjic, 2012)

1. What do you like about the book so far?
2. What, if anything, is confusing?
3. In your group, assign roles and read the first two chapters out loud. Then discuss: who - or what - do you think Jake Ellis really is? What makes you think so?
4. Jake Ellis has an original beginning, where the same scene is shown twice. In your group, assign roles and read the first 5 pages out loud. Then discuss: were you confused the first time you read this scene? Why/Why not?
5. Did you notice the text at the bottom of page three and at the top of page four the first time you read it? Is this text important to the story?
6. Why do you think the cartoonists showed this scene twice?
7. How does the artist make Jake Ellis and what he says stand out?
8. Turn to the panel which ends chapter 1.
9. Why do you think the artist chose a low angle shot for this panel? What effect does it have on you, the reader?
10. How does the comic artist create a sense of action on page two? Look at panel shapes and sizes, camera shots in each panel (framing, angle and perspective), colours and words. What is special about the forth panel on this page?
11. In the first chapter of the book, the illustrator makes use of dark colours and dark shadowing. What kind of mood does this colour palette create?

12. Finally, after the group discussion, write down some thoughts on the following questions:
 - a. What (if anything) did you learn from the discussion with your fellow students that you had not seen or understood on your own?
 - b. What do you think about the graphic novel discussion in your group, was it easier or more difficult than discussing traditional literature?
 - c. Did you find it easier to take part and engage in the discussion of the literary text when you could talk about the images? Why/why not?

Questions for *Severed* (Snyder&Tuft, 2013):

1. What do you like about the book so far?
2. What, if anything, is confusing?
3. Assign roles and read chapter two out loud. Then discuss: what elements do you think are important to make a horror book exciting?
4. Based on what you have read so far, discuss some examples from the book that are typical characteristics of the horror genre.
5. The main story in this novel takes place in 1916. How can you tell from the illustrations?
6. Study the layout of page 6 closely. How does the camera angle and perspective change in these panels? *Why do you think the artist has chosen to use tall, horizontal panel shapes?*
7. Finally, after the group discussion, write down some thoughts on the following questions:
 - a. What (if anything) did you learn from the discussion with your fellow students that you had not seen or understood on your own?
 - b. What do you think about the graphic novel discussion in your group, was it easier or more difficult than discussing traditional literature?
 - c. Did you find it easier to take part and engage in the discussion of the literary text when you could talk about the images? Why/why not?

Questions for *Fables: Legends in Exile* (Willingham et al., 2012)

1. What do you like about the book so far?
2. What, if anything, is confusing?
3. Assign roles and re-read the first chapter of the graphic novel out loud. What clues are given that link this story to the fairy tale tradition?
4. Study the layout of page 26. What does the shadow on the wall in panel 3 symbolise? What effect does it have on the reader that this panel is made larger than the other panels on the page?
5. Study the panel on page 27 closely. What effect does the artist's use of a full splash panel have on you, the reader? What do you think about the letters on the wall?
6. Turn to pp. 85-90. How has the artist made this section of the story stand out from the rest of the book?
7. Finally, after the group discussion, write down some thoughts on the following questions:
 - a. What (if anything) did you learn from the discussion with your fellow students that you had not seen or understood on your own?
 - b. What do you think about the graphic novel discussion in your group, was it easier or more difficult than discussing traditional literature?
 - c. Did you find it easier to take part and engage in the discussion of the literary text when you could talk about the images? Why/why not?

Appendix 7: Final survey questions

1. Ga tegneserieromanen deg en god leseropplevelse?	
Ja	
Nei	

Kommentar:

2. Kunne du tenke deg å lese engelskspråklige tegneserieromaner i fritiden din?	
Ja	
Kanskje	
Nei	

Kommentar:

3. Syntes du det var mer engasjerende å diskutere en tegneserieroman enn tradisjonell engelskspråklig litteratur (i gruppen og i klassen)?	
Ja	
Til en viss grad	
Nei	

Kommentar:

4. Synes du det er viktig å bruke god tid på å lese både illustrasjonene og teksten i tegneserieromanen?	
Ja	
Litt viktig	
Ikke så viktig	
Nei	

Kommentar:

5. Synes du det er viktig å ha kunnskap om tegneseriemediets virkemidler for å kunne analysere tegneserieromaner?	
Ja	
Litt viktig	
Ikke så viktig	
Nei	

Kommentar:

6. Har du blitt mer oppmerksom på hvordan illustrasjoner bruker spesielle virkemidler for å skape en følelse eller reaksjon hos leseren etter dette leseprosjektet?	
Ja	
Nei	

Kommentar:

7. Kan kunnskap om hvordan man leser denne typen multimodale tekster være nyttig i andre sammenhenger også?	
Ja	
Nei	

Kommentar:

Svar så utfyllende du kan på de neste spørsmålene:

8. Hva syntes du var positivt med å lese og arbeide med engelskspråklig litteratur gjennom tegneseriemediet?

9. Hva var negativt med å lese og arbeide med engelskspråklig litteratur gjennom tegneseriemediet?

10. Hvordan var det å lese en tegneserieroman forskjellig fra de tekstene du vanligvis leser på skolen?

11. Hvis noen sa til deg at det å lese tegneserieromaner i engelsktimene ikke var "ordentlig" lesing, hva ville du svare?

12. Hvis du var engelsklærer i videregående skole, kunne du tenke deg å bruke tegneserieromaner i undervisningen din? Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke?

13. Velg en side/et panel/en illustrasjon fra boka du leste som gjorde et spesielt inntrykk på deg. Forklar hvorfor.

14. Ordet er fritt:

Appendix 8: Semi-structured focus group interview guide

Outline of themes and topics to be covered during the interviews

Intro

- For at jeg skal kjenne igjen stemmen din – si navnet ditt, hvilken bok du har lest og beskriv kort ditt forhold til tegneserier og tegneserieromaner før dette prosjektet
- Hvordan reagerte folk rundt dere (foresatte, skolekamerater i andre klasser, venner eller søsken) da de fant ut at dere leste en tegneserieroman i engelsktimene?

Tegneserieromaner som tekst i engelskfaget

- Har synet deres på tegneserier og tegneserieromaner forandret seg etter at dere har jobbet med slike tekster i engelsktimene?
- Har elever noe å lære av å lese grafiske romaner i engelskfaget? I tilfelle; hva da. Hvis ikke; hvorfor ikke?
- Passer tegneserieromaner til alle typer lesere? Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke?
- Var der ting som dere fokuserte spesielt på når dere leste bøkene?
- Var det noe som overrasket dere? Skuffet dere? Som var utfordrende?
- Hvilke begrensninger har tegneserieromaner (i forhold til tradisjonell skjønnlitteratur)?
- Valg av sjanger /bok – hvilken innvirkning hadde det på deres forhold til prosjektet?
- Hvordan opplevde dere gruppearbeidet? Var det lettere/vanskeligere å diskutere litteratur på engelsk når dere hadde en multimodal tekst å jobbe med?
- Hva tenker dere om det å lese bilder eller illustrasjoner?
- Har deres kunnskaper om å tolke illustrasjoner endret seg etter at vi har jobbet med dette prosjektet i klassen? På hvilken måte?
- Hvilket utbytte fikk dere av arbeidet i klassen om typiske tegneserievirkemidler?
- Etter dette prosjektet, har dere blitt mer bevisst på hvordan tegneserieskapere bruker spesielle visuelle virkemidler for å påvirke leserne? I tilfelle; kan dere nevne noen eksempler?
- Har dere lyst til å lese flere tegneserieromaner? Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke?
- Hvilken mulig overføringsverdi kan kunnskap om tegneseriens virkemidler ha?
- Hvilket råd ville dere gitt en venn som skal lese en tegneserieroman for første gang?

Appendix 9: Sample, colour coding

Available linguistic design

Available gestural design

Available visual design

Excerpt from the interview transcript (appendix 15), group A:

- H: Tenkte mye på ansiktsuttrykk og. Et ansiktsuttrykk kan si veldig mye synes jeg, da, hva de tenker. Du kan analysere personen ut i fra ansiktsuttrykket. Det gjorde jeg veldig mye. Brukte og lang tid på å se på farger, da, som C sa, for det er med på å skape settingen. Og hvis det er et slags lys som gir behagelige bilder, da vet du at nå skjer det ikke noe skummelt. Er det mørkt med mye skygger, og kalde farger, da vet du at det kan skje noe bad, liksom.
- M: Og av og til så jeg noen ansiktsuttrykk som jeg følte ikke passet inn, jeg var ikke sikker på hva han følte. Det fikk meg til å tenke, hvis han ser sur ut, hvorfor er han da sur? Eller hvorfor sier snakkeboblen noe, mens ansiktet hans sier noe annet? Ja, det fikk meg til å tenke litt ekstra på en måte.

Appendix 10: Sample field notes

Example, transcript of field notes

Date: 4/3 2015

Class B

Focus: Participants' individual readings of the graphic novels

(Researcher's reflections are in italics)

The start of this English lesson's reading session. The students had collected their graphic novels from the shelf at the back of the classroom and settled into their usual places. Some hustling and bustling. The classroom soon fell quiet as the students started to read. They made themselves comfortable, sliding down on their chairs or leaning over their desks with the graphic novel in front of them. After a little while, P leaned over to L, who was reading the same book, pointed at something in his graphic novel and smiled. L nodded and laughed. Then they both returned to their reading. I watched the class read for some time, ten or fifteen minutes perhaps. Sometimes, a student would frown and flip back to something he had previously read. Other times, there were flickers of smiles. M kept bending down over his book to study something more closely.

Watching them read, I found myself thinking that although they were reading silently, their reading seemed active in a sense. Their facial expressions reflected their reactions to what they were reading. To me, they seemed to be invested in the reading.

After a while (ten or fifteen minutes, I forgot to check the time) I had to leave the classroom to attend to some business in my office next door. I didn't say anything as I left. Returning to the classroom approximately five minutes later, the first thing I noticed as I opened the door was the sound. The sound of silence. The students were still concentrated on their reading. No mobile phones or open lap-tops, no chatting. R and L looked up as I came in, the rest seemed not to notice.

As I returned to the classroom, I was really struck by the silence. It seemed to me that the students were focused and even immersed in the graphic stories they were reading. Whenever I'd had to leave them on their own in the classroom before they'd made the most of the situation; socialising or surfing the web. This time was different.

Appendix 11: Participants' responses, pre survey

1. Liker du å lese skjønnlitteratur?		
	Gruppe A	Gruppe B
Ja	6	5
Nei	7	8

2. Hvor ofte leser du engelskspråklig skjønnlitteratur i fritiden din?		
	Gruppe A	Gruppe B
Hver dag	1	0
Ofte	0	1
Sjelden	8	6
Aldri	4	6

3. Har du lest en roman i engelsktimene på videregående skole?		
	Gruppe A	Gruppe B
Ja	0	0
Nei	13	13

4. Har du noen gang lest en grafisk roman (tegneserieroman) på norsk eller engelsk?		
	Gruppe A	Gruppe B
Ja	5	5
Nei	8	8

5. Synes du det er vanskelig å lese engelskspråklig skjønnlitteratur?		
	Gruppe A	Gruppe B
Ja	2	0
Nesten alltid	1	1
Noen ganger	3	7
Nei	7	5

6. Tror du det er mulig å lese bilder og illustrasjoner?		
	Gruppe A	Gruppe B
Ja	12	12
Nei	1	1

7. Hvilken type tekst kunne du tenke deg å jobbe med hvis du skulle lese en grafisk roman i engelsktimene? (sett gjerne flere kryss)		
	Gruppe A	Gruppe B
Fantasy	12	8
Sci-fi	8	4
Horror	6	7
Mystery	5	8
Romance	2	0
Adventure	9	8
Andre	1	1

8. Hva skal til for at du engasjerer deg i en norsk eller engelsk skjønnlitterær tekst?		
---	--	--

Gruppe A	Gruppe B
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At teksten er spennende • At jeg forstår teksten og den er spennende • God bok • Den bør være en litt lettlest tekst some er innenfor min interesse av sjanger. • Spennende, god skildring, bra tekstn'binding og at det er et interessant plot og at bokens forfatter skriver bra. • Gode skildringer og god spenningskurve. Jeg leser ofte oppsummeringen bak, der blir jeg interessert. Må vite "hva jeg går til" før jeg starter å lese. • Teksten handler om noe jeg allerede har interesse for og kan relater til. • Det må være et emne jeg liker. • En spennende handling, der det skjer noe fra start av. Flere spenningsstopper. • Finne en god bok og tid. • Teksten må ha et godt utgangspunkt og en god handling som helst bør inneholde elementer av personlige interesser. • Et innteressant emne. • Teksten må være innenfor noe som jeg synes er interessant. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bruke tekster som er relater til mitt fremtidige yrke. Gjerne tegneserieromaner. • Bytte de tekstene med tegneserieromaner. • En tittel som er superintresang, og en bok som ikke er for stor, tid til å lese den. • Spennende. • Finne en bok som jeg synes er interesang. • Lese en bok som har en bra handling, men som heller ikke er for avansert å lese. • At vi får tekster som gjerne er spennende, ikke altfor lange og gjerne velge selv hvilken tekst man skal lese. • Spennende tekster, som tekster om andre land og deres kulturer. • En god tekst og kanskje ikke bare et utdrag. • Noe som ikke er langtrukket. • Veldig usikker, vet ikke om det går at jeg engasjerer meg 100%. • Jeg vil ha mer yrkesfag i norsk, engelsk er helt fint som det er. • Har ikke peiling.
<p>9. Læreplanen i engelsk sier at elevene skal kunne: <i>drøfte engelskspråklige filmer og andre kulturutrykk fra forskjellige medier</i>²³. Hva tenker du er "andre kulturutrykk fra forskjellige medier"?</p>	
Gruppe A	Gruppe B
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hvordan medier fremstiller andre kulturer. • Veldig usikker. Forskjellige måter for kulturer å uttrykke seg på (?) som tekster, internett og TV? • Forskjellige måter å beskrive samme ting på. • Musikk og bilder, gjerne historie sammensatt av bilder som tegneserie. • At vi skal studere andre utrykk fra andre kulturer som vi ikke er så mye borti i hverdagen. Vet egentlig ikke. • Eg vett ikkje ☹ • Pc, online, bøker, artikler og tegneserier og musikk/musikkvideo • Varierende ordbruk på medier. • Kilder, musikk. • Jeg vet ikke • Vet ikke • ? • Vet ikke 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aner ikke • ? • Forstår ikke spørsmålet. • ... • Vett ikke • Vet ikke • Har virkelig ikke peiling. • Oversett til norsk, plis. • Vet ikke • Vet ikke • Har egentlig ikke peiling • At vi skal kunne forstå og forklare hvordan andre kulturer er. • Har ikke peiling.

Appendix 12: Class A's responses, *Hurdles*

A. What kind of a person is the coach?

- How can you tell from what he says?
 - How can you tell from what he looks like?
 - How can you tell from the way the artist has used particular camera shots and angles to depict him in the panels?
- a) The coach sounds like he is a racist. He is a mystical person. He just stand there, and wears sun glasses so you can not se his eyes. The artist has used very close up shots of the coach.
 - b) The coach seems to be a rather calm and tough person. As illustrated in the story, he usually just stands by the tracks, observing the runners from his own point. He doesn't talk much either, but when he does, he seems to have the intention of being mean and merciless to his athletes.
 - c) He uses sunglasses, and then you can't see his eyes. That makes me a bit unconfutable, because you can't connect with him. He is dressed in typical coach clothes. Baggy jacket, sweatpants and a hat. And he stands in a position that makes him seem powerfull, you see him "close-up" witch makes him look big.
 - d) The coach is strict. He wants his students to become the best. He could be Chinese because he replies "Because the Chinese are smart", or he says that because he thinks that the boy are stupid. The coach seems old, and he is wearing sun-glasses because he seems cool and also not to show his emotions that good.
 - e) The coach is mean and very direct. You can also say he is a racist, because he tells the young lad that he is dumb because he is Korean. He is also talking in short sentences which make him more direct and creepy. He looks like a cold person because he is hiding behind sunglasses and wears his cap very low to hide his eyes. The artist uses close-up pictures to show how creepy and direct the trainer is. In a way, he tries to scare the reader a bit and make the reader understand more how the coach really is.
 - f) He's a man with discipline. I can tell that, because everyone who doesn't do what he says are going to take one more lap, as a punishment. The way he stands, with hands on his back and the way he doesn't show his eyes, it looks like he thinks he's from the army (maybe he is, I don't know), and there it's much discipline. The artist shows the coach in bird-perspective, and the Korean boy in frog-perspective, which makes the Korean boy feel small and weak, and the coach big and strong.
 - g) The coach is very tough and strict. He right up said that the Korean were dumb, because he ran off the tracks to get some water. He always stands with his hands behind his back, like how someone stands in the military, which for me shows that he is calm and somewhat wise but also have discipline. Putting the coach in the middle of the frame makes him look important. The artist also used ultra-zoom shots which makes the coach look dominating. And he makes the boy feel really small by using frog-perspective. That shows that the coach is the boss and the boy can't do nothing about it.
 - h) The coach expect that everybody is alike and that everybody shall do the same, and do what he says. His body language tells me that he like to be in charge and have control over other people. He likes to be in charge, with out any responsibility, because he hides behind his sunglasses. The kids have a lot of respect for there coach. The coach is used to, that the kids don't ask questions to his demands.
 - i) The coach is a very strict/scary person. He shows no feelings and is cold-hearted. You can tell this from when he makes fun of/humiliates the Korean boy. You can also tell this from the way he dresses. He shows little of his face, and he has a very nice posture, straight back and his arms are behind his back. The artist shows the coach as a scary person. The close-up shot of the coache's face, with the shadowing, makes him seem scary.
 - j) He is a racist, strict. He says that the Korean are not as smart as the Chinese. You cannot see his arms, the way he always stands whit his arms behind his back. The camera angles that are used makes us look up at the coach.
 - k) He is a racistic smart-ass coach. He is very serious, strict and scary, and he is clearly "the boss". He stand there, with his hands behind his back, with sunglasses on. He is shown really close up, and as a lone figure. Makes him scary.
 - l) He is a harsh person. He judges people from what they do. He's a tough man and he has got the power. The artist zooms in the man and make us get an illusion of the man looking down at the boy. It makes the coach to a powerful man.
 - m) You can tell that the coach is narrow-minded when it comes to Koreans. He tells the boy that he is stupid only because he is from Korea. He is a careless and serious man based by the look of his clothes. The coach's angled appearance makes him look bothe mysterious and serious as he is standing

far away and then way up in your face.

B. The word *hurdle* literally means *one of a series of barriers to be jumped over in a race*. Symbolically, *hurdles* refer to a difficulty or an obstacle to be overcome. What kind of hurdles do you think the young boy in the story is facing?

- a) The boy in the story is facing real hurdles that he has to jump over, when he is training. He might also face real hurdles, when the coach is speaking to him in a discriminating way.
- b) The young boy in the story probably has a series of difficulties either at home or in school. The coach, with his depressing and merciless behaviour doesn't seem to be helping the boy in any way, which is probably why he ran home instead of running back on the track.
- c) Both, he is jumping over hurdles at the running track, but he is also facing hurdles, of living as a Korean guy in an American community. He is not following what everybody else is doing too. He jumps hurdles while everybody else is running straight through.
- d) In the beginning, he talks about the race hurdles, but at the end when he says "I jump hurdles every day" he is talking about obstacles in his life. For example his coach was one of them, judging him because of his skin colour.
- e) I don't think the boy is facing real physical hurdles. I think the hurdle is a symbol for his life. A hurdle can symbolize a problem. I think he has many of these hurdles or problems in his life.
- f) It can mean both, the mental and the physical hurdles. The story's plot is about a boy that trains with hurdles. But it can also mean the mental hurdles; the life is going to be a rollercoaster, up and down. Good days and bad days.
- g) The fear of facing down his coach after he made a mistake, which was running off the track to drink some water.
- h) The hurdle the young boy is facing in the story is racism. How it is to be a South-Korean boy in the USA.
- i) He is facing symbolical hurdles. He is an outcast, and this creates hurdles for him.
- j)
- k) The boy in the story is facing actual hurdles, as well as hurdles in his every-day life. He jumps over them, not wanting to confront them. He faces hurdles by being a Korean in an American society.
- l) The young boy is facing judging by doing his own thing and not by going with the flow.
- m) ...

C. What do you notice about the style in which the title is written? What is the significance of the title?

- a) The title is placed in a direction that looks like hurdles.
- b) The font used in the title has hints of hurdle shapes in the words themselves, which gives an extra sensation of the meaning of the word itself. The word "hurdles" probably means obstacles that have to be overcome in life in the story, as there are no other words to explain which context the headline is connected to.
- c) The letters are slanting, and they look like hurdles, the letters are going up and down.
- d) The title is styled as race-hurdles. Making obvious what it is about, even though it has a deeper meaning.
- e) The title is written in a way that makes the letters look like hurdles.
- f) The letters are written with long space between the letters, the letters seem to be hurdles.
- g) The headline is actually written in the style of hurdles.
- h) The title is written like hurdles, the letters are making hurdles, since they are not standing in a straight line. The significance of the title is that everybody has a hurdle in their life, a small or a big one.
- i) The title is written in the form of hurdles. The artist chose this title because the kid is a hurdle runner/jumper, and also because he faces the symbolical hurdle of racism in his life.
- j)
- k) The title hurdle is written in a "hurdley way". The letters are not standing straight, but are tilted, to illustrate the meaning that it is not ordinary hurdles the text is about. But also hurdles like racism in the boy's everyday life.
- l) The style of the title is written as hurdles. The story is about hurdles, and that the boy is facing problems ("hurdles") while he is choosing his own track in life.
- m)

Appendix 13: Participants' responses, graphic novels

(Notes taken following peer group discussions)

Pride of Baghdad

1. *What do you like about the book so far?*

Group A

- a) I like it that the drawings take a large part of the utterance, as they often cover the whole page, rather than a small piece of it. I also like the story, as there are many small arguments that are easy to comprehend.
- b) Answer: I like the action in the book. It is a very good story, and it makes you want to read more.
- c) The book is interesting to read as you get to experience a big moment in their lives. You get the vibe that some drama is going on within the pack which makes the story more living.
- d) Nice pictures and a great story
- e) Interesting, family drama, like real people and society mixed with things from lion society.

Group B

- a) What I liked about this book was the incredible art work the writer makes. I also did like the story. Think it's a deep story where he uses lions to symbolize people. I have never read a book there lions are the main characters.
- b) I like the story, it's very interesting and it just cepp you rinding and what to reid more.
- c) I like everything about the book. The book has everything you need for it to be amazing.

2. *What, if anything, is confusing?*

Group A

- a) The scene changes often happen too quickly, not giving a very accurate description of what's going on.
- b) ...
- c) The confusing part is why the scared lion is so scared of the wild.
- d) I didn't find anything confusing, except difficult words that I don't know the meaning of.
- e) What is going to happen next, that is always confusing, nothing more.

Group B

- a) I didn't think that anything in the story was confusing. But I can see that some people can find it confusing, but I like to see deeper meaning about things.
- b) Some word are confusing, but if you continu reiding you understand the mienig.
- c) I don't think that anything is confusing

3. *Study the book's cover: what are the first things you notice? What double meaning might the title have?*

Group A:

- a) Pride is the English word for "stolthet", but also means "a pack of lions" in English.
- b) Answer: The first thing I notice is Zill's face behind some bars, and the title "Pride". The word pride can mean to things. It can mean a pack of lions, and it also means "stolthet"
- c) The first thing I noticed about the cover is that Zill is behind bars and the text PRIDE means that they are proud animals. It also means a family of lions.
- d) The lions eyes. They look so serious. And also the name of the book, "PRIDE".
- e) I see the lion locked up behind bars, close up. And the family walking in the city. They are not really free. Pride: They are proud (lions), they have to be brave to keep that, and they are very easily irritated, and arrogant. They see themselves with pride. And pride means (pack of lions).

Group B:

- a) I think that cover of this comic gives a feeling of war and tragedy. It also gives a little feeling of death, because if you see at the mouth of the lion you can see blood. But I think the meaning of the cover is that even when they not behind bars they are still not free.
- b) I see war, taredie and defth. The coller of the cover make the book loke mysterious.
- c) There is a lot that is happening to both the city and the lion. It seems like they have gotten out of the zoo, but still they have to escape the war.

4. *In your group, assign roles. Read pages 22-28 out loud. Then discuss: how does the double splash panel on pp 27-28 affect your reading?*

Group A

- a)
- b) Answer: We slow down our reading because of all the things that are happening. There is a lot of animals running, and explosions.
- c) I can see many details from the different animals running from both explosions and fires.
- d) I slow down the reading because there are a lot of things that happens in the picture. There are no panels, just a huge picture that covers the to pages. And you get a review over the "battlefield" (The explosions, and the animal panic).
- e) There is so much going on. You have to slow down just to observe all that is going on in the pictures.

Group B

- a) You will slow down because it is a big drawing without any borders with only a little text bobble.
- b) It's give a overwu over the siuesjon.
- c) It is the big drawings without the borders. And without a lot of dialogue. The angle of the drawing make you observe what's happening at the time. Big and many details so you take a lot of time to study it.

5. *There are many close-up shots of the lions' faces in this part of the book. Why, do you think?*

Group A

- a)
- b) Answer: I think it helps us getting to know them better, or making us feel like we connect in some way.
- c) The author/artist wants you to see their facial expressions throughout the tragedy.
- d) Because you get to see the lions face expressions. And how they are feeling. And you get compassion for them.
- e) So you can see who says what better, and easier see what they think as they say what they say, because you see the expressions on their faces better.

Group B

- a) I think he use many close ups because then we can see the feelings and emotion in there face. Like they want to tell you something.
- b) Because it give a more imosenal filing to the lion. You onderstan the filing.
- c) Close-ups are for the impressions the character gives us. They look at you and it feels like you know them. They show us emotions and expressions that means a lot for the plot.

6. *What do you think Noor means when she says: "freedom can't be given, only earned" (panel 3, p. 24).*

Group A

- a)
- b) Answer: I think she means that even though their freedom was given to them in the beginning, it has to have some kind of catch, because they did not earn their freedom.
- c) The freedom they got was not real freedom. It was given to them, but it was clearly too

- good to be real.
- d) I think she didn't feel that they deserved getting free from the zoo, because they escaped because of the war. And also they had lived most of their life inside the zoo, and the freedom they wanted was hard to get because they still had to manage living in the wild. And therefore it might not be the freedom they always wanted, but that they had to earn it anyway.
 - e) You don't appreciate it the same way if you don't earn it yourself. And freedom is not something everyone has, it is something you have to work for. And the way they obtain their freedom just seem wrong to her.

Group B

- a) I think she means that you will never be free if freedom is given to you, you can only be free if you deserve it.
- b) She are arfeid that it they just run of the will get in a worst situasjon that the alredi is in.
- c) It means that you cant just walk away. Because it will haunt you forever. You have to do something and not just stand around and pretend it didn't happen.

7. *Turn to pages 19 and 20. Why do you think the artist chose an eye level shot for the first panel? What effect does it have on the reader?*

Group A

- a)
- b) Answer: It makes us feel like we are there in the action.
- c) When you see everything from eye level, it feels like you are a part of the action.
- d) Because then the reader feels like he/she is in the scene. The effect is that the reader is equal to the characters, so the reader to feels comfortable with the characters in the story.
- e) You are in the explosion and it seems more real, like you were standing there yourself, watching and feeling the explosion. You see it as if you were standing there watching it yourself, then it seems more real.

Group B

- a) When he uses that type of panel you will get the feeling that you are in the situation with the lions.
- b) The reader fils like the are in the same sisuasjon like the lion, and it maks you more atraktiv to the story.
- c) It makes you feel like you are standing in front of the explosion. It feels more real

8. *How does the comic artist create a sense of action and movement on page 19?*

Group A

- a)
- b) Answer: The colour red, and all the lines along the page. It has the effect of making things seem like they move in a great speed.
- c) You can see movement lines behind the stones in the air, giving you the impression that they are flying in high speed.
- d) Because they have used "Speed" lines. Lines that make the reader think things are in motion. And also the lions and rocks in the air. The colour, white in the middle and then it gets more and more red smoke/ pressure waves.
- e) With the help of the "speedlines" it seems like everything goes really fast. And the zig zags around Zill when he hits the wall, shows that he suddenly stop, this also indicates speed.

Group B

- a) He uses the motionlines and the dialog to make the image more real and a sense of movement in the picture. And he uses the collar orange to give more action and feelings. It feels more intense.
- b) ...
- c) Sense, action and movement are made by how he draws the picture. With the movement

lines and the speech bubble he makes it clear that it is dangerous and they have to run away.

9. Study the details of the third panel on page 20 closely. Discuss panel size, camera shot (framing, angle and perspective) and colours. Where are you as a reader positioned in this panel? What effect is created by the tilted camera angle?

Group A

- a)
- b) Answer: We are in the explosion. The effect of the tilted camera angle is that it is out of place. Things are wrong, and it is not going the way it is supposed to.
- c) A lot of orange and red I being used which indicates fire/explosion. The “camera” is tilted when the explosion took place which creates a dramatic/od effect to the frame. You are also in with an eye level shot making you a part of the action.
- d) I feel like I am positioned in the pressure wave, and the tilted angle make the scene feel chaotic and gives an impression that something is wrong. And that makes sense when you see the explosion. And the colour is red: fire, fear, and blood is something I associate with this. And also the size of the panel is half a page. And there are no white frame around witch makes it feel like I am in the scene.
- e) It is a big panel, so you get to see what goes on in front of you as well as the background. As a reader you are watching the explosion coming towards you and you see the lions running away, escaping. The tilted angle makes the picture chaotic and the picture does not have a gutter, so the picture does not stop on the page, you imagine the surroundings as well. The colours are very warm and make you think of a warzone.

Group B

- a) The angel of the picture is tilted so you will feel that there is something wrong that is happening. It's because people like to have things straight and not tilted.
- b) ...
- c) How the panel is tilted shows how things are going to happen. That means that there's something strange or something is off.

10. How is the colour palette used on pp. 19-20 different from the colours on pp.16-18? What is the effect of this change in colours? Do the colours help create a certain the mood in the story?

Group A

- a)
- b) Answer: The red-ish orange colour makes it feel more thrilling. It changes the mood to a more dangerous mood, things go wrong, blood, action.
- c) 16-18 is green, happy and peaceful while 19-20 is red, tragic and dangerous.
- d) It is kind of dark colours, but it's red. And this makes the reader feel like it is a danger and also it makes the explotions feel real because it's the colour of fire, with a white in the middle.
- e) The colours on the previous pages are cold and somewhat happy, but the colours on page 19 and 20 is warm, and chaotic and the contrast makes for a sudden mood change.

Group B

- a) The first collars are natural. But then when the explosion comes, the collars change and now they are hot orange like flames and danger. Nothing is natural about war.
- b) ...
- c) The colours do really make a difference. They make the seen feel real and intensifies the situation.

11. Finally, after the group discussion, write down some thoughts on the following questions:
A. What (if anything) did you learn from the discussion with your fellow students that you had not seen or understood on your own?

Group A

- a) To be honest, I learned very little from discussing with my group. Everything that got

- mentioned in the group session was something I had understood from before.
- b) Answer: The thing about the first gulf war.
 - c)
 - d)
 - e) The picture with the turtles and the oil, I didn't get that myself. And the bird that appear at the beginning and the end of the book.

Group B

- a) We had different opinions about the end.
- b) ...
- c) X said that the bird in the beginning was important because he warned about the war. He said that was like a "frampek". I hadn't thought about that but I see it now.

B. What do you think about the graphic novel discussion in your group, was it easier or more difficult than discussing traditional literature?

Group A

- a) All I can say is that it was easier to discuss a graphic novel, rather than a traditional one. Instead of only discussing words and lines, we had to discuss pictures too. This meant that there were more impressions to gather from the texts, in addition to the fact that the impressions were easier to interpret.
- b) Answer: It was easier.
- c) Discussing a graphic novel was much easier then normal literature. You get more of the same looks on things and get to discuss the pictures. What they mean, what their facial expressions tells you and why the artist chose to make it like that.
- d) It was easier because you could report to the panel and the page and discuss the images.
- e) Easier, because you could show examples from the book, and it was easier showing a picture that finding a paragraph in a book. People did also have more similar views and you could interpret the picture as well as the text.

Group B

- a) It was pretty easy I think because I have an interest in comics and manga. So I think that comics are much more fun to read then normal text books.
- b) Yes, it was much eyser to read the graphic novel.
- c) I think that the graphic novel was good to read and discuss. It is both easy and a very interesting book.

C. Did you find it easier to take part and engage in the discussion of the literary text when you could talk about the images? Why/why not?

Group A

- a) As I explained in the previous answer, the images made construing the story in groups a lot easier. Pictures talk a great deal more than words, making the story simpler and more understandable.
- b) Answer: I found it easier because it is easier to discuss things when there are both pictures and text. There are more angles on the story, and therefore more angles to discuss.
- c) Same as the answer above.
- d) No, because in a literary text you have to read between the lines, and you pictures everything in your mind. And no one else can know how you think things look. But when there was pictures everyone had the same picture of how the characters looked and how the setting was.
- e) See answer above

Group B

- a) I think that it was easier because you get the image that tells much of the story so you can go deeper to the meaning of the text with help of the drawings in the comic. To teacher: I think that we need to have more of this type of assignment ☺
- b) Yes it was fun to discussion the book in grops and hire other people minig about the book. It meid me tink.

- c) The images makes it is easier to understand the situation the main character is in. That means you can both read faster and live more in to the story. It makes your imagination work more and it is easier for you to understand as well.

Who is Jake Ellis?

1. What do you like about the book so far?

Group A

- a) I like that there are always happening something. He keep the novel exiting all the time. When there is much talking, there is much action afterwards.
 b) Its an interesting story. With a man inside another’s head, maybe? But there are to much traveling.

Group B

- a) The pictures and text have good synergy, short and mysterious
 b) I find the book very interesting, the combination of pictures and text intriguing. In my opinion, it is easier to express emotions and feeling behind the lines, using pictures.
 c) I think it is exiting.
 d) A mix between Inception, hard to understand. A lot happening at the same time. Very exciting and fast going story.

2. What is confusing?

Group A

- a) In the beginning I did not understand who the man in the background were. I thought Moore had an “agent invisible headphone” on, and talked to the man from there. But right before chapter 3, I understood it when they talked about it.
 b) There are some jumps in time, which gets hard to follow, but I think I have figured it out, how the system works.

Group B

- a) Jon Moore’s past is kind of confusing in the beginning
 b) I find the character Jake Ellis somewhat confusing. Because it’s seems incredibly obvious that he is just a vision of the schizophrenic main character, but I don’t think the book would give it away in such an early stage.
 c) The most confusing part is when you get a flashback to the ”institution” where it all started. The only way they show this is by making the whole panels red. I didn’t get that in the beginning.
 d) A lot, but after you read it 2 times it will probably get a lot better with understanding it.

3. In your group, assign roles and read the first two chapters out loud. Then discuss Who - or what - do you think Jake Ellis really is? What makes you think so?

Group A

- a) I think he is a person in the minds to Moore. I think Jake Ellis is like a “ghost” that can see things in the future. Some people think they can talk to ghost or souls, and I think that Moore is a person that can do the same.
 b) I am nearly done with the book. So I know he is also a normal person. Probably CIA aswell. And they have somehow been put together.

Group B

- a) I think Jake Ellis is a Virus, because in chapter 2, you get to see a red scene where they show Jon Moore in a lab and you get to know that he is an experiment, and the only one that survived. The experiment was too put a “second” taught into people, so that they would hear voices, this voice will be they’re Guardian Angle.
 b) Answered this above.
 c) I think Jake Ellis is an implanted virus in the head of Mr. Moore
 d) I think he is not real, an imagination from john very cold and dark, don’t care about the all the people shooting with guns, very calm and quiet. Talks very simple and straight forward

in how he explains how he will get away from the bad guys.

4. *Jake Ellis has an original beginning, where the same scene is shown twice. In your group, assign roles and read the first 5 pages out loud. Then discuss: were you confused the first time you read this scene? Why/Why not?*

Group A

- a) A bit. But I understood it when it came again, when we could see Jake Ellis.
- b) No

Group B

- a) Not really, because when I saw the scene coming again, I started analysing the scene before reading, and try to notice the differences in the two scenes before reading the second scene.
- b) I was not confused when I read the starting scene, rather surprised that Jon was really talking to Jake Ellis and not the two men sitting next to him.
- c) No not really.
- d) Yes, but I read it again and it made a lot more sense.

5. *Did you notice the text at the bottom of page three and at the top of page four the first time you read it? Is this text important to the story?*

Group A

- a) Not before X showed me. I forgot to look at the text I only saw the pictures. Then it made sense that the scene was played two times.
- b) The top where it says 15 second ago. Its important. Could have been done without it but may have been confusing. The stop part I don't really see the point in.

Group B

- a) Yes I did, like who doesn't, there's big capital letters, like come on. The second scene is very important, because you get to know that Jon Moore aint that smart, he has an "Guardian Angel" that protects him. You also get to know how Jake Ellis work.
- b) I did notice the text at the bottom of page three and top of page four. I don't feel that the text influence the story too much compared to the pictures.
- c) Yes I did, partly why I understood the sequence.
- d) No, not when I read it. But know it now that I had discussed it with the group.

6. *Why do you think the cartoonists showed this scene twice ?*

Group A

- a)
- b) First time he shows it as a normal persons perspective. While on the second time, we see what Jon is seeing while still in a third person perspective. This is done to show that only Jon Moore can see Jake.

Group B

- a) Shit, I answered this in the question above.
- b) I think the creators show the scene twice to show that only Jon see and interact with Jake Ellis, and to show Jake's influence on Jon.
- c) To illustrated the same scene inside and outside of Moore's head.
- d) To introduce this cold imagination person. To show he is a person in his own mind that he talks to.

7. *How does the artist make Jake Ellis and what he says stand out?*

Group A

- a) He is grey and he has no expressions in his face.
- b) He's dark, sort of like a shadow. And therefore his speak bubbles is also dark.

Group B

- a) He is in the background; he is grey, kind of ghostly. He is always calm, and never seem to bother in intense scenes. He seems to not have any types of emotions.
- b) Jake stands out in the novel by being the only character with grey colours and grey speech-

<p>bobbles. Also his body language and facial expressions don't match the situations at all.</p> <p>c) Jake Ellis is the only grey character. He is very cold and doesn't show any facial expressions. His speech bubbles are grey as well.</p> <p>d) Talks simple, very dark, black and white compared to the rest of the novel. Don't care about the rest of the people. Nobody can see him except John.</p>
--

8. Turn to the panel which ends chapter 1.
Why do you think the artist chose a low angle shot for this panel? What effect does it have on you, the reader?

Group A

- a)
- b) It makes us feel that he is vulnerable.

Group B

- a) It shows that Jon Moore is drowning, like he is going down. It also indicates that the scene is ending. It's like a cut scene
- b) ...
- c) It illustrates him, like he is deeper in the sea. It gives us some depth perspective
- d) To show the whole person as a part of the story compared to all the other people in the story, how he escapes, the different colors that affect the picture.

9. *Why do you think the artist chose to illustrate this scene in a full page panel?*

Group A

- a)
- b) Next page is a new setting. And this was an important scene for the artist.

Group B

- a) So we can feel the tension. But at the same time if you look to your left, you see him chilling with coffee. I think the artist did this on purpose, to clearly show that that scene is ending, like they do in the movies to take a hold of you.
- b)
- c) To give us art to really think over what happened. Maybe to give us the chance to think more illustrative of what happened.

To slow everything down in the novel, to show the scene.

10. *How does the comic artist create a sense of action on page two? Look at panel shapes and sizes, camera shots in each panel (framing, angle and perspective), colours and words. What is special about the fourth panel on this page?*

Group A

- a)
- b) He uses orange and yellow. To give a feeling of warmth. He sets the scene on fire. On the fourth panel. You see him running away from a low angle view. Making him seem strong/unstoppable.

Group B

- a) You see this dude running, running for his life, dodging bullets and shit.
- b)
- c) There are a lot of variations, which makes the story more exciting.
- d) He makes it look close up. Dangerous. Like you are there yourself, like they are shooting at you.

11. *In the first chapter of the book, the illustrator makes use of dark colours and dark shadowing. What kind of mood does this colour palette create?*

Group A

- a) Scary
- b) Cold and dangerous.

Group B

- a) To cause tension, you know that's something is about to go down.
- b) ...
- c) Very dark and cold mood. It creates a very exiting and "scary" mood.
- d) Bad mood. Very dark means depressive and sadness.

12. Finally, after the group discussion, write down some thoughts on the following questions:

A. What (if anything) did you learn from the discussion with your fellow students that you had not seen or understood on your own?

Group A

- a) He helped me to understand the beginning when I didn't see the text.
- b) ...

Group B

- a) Yes I did, even though we read the same thing, we had different aspects from the story, so far.
- b) ...
- c) X mentioned that he thinks Jon Moore is inflicted with some sort of virus in his brain, making him see a person that represents his subconscious.
- d) Many different opinions that I did not think myself.

B. What do you think about the graphic novel discussion in your group, was it easier or more difficult than discussing traditional literature?

Group A

- a) Yes. We talked about the pictures and what happened.
- b) Yes it was easier to discuss.

Group B

- a) Its easier because you already have the pictures, you don't have to make them on your own. Because of that, we all have the "same" picture of who Jon Moore is and who Jake Ellis is, it would be more difficult without pictures, because we would have made different images of who they were. Some of us might not even be making pictures, we would be emptyheaded.
- b) I think the images made for an easier discussion, seeing as though you can simply point at the picture you are talking about, as opposed to commenting on a sentence or a page from a book.
- c) ...
- d) Easier.

C. Did you find it easier to take part and engage in the discussion of the literary text when you could talk about the images? Why/why not?

Group A

- a)
- b) Its easier to talk about stories when you don't have to analyse only the text but can analyse pictures too.

Group B

- a) Yes easier to discuss, but you don't use your imagination to the fullest though. But I don't mind that, its harder to concentrate without pictures when you read in your classroom with other people around you.
- b) I found that we had different views on what the pictures was telling, which made for a more interesting discussion.
- c) ...
- d) Yes, because we are all friends, you feel secure with your class mates.

Severed

1. *What do you like about the book so far?*

Group A

- a) I like the tension and the persons involved in the story. I also like how the antagonist is interesting and scary. Many stories don't focus on the bad guy, and that's what I love about this story.
- b) Exsaiting, god storyline, god drawings, a god plot.
- c) Very exciting and fun. Good illustrations and awesome characters.

Group B

- a) I like the way they change between the characters so that you get an idea of what the main character is up against.
- b) It's exciting and a very good book
- c) Exciting story and a bit gross like a horror should be.
- d) The book was exciting and the layout was very good.
- e) It is a lot of adventure. Good story + horror.

2. *What is confusing?*

Group A

- a) Some of the pages have confusing picture-lay out. The handwritten cards are also hard to read.
- b) Hang on to everyone of the characters. And some language and the writing /tekst type.
- c) Nothing

Group B

- a) Some of the words are confusing and the change of character.
- b) Nothing special
- c) The book is not confusing at all, the pictures show the story very clear.
- d) We did not find anything that was confusing.
- e) The text sometimes

3. *Assign roles and read chapter two out loud. What elements do you think are important to make a horror book exciting?*

Group A

- a) To make a horror book exciting, you'll need: A plot, scary/interesting main antagonist and good build up.
- b) To kniw mor than the main character thast n danger. And to be unchore abouth what wil happened to him.
- c) It must make me excited and want to find out more. The story should be "dark" and scary, like I don't want to read but still want to read more. It mustn't be too "easy".

Group B

- a) Its important with the build up. When you know something is going to happen but the character don't.
- b) Colour, darkness and shadows, how the faces are looking
- c) Dark scenes, mysterious plot and unexpected scenes.
- d) Dark scenes, screaming, the people in the story
- e) A lot of horror and a great story before the people dies or getting hurt.

4. *Based on what you have read so far, discuss some examples from the book that are typical characteristics of the horror genre.*

Group A

- a) Dark colours and a creepy antagonist. We don't see him properly because he is always in the shadows or hides behind his hat. Dark houses. Cliff-hangers, the chapters stop when it is really exciting.
- b)
- c) Lonely and dark houses in the middle of nowhere. Evil man chasing young boy who knows

nothing. Cellars.
Group B
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Monsters or evil killers page 25. Dark colours most of the book. Isolated settings, often at nighttime. page 23,18. Fear of the unknown page 34. b) It is dark and creepy. There is an evil man. The boy who is main character doesn't know he is evil, so we know something more than him (page 39). c) You get the feeling that something is wrong, that jack is in danger. But we don't know why. Dark settings, secrets. d) ... e) ...

<i>5. The main story in this novel takes place in 1916. How can you tell from the illustrations?</i>
Group A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The clothing and cars give away some of the time period. The colours also helps give a sense of time (Crude shadows). b) c) Because everything looks old and from that time.
Group B
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Old locomotive. Letter written old fashioned. Written in ink. Old fashioned clothes. No technology (in the detectives office) b) Old locomotive, the letter can you see is old and written old fashion with ink, the clothes they have on and no technology. c) ... d) ... e) Old locomotive, the letter is written in old fashion, the clothes is old and there is no telephones and computers.

<i>6. Study the layout of page 6 closely. How does the camera angle and perspective change in these panels? Why do you think the artist has chosen to use tall, horizontal panel shapes?</i>
Group A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The tall panels help give the reader the feeling of height. When you see jack on the ground, he is very small. Therefore it could be a metaphor for jack going into the big world while he's still so small. b) Bilding up suspence c) It makes us see how high it really is. Gives us a better perspective of how it's happening.
Group B
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To create illusion of height b) Its like we are at the bottom looking up at the house in the first panel so we see how high it is. The next one is from high angle so we are with jack in that panel. They are high and narrow so we feel how high and dangerous it is. c) ... d) ... e) up and down pictures. Small and high panels. His running away so its dangerous so we feel that its not safe.

<i>7. Finally, after the group discussion, write down some thoughts on the following questions: A. What (if anything) did you learn from the discussion with your fellow students that you had not seen or understood on your own?</i>
Group A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Some of my fellow students had noticed some parts of the story that I didn't catch. That made me read slower, so that I would get the full story. b) c)

Group B
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The other guys in the group saw things that we had not seen. b) That the old jack hasn't got an arm in the first scene, that that was important. c) ... d) ... e) That his friend was a girl in disguise.

B. What do you think about the graphic novel discussion in your group, was it easier or more difficult than discussing traditional literature?

Group A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) I think that people like better to share their what they think about the book. It was easier to discuss graphic novels because you can physically point out what you mean. If you were going to discuss a novel, then everyone don't have the same picture as you have. b) Easier c) I think it's more difficult with traditional literature because it's easier and more fun to read a graphic novel.

Group B
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) I think it was easier. All of us had meanings about the pictures so we had something to discuss. b) It was easier to discuss graphic novel, than discussing traditional literature. c) It was a lot easier to discuss than normal literature. Easier because there are pictures to show as an example. d) I think it is much easier to discuss what we thought about the graphic novel than a traditional literature. e) Easier to discuss because you can see the picture what they feel and their face expressions.

C. Did you find it easier to take part and engage in the discussion of the literary text when you could talk about the images? Why/why not?

Group A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Personally I feel no different, but I might see how other would see it different. It's an image, so I imaging that it would be easier to discuss that instead of a blank page with words on it. And it would also be easier to explain, not a lot of people are good at explaining. b) c) Yes, it's more concrete, so to say.

Group B
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) It was easier to discuss our opinions of the images because they are there, you know. We could look at them and discuss. Everyone had an opinion, that isn't always so when we discuss just texts. b) Yes, because you see more what is happening in the story with images, then without images. The images tells their own stories, sort of. c) We could talk about the pictures and it was easier to have something to talk about because we could show eachother and it wasn't just words. d) Yes, it was much more easier and actually fun to read. I'm not a "book person". e) It is much easier, and you dont have to read alot before u find answers.

Fables: Legends in Exile

1. What do you like about the book so far?

Group A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) I like that they writ about characters that we have met before in fairy tales. b) I like that it has characters from ancient fairytales. Also, I really like that the crime scene

- start so early.
- c) It is a fairy tale story with a surprise. The fairy tale characters are different then they are in the ordinary fairytales. Like Snow, she is mayor of the town and very secure and bossy, not just pretty like in the fairy tale. And the bad wolf is now like a hero, he is a detective.

Group B: No students in group B chose to read this graphic novel

2. *What is confusing?*

Group A

- a) Who killed Rose Red?
- b) It isn't much that is confusing. I understand everything through the pictures.
- c) It was a bit confusing to get to know the new "persons" the fairy tale characters were now. They are not like I know them from when I was little. It took some time before I understood that. But it was part of what was fun.

3. *Assign roles and re-read the first pages of the graphic novel out loud. What clues are given that link this story to the fairy tale tradition?*

Group A

- a) It starts with once upon a time. Bigby ask Jake if he has been climbing beanstalks again and Jake ask if Bigby has blown down any piggies' homes lately.
- b) It starts with once upon a time. Pigs can't talk in real life. There are fairy tale characters like Snow White and the Big Bad Wolf (who is now called Bigsby wolf) and Jack from Jack and the beanstalk.
- c) The first text box says "once upon a time". This is what fairy tales typically start with. And the drawings and colours are soft and kind of dreamy. All the characters are from different fairy tales, but their names are a bit different and they are like different persons too.

4. *Study the layout of page 26. What does the shadow on the wall in panel 3 symbolise? What effect does it have on the reader that this panel is made larger than the other panels on the page?*

Group A

- a) The shadow make you think that he could might be the bad gay. Its make de effect that you pay ore attention to the panel because it is made larger.
- b) It symbolises that he is the dark bad wolf. Maybe he did the murder? You use more time looking at the picture because its larger.
- c) I think the shadow on the wall is there to make us remember what Bigsby Wolf used to be, and that he can still be dangerous. It makes me think of the original fairy tale about little red riding hood. The wolf ate her then, maybe he is the one who killed rose red? The big panel makes us interested in this special picture, like it is important or something. And I took more time to look at it, because it was bigger.

5. *Study the panel on page 27 closely. What effect does the artist's use of a full splash panel have on you, the reader? What do you think about the letters on the wall?*

Group A

- a) You get full overview off the seen. And get an insight om the crimeseen.
- b) You get a full view over the crime scene. You can look at every detail. The letters on the wall gives us a clue to that it has to be a fable that killed Rose. Every fairytale ends with a happy ending, but this one doesn't.
- c) The full spash panel could give a full view of everything on the crime scene. It was very caotic. I tried to look for clues and see if something was wrong/if someone had left something that could give me a sign of who had done it. The letters on the wall are written

in rose reds blood I think. It's like they are making it clear that this isn't an ordinary fairytale which always has a happy ending. This is more realistic even though it is a fantasy story.

6. *How has the artist made this section of the story stand out from the rest of the book?*

Group A

- a) Oldfashioned borders. No wide gutter.
- b) The pages have like curly, old frames. Makes it look old because it tells the story of fables back when they were fairytales.
- c) The drawing style is different, more old fashioned. The frames look like in old documents. The layout, there's no gutters.

7. *Finally, after the group discussion, write down some thoughts on the following questions:*

A. *What (if anything) did you learn from the discussion with your fellow students that you had not seen or understood on your own?*

Group A

- a) Some theories about who killed Rose Red.
- b) Maybe the bad wolf did the murder.
- c) I hadn't thought about that a fable could have killed rose red, [X] said that and it made sense since the letters in the apartment were in blood and said that there was no happy ending.

B. *What do you think about the graphic novel discussion in your group, was it easier or more difficult than discussing traditional literature?*

Group A

- a) I think it was easier.
- b) It was much easier and funnier to discuss.
- c) I liked the story so it was easier to discuss. And we all know something about these fairy tales from when we were kids, so it was fun to discuss what we remembered and how different the fables had become now.

a) *Did you find it easier to take part and engage in the discussion of the literary text when you could talk about the images? Why/why not?*

Group A

- a) Yes, because then we all had the same pictures to look at.
- b) It was easier because you could talk about the story in both the text and the images. If there was something you didn't understand in the text, you understood it when you looked at the images.
- c) Yes, because everyone in the group could discuss the same pictures and mean something about them, we didn't just have to discuss written words in a long story, which is difficult for some of us. So we all had some opinions about the pictures and everyone talked

Appendix 14: Participants' responses, final survey

1. Ga tegneserieromanen deg en god leseropplevelse?		
	Gruppe A	Gruppe B
Ja	13	13
Nei	0	0

2. Kunne du tenke deg å lese engelskspråklige tegneserieromaner i fritiden din?		
	Gruppe A	Gruppe B
Ja	7	3
Kanskje	4	8
Nei	2	2

3. Syntes du det var mer engasjerende å diskutere en tegneserieroman enn tradisjonell engelskspråklig litteratur (i gruppen og i klassen)?		
	Gruppe A	Gruppe B
Ja	11	12
Til en viss grad	2	1
Nei	0	0

4. Synes du det er viktig å bruke god tid på å lese både illustrasjonene og teksten i tegneserieromanen?		
	Gruppe A	Gruppe B
Ja	8	8
Litt viktig	3	5
Ikke så viktig	1	0
Nei	1	0

5. Synes du det er viktig å ha kunnskap om tegneseriemediets virkemidler for å kunne analysere tegneserieromaner?		
	Group A	Group B
Ja	7	5
Litt viktig	4	5
Ikke så viktig	1	3
Nei	1	0

6. Har du blitt mer oppmerksom på hvordan illustrasjoner bruker spesielle virkemidler for å skape en følelse eller reaksjon hos leseren etter dette leseprosjektet?		
	Gruppe A	Gruppe B
Ja	13	13
Nei	0	0

7. Kan kunnskap om hvordan man leser denne typen multimodale tekster være nyttig i andre sammenhenger også?		
	Gruppe A	Gruppe B
Ja	13	11
Nei	0	2

Responses to open ended questions, class A

8. Hva syntes du var positivt med å lese og arbeide med engelskspråklig litteratur gjennom tegneseriemediet?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Positivt at vi gjøre noe som er utradisjonelt. Når det er både bilder og tekst blir det kjekkere å lese og man blir mer påvirket av følelsene som kommer frem i bildene. Dette fange interessen og jeg får lyst å lese mer.b. Engasjerende, bildene fylte mye ut det ordene sa, gav dybde, men la merke til ordene på en annen måte, spesielt de uthevede. Husker viktige poeng lettere, siden det er mindre tekst.c. Det blir mye mer motiverende å lese tekster som er mer ”levende” ved hjelp av bilder og tegninger. Man blir mer revet med i historien når man får se alle bildene.d. At jeg leste engelsk uten å bli lei av å lese.e. Det var spennende å gjøre noe helt aent. Jeg hadde ikke tenkt på at bilder virker sånn at de liksom ikke bare sier det samme som en tekst, men forteller en helt egen historie.f. Jeg syntes det som var positivt var at jeg syntes det var kjekt, litt utenom det vanlige, ga meg ny interesse for lesing. Har aldri vært glad i å lese helt til nå.g. Jeg syntes det var en mer gøy måte å lese på, og at det var lettere å henge med i teksten.h. Det var mer interessant.i. Det var annerledes fra å lese vanlige romaner. Interessant å høre hva de andre syntes om boken.j. Jeg syntes det ga meg en ny måte å tenke på litteratur på. For jeg kunne gå inn i bildene og analysere de, de var like viktige som teksten.k. Det var lettlest, slik at du kom gjennom historien og ga ikke opp.l. Mer avslappende og lettere å konsentrere seg.m. Man får et bedre bilde av hva som foregår.
9. Hva var negativt med å lese og arbeide med engelskspråklig litteratur gjennom tegneseriemediet?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Syntes ikke det var noe negativt. Kanskje det ble litt kort. Ble ferdig med boken på under 2 timer. Men dette er jo positivt også.b. Lærte nok ikke like mange ukjente ord som dersom det hadde vært en vanlig tekst der det blir brukt mer ord, og da også flere nye ord.c. Kommer ikke på noe negativt.d. At man kanskje fokuserer mer på bildene enn på teksten.e. Kommer ikke på noe.f.g. Kommer ikke på noe negativt.h. Det tok lengre tid.i. Man leser altfor fort og da går man glipp av viktige detaljer i bildene.j.k. Du mister litt av friheten din til å lage karakterene og omgivelsene selv.l.m. Man blir litt sen i lesingen for man må bruke mye tid på å analysere bildene.
10. Hvordan var det å lese en grafisk roman forskjellig fra de tekstene du vanligvis leser på skolen.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Var mer interessant. Siden jeg fokuserte på bildene og da ble det kjekkere å lese teksten. Siden normalt ville det gjerne bare vært noen få bilder. Men her er det mye info som ligger i bildene.b. Det var større overraskelser når bildene plutselig forandret seg en om handlingen forandrer seg i en vanlig bok/tekst. Mer engasjerende og gøy å lese. Tolkte bildene like mye som tekst. Lærer å tolke bilder også.c. Jeg gledet meg faktisk til å lese, og jeg er veldig kresen på bøker/tegneserier. Man blir mye mer motivert til å lese.d. Man blir mer motivert til å lese og man klarer bedre å forstå og føle med i historien.e. Det var veldig annerledes. Jeg trodde ikke når vi begynte at disse tekstene kunne diskuteres på samme måte som vanlige noveller. Men det var mye budskap og sånt her og, men kjekkere å diskutere for vi kunne analysere mer konkret bildene.f. Mer spennende og interessant. Blir på en måte dratt mer inn i fortellingen.g. Mer spennende, lettere å se hvilke følelser karakterene hadde, og jeg trengte ikke å forstå hvert eneste ord.h. Mye kjekkere og en kunne nyte det mer.i. Det er mye lettere å sette seg inn i historien. Det var også noe nytt som jeg ikke hadde gjort før.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> j. Jeg merket at jeg ble mer engasjert i boken og lesingen, jeg ble ikke så fort lei og ble litt sånn detektiv på en måte, jeg prøvde å finne ut av ”spor” i bildene. k. Morsomere, det var gøy. Og intresant. l. Kjekkere. m. Man får et bedre innblikk i handlingen, og historien blir mer tydelig.
<p>11. Hvis noen sa til deg at det å lese tegneserieromaner i engelsktimene ikke var ”ordentlig” lesing, hva ville du svare?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. At de bør teste det ut selv. Siden man lærer å lese både teksts og bilder. Og teksten blir komprimert, men det er de vanskelige ordene som blir stående. Mens de lette som man normalt leser, blir lagt igjen i tegningene. Og man leser ut av bildene. b. At de tar feil. For man leser både tekst og bilder. Og å lese handler om å bruke fantasien, noe man i aller høyeste grad gjør når man leser tegneserier (med å få bildene til å henge sammen). c. Jeg ville sagt at de tar feil. På ungdomsskolen ble vi tvunget til å lese lange, kjedelige tekster, som jeg aldri gadd å lese. Når det er bilder, noe man kan se på, fanger vi opp mer, og blir mer motiverte til å lese. d. At det er mer nyttig å lese skikkelig gjennom en tegneserieroman som man liker, enn å slurve lese gjennom en annen tekst, bare for å bli ferdig. e. Det er vel kanskje enda mer lesing enn ”vanlig” lesing, for du må kunne lese og forstå både den engelske teksten <u>og</u> bildene. Du må liksom kunne begge deler. Prøv selv! f. Jeg ville sagt at jeg var totalt uenig og at det tvert imot er mye bedre. Det skaper mer motivasjon blant elevene, i tillegg til at det skaper mer interesse for lesing. g. Du tar feil. h. Samma det vel, lesing er lesing. i. Man sier at et bilde forteller mer enn 1000 ord. Derfor når man leser tegneserie, så leser man både bildene og teksten. j. TULL! k. ”Uenig” l. Det viktigste er at vi leser. Bedre å lese noe som ikke er ”ordentlig” istedenfor å få en stor bok som ikke blir lest. m. Jeg ville vært litt enig, da man kun leser korte og lite beskrivende setninger. Men bildene leses jo også på en måte, man tenker jo inni seg.
<p>12. Hvis du var engelsklærer i videregående skole, kunne du tenke deg å bruke tegneserieromaner i undervisningen din? Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ja, dette er en metode som oppleves positivt. Å analysere en vanlig bok er for mange veldig demotiverende. Men kombinasjonen av bilder og tekst gjøre at det blir kjekt å lese. Og da vil man få mer ut av undervisningen. b. 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. c. JA! Fordi elevene ville blitt bedre i analysering pga. alle bildene, og det ville også ha vært flere som faktisk leste det de skulle. d. Ja, fordi elevene har mer nytte av det (slik som nevnt i pkt 11) e. Ja, det kunne jeg fordi da gjør vi to ting på en gang, både bilder og tekst. Og elevene vil nok synes det er kjekkere å jobbe med. Mye lettere å få de med på diskusjoner på engelsk om boken. f. Ja, jeg hadde fått elevene mer interessert og motiverte. De som vanligvis gir lit f**n i skolen ville gjerne blitt motivert til å jobbe mer. Jeg hadde også oppnådd flere faglig relaterte diskusjoner i klassen. g. Ja, jeg tror det ville gjort det lettere for elevene å bli engasjert i arbeidet. h. Ja, da vet jeg at elevene mine er interessert i det jeg utleverer til dem. i. Ja, siden du får elevene til å engasjere seg mer. De er leie av å lese vanlige bøker. j. 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. k. Ja. For å få elevene til å like å lese. Få en myk start på engelskfaget. l. Ja, elevene er nok mer motivert. m. Nei, jeg ville fokusert mer på opplæring innen valgt yrkeslinje.
<p>13. Velg en side/et panel/en illustrasjon fra boka du leste som gjorde et spesielt inntrykk på deg. Forklar hvorfor.</p>

- a. Side 120, panelet nede i midten. Da Ali og Safa ligger og har blitt skutt. Det var en overaskende tragisk slutt. Der ligger de i blodputter og prøver å kommunisere men blør ut. Døden er alltid et sterkt virkemiddel der man blir påvirket av følelsene rundt det. (*Pride of Bagdad*)
- b. s. 116, midterste panel. Ali står lengst fremme, og ser mot horisonten. Øynene hans ser så store og runde ut, fulle av undring og ”amazement”. Alt ser så bra og lykkelige ut, selv om de alle er litt ”oppbanket” og slitne. Ali sine øyne og ansikts-uttrykk er det som gjør at jeg liker bildet så godt. Og da blir det ekstra grusomt når han plutselig blir skutt, når du har møtt det blikket, da blir det personlig og skikkelig vondt at han må dø på en sånn unødvendig måte. (*Pride of Bagdad*)
- c. s. 118, panel nr 3. Man ser hvor brutalt Safa blir drept, og av egentlig ingen grunn. Krig er aldri rettferdig. (*Pride of Bagdad*)
- d. I kapittel 3, var de på en nattklubb. Jeg likte fargebruken i det kapittelet. På bildene bruker de bare svart, blå og lyseblå. De fremhever detaljer med den lyseblå fargen (eks. Armbånd, drink, øyne og tenner). I tillegg er annen hver bilde svart og hvit. Dermed ser det ut som at lyset blinker. (*Who is Jake Ellis*)
- e. ...
- f. Siste side av kapittel 6. Jeg valgte dette fordi du føler du ligger på gulvet sammen med Jack og føler på en måte at du føler på hans redsel og smerte. På grunn av det lave perspektivet på dette bildet følte jeg meg spesielt inne i handlingen. (*Severed*)
- g. s. 27. Den fikk meg til å lure veldig mye på hva som hadde skjedd. (*Fables*)
- h. Det første panelet Jack var i bildet. Da tenkte jeg ”wohoo! Jeg skal få lese om en fin fyr som er med i fortellingen”. (*Fables*)
- i. Det er da Jack mister armen siden det var så grafisk da. Det var ikke så klisje heller. Det bare skjedde. (*Severed*)
- j.
- k. p. 175, panel 5. Fordi det får meg til å lure på hva som skjer. Og svaret får du ikke svar på. (*Severed*)
- l. Finner ikke sidetall og kommer ikke på noe som har gitt meg et spesielt inntrykk.
- m. Den første ruten gir et litt sjokkerende inntrykk, da alt går fra fred til kaos på et blunk. (*Pride of Bagdad*)

14. Ordet er fritt:

- a. ...
- b. Likte godt å lese grafiske noveller. Gøy med forandring. Lært mye.
- c. Dette er AWSOME! 😊
- d. ...
- e. Jeg har gledet meg t lesingen og lært mye om bildeanalyse.
- f. Jeg synes absolutt grafiske noveller/romaner skulle vært en del av undervisningen i skolen. Skulle så gjerne hatt mer om det.
- g. ...
- h. Dette har vært gøy og annerledes.
- i. En spennende bok, med en FANTASTISK antagonist. Får meg nesten lyst til å lese flere grafiske noveller.
- j. Spennende og lærerikt prosjekt! 😊
- k. ...
- l. ...
- m. ...

Answers to open ended questions, class B

8. Hva syntes du var positivt med å lese og arbeide med engelskspråklig litteratur gjennom tegneseriemediet?
 - a. Det er mye kjekkere og jobbe med det når en kan lese tegneserier. Man får ikke bare en tykk bok som man har gitt opp før en har begynt.
 - b. At det blir kjekkere en andre tekster, og at man får satt seg mer inn i handlingen.
 - c. Det var lettere å forstå fortellingen da både tekst og bilder blir mikset.
 - d. At det var innen en sjanger jeg ville lese. Blir litt som en film pga bildene. Klarer å leve meg mer inn.
 - e. Lære nye ord.
 - f. Kjekkere, mer spennende.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> g. Det var lett å lese, arbeide, diskutere og forstå bokå. Det var veldig mye kjekkere å lese nå enn vanlig bok. h. At jeg fikk fullføre en ”bok” for andre gang i mitt liv. i. Det at vi fikk lære en måte å forstå hvordan tegneserieromaner fungerer og hvordan de er bygget opp. j. Det ble ikke for mye tekst og bildene gjorde det lettere å komme inn i. k. Mer interessant, og lettere å lese. l. Det gjorde det lettere å forstå hva historien handlet om, man fikk med seg hva som skjedd med hjelp av bildene. Jeg forstod hele sammenhengen med historien når det var bilde og tekst. m. Det mest positive var at det var enklere å engasjere seg. Tegningene var enkle å lese og i tillegg å forstå, slik at man klarer å engasjere seg fordi det er kjekt.
<p>9. Hva var negativt med å lese og arbeide med engelskspråklig litteratur gjennom tegneseriemediet?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ingen ting b. Ingen ting c. Det var ikke veldig utfordrende for språket. d. Ingen ting e. Idk f. Ingenting g. Jeg mener det ikke var noe negativt med å lese og arbeide med dette. h. Det krever litt mye hodebry når du måtte lese og se på illustrasjoner samtidig. Dersom du ville forstå handlingen på best mulig måte. i. Jeg synes at det ikke var noe negativt med det. j. Du får ikke sjangsen til å fantasere så mye av handlingen, som i en vanli novelle. k. Vi fikk litt liten tid til å lese, så jeg fikk ikke studert bildene så mye som jeg ønsket. l. Synes ikke det var så mye negativt, synes det var mer spennende, enn å lese en bok med bare tekst. m. Finner egentlig ingenting som er direkte negativt med dette.
<p>10. Hvordan var det å lese en grafisk roman forskjellig fra de tekstene du vanligvis leser på skolen?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Mye lettere. Vanligvis når vi skulle lese en bok (spesielt på engelsk) har jeg gitt opp før jeg har begynt. Men dette tegneserien var faktisk kjekke og lese og jeg forstod historien. b. Mer spennende og kjekkere. Og at man får bilder å fantasere etter enn bare tekst. c. Mye kjekkere. Er ikke glad i å lese vanlig litteratur, men er veldig glad i å lese tegneserier. d. Bedre, mer spennende. Dette er liksom bedre enn å lese om en utveksling student som kommer hjem til familien. NB: Bare et eksempel. e. Mindre tekst = Mye kjekkere. Mer bilder = Lettere og bedre. f. <u>Mye bedre!</u> g. Forståelig, bedre innlevelse. Leste raskere. h. Mer underholdende, sammensatt tekst for meg har alltid vert bedre enn vanlig tekst. i. Jeg mener det er mer spennende og forståelig og lese. Det gir mer handling samtidig som det er lett å lese. j. Du får mer informasjon på mindre tekst. k. Dette leseprosjektet er det eneste skjønnlitteraturen jeg har lest på videregående skole, så jeg har ingenting å sammenligne med. l. Det var mindre tekst, som gjorde det lettere og forstå hva det handlet om. Mer bilder som framhevet bedre historien i boka. m. Dette var annerledes, men mye kjekkere. Selv om jeg leste en kortere historie enn disse vanlig tekstene, følte det som jeg hadde fått større utbytte.
<p>11. Hvis noen sa til deg at det å lese tegneserier i engelsktimene ikke var ”ordentlig” lesing, hva ville du svare da?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. ”Da får du finne noe ordentlig lesing. Men jeg kommer ikke til og lese det”. b. At de ikke vett hva de snakker om og at de kan dra til helvete (ikke bokstavelig ment). c. Jeg ville sagt at det ikke var sant og at tegneserieromaner ikke er det samme som vanlige tegneserier. d. ”Hvorfor ikke? Det er nesten like mye tekst her som i en annen tekst. Bare her får vi bilder og”. e. Det er ord i boken. Så teknisk sett så ”leser” du uansett. f. Cunts. g. Da vet du ikke hva du snakker om! h. Tvunget dem til å kjøpe seg en og lese den ferdig ut, for så å se om han/hun fortsatt sier det samme. i. Det er like mye ordentlig lesing som å lese en vanlig bok. Det er bare at du erstatter ordene med bilder som forteller med 1000 ord.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> j. Jeg ville sagt at de blandet tegneserieromaner med vanlige tegneserier for barn. k. Jeg ville si meg uenig i denne påstanden. Og opfordret til å lese en tegneserieroman selv. l. Jeg ville vært litt enig siden det ikke er så mye tekst. Men man leser jo og forstår bedre hva ordene betyr og får frem bedre historien med hjelp av bilder. Så jeg hadde også vært uenig. m. Da vil jeg si at dem tar feil. Kanskje det er mindre tekst, MEN, de er fulle av bilder av alle slag. Det sies også at et bilde ”sier 1000 ord”.
<p>12. Hvis du var engelsklærer i videregående skole, kunne du tenke deg å bruke tegneserieromaner i undervisningen din? Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ville brukt både det og vanlige teskter. Siden selv ville jeg nok ha lest tegneserieversjonene. Men det er sikkert noen som vil lese boka på 1000 sider. b. Ja, for det er stor sjanse for at elevene vil bli mer engasjert i det engelsk skriftfaget. c. Ja, det er en god måte å få ungdom til å bli mer interessert i lesing. d. 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. e. Kjekkere for elevene = kul lærer f. Ja! Kjekkere, forstår bedre, lærer bedre engelsk når du leser og ser på bildene. g. 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. h. Ja, mer folk hadde giddet å fullføre boken, men ikke for ofte, da, alle blir lei av ting etter hvert. i. Ja, fordi det er en lett måte å få eleven til å engasjere seg i litteratur. j. Ja. Kunne bli lettere for svakere elever å lese engelske tekster. k. Ja, det er noe som elevene intreserer sei for. Imotsetning til fakta om Australia. l. 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. m. Ja. Fordi det er en god måte å få elevene til å engasjere seg og i tillegg ha det gøy.
<p>13. Velg en side/et panel/en illustrasjon fra boka du leste som gjorde et spesielt inntrykk på deg. Forklar hvorfor.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. s. 37-38. Siden her får du se et stort bilde som gir en følelse av frihet. Noe som er en viktig del av boka. (<i>Pride of Baghdad</i>). b. s. 4 og 5, for det er en vakker illustrasjon, og det gir et hint til hva som skjer i boken. Og det er et majestetisk bilde av en av hovedkarakterene. (<i>Pride of Baghdad</i>) c. Hele side 167, jack viser et stort mot og møter sin frykt, og det er vist med å bruke et panel som dekker hele siden, og med en vinkel som gjør at vi ser opp mot jack, han virker stor og mektig plutselig, nå når han har bestemt seg for å ta igjen. (<i>Severed</i>) d. Nesten helt bak, når alle tegningene er røde. Jon ser Jake Ellis i levende person. Da forstod jeg fælt lite, jeg har aldri tenkt så mye før! Derfor gjorde det inntrykk. (<i>Who is Jake Ellis</i>) e. s. 12, bilde 4. En uskyldig agent dør = trist. #RIPCIA (<i>Who is Jake Ellis</i>) f. s. 172, panel 5 fordi det er mystisk, fargen på flammen og det sløve men bestemte blikket t jack, det får deg lyst til å lese mer. (<i>Severed</i>) g. Vet ikke sidetall, men når Jack går ned for å møte mannen, med bare en arm. (<i>Severed</i>) h. Siden rett før kapittel 5. På denne siden får du ”close-up”, du ser ansiktsuttrykket å følelser, til slutt så får du se hele rommet med Jon og Ellis, det Jon bare glør og du ser at Jon prøver å finne ut hva i all verden Jake Ellis er for noe bare ved å se på ham. (<i>Who is Jake Ellis</i>) i. s. 121 panel 12. Ironisk at de bruker ”animals” som en fornærmelse. (<i>Pride of Baghdad</i>) j. Når Jack tok fyr på huset. (<i>Severed</i>) k. ... l. Slutten av boken når jack klare å komme seg løs og slå alan med kjøkkenøks. Det ga meg et inntrykk av at historien ville ende bra og Jack kom seg bort. Men gjorde han egentlig det? Det får man ikke helt vite helt selv om man leser boken. (<i>Severed</i>) m. Side 10, kapittel 5. Bildet som viser at Jake Ellis ikke bare er en person i hodet på Moore. Han er faktisk en person i levende live. I tillegg får vi se sjokket (ansiktsuttrykket) til Moore når han ser dette. Jeg ble selv veldig overrasket, og historien ble plutselig 10 ganger mer spennende. (<i>Who is Jake Ellis</i>)
<p>14. Ordet er fritt:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Kjempe bra bok som var lett og forstå selv med dårlig engelsk ordforråd. b. Vi bør ha mer sånne oppgaver og at alle bør lese PRIDE of Baghdad. c. Spennende og annerledes bok. d. Nei, ordet er ditt!

- e. #Freedomofspeech
- f. Bra bok. Tegneserieromaner er bedre.
- g.
- h.
- i. Alt i alt mener jeg boken er veldig god. Jeg mener vi bør gjøre dette oftere og lese flere av disse bøkene på skolen.
- j.
- k. Dette var et kjekt og intressant prosjekt.
- l. Jeg synes boka var spennende, kjekk å lese. Jeg er glad jeg valgt den. Liker godt skrekk filmer og historier. Så anbefaler andre med samme inntrisse å lese den.
- m. God bok, kjekk lesing.

Appendix 15: Transcripts, focus group interviews

Gruppe A.

Int: Velkommen til dette intervjuet. Kan dere begynne med å si hva dere heter, hvilken bok dere har lest og om du har lest noe fra tegneseriemediet før. Sånn at jeg kjenner igjen stemmene deres når jeg skal skrive ut båndet.

M: Jeg heter M, jeg har lest Severed. Hva annet skal jeg si?

Int: Har du lest graphic novels før?

M: Nei, jeg leser ikke så mye, leser litt av og til siden jeg holder på med teorien nå og så leser jeg sånne random bøker. Jeg sier jeg skal lese om kvelden, men ender ofte opp med å spille i stedet.

Int: Ok, takk skal du ha. H?

H: Ja, jeg heter H, og jeg har lest Severed. Jeg pleier ikke lese så mye vanlige bøker, altså romaner og sånt, jeg har prøvd men er ikke så glad i det. Men jeg leser av og til Donald Pocket, når jeg skal legge meg, eller Donald blader, faktisk, har alltid gjort det helt siden jeg var liten.

W: Ja, jeg heter W, jeg har lest Pride of Baghdad, og leste ekstremt mye før, masse engelske bøker, for eksempel fantasy, Artemis Fowl, One of the Five, men nå er jeg tom for bøker, jeg vet ikke hva som finnes lenger, så nå leser jeg ikke så mye. Jeg har ikke lest så mye tegneserieromaner, forresten.

K: Jeg heter K, jeg har lest Pride of Baghdad, og jeg har ikke lest tegneserieromaner før.

C: Jeg heter C, og jeg skrev – nei leste – Pride of Baghdad, og før så leste jeg ganske mye engelske romaner og sånn fantasy-romaner, og mye tegneserier eller Manga og sånt, med det blir ikke så mye nå for tiden. Jeg har en samling bøker hjemme, men har ikke kommet så langt ennå.

Int: Hvordan reagerte folk rundt dere når dere sa at dere skulle være med i et prosjekt hvor dere skulle lese tegneserieromaner i engelsken?

C: Jeg har ikke sagt det hjemme. Men i de andre klassene så har jo andre folk og lest, men jeg vet ikke altså... tror folk var litt interessert i det og syntes det virket ganske greit liksom, du får lov å gjøre noe som er annerledes, du får liksom... det er ikke vanlig å få lov å lese tegneserier i en engelsktime.

K: Og jeg tror mange syntes det virket litt sånn barnslig.

Int: Akkurat – og hvorfor tror du folk tenker på tegneserieromaner som barnslige?

H: Fordi det er tegninger og tekst. Alle små unger kan lese det også, det er ikke så tungt.

K: Ja, det går på en måte mye fortere...

M: Som å se på en tegnefilm eller noe.

Int: Etter å ha jobbet med dette prosjektet, har deres tanker rundt tegneseriemediet endret seg? I tilfelle: på hvilken måte?

- M: Jeg synes det. Tegneserieromaner kan jo være aktuelle, ta opp viktige ting, jeg fikk mer respekt for de. Jeg hadde aldri lest tegneserieromaner før og jeg syntes det var ganske kult.
- Int: Hva var det som gjorde at du fikk mer respekt for de?*
- M: Nei, det var spennende. Oppbyggingen, annerledes enn å lese Donald Duck siden det ikke er så alvorlig. Det var annerledes, jeg tenker det er mye arbeid å gå inn i en sånn bok siden det er så sykt mange detaljer.
- W: Jeg mener det er mye enklere å bli revet med, hvis du skjønner, for jeg merker jo selv når jeg kom til liksom en spennende del i boken så er det lettere å lese fort for der er sånne action-bobler ”ah, dette går fort”, da leser jeg veldig fort for å få med actionen i boken som er i bildene. Og moren min mente, for jeg sa det til moren min, og hun mener det er veldig positivt siden hun er sånn barnevernspedagog, og så merker hun selv at hvis jeg må lese en lang bok så er jeg sinnsykt demotivert, men når jeg leste, for jeg leste masse Manga som C gjorde, 50-60 sånne bøker har jeg lest og da var det mye enklere og mye mer action og halvparten av engelsken min kommer jo fra sånne bøker liksom.
- H: Og jeg har jo lest Donald Duck før så jeg har jo sett på grafiske noveller, det er på en måte liksom på en barnslig måte, gjerne, fordi jeg har lest Donald Duck, men etter jeg leste den Severed boken og gikk hjem og leste Donald Duck, sånn som i går, så merket jeg at der faktisk er en stor forskjell mellom de. Det blir litt mer voksnere egentlig, det blir mer gjennomtenkt, mer tanke bak alle de der guttarene mellom panelene. Og etter vi har lært litt om det så tenker jeg mer på kameravinklene, tanken bak det, hvor gjennomtenkt det egentlig er...
- M: Ja og du merke en forskjell når du har blitt fortalt og har diskutert hva det betyr, som når illustrasjonen bare ligger utenfor sidene på en måte, når panelet blør utover sidene, så blir du enda mye mer hekta på å se hva de tegneserieskaperne prøvde å gjøre.
- C: Sånn som jeg merket det, da, at mange av de tegneseriebøkene jeg har lest de har jo vært seriøse, da, men dette her er på en annen måte igjen. Det blir på et annet nivå på en måte, du merker at OK, så det kan være sånn, det er akkurat egentlig som en vanlig bok som bare er gjort om. For egentlig trodde jeg ikke Pride skulle være en tragedie på den måten, eller liksom, det er akkurat som en vanlig bok bare med bilder som legger mening til, mange andre tegneserier er liksom ikke det.
- Int: Så dere sier at... hvis dette er som en vanlig bok, vil man da kunne gå inn og analysere den med de vanlige teknikkene og oppgavene vi pleier å ha til vanlig litteratur? Kan vi se på tema, budskap, litterære virkemidler osv?*
- M: Ja, det hadde vært enklere for bildene er mer konkrete å analysere. De er der liksom, ikke bare ord etter ord.
- K: Ja det tror jeg og. Du har for eksempel det med vinkler, kameravinkler selv om det er i panelene, hvordan de brukes legger mening til historien og betyr noe for det forfatteren vil skal komme frem, det er jo på en måte som et litterært virkemiddel bare mer synlig kanskje...

- W: Ja for bildene bringer frem mer av innholdet og den skjulte meningen... altså du, selv om du ikke nødvendigvis er så flink til å analysere en tekst så kan du jo analysere bildene på en måte så det blir en kombinasjon av det.
- K: Mmm... bildene forteller jo veldig mye så du kan analysere de på helt vanlig måte... altså for å se hva de legger til av budskap og stemninger.
- H: Jeg føler også at du slapp de tunge beskrivelsene av steder, hvordan de ser ut, fordi du ser med en gang hvordan det ser ut, du skaper en oppfatning i fantasien din om, ja, hva lyder der er der, ja du ser for eksempel en svart kjeller liksom, og du hører liksom at det er helt stille der. Sånne ting du kan tenke litt selv på synes jeg er kjekt, at du ikke er låst til en tekst, eller vet akkurat hvordan det skal være, at du fortsatt lager bilder selv, det er litt sånn at du fortsatt lager verdenen selv.
- M: Men igjen... det han sier er jo sant med det er jo, når du leser en bok, så er det en annen opplevelse helt uten bilder, siden da kan du lage bilder av noe du kjenner igjen, så det går jo begge veier. Det er ikke dårlig eller positivt, det er bare sånn.
- C: Ja, men sånn som jeg tenker, da, det er lettere å diskutere en bok sånn som dette for du kan vise til eksempler med bilder og folk forstår deg lettere enn om du begynner å trekke ut eksempler fra tekst som bare er tekst. Merket at jeg syntes det var mye kjekkere å diskutere denne boken for da pekte vi liksom på bilder og når folk begynte å diskutere eller forklare meningen bak de så blir det noe annet enn om du skulle ha begynt å pekt i teksten på en vanlig bok. Du får liksom de samme bildene, men forskjellige meninger om hva de betyr. Mens hvis du lese en vanlig bok så har jo folk helt forskjellige oppfatninger, sånn som M sa og det er jo positivt og negativt men i hvert fall når du skal diskutere den, så syntes jeg det var greit å ha noenlunde samme utgangspunkt. Så kan vi diskutere hva teknikker de har brukt for å skape den oppfatningen i oss i stedet.
- Int: Dere jobbet jo også i grupper hvor dere diskuterte spørsmål som var knyttet blant annet til illustrasjonene. Hvordan gikk det med å holde gangen i diskusjonen med denne typen multimodal tekst?*
- W: Mye enklere å finne frem eksempler å vise til i boka for hvis du har et argument så er det liksom, ja, på side det og det, det panelet, der mener jeg at... I stedet for, husker du på side 4 avsnitt 3, 5. setning, så sa de.... Det blir jo håpløst å diskutere.
- M: Og så er det jo sånn at du ofte reagerer på det samme i bildene... det er lettere å diskutere de tingene.
- H: Ja, men i for eksempel film blir det altfor konkret at sånn er det mens i en bok blir det gjerne litt mer sånn veldig åpent og folk kan ha forskjellige oppfatninger mens en grafisk novelle er akkurat som en bro imellom som har litt av begge deler du kan skape dine egne fantasier samtidig som det er noe konkret som du må forholde deg til. Jeg tenker og at det skaper mindre forvirring, kanskje. Det er jo ofte at vi ikke ser noe som helst å tolke i sånne vanlige litterære tekster vi leser.
- M: Ja, og jeg tror og det er lettere og for de som gjerne ikke er så glade i å lese... de som gjerne synes det er dumt å lese tunge bøker på skolen de vil gjerne få en mer høyere interesse for faget eller i hvert fall for å lese og delta i diskusjoner i undervisningen for jeg føler liksom at selv om du ikke har den store

bakgrunnskunnskapen om for eksempel analyse av vanlige bøker så kan du på en måte være med å delta i tolkning av bildene.

Int: Så det dere sier er at dette er tekster som engasjerer i de diskusjonene?

Alle: Ja, ja det er det.

K: Ja, jeg tror og at det er spesielt godt for de som har lese og skrivevansker. Jeg har en lillebror som har det, han synes det er kjekt å lese tegneserier som Donald, men liker ikke å lese en vanlig bok.

Int: Så det kan fungere bra for elever som har dysleksi?

K: Ja det tror jeg. For de er jo ikke dumme men føler seg ofte sånn fordi problemer med lesingen gjør at de ikke får til å få tak i hele handlingen eller akkurat som sånne små hint som forfatteren legger inn for å få deg til å skjønne ting som ikke blir sagt... nei skrevet rett ut.

Int: Så passer graphic novels til alle typer lesere? Du nevnte for lesesvake elever, hva med lesterke elever?

M: Ja, for det kan være at lesterke elever som er vant til å lese tekst at de leser de feil... bare sånn suser gjennom alt og ikke ser skikkelig på bildene. Jeg følte jeg gjorde sånn i begynnelsen, leste bare og tenkte lite på selve temaet bildene tok opp siden jeg... for eksempel når H snakket om at hovedpersonen hadde den bjørnefellen... H sa jo at han fant ikke han med staven. Jeg tenkte ikke på det en gang, jeg vet ikke hva, jeg tror ikke jeg leste så mye ut fra bildene i boken som han gjorde.

K: Det er vel egentlig sånn at selv om noen er flinke til å lese vanlige tekster så trenger de ikke være like flinke til å lese bilder. Så derfor blir det en utfordring for dem og... de kan ha godt av det tenker jeg i hvert fall. Akkurat som at alle får like sjanser til å tolke teksten da.

W: Mmm

Int: Hvilket utbytte fikk dere av diskusjonene vi hadde i klassen om typiske comics conventions?

C: Jeg synes det var greit at vi hadde den undervisningen om liksom virkemidlene også, det er som du nevnte med at... rett og slett gutteren og sånn... at du tenker mer over det når du har lært det. Det var ikke så spennende akkurat når vi holdt på å lære om det [latter], men det er liksom... når en leser gjennom boken etter å ha lært om det så legger du jo merke til det på en egen måte.

W: Det var veldig interessant, da, når du fikk vite alle disse tingene, for de fleste av oss har vel lest Pocket eller Manga og sånt før og det har jo aldri gitt mening før... altså for eksempel når noen paneler har firkantet ramme og noen har ikke... og da kan du jo på en måte tenke tilbake så sitter du der og tenker på situasjonen... det var derfor de brukte sånne paneler, for å gi en følelse av at denne illustrasjonen er viktig eller no. Det var interessant da å få vite hvorfor de har gjort som de gjør.

Int: Så er det da lettere for dere å lese en sånn type sammensatt tekst kritisk etter å ha lært noe om hvordan mening påvirkes av comics conventions som for eksempel kameravinkler?

K: Det synes jeg i hvert fall. Det var mange ting jeg aldri hadde tenkt på før... sånn for eksempel det med at størrelsen og fasongen på panelene hadde noe å si for...

- liksom for hvor fort du leser en side eller at et langt sånt høyt panel kan få deg til å liksom kjenne på at noe er trangt og innestengt på en måte.
- H: Ja, og jeg tror det er mange som har et syn på grafiske noveller at det er liksom bare bilder og snakkebobler og det blir liksom litt for simpelt men når du får vite om virkemidlene og hører for eksempel som vi hørte han forfatteren som snakket om grafiske noveller... at du får et annet syn på det. Det er jo langt ifra Donald da... [*latter*] og når jeg kom hjem og så på det så var det jo nesten som å gå tilbake å se på Disney Channel, det blir litt sånn.. Ser det er mer tanker bak disse bøkene enn Donald.
- M: Ja, du ser ikke en mann miste en arm i Donald.
- Int: Dere som leste Severed, det er en horror-roman som spiller på alle konvensjonene dere sikkert er kjent med fra horror filmer eller romaner. Hva tenker dere om de sterke scenene som vises i noen av panelene?*
- M: Ja, det er jo litt voldsomt, men det passer. Det er skrekk, og jeg tenker at det må være vanskelig å få det inn i en grafisk roman, egentlig.
- H: Ja, for ofte på film så bruker de virkemiddelet lyd veldig flittig. De legger det inn sånn at du vet at noe kommer til å skje, det kommer en sånn skummel lyd men jeg føler at når du satt og leste, så var det akkurat som når du sitter og leser så lager du de lydene selv. Det kom, sant, det var litt sånn mørkt og de brukte farger som virkemiddel og lagde liksom sånn skummel stemning og du vet at noe kommer til å skje, det ble liksom sånn det samme.
- Int: Det er interessant, det, for det er jo ikke bare-bare å lage den type spenning i en bok som jo er et statisk medium... som du sier, den lager jo ikke lyd.*
- H: Ja, men det er sånn at hvis jeg hadde lest den før jeg la meg, så hadde det vært litt skrekk for meg. Jeg hadde tenkt på det og gjerne ikke sovnet med en gang [*latter*]. Så jeg var glad vi leste denne på skolen.
- Int: Ok. Over til noe litt annet, hva tenker dere, synes dere er det viktig å lese denne type tekster sent, det å ta tiden til å se på illustrasjonene?*
- K: Ja.
- W: X på min gruppe nevnte noe som jeg ikke hadde fått med meg selv etter å ha lest den to ganger. Etter andre gangen var det ikke noe viktig jeg ikke hadde fått med meg, men for eksempel ganske langt i begynnelsen før alt sprengte i Pride så får de et esel og så står det Wow, is that an ass... altså, han lille ungen sier sånn heh... det hadde jeg ikke fått med meg, det hadde jeg lest litt for fort. Gikk glipp av litt sarkastisk humor der ja.
- Int: Hva tenkte du, K, med det å ta seg tid til å lese bildene?*
- K: Jo vi fikk mye informasjon. For meg var det kult siden jeg ikke er så interessert i å lese, i hvert fall ikke på engelsk, men dette ga mer mening for bildene sier mer enn teksten. Men det var jo vanskelige ord også, men de ga mening når du så på resten.
- H: Jeg tenkte og når jeg leste så var der en del ord som jeg ikke hadde lest før og ikke kjente noen ganger. Det tror jeg at jeg lærte på en annen måte når jeg leste ting grafisk.
- M: Ja, du kan forbinde de med noe.

- H: Ja, forbinde de med noe, for hvis du leser en bok, og det er et ord du ikke forstår, så må du gjerne inn på Google Translate [*latter*]. Tror du lærer mange ord ubevisst her, utvide ordforrådet ditt, du har kanskje hørt de før men er ikke helt sikker på meningen.
- C: For sånn som jeg merket... slutten på den som jeg leste, jeg synes det var så morsomt for der er nesten ingen ord på slutten men fremdeles så syntes jeg den slutten på en måte gir et kraftigere inntrykk enn det slutter i mange bøker gjør der det bare er masse ord. Her er det liksom bildene, du opplever alt på en annen måte... den slutten den sitter i på en annen måte.
- M: Det er litt mer emotion.
- C: Ja, det blir det, også når du får se uttrykkene og, du på en måte ser karakterene, så du liksom, i hvert fall i *Pride*, så har de mye sånne close-ups, så du ser liksom mer, du føler mer på hvordan de faktisk har det. Det blir ikke sånn at du har en fortellerstemme som forteller hvordan de tenker. De sier det ikke, du bare ser det på ansiktsuttrykkene og så på en måte forstår du det. Det blir noe annet.
- Int: Jeg så jo på deg da du leste slutten av Pride, du så alvorlig bekymret ut, du bladde tilbake noen sider og så frem igjen for liksom å sjekke, stemmer dette? Er der noen fordeler, synes dere, med å ha det fysiske formatet bok fremfor for eksempel film eller digitale tekster?*
- C: Ja, jeg har lest mye tegneserier på nett før, men jeg likte det jo ikke, så jeg gikk ærlig talt på biblioteket og lånte de bøkene jeg fant der for jeg syntes det var mye kjekkere og kunne sitte å bla. Det blir en annen måte... og hvis det er noe du lurer på så kan du liksom stappe halve ansiktet oppi boken og bare hva søren, det blir noe annet enn om du sitter der og ser på en pc-skjerm.
- M: Ja, det er mye mer behagelig, det blir mye mer personlig.
- K: Det blir mer naturlig generelt. Kommer mer nært liksom.
- Int: Jeg tenker litt tilbake nå, noen av dere har lest ganske mye tegneserier... gjør det noe med lesingen deres? Er det sånn at som leser blir du vant med å lese sammensatte tekster og dermed tar du det lettere inn over deg, kombinasjonen ord bilde?*
- W: Jeg er veldig vant med å lese fort for når jeg leste de der *Artemis Fowl*, det er jo rimelig tjukke bøker på 500 sider eller et eller annet sånt. I de er det kanskje bare et bilde pr. hundre sider så da blir det veldig sånn at for å føle actionen i kun tekst må du lese ekstremt fort for å få det der rushet, for meg i hvert fall, så da merket jeg at jeg tok med meg det å lese fort inn her på en måte.
- H: Ja jeg har vel en tendens til å lese litt fort men jeg tenker mer sånn at hvis jeg leser, gjerne, fire paneler litt fort, så stopper jeg og ser på de illustrasjonene gjerne like lang tid som jeg brukte å lese dem, gjerne går tilbake og ser litt, og så ser du når du har lest to bilder til at du må gå tilbake igjen og se mer på bildet. Og jeg tenker at ofte når jeg ser mye på bildene så er det gjerne et ansiktsuttrykk som jeg studerer og ser, det er lett å tenke, liksom.
- M: Det er litt det også jeg merket... sånn som jeg er ganske opptatt av detaljene, men jeg er sånn generelt at jeg må alltid lese litt lenger og så går jeg tilbake igjen. Men

det er liksom fordi jeg er opptatt av detaljene så jeg må få dem med meg. Så da blir det litt sånn sen lesing... det går jo fort fremover, men det går liksom sent fordi du går tilbake igjen.

Int: Mens dere leste bøkene, var der noen ting dere fokuserte spesielt på? Noe dere ga mye oppmerksomhet mens når dere leste?

C: Jeg la mye merke til fargene og om bildene var litt skjeve og at det var så mye nærbilder som det var. Det ga en følelse av at jeg var der med løvene. Og liksom hvordan de tegnet løvene nærme og langt ifra. Hvor mye detaljer som ble lagt inn når de var nærme. Og hvor lite som ble lagt inn når de var lenger borte, da var det ikke de som var i fokus, da var det mer omgivelsene. Hvordan fokuset skiftet, det laget og et skifte i måten jeg leste og forstod historien på.

K: Mye fargebruken i Pride... alltid så mye rødt og gult og oransj i hele boken. Der er omtrent ikke andre farger, sånn omtrent ti sider med andre farger bare.

Int: Hvorfor brukte tegneserieskaperne akkurat de fargene, tror dere?

C: Det er jo for å understreke temaet, for det er krig der, og da er det jo, det brant jo, og da blir det... det er liksom de fargene du forbinder med det, og så er det mye følelser, sinne og angst. Ja, egentlig generelt alt boken tok opp kan forbindes med fargene. Det gir deg en sinnsstemning.

H: Tenkte mye på ansiktsuttrykk og. Et ansiktsuttrykk kan si veldig mye synes jeg, da, hva de tenker. Du kan analysere personen ut i fra ansiktsuttrykket. Det gjorde jeg veldig mye. Brukte og lang tid på å se på farger, da, som C sa, for det er med på å skape settingen. Og hvis det er et slags lys som gir behagelige bilder, da vet du at nå skjer det ikke noe skummelt. Er det mørkt med mye skygger, og kalde farger, da vet du at det kan skje noe bad, liksom.

M: Og av og til så jeg noen ansiktsuttrykk som jeg følte ikke passet inn, jeg var ikke sikker på hva han følte. Det fikk meg til å tenke, hvis han ser sur ut, hvorfor er han da sur? Eller hvorfor sier snakkeboblen noe, mens ansiktet hans sier noe annet? Ja, det fikk meg til å tenke litt ekstra på en måte.

W: Jeg forstod ikke spørsmålet helt?

Int: Jo, altså, når du leste, var der noe som fanget oppmerksomheten din mer enn andre ting?

W: Altså, jeg føler ikke at jeg tenker så mye på farger, stemning er noe som faller naturlig for meg det er ikke noe jeg tenker bevisst på, hvilken stemning er det nå? Men når jeg leser så liker jeg veldig å liksom, lage stemning i hodet mitt sånn at jeg kan på en måte skille mellom hvem som snakker, selv om du vet på en måte hvem som snakker, men jeg liker å lage egne stemmer til hver av karakterene.

Int: Når du gjorde det med Pride of Baghdad som er en engelsk bok... de stemmene, var de på engelsk?

W: Ja.

Int: Og du tenker på engelsk når du leser og når du ser på illustrasjonene så er tankene dine på engelsk?

W: Ja det er mye engelske stemmer.

- H: Jammen det gjør jeg og. Når du sa det kom jeg faktisk på det, jeg har ikke tenkt over det, men jeg tenker faktisk på engelsk. Jeg pleier aldri å gjøre det, når jeg snakker engelsk pleier jeg å tenke på norsk men akkurat her så kan det stemme ganske godt.
- C: Det blir liksom naturlig for du leser på engelsk, du lever deg inn i historien, så tankene, i hvert fall i mitt hode, blir det feil å begynne å tenke norsk, for jeg er liksom i engelsk modus, så da blir det liksom så naturlig.
- Int: Ok. K, er det noe mer du tenker fanget oppmerksomheten din spesielt?*
- K: Jeg syntes alle nærbildene for da var det sånn at du måtte liksom stoppe opp og tenke og studere. Så da var det sånn at jeg stoppet liksom opp på alle nærbildene for å se hvordan de hadde tegnet, hva vinkelen var og sånn. Og da tenkte jeg over det vi hadde snakket om... hvordan jeg skulle gjøre det om, hva det egentlig betydde for historien eller de karakterene det handlet om.
- Int: Vi hadde en undersøkelse i høst der dere fikk velge hvilken sjanger dere hadde lyst å lese, så plukket jeg ut noen bøker og dere valgte ut ifra disse. Hvor viktig var det for interessen deres for å lese at dere fikk valg?*
- H: Stort.
- M: Ja jeg liker å lese noe som jeg føler jeg har valgt. Du har ikke lyst å lese noe hvis du må lese det, kjekkere hvis... ok, dette er en sjanger jeg valgte å lese og jeg valgte boken blant alle de valgene jeg hadde, da er det sånn at dette må jo bli bra.
- K: Og så hadde vi jo sett på den før vi fikk valget, så da hadde vi jo sett og tenkt og motivert oss til å lese bøkene. Så da hadde det blitt feil om vi hadde fått en bok som var en annen du hadde valgt for oss.
- C: Når du får lov å velge det selv da får du lov å velge noe du interesserer deg for i stedet for å måtte lese en annen bok du ikke bryr deg døyten om, da blir det til at du leser den for å lese den, men nå er det liksom litt kjekt, du har valgt boken, som M sa, og da setter du deg ned og faktisk leser den, for det må jo bli bra liksom.
- Int: Får dere større eieforhold da, til lesingen, når dere har valgt selv?*
- M: Hadde du kommet med en romantisk bok, da hadde jeg definitivt lest den steinfort og så hadde jeg vært ferdig.
- H: Og så, hvis vi skulle analysert den da hadde det vært rett på Google og bare brukt den [*latter*].
- W: Den kjenner jeg meg så igjen i, at når du får noe som ikke engasjerer så velger du letteste utveien. Så jeg er veldig glad for at vi fikk velge selv.
- C: Det blir mer spennende å analysere det og, du bryr deg mer om det enn, som H sa, du får en bok du bryr deg døyten om og som er bare drit så vil du bare bli fortest mulig ferdig og gjøre det enklest mulig... gidder ikke bry deg.
- M: Skrive den analysen, sånn, selv om det ikke er dine egne ord [*latter*].
- H: Ja, og jeg føler at hvis du setter deg inn i noe så er det lett å snakke om det, for du har, uten at du vet det, så har du det helt klart i hodet hva du synes om boken. Det blir som hvis du skal ha presentasjon om noe du ikke bryr deg om, da blir det som å lese fra et manus, du pugge bare, men har du en presentasjon om noe du bryr deg om kan du bare stå og snakke om det du tenker, du har så mange meninger.
- Int: Så det er mer relevant når det blir personlig?*

- Alle: Ja
- K: Ja og så tror jeg ikke du hadde lest bildene så mye heller, at du bare hadde prøvd å skippe for å komme fortrest mulig gjennom. Og da hadde du mistet mye av poenget med lesingen.
- H: Jeg husker liksom hver gang vi skulle ha norsk på ungdomskolen, vi skulle, oppgaven var å analysere dikt og noveller vi hadde lest i klassen det var så kjedelig
- M: Ja Karen og sånt, det suge.
- H: Ja, for da er det sånn, jeg bryr meg ingenting om dette, det handler ikke om noe jeg kan forholde meg til, og hvis ikke historien treffer i det hele tatt så tenker en at ok, gjør det fordi jeg må, fordi jeg må få en karakter.
- C: Nei og da blir det ikke liksom dine egne meninger på samme måte heller, du gjør deg ikke opp meninger på samme måte, du bare skriver noe, får det ferdig liksom.
- M: Du skriver bare det læreren snakker om.
- C: Ja, du sitter liksom ikke selv og tenker over det og bare hmmm og har ikke liksom så mye opplevelser å ta fra.
- W: Og så får du ikke god karakter.
- Int: Vil dere si at tegneserieromanene dere leste engasjerte dere? Og i tilfelle hvorfor eller hvorfor ikke?*
- Alle: Ja/mmm
- H: For min del har jeg jo alltid vært glad i å lese tegneserier for det trigger noe i meg liksom det blir bare mer spennende. Det er jo på en måte en annen måte å bruke fantasien på. Høres sikkert litt rart ut, men sånn føler jeg det.
- C: Det er annerledes, for meg er det liksom noe som er viktig, du får en historie på flere plan, liksom, du må sette deg inn ikke bare i teksten men alt som ligger i bildene og. Og den boken jeg leste, Pride, da, var skikkelig spennende og trist og alt som var, og det var en annen måte å beskrive hvordan krig kan liksom ødelegge mennesker, men det var jo løver, da, men det var jo egentlig om oss.
- K: Jeg liker ikke så godt å lese bare tekst, jeg klarer liksom ikke så godt å få til de bildene som skal komme i hodet mitt men de bildene i Pride sitter liksom fast. Når jeg hadde lest den boken så måtte jeg bare snakke med C om det, liksom, vi måtte jo bare snakke om det vi syntes, for ja, men det gjorde jo inntrykk på meg i hvert fall.
- Int: Før prosjektet startet, så spurte jeg om det var mulig å lese bilder. Hva tenker dere om det nå?*
- Alle: Ja
- M: Ja, det gjør jo det.
- Int: På hvilken måte da?*
- M: Du kan se et bilde, for eksempel et oversiktsbilde uten tekst, så ser du åja, han er i byen, eller hvis sånn her [*viser illustrasjon fra Severed*], det er early morning, solen står opp, de er på et tog, du ser på de og skjønner at de er sultne og slitne men det står ingen plass. Du bare leser det liksom ut ifra situasjonen på bildet.
- H: Du tar vel egentlig forfatteren sin tegneprosess... eller nei, du tar den prosessen som skjer i en roman i revers, det er du som beskriver bildet med fantasien din og hvordan det er der i stedet for at det er forfatteren som beskriver det.

- W: Når du ser på et sånt bilde som dette [*viser dobbel splash page fra Pride*] solen skinner, himmelen er blå, gresset er grønt, så sitter jo ikke du og tenker på at, ok, løvene dør på neste side, sant, alt er jo godt, det er fint vær, solen skinner, det ser bra ut, ting går godt, du trenger ikke ha tekst for å tolke det, for eksempel at det skulle stå: ”her ser de utover marken, livet er bra”, sant, du trenger jo ikke det?
- Int: *Nei, så det du sier da er at du kan gi nesten mer informasjon i et sånt type bilde enn du kan med tekst?*
- W: Ja, det er mye bedre å tolke situasjonen selv enn å bli fortalt at det er bra. Du ser jo at det går bra med løvene her.
- K: Jeg tror og at, liksom, hvis du hadde lest i en vanlig bok, så hadde de kanskje brukt en halv side på å beskrive en setting, mens nå kan du bare se på bildet og du ser liksom hvordan det er. Du slipper å lese en hel side med tekst, så...
- W: Så blir det opp til deg å tolke situasjonen selv, i stedet for å liksom fokusere på å lese, du kan ikke bare stoppe midt på en side og fokusere på en situasjon i boken, men her kan du liksom bare sitte og følge med bildet hva som skjer.
- H: Du tenker jo hele tiden, du har et gående bilde i hodet om hvordan settingen er, du kan være i et rom i tre siden i den grafiske novellen, så har du på en måte hele tiden den der, hvilke lyder er det her, du tenker liksom det selv. Er det i byen så hører du lyden av bilene som kjører eller tuter.
- M: Hvis du bare blir fortalt at du er i rommet en gang i boken, så har du på en måte glemt ut rommet når du fortsetter å lese for eksempel samtalen eller et eller annet sånt. Men liksom når du ser selve rommet i bakgrunnen så på en måte får du det med deg hele tiden at det er der du er, det er den settingen du er i, i stedet for å bare lese samtalen.
- H: Ja og så får du hele tiden nye vinkler av rommet og.
- C: Det blir mye stemning eller du får mye stemning. Men det jeg synes er så morsomt med, eller i vanlige bøker, så er det veldig mye av bøkene som er egentlig bare beskrivelser av hvor du er, hvordan folkene er, hva de gjør, mens her i boken, eller sånn tegneseriebok, så... det er jo en av grunnene til at det er så lite tekst, det er jo bare tekstbobler og tankebobler hele greiene, du trenger ikke lese hva som skjer for det ser du jo selv, du trenger ikke lese det for at du ser det gjennom bildene, så det blir jo noe helt annet. Altså det er jo en av grunnene til at det går så mye forttere å lese en sånn, for at mens du leser teksten så gjør hjernen det der underbevisste arbeidet med å fordøye hele greiene i stedet for at du, det er sånn som både W og H sier, du glemmer liksom situasjonen der handlingen skjer i en bok for da må du bruke bevisstheten din på begge deler, mens i en tegneseriebok så får du alt med en gang.
- Int: *Dere har snakket om det allerede, men etter å ha jobbet med dette leseprosjektet, føler dere at deres egen evne til å tolke bilder har endret seg på noe vis?*
- Alle: Ja
- W: Du forstår hva som er lagt inn og hvorfor. Det er noen ting der som blir satt i en setting og så kan du lure på hvorfor det er sånn. Så når du forstår hva de forskjellige virkemidlene betyr så blir du på en måte satt ennå dypere inn i settingen og

- tematikken. For det er jo et ekte virkemiddel og de vet jo hva de gjør, hvordan de skal påvirke deg.
- H: Og det blir jo liksom det der med kameravinkler og nærbilder, du kommer mer oppi folk og liksom når det er sånn bilde fra bakken og oppover, for eksempel av en mann, så får du inntrykk av hvor stor og dominerende han er fysisk, men liksom og hvor dominerende han er psykisk, du forstår at han gjerne har en hard personlighet.
- K: Jeg merket bare at etter at vi hadde hatt undervisningen så ble jeg mer bevisst og på det i norsken så du tar det med over i andre fag og. Det blir liksom ikke bare akkurat når du leser sånne bøker i engelsken, du ser liksom på de tingene i andre fag eller filmer og.
- Int: Spennende, så det du sier er at det har en overføringsverdi til andre fag og til andre medier også?*
- K: Ja, vi hadde en analyse i norsk også, om musikkvideo, og da kunne jeg liksom se at de brukte perspektiver og andre virkemidler. Så fikk jeg et helt annet inntrykk av musikkvideoen.
- H: Ja, jeg tenkte på det når du sa overføringsverdi til fag og sånn, ofte i norsken når vi skal analysere et bilde eller en sammensatt tekst eller noe, det er liksom litt konkret akkurat om et bilde, da har du gjerne ikke en bakgrunnshistorie, mens i en grafisk novelle så har du historien rundt bildene, da blir det mye lettere for deg å analysere et bilde. Et bilde i norsken blir bare et bilde.
- Int: Tatt ut av en sammenheng?*
- H: Ja.
- Int: Ok. Hvis dere skulle trekke frem noe som var utfordrende med å lese grafiske romaner, eller som dere ser på som en ulempe, hva ville det ha vært?*
- W: Å lese sent er utfordrende i hvert fall for meg. Jeg måtte liksom sette meg ned å tenke hvis jeg skal få med meg alt.
- K: Jeg syntes ikke det var så mye utfordringer eller ulemper jeg. Kanskje det at jeg fokuserte litt for mye på bildene, at jeg burde ha lest fortere, men det var viktig å lese sent for å få med alle nyansene men samtidig ikke stoppe helt opp.
- M: Ja, det var helt nytt for meg og at jeg måtte lese senere, jeg leste kanskje for raskt.
- Int: Hva var det som gjorde at du leste så raskt?*
- M: Jeg ble bare så involvert, jeg ville vite hva som skjedde videre.
- C: Jeg prøvde liksom å nyte den første halvdelen a boken og bare ta det sent og fokuserte mye på bildene men siste halvdel så ga jeg opp for jeg måtte bare vite mer av historien og lese.
- Int: Ok. Var det noe som skuffet dere spesielt med de bøkene?*
- M: Jo, de var korte. Det gikk fort.
- C: Det ble litt fort ferdig ja. Jeg hadde trodd at vi måtte ta dem med hjem.
- Int: Var det positivt?*
- K: Ja, for min del i hvert fall.
- C: Ja, men det var litt trist og.
- W: Jeg liker å ha noe å lese over lang tid så det blir spennende for meg å gå i gang med *V for Vendetta* nå.

- Int:* Hvis dere hadde en venn som skulle lese en engelsk grafisk roman for første gang i sitt liv, hvilke råd ville dere ha gitt?
- M: Dette er ikke en tegneserie det skal ta tid.
- H: Ja, tenk mens du leser. Altså, i en vanlig roman så er det ”les mellom linjene”, mens her må du gjerne lese mellom bildene, altså; ”les mellom bildene”, bruk litt tid på å se på bildene og stemningen de lager, tenk litt på livet i boken, hvordan folk snakker, lag stemmer i hodet ditt.
- W: Ja men hvis du skal tenke for mye på hva perspektiver er så blir det jo kjedelig.
- C: Ja men hvis du informerer personlig om virkemidlene på forhånd så har du jo gjort litt.
- W: Ja men jeg hadde bare sagt, ikke les sånn insanely fort, sant, så må du se litt på bildene, for eksempel hvis det er et svært panel med lite tekst så trenger du ikke bare fyke forbi, men sitte og se litt, liksom. Det hadde sikkert vært greit å gitt de litt forhåndsinfo om hva virkemidler betyr på en måte... da får du et annet innblikk i historien.
- K: Jeg tenker og det at de kanskje måtte fått litt forhåndsinformasjon om virkemidlene som er brukt for da får de mer ut av boken. Da ville en legge merke til litt mer følelser som ikke blir sagt og sånn.
- Int:* Kunne dere tenke dere å lese flere slike type engelske bøker?
- Alle: Ja
- H: Jeg har planer om å kjøpe nå og ha grafiske noveller og ha det som lesestoff.
- W: Og jeg gleder meg til å lese *V for Vendetta*, den ligger klar. Jeg har funnet en ny interesse rett og slett.
- Int:* Kan det overføres til andre medier, den måten dere tenker på når dere leser en blanding av tekst og bilder?
- M: Ja til kunst for eksempel.
- H: Reklame for der er det jo sånn blikkfang og sånt.
- C: Du tenker gjerne mer gjennom bilder du ser og sånt, du blir mer obs på forskjellige ting, du ser ting på en annen måte, for du vet liksom hvordan det funker, så jeg vil påstå at du får bruk for det, i hvert fall hvis du har en tekst med bilder, for eksempel en webside, så tenker du mer på hva bildet gir og hvilken funksjon det har og trekker det inn i teksten.
- Int:* I den første undersøkelsen, spurte jeg dere hva dere la i læreplanmålet om sa at ”elevene skal kunne analysere og drøfte kulturuttrykk fra andre medier... enn film eller bok, da. De fleste svarte at de ikke visste hva som lå i det læreplanmålet og ikke hadde jobbet med det. Hva tenker dere nå?
- W: Ok, nei det er mye enklere å analysere sånn som dette, en bok med både bilder og tekst, altså det er enklere å forstå. Og hvis du suge i tradisjonell analysering, når du får sett et bilde, settingen, fargene, stemningen og så ser på snakkeoblene eller tankeoblene så ser du for deg at stemmen hans ikke akkurat er så cheery akkurat der, sant? Fargene tyder på at blablaba kommer til å skje, at det kommer til å gå dårlig, noe kommer til å skje. For eksempel han personen som er svart rundt øynene, du ikke kan se øynene helt, han er liksom sånn shady, du tenker på at du

- kan ikke stole helt på han, sant? Det er akkurat som på en måte å tolke noe in real life, hvis du står på et buss-stopp, så kommer det en fyr med en hatt og frakk du blir litt sånn øøøh, du blir usikker. Ok du går ikke bort og sier hei, jeg heter W, sant?
- Int: *Nettopp. Og det betyr at du ser på, betyr det at dere ser på graphic novels som et kulturuttrykk?*
- C: Ja
- K: Definitivt
- H: Ja, absolutt. Det er jo på en måte kunst i de tegningene.
- W: Åja, jeg tenkte vel litt feil her. Ja, tegneserier eller tegneseriebøker er jo et medie, er det ikke? Så da har vi jo jobbet med det der litt merkelige målet [*Latter*]
- Int: *Og det dere sier er at dere trekker på deres egne erfaringer når dere tolker dem?*
- M: Ja, sånn som det W sa nettopp om han mannen på bussen... vi kjenner jo liksom igjen mennesketyper og blikk og sånt.
- K: Sikkert spesielt det med ansiktsuttrykkene på nærbilder, du ser på de akkurat som om du hadde snakket med de. Du skjønner det bare, hvordan de har det på en måte.
- H: Jeg liker å si egentlig at det er en slags bindepunkt mellom bøker og film. Det har både virkemidler fra film og virkemidler fra bøker.
- Int: *Hvilke begrensninger er der med å bruke graphic novels som litterær tekst? Er det noe du kan gjøre med tradisjonelle engelske romaner som du ikke kan gjøre med graphic novels?*
- M: Det er ikke så mange. Når du leser dette så kan du ha flere meninger men bare ikke på samme måte som i vanlige romaner. Du får ikke laget dine egne personer på helt samme måte, liksom, men du føler kanskje sterkere om den personen akkurat som.
- C: Nei, jeg tenker at det virker på mange måter like. Vi som leste Pride snakket ganske dypt om den boken, det var sånt sett som om det var en, hva skal jeg si, som en skikkelig roman, egentlig. Kommer ikke på noe jeg i hvert fall.
- Int: *Ok. Er det noe annet dere vil si eller tilføye, noe vi har glemt å ta opp som er viktig?*
- W: Tror ikke det.
- Int: *Da sier jeg takk for hjelpen til dere!*

Focus group interview class B

27.02. 2015. (44.38 min)

- Int: *Velkommen til dette intervjuet. Hvis dere begynner med å si hva dere heter, hvilken bok dere har lest og om du har lest noe fra tegneseriemediet før. Sånn at jeg kjenner igjen stemmene deres når jeg skal skrive ut båndet.*
- D: Jeg heter... skal jeg si navnet mitt eller?
- Int: *Ja, bare si fornavnet ditt du. Det vil bli tatt bort i oppgaven.*

- D: Jeg heter D og leste *Jake Ellis*.
- R: Jeg heter R, og jeg leste *Severed*.
- P: P, jeg leste *Severed*.
- E: Jeg heter E, og jeg leste *Pride*.
- L: Jeg heter L og jeg leste og *Pride*.
- Int: *Ok, kjempebra, da vet jeg hvem dere er når jeg skal høre på dette. Har dere har lest tegneserier eller graphic novels før?*
- D: Jeg har lest Donald.
- E: Ja, tegneserier og striper.
- Int: *Jeg vet at du har lest mye tegneserieromaner L, hva leser du?*
- L: Jeg leser Marvel sine. Og en del Manga.
- P: Jeg har lest litt på skolen tidligere med en engelsklærer. Både på ungdomskolen og barneskolen.
- Int: *Ja, hva leste du da, husker du det?*
- P: Husker ikke helt jeg... men leste i hvert fall en på barneskolen om innvandrere som ble sendt inn i et land der de gjemte seg, husker jeg.
- Int: *Spennende. Hvordan jobbet dere med disse tekstene, gikk dere gjennom comics conventions eller bare leste dere?*
- P: Eh, leste vel og så svarte på oppgaver til de. Vi snakket ikke om virkemidler og sånt.
- Int: *Ok. Hvordan reagerte folk rundt dere da dere sa at dere skulle være med i et prosjekt der dere skulle lese tegneserieromaner i engelsken?*
- D: Vel, jeg sa det ihvertfall til mamma...
- Int: *Og hva sa hun da?*
- D: Mamma sa tegneserier? Så sa jeg nei. Og så sa jeg det du sa [*nikker mot L*] om at det var masse kule ord og sånn og det var blablabla laget filmer og sånn, og så sa jeg ingenting mer, og så så hun på meg, rista på hodet sitt og bare gikk vekk [*latter*]
- L: Jeg fikk et helt annet svar for jeg sa det til familien min som bor hjemme så sa de: Ah, kult, og så var det ikke så mye mer, egentlig.
- E: Det sa kompisen min og han er sånn skikkelig tegneserie-fan. Han leser mye, kjøper de på Outland nede i byen. Jeg har vært med han et par ganger.
- Int: *Andre reaksjoner fra noen? Dere har kanskje sagt det til de i den andre elektro klassen, hva sa de?*
- R: De sa egentlig ikke så mye, tror de syntes det hadde vært greit å gjort det samme, sånn sett, fordi det er jo ganske greit å lese.
- Int: *Tror dere det kan være en del fordommer knyttet til det å lese tegneserier/tegnserieromaner? I tilfelle, kan dere tenke dere hvorfor?*
- D: Fordi det minner om tegneserier og tegneserier er typisk for barn og det er jo sånne barnebøker, det blir jo nesten det samme, sånn med bilder.
- R: Tror mange tenker at det er små bilder, ikke så mye tekst, så ...
- D: Og så er det nytt, og menneskeheten hater alt som er nytt, alt som er nytt suge, liksom [*latter*].

Int: Dere hadde kanskje litt sånne tanker også når jeg introduserte prosjektet for dere. Etter at dere jobbet med slike tekster i engelsktimene, har synet deres på tegneseriemediet endret seg?

D: Ja, definitivt.

R: Jeg synes det, ja.

E: Mmm

Int: På hvilken måte?

D: Det var veldig interessant å se, du følte jo mye mer som en film på en måte når jeg leste det, og det var ganske kult, og jeg leser nesten aldri bøker i fritiden min, men etter denne oppgaven vurderer jeg kanskje, kanskje å gjøre det.

Int: Så du vurderer kanskje å lese... så hva likte du?

D: Måten tempoet minner om film og måten de klarte å lage, å bytte en helt annen scene uten å forklare så mye for bildene forklarer alt for deg, mens i en bok antar jeg at de må forklare alt så det er mer tungvint.

Int: Så det du sier er at et bilde kan si veldig mye, da?

D: Ja, sånn at for eksempel den *Jake Ellis* som jeg leste, så var det det første kapittelet når de var på den båten, og plutselig var han i Paris, det var i hvert fall en eller annen plass, og så var det måten alt skjedde på, den korte dialogen minne og om film, egentlig. Den *Jake Ellis* boken minnet om en typisk action film.

R: Tenkte mye det samme, egentlig, det gjorde det mye lettere. Jeg leser ikke selv bøker i fritiden, det blir altfor mye å lese, mye lettere sånn som jeg synes med at det var bilder, så fikk du med på en måte mer... forstod bedre, følte jeg, da, historien i boken enn hvis det bare hadde vært tekst, da må du lese og lese for å forstå. Så jeg syntes det var veldig greit.

P: Jeg følte det var lettere å komme inn i historien. Fordi hvis du har en bok så må du lese kanskje et par kapitler før du kommer inn i hvem karakterene er og, mens så føler jeg med bildene og, så greier en mer å komme inn med en gang for du må kunne ta litt tid før det kommer inn i hodet hvis du leser en vanlig bok.

Int: Hva er det som gjør at du føler du blir kjent med karakterene?

P: Når du liksom ser karakteren, når du ser ned på boken, så kan du se karakteren, du kan se hva han gjør og du forstår det bare, hva han tenker. Hvis du leser en bok så trenger du lang tid til å se for deg hvordan den skal være.

Int: Så det du sier er at det er kjappere å komme i gang med karakteren og få en forståelse for hvem de egentlig er?

P: Ja

E: Jeg tenker mye av det samme, med karakterene, at vi kan se uttrykkene deres, vi kan se ansikts uttrykket deres forandrer seg når noe annet skjer, så av og til kan vi tenke oss hva som skal skje bare ved å se på ansiktet.

Int: Merket du da at det var forskjell mellom ord og ansikts uttrykk, at det var motsetninger mellom ordene i snakkeboblene og det som karakteren så ut?

E: Ja, sarkastiske kommentarer for eksempel, får den følelsen at de mener det motsatte enn det de sier.

R: Du ser bedre når du har både bilde og teksten i stedet for bare teksten, da må du tenke mer på bare ordene, hva var faktisk poenget med det som stod, men med

- tegneserier så kan du se på bildet og forstå det hvis det er noe som ikke stemmer med det de sier liksom.
- Int:* Tenker dere at det er sånn at intuitivt så skjønner dere det fordi dere kjenner mennesker, på en måte?
- R, E: Ja
- L: Jeg har jo lest tegneserier en stund, så det blir ikke så veldig mye nytt, men jeg lærte mye mer hvordan tegningene blir brukt, det syntes jeg var ganske interessant.
- Int:* Kan du gi noen eksempler på det?
- L: Åh, det der med sånn mellomrom mellom bildene og sånn. Den der ”gutteren” eller rennesteinen. Hadde ikke tenkt på at den betydde så mye. Du får på en måte mer liv i tegneserien da, du må tenke over det, da blir det mer spennende å lese historien da.
- Int:* Var det noe som overasket dere med å lese en sånn type grafisk bok?
- D: Det var sånn tidenes cliff-hanger på slutten av filmen [*latter*]. Boken... Nesten som en film, det er sånn, det var sånn åpen slutt. De forklarte ikke hva som skjedde, og jeg har ikke lest så mye bøker, men jeg vil anta at det ikke er noe som skjer så ofte i typisk litteratur.
- E: Overasket i slutten av boken jeg og, for eksempel, det bare [*knipser med fingrene*] og så, ferdig!.
- L: Ja, sånn boof, og så så du, jeg så det bare aldri komme, så jeg ble sånn, hva skjer, liksom?
- Int:* Hva var det du ikke så komme?
- L: De løvene ble skutt ned, liksom.
- E: Ja, og etterpå så jeg bare et sånn flagg fra USA i bakgrunnen. Det sa jo alt egentlig.
- L: Ja, det skjedde, liksom, det var veldig sånn ”boom”.
- Int:* Kan dere beskrive scenen?
- L: De står og så ser du utover byen, eller ruinene.
- E: Ja, ruinene av den ødelagte Bagdad.
- L: Ja, og så snakker de om hvor fint det er og minnes gode tider, på en måte, det går mot en lykkelig slutt, og så plutselig så...
- E: Så skjer det, det som ikke trengte skje, bare fordi, jeg vet ikke, det er ikke som om de skylder bare på de amerikanske soldatene heller, mer det at det er krig og da er der ingen som tenker seg om egentlig. Uskyldige blir drept, men de hadde ikke trengt det og jeg kjente jeg ble skikkelig forbannet.
- L: Ja, for du tenker litt, sant?
- Int:* Hva tenker dere forfatterne ville oppnå med det?
- E: Slå inn at alt ikke har en god slutt i virkeligheten.
- L: De løvene kunne symbolisere generelt mennesker på flukt i sitt eget land, det er krig, og hvor vanskelig det vil være å holde seg i live, egentlig, når du ikke er en del av den, ikke vil.
- Int:* Etter dette prosjektet, har dere blitt mer bevisst på hvordan tegneserieskapere bruker virkemidler for å påvirke oss, få frem slike typer følelser? Hva tenker dere?
- D: Jeg la merke til hvordan de brukte farger for å skape stemning, for eksempel.

- Int:* Kan du gi et eksempel fra boken din?
- D: Ja, det er ingen sidetall i boken så jeg vet ikke om jeg finner det, men det er en scene der de diskuterer fortiden, hva de skal gjøre, og de er sure på hverandre, eller relativt sure på hverandre. Og da er det mørke farger, er for (*utydelig*), og de er litt frustrerte, og så er der en sånn syk tvist, say no more.
- Int:* Du nevner farger som noe som skaper stemning, i dette tilfelle en stemning av dysterhet, og som signaliserer at de er uvenner, stemmer det?
- D: Ja.
- Int:* Er der andre eksempler på hvordan tegneserieskaperne påvirker hvordan vi skal oppleve en scene, for eksempel?
- R: Ansikts-uttrykk, veldig mye, i hvert fall i vår bok. Når du tenker på at det er en skrekk så vil du jo se mye mer scener der du merker at det skal skje noe, og så kan du gjerne se på ansikts-uttrykket til de som det gjelder i boken da, eller, den, at han virkelig... Men ikke viser det helt, men så får han et helt annet ansikts-uttrykk når det som skal skje det skjer, det følte jeg i hvert fall i vår bok.
- Int:* Så tegneserieskaperne brukte typiske horror-virkemidler i den?
- R: Ja. Mye mørke omgivelser, skumle settinger liksom.
- P: Ja og det øker jo spenningen når du vet at den gale personen er ute etter hovedpersonen. Så du vente på hva som skal skje, sånn ”nei, nei, nei”.
- L: En annen ting jeg tenker på er vinkelen på bildet, hvis det er skrått, så vil det ikke, så vil mennesket ta det som noe som ikke stemmer, vi vil ha mer eller mindre alt som firkantet, vi vil ha det plant. Du ser det for eksempel her [*viser dobbelsidig panel fra den andre scenen i Pride of Baghdad*]
- Int:* Så hvis vinkelen tipper så føler du at noe er galt?
- L: Ja, du blir usikker og du tror at det skjer noe, du merker at det er noe som foregår.
- E: Hvis du ser på dette bildet, så er det jo tilta [*viser illustrasjon fra Pride til gruppen*]. På skrått, sant, og viser en skummel bjørn, du kan tenke deg at noe kommer til skje med de som lever der, et frempek på at de dør liksom.
- ? : Mmm, ja [*snakker i munnen på hverandre*]
- L: Du vet det.
- E: Og så er der en skjev boble, måten de har laget den tankeboblen på, måten han snakker på liksom, og så er det helt mørkt.
- Int:* Hvilken effekt har det at den illustrasjonen er på en full-splash page og at de dekker hele siden med tegninger?
- L: Du får sånn, når det ikke har noen kanter, så er det sånn at bildet ikke stopper. Og at det egentlig er ganske viktig, de bruker hele siden, lagt til masse detaljer, så du får litt mer innlevelse av hendelsen.
- Int:* Bruker dere lengre tid på å lese sånne store bilder enn mange små?
- R: Ja for du studerer det gjerne litt mer enn det du gjøre på de enkelt-bildene, for når det er et stort et så får vi på en måte absolutt alt i ett, da er det ikke sånn at du må på en måte hoppe, du studerer bare akkurat den siden, akkurat det bildet.
- Int:* Ok, var der andre ting dere fokuserte spesielt på?

- P: I hvert fall, rett etter begynnelsen er der sånne paneler som er veldig høye, som viser, du får en illusjon av høyde, da, du føler det som det er veldig høyt, veldig langt ned.
- R: Du får på en måte et sånt fugleperspektiv.
- P: Ja, ned og sånt, jeg vet ikke akkurat på det eksempelet, jo du får faktisk på en måte akkurat som du er helt nedi bakken og ser opp, det viser de på akkurat den siden. Så du viser både fugleperspektiv og sånn på en måte mark. Akkurat som de vil vise en slags bevegelse mellom høyt og lavt.
- L: Vi i min gruppe brukte lang tid på å snakke om forsiden på Pride, husker du det, E?
- E: Ja, det var vel meningen bak den vi snakket om, når vi leste litt bak først om historien så stod det jo at på grunn av krig så måtte de rømme fra dyrehagen, men så når vi så tilbake på forsiden, så var det jo ikke vanlige gittere som var foran dyrehagen lenger, da var jo fortsatt ikke løvene fri fra den dyrehagen der... Så de er jo fortsatt fanget innenfor noe annet.
- L: Ja, den ene løven sier jo at frihet ikke kan gis, den kan bare..
- E: Tjenes.
- L: Ja, fortjene den. Så det vil si på en måte at de er fri, for de er ikke i buret lenger, men likevel ikke fri heller, for på en måte har krigen forgiftet dem. Og det funker bra til forsiden, artisten viser metall som bare er skrot, foran ansiktet, så det får det til å virke som at løvene er ennå bak gitteret mens samtidig går de fritt i gaten.
- Int: Dere høres ut til å ha lest mye bare ut ifra forsiden av boken deres, så spennende! Men vi må gå over til noe litt annet. Læreplanen sier at vi skal jobbe med kulturuttrykk fra andre medier...*
- L: Ja, det går på at vi skal lære engelsk språket bli brukt i forskjellige ting som i filmer, bøker, tegneserier, aviser, generelt medier i forskjellige steder.
- Int: OK, kan for eksempel det å lese tegneserieromaner en måte å dekke et sånt læreplanmål på? I tilfelle hvordan?*
- Alle: Ja
- P: Ja det kan gi like mye handling som en faktabok eller en avisartikkel og det kan gi like mye budskap som en roman.
- E: Det er jo et medie, er det ikke? Og så er noen av disse tegningene veldig flotte og akkurat som kunst. Synes jeg i hvert fall, i hvert fall i Pride var de det.
- L: Spørs hvilke tegneserieromaner du leser. Noen har tegnere som er veldig flinke, mens noen sånne masselagde serier er bare laget kjapt for å underholde og tjene penger.
- R: Vår var veldig fint tegnet, masse stemninger og greier. Og så var den basert på en sann historie om en masse morder, men vi fikk et helt annet synspunkt enn hvis vi bare skulle ha lest om det i en avisartikkel sånt sett.
- Int: I den som dere leste, O og A, Severed. Der var handlingen lagt til USA på 20-tallet, er det vel...*
- P: Ja, stemmer, etter slutten av første verdenskrig.
- Int: Følte dere at dere fikk et godt tidsbilde av USA på den tiden?*

- R: Ja, du kunne liksom se på klærne, og se at det var gammeldags. De hadde ingen teknologi, for moren, eller fostermoren til Jack gikk til politistasjonen og så hadde de, sånn at du kunne se på kontoret at de ikke hadde noe som hadde med teknologi å gjøre. Ikke noe telefon, data eller noe sånt. Det var bare noe papir og en penn. Og så tror jeg...
- P: Så var det gamle lokomotiver og biler, og de sveiva, var det ikke det?
- R: Jo, når han møte han som vi egentlig ikke fikk vite navnet på, han som tok livet av de han tar med seg, da så vi det.
- Int: Hva tenker dere, har elever i videregående skole noe å lære av å lese grafiske romaner i engelsken? I tilfelle, hva da?*
- D: Jeg syntes det var, ja, interessant å lese tegneserier og når vi hadde den teorien bak det om hvordan vi skal lese det, sant, det var interessant.
- L: Det jeg syntes var interessant er at det er større sjanse for at vi vil like tegneserier. Vi ungdommer, veldig mange i vår generasjon leser ikke mange bøker, så vi vil lettere bli engasjert i tegneserier. Så vi kan lære oss språket, ord og språk ut i fra egentlig å lese tegneserier, for vi vil ikke gidde å lese bøker.
- P: Det kommer vel litt an på, det er sikkert noen som liker å lese og. Men egentlig... jeg syntes i hvert fall at det var greit for jeg har sikkert blitt mer bevisst på om hvordan bilder virker, altså, hvordan de som lager de bruker sånne virkemidler som vi snakket om, og så leser vi jo engelsk uten å tenke på det, at vi leser mye, altså. Det er jo bra.
- E: Ja.
- R: Det blir liksom en annen måte å jobbe med litteratur på, jeg hadde ikke trodd jeg skulle like å diskutere sånt noen gang, men dette var jo helt annerledes, på en måte, det var mye å snakke om siden vi hadde både bilder og tekst liksom.
- Int: Hva tenker dere, den kunnskapen dere har fått om det å analysere illustrasjoner og sånt, har den noen overføringsverdi? Hvordan kan det i tilfelle brukes til noe annet?*
- L: Jeg merket at jeg tenkte på det når jeg så en reklame på en plass, det..
- R: Ja, reklame og sånt. Og kanskje, det er jo mange ganger vi kunne ha bruk for det når vi er på nettet, kanskje bli litt mer bevisst på hva bildene faktisk gjør. Jeg tror sikkert jeg skal tenke litt mer på sånn nå.
- D: Jo, det er jo og nesten som film, den boken jeg leste er jo det, som en action film, de bruker mange av de samme teknikkene der, sånne cliff-hangere for eksempel. Og i spill, så klart, veldig samme der.
- Int: Ok. En annen ting, dere fikk velge sjanger først, ut i fra det valgte jeg noen bøker og så fikk dere velge blant de fire bøkene som var plukket ut i fra deres sjangervalg. Hvilken innvirkning hadde på deres interesse for å lese bøkene – at dere fikk være med å velge?*
- Alle: Jo... [snakker i munnen på hverandre]
- R: Jo, det er greiere for oss på en måte å få velge litt av det vi vil lese enn at du bare velger noe vi ikke vil, sånt sett.

- L: Da kommer det faktisk innenfor det vi har lyst til selv, når vi har lyst til å lese det selv vil det være mye mer engasjert i det enn at du får en, du skal lese den, men jeg har ikke lyst til å lese den, men jeg må. Så da gidder jeg ikke å bruke mye tid på å lese.
- Int: Så da er det lettere å..*
- E: Bli engasjert på en måte.
- D: Lærer engasjerer elevene ved å gi de valget... få være med å velge litt, enten det er type sjanger som hos oss nå eller om lærer finner frem noen bøker og så får du velge ut ifra det.
- P: Bare få de til å sette seg ned, gå inn i den verdenen liksom.
- Int: Passer graphic novels til alle typer lesere? Da tenker jeg på elever som leser mye eller leser lite, er flytende i engelsk eller strever litt med engelsken?*
- Alle: Ja/mmm [*snakker i munnen på hverandre*].
- L: Det passer til alle. For i sånne bøker er ikke poenget å lese bare teksten, du må kunne lese bildene, forstå gutterene, snakkeboblene, alt det der. Der er liksom noe for alle, kanskje de som er flinke å lese vanlig tekst ikke er så gode på bildene, så da blir det litt for alle.
- R: Det passer veldig greit til alle.
- D: Det tar ikke så lang tid å gå gjennom boken, så de som leser sent får tid til å lese ferdig mens de som leser fort kan sette seg enda mer inn i teknikker og bilder og sånt.
- L: Det er derfor de... jo mange av bøkene er at de peker på andre ting, du må se etter hint, du må lese etter hint, sånn at du må tenke deg frem, du må ha sett på en spesiell film, du må ha lest noe før. Sånn som den *Fables* som jeg egentlig valgte, den er sånn at du må ha lest litt før, alt ligger ikke i selve graphic novelen, du må finne ut av det selv, kjenne de eventyrene liksom. Sånn er det ofte med grafiske noveller. Tror de som leser mye vil ha det kjekkere da, de klarer å liksom se sånne sammenhenger.
- R: Tenke litt, da, og bare finne det ut. Men sånn som for de som ikke leser, så er det veldig greie bøker. Og de som sliter med engelsken, de og for da er det ikke så mye tekst som gjør at de lettere kan følge med og forstå selve handlingen.
- Int: Så det dere sier er at det nok til å kvesse de som er vante lesere, samtidig er det nok til de som..*
- R: Ikke greier å lese så mye.
- L: For de som leser veldig fort kan de jo bare gå i gang og kjøpe samlinger av ti graphic novels i en bok og lese mer.
- E: Ja, eller de kan bruke ekstra god tid på bildene, hvis de leser fortere enn de andre for eksempel. Akkurat som, jeg synes, det som jo var veldig greit med disse bøkene er at egentlig kan alle være med å diskutere de, selv om de er forskjellig gode i engelsk eller lesing. For bildene kan jo sikkert alle mene noe om på likt, liksom.
- Int: Når dere jobbet i klassen hvordan opplevde dere gruppearbeidet? Altså, det å skulle snakke engelsk og diskutere litteratur – hva synes dere om å diskutere tegneserieromaner?*
- L: Jeg syntes det var kjekt. Ganske lett og kjekt.

- R: Veldig greit, for det er mye, ikke så mye tekst og så er det lettere, du kan faktisk bare bla og finne bildet og på en måte forklare litt om det og sånne ting og vise det frem, så ser vi det jo alle.
- Int: Så var det lettere å diskutere når dere hadde illustrasjonene?*
- P: Mmm
- D: Og det gikk ganske greit å holde diskusjonen i gang på engelsk og. Det hjalp jo litt når du har en tegneserie eller graphic novel for da har alle de samme panelene å snakke om, hvis alle har lest en bok, så kan det bli vanskelig å diskutere hva som faktisk har skjedd.
- R: Da bruker du bare din egen fantasi og ikke det som vises i boken. Men vi snakket mye om bildene, da og må folk tenke selv hva som faktisk har skjedd og hva som ligger bak de på en måte.
- E: Men vi tolket ofte bildene ganske likt men var ikke så enige om hva det betydde i sammenhengen hvis du skjønner.
- P: Men tror det hjalp å ha bilder, at det var noe som engasjerte folk. Og de var ikke redde for å mene noe om de, altså bildene.
- Int: I den forrige undersøkelsen spurte jeg om det var mulig å lese bilder. Hva tenker dere om det nå?*
- Alle: Ja/Mmm
- R: Det er veldig greit å lese bilder, du får mye mer forståelse av alt av historien. Men det tar litt tid kan du si.
- L: Det har mye å si med ansikts-uttrykk, det med ansikts-uttrykk er lett å se på bilder, egentlig, da klarer du å lese sånt sett ganske mye av situasjonen bare ved å se på ansikts-uttrykkene til personen, hva de egentlig mener.
- E: Mmm. Vi klarer jo det til vanlig, å se ansikts-uttrykkene til folk, for vi ser jo mennesker hver dag, da er det jo like lett for oss å se det i en tegneserie.
- Int: Ok. Hvilket råd ville dere gitt en venn som skulle lese en sånn type roman for første gang?*
- D: Ta deg god tid til hvert bilde sånn at du ikke mister noe, det merket jeg når jeg først begynte, så måtte jeg gå tilbake igjen og se hva som hadde skjedd fordi jeg leste ikke på bildene før jeg hoppet videre.
- Int: Kan du fortelle litt mer om det?*
- D: Så... jo i begynnelsen av Jake Ellis det er en som snakker, hovedpersonen, med to antageligvis business-partnere. Uhm... og så svarer han naturlig på spørsmålene deres, og så kommer den samme scenen om igjen, bare at da er han Jake Ellis med, og så ser du at hovedpersonen egentlig svarer til Jake Ellis, og ikke de han er med, som snakker med ham, så der litt kult. Det minner om en film.
- Int: Hva trodde du, er Jake Ellis i hoder hans eller er han er person?*
- D: Først trodde jeg at det var bare underbevisstheten hans som snakket fordi mens du leste boken, så så du at Jake Ellis ikke så noe hovedpersonen ikke hadde sett, så det kunne liksom ikke være en sånn supernaturlig greie, han kunne ikke se bak en dør som var lukket, men han kunne se det som var i rommet mye tydeligere, liksom. Men han har i tillegg sin egen tankegang, for han tenker mens hovedpersonen

sover, for eksempel. Og så når du kommer ut i boken så er det sånn at da finner du ut at, åh, ja! Så er der sånne tilbakeblikk i boken, som er i rødt, som hincer til at det er i fortiden. Det er ganske kult, det tenkte jeg ikke på før akkurat nå. Og da ser du liksom at denne Jake Ellis ligger i sengen, og at de har på en måte sveist sammen tankegangen deres eller noe... det var ikke helt klart, du måtte spekulere selv der, det er ganske interessant.

Int: *Så den forundret deg, den boken?*

D: Ja, så var det det at mens jeg leste boken og skulle svare på de spørsmålene, så var der et spørsmål om hvem jeg trodde Jake Ellis var, så sa jeg at jeg trodde det var underbevisstheten som snakket til ham, som en type schizofreni, men jeg tenkte at når boken la opp til at det skulle være sånn så mye, så tenkte jeg at det ikke var sånn, akkurat som en krimserie med flere episoder, det er morderen, det ble litt for obvious på en måte. Så det var nok ikke som jeg først trodde.

Int: *OK. Hva ville du rådet til, R, en venn som skulle begynne å lese graphic novels for første gang?*

R: Sånn som du gjorde med oss, at vi så på og snakket om hva de forskjellige snakkeboblene viste og at vi snakket om hvordan vi kunne se på bildene. Studere bilder, det mener jeg i hvert fall er veldig viktig for da... du leser teksten, men du får mer på bildene. Bedre forståelse av hva hele historien er, så i hvert fall tenk gjennom samtidig som du studerer bildene, ikke bare lese og så gå videre, det ville i hvert fall jeg anbefalt.

Int: *Ja, takk. P?*

P: Ja, sånn som R sa, sette seg litt inn i hvordan tegneserien er oppbygd, med tekst og boblene. Og når illustrasjonene står på skrå. Hvilken farge som er i dem. Og jeg la merke til at nå, så så jeg på hele historie litt annerledes etter at jeg hadde liksom gått gjennom hvordan tegneserieforfatterne hadde bygget den opp. Jeg så ting som jeg ikke hadde lagt merke til hvis vi ikke hadde jobbet gjennom sånne virkemidler.

E: Jeg ville nok si det samme, tror jeg. Det er jo greit at du studerer bildene, men samtidig og at en ikke tenker for mye på det, for det forfatteren har gjort... det som skjer går opp for deg der og da. Du må ikke tenke for mye rundt det, hva som skal skje, for det får du inn i deg hvis du leser videre og ikke bare stopper og tenker for mye på det.

L: Det jeg faktisk synes er viktigste er å si at at dette er noe som er helt annerledes, som kan trigge deg, sånn at det hjelper deg med å lese, for du liker å lese det som interesserer deg så da blir det kjekkere og derfor lettere for deg å lese den.

Int: *Hvor viktige var illustrasjonene når dere valgte bøker? Valgte dere for eksempel vekk bøker fordi dere ikke likte illustrasjonene?*

D: Ja, jeg syntes det var avgjørende, hvordan illustrasjonene så ut.

P: Mm

Int: *Så det visuelle uttrykket til tegneserieartisten er viktig?*

E: Ja, det er det som skaper et førsteinntrykk.

P: Ja, jeg tenkte på å velge Fables, men når jeg bladde i den så var ikke kunsten rett. Det var litt sånn type dus-aktige farger og svake tegninger. Jeg følte ikke det var helt meg, det fristet ikke.

- D: Jeg er enig, jeg syntes konseptet i den virket kult, men jeg likte ikke kunsten. Så derfor valgte jeg heller Jake Ellis.
- Int: OK, hva...*
- L: Men det viktigste spørsmålet her: hva er neste tegneserie vi skal lese? [*latter*]
- Int: Så kunne dere tenke dere å lese flere engelsk grafiske romaner?*
- Alle: Ja/Mmm [svarer i munnen på hverandre]
- D: Jeg har lyst å lese den neste boken, har hørt der er en til.
- R: Denne *Severed* har jo flere, har den ikke det?
- P: Nei, alt er samlet i den boken.
- Int: Ellers, er det noe dere kan gjøre med vanlig litteratur, for eksempel noveller, som dere ikke kan gjøre med graphic novels? Hvilke begrensninger har tegneserieromaner?*
- D: Tror nok det er lettere å skrive mellom linjene i en vanlig novelle enn i en graphic novel. I en graphic novel må du liksom skrive mellom bildene og teksten på en måte, hvis du skjønner. Det er vanskeligere på en måte.
- L: Du tror kanskje det lettere å se andre meninger i teksten for da har du ikke bilder. Men de bildene, de må jo tolkes de og.
- P: Jeg vet ikke, kommer ikke på noe.
- E: Ikke jeg heller egentlig.
- Int: Hva var utfordrende eller vanskelig med å lese graphic novels? Og hva var negativt, hvis det var noe?*
- L: De var for korte. Det gikk litt for fort.
- D: Jeg hadde lyst å lese videre, fikk ikke studert bildene skikkelig. Det gikk litt for fort, jeg gikk nok glipp av viktige ting jeg burde ha sett. Men jeg brukte og tid på å lete etter ting som var skjult.
- P: Jeg syntes det var vanskelig å finne det rette tempoet på lesingen... hvor mye tid du skulle bruke på bildene, hvor lang tid du skulle bruke på å studere boblene og hva effekter forfatteren hadde brukt. Så jeg tenkte en liten stund, hvor fort skal jeg lese en side, se på et bilde? Jeg følte litt at jeg hadde en tidsfrist å gjøre det på. Hadde jeg lest den hjemme hadde jeg jo tatt den tiden jeg følte jeg trengte på å studere bildene.
- E: Jeg kommer ikke på noe, egentlig.
- R: Ikke jeg heller.
- Int: Ok. Hvis vi skulle ha utvidet dette leseprosjektet og gjort andre ting med boken, hva kunne det ha vært? Hvis vi for eksempel skulle hatt en vurdering i en eller annen form etter endt lesing, hva kunne vi ha gjort?*
- D: Hatt samtale eller fremføring om boken.
- Int: Da tenker du muntlig? Brukt den som muntlig presentasjon?*
- D: Ja, det eller skrive om den. Eller vi kunne sammenlignet den med en filmversjon hvis det fins.
- L: Det hadde jo gått an å lage en gruppepresentasjon, siden vi var flere folk som leste samme bøker.

P: Det hadde gått an å analysert bildene, sett på hvilke effekter forfatteren brukte, da. Sett på hvordan snakkeboblene er satt opp, hvordan de er brukt, hvordan farger som er brukt, hvor store panelene er, hvordan de er utformet, hva det gjør med historien.

Int: Rett og slett en analyse virkemidlene tegneserieskaperen bruker?

P: Ja

E: Mmm... men vi må ikke tenke på det som å analysere en vanlig bok, for det går ikke, for da får du ikke med alle de andre virkemidlene, men hvis du tenker å analysere den som en film, for eksempel så går det. Måten du analyserer en film på er helt annerledes enn en bok. Og en tegneserieroman er ikke akkurat som en vanlig bok, det er mer som en film du liksom lager inni hodet ditt av å sette sammen bildene og teksten og sånt. Så hvis du tenker på det som å analysere en film så hadde det kanskje vært spennende.

Int: OK, mange spennende forslag her. Er der andre ting dere vil si før vi slutter av?

Greit, da sier jeg tusen takk for hjelpen, gutter!