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Working with Fairy Tales to Help Norwegian Year 7 ESL Students
Develop Authentic Response Through the Use of Critical Expressionism
and Reader Response Theory

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Marit Sæther & Adrian Lorentzen

Abstract

This thesis investigates how reader response theory and critical expressionism can work in unison to promote the development of authentic response to literature in the Norwegian year 7 English classroom. The choice of topic is motivated by a desire to aid students in developing and valuing their authentic response, following our perception that students too frequently rely on a different authority in deciding their answer for them. The necessary data is collected predominantly through student-produced works from 41 students based on the Brothers Grimm fairy tale *Rumpelstiltskin*, but will be supplemented with a questionnaire, a semi-structured interview with their teacher, and relevant observations. The findings suggest that most students have benefitted from the multitude of response methods made available to them through critical expressionism, and the open-ended structure imparted upon those response methods with reader response theory. We conclude that reader response theory and critical expressionism have a mutually beneficial relationship where the former lays the foundation with well-established theory, while the latter contributes with a practical dimension that is more intuitively applied to a classroom.

1. Introduction

The purpose of this study is to help Norwegian year 7 students develop an authentic response to literature as part of their learning in the English subject. The Brothers Grimm's fairy tale *Rumpelstiltskin* was used as a classroom text for the students to engage with during the lessons that were conducted in relation to this study. Reader response theory and critical expressionism support the choices made for the lessons, and the results of the lessons suggest that the two theories can combine to promote the development of authentic response in students. The results more specifically show that students' understandings and interpretations differ greatly and that students' preferences regarding learning methods and classroom activities differ just as much. Each of the five response methods that the students could choose from when working with *Rumpelstiltskin* were chosen at least once, and each of the three classroom activities were mentioned at least once as a student's favourite part of the lessons. This suggests that teachers may be well served in including varied working methods to let students play to their strengths, which in turn helps them create something authentic. This study also indicates that accepting and encouraging the students' uniqueness is essential to the students' development of authentic response.

The wish to encourage an authentic response in students was brought on by the prevalence of the New Critical approach to teaching, which we have experienced as both students and teachers. New Criticism favours a "correct" way of interpreting text, which we believe has inadvertently weakened the student's ability to develop responses of their own. A common example from the teacher's side is "fishing" for certain answers if students fail to provide the answer the teacher envisioned. Another prominent example is the frequent tendency students have to search texts for answers they can copy almost verbatim from. These experiences were brought to the forefront when we taught a 5th grade class. Here, students would have difficulty answering questions from the material being taught if it asked for their opinion, rather than a concrete answer. This tells us that students may lack experience formulating thoughts and opinions of their own in a classroom setting. Having done classroom teaching for this thesis specifically, we came to understand the teacher's side of this even better. When students share their work, as they did in our lessons, it is natural for us to praise and acknowledge their input. What we did not realize, is that the way in which we respond could affect what the class perceives as the "correct" answer, or way of doing something. Responding with "correct" to a simple math question is a matter much different than answering a more nuanced

or layered question. One of the most natural reactions a teacher could have suddenly posed a challenge. This leads us back to our goal of finding ways to aid students in developing authentic responses, which we believe can be done through a combination of reader response theory and critical expressionism.

Before continuing to the research questions, we want to briefly clarify a few useful terms:

Authentic response: Authentic response is used in this thesis to describe a student valuing and prioritizing their personal response. This explanation is inspired by the definition of “authentic”. One is authentic if one is “true to one’s own personality, spirit or character” (Merriam-webster, n.d.). Authenticity is essential for the development of opinions.

Reader response theory: Reader response theory is a textual approach that encourages the development of the individual reader’s personal interpretation (Rosenblatt, 1938). Reader response will be explained in greater detail in section 3, “Theoretical background”.

Critical expressionism: Critical expressionism is a theory that encourages the use of varied response methods, beside the most common ones such as discussion (DeVoogd & McLaughlin, 2020). This is intended to provide options, and not replace discussion. Critical expressionism will also be explained further in section 3.

To achieve the goal of improved student ability in developing authentic responses, we have formulated one main research question (henceforth referred to as MRQ), with two supplementary sub-questions (henceforth referred to as SQ1 and SQ2) to investigate adjacent areas of interest. The research questions are as follows:

MRQ: How can a combination of reader response theory and critical expressionism promote the development of authentic response when working with fairy tales in the Norwegian year 7 English classroom?

SQ1: How do students in the Norwegian year 7 English classroom respond to a more reader-centric teaching method for fairy tales?

SQ2: How capable are students in the Norwegian year 7 English classroom of reading against a fairy tale without being instructed to do so?

The key phrase in SQ2 is “reading against”. “Reading against” is a term frequently used by Hilary Janks in her written works. Janks describes “reading against” a text as not necessarily disagreeing with the text, but taking a critical stance to the perspective that is presented in the text (Janks, 2018): “Reading critically is about understanding the ways in which a text is positioned and is working to position us, the readers” (Janks, 2019, p. 563). The students were encouraged to express their opinions of certain characters and events when working with the fairy tale. One activity was designed specifically to encourage the students to adopt the perspective of Rumpelstiltskin, as the change in perspective could affect their opinions. Rumpelstiltskin fails to reach his goal, which may suggest that he is the villain, as villains are usually unsuccessful in literature targeting a younger audience. When the students adopted the perspective of Rumpelstiltskin, they had to interpret his motives to understand him. Regardless of whether the students ended up agreeing or disagreeing with the villainous depiction presented by the Grimm Brothers, they had to consider both alternatives in order to form an explanation for their opinion, thus showing that they are able to read against the fairy tale, as opposed to blindly accepting the perspective that is readily available to them. This explains what “reading against” means in the context of this thesis.

The research and classroom practice that is documented in this thesis is grounded in different regulatory documents and white papers. These are:

White Papers

- (28) «Fag – Fordypning – Forståelse – En fornyelse av kunnskapsløfte»
- (20) «På rett vei. Kvalitet og mangfold i fellesskolen»

The Education Act

- (§1-1) “The objectives of education and training”
- (§1-3) “Adapted education”

LK20

- Core curriculum
 - o (1.4) “The joy of creating, engagement and urge to explore”

- Interdisciplinary topics
 - “Health and life skills”
 - “Democracy and citizenship”
- (ENG01-04)
 - Year 4
 - Year 7

These ties will be made explicit below before proceeding to the fairy tale section, starting with government white papers.

Government white paper 28 has a section titled “kompetanser i fagfornyelsen,” which elaborates on some of the prioritized areas in the updated subjects. Most relevant for this thesis are points two and four. Point two explains that learning strategies and the ability to reflect on one’s own learning process are important prerequisites for attaining subject knowledge. Point four is concerned with exploration and creation through critical thinking, problem solving, creativity and innovation (Meld. St. 28 (2015-2016), p. 41). We would argue that our project may act as an aid in furthering the development of their personal learning strategies. It stands to reason that in order to learn what strategies suit you well, you must be able to try different methods, which we give ample opportunity for through the response methods available to the students. Government white paper 28 further comments on the development of the new curricula. It proclaims the great importance of the “grunnopplæring”. In this proclamation, it acknowledges the need to continually evaluate if current teaching practice provides an adequate base for successful integration into working life and society in general (Meld. St. 28 (2015-2016), p. 6). This is something that must be kept in mind when we take on researching as teachers. How can this aid classroom practice? This is something we are attempting to explore with this thesis focusing on reader response criticism utilized in conjunction with critical expressionism through the medium of fairy tales. It is an attempt to take a fantastical medium and use it for teaching in a manner that allows for authentic response in creative ways. Imagination, creativity, expression, and personal input, are all ideas we would consider important both in working life and society.

The same benefits mentioned for government white paper 28 lend themselves well to the contents of government white paper 20. Described in government white paper 20 is the need to diversify and add elements of practicality to education for grades 1-7, with motivation and “learning enjoyment” for a better learning outcome being the primary motives. This does not entail a lowering of student expectations to achieve this outcome, but rather new methods to acquire the required skills and knowledge (Meld. St. 20 (2012-2013), p. 3). This thesis acts as continued work toward this purpose. Inherent to this project are the varied and expressive working methods, providing students with the best opportunities to choose the activity that motivates them. The students have acquired intricate knowledge of *Rumpelstiltskin*, to the point of proving very capable in producing their own works from it. Throughout this work they have tested their abilities to imagine the unseen (describe an undescribed character), make personal (and unprompted) references via pop culture and show an ability to openly share everything they made. The learning outcomes and how this approach worked out will be explored in more depth when we arrive at the discussion of findings in section 5.

In this section it is argued that the teaching methods the current thesis promotes align with the rules that are set in the Norwegian law of education (“Education Act”). The Norwegian Education Act serves as the foundation for all teaching that happens in Norway, thereby making it part of the foundation for LK20. §1-1 explains the purpose of the education. This paragraph states that “Education and training must provide insight into cultural diversity and show respect for the individual's convictions. They are to promote democracy, equality and scientific thinking” (1998). Part of encouraging students’ development of authentic response is to make the students comfortable expressing their personal opinions, which requires the fostering of an environment in which the students accept and value that their classmates might have ideas that differ from their own. The paragraph then says that “The pupils and apprentices must develop knowledge, skills and attitudes so that they can master their lives and can take part in working life and society. They must have the opportunity to be creative, committed and inquisitive” (1998). According to Lev Vygotsky, learning is a social activity that happens when one uses the tool of communication to interact with others (Imsen, 2014, p.188-189). Sharing one’s authentic response in a group often encourages others to share too, which leads to interaction; “mutual or reciprocal action or influence” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). As participants in the conversation listen to the authentic responses of others, they might experience development of their own knowledge, skills and attitudes.

The Norwegian Education Act (1998) §1-3, “Adapted Education”, also states that “education must be adapted to the abilities and aptitudes of the individual pupil [...].” Most students will find that their ability to express their opinions in English class is affected by their skill level in English. If the students feel that their English language proficiency is not good enough, one could let these students use either code switching (mixing languages) or Norwegian to the extent required. That there is no correct answer in the lessons we performed seemed to ease the pressure on students, most evident through the comfort they showed when performing in-role interviews, something that will be explored further later.

The present thesis grounds itself heavily in section 1.4 of the core curriculum, which is titled “The joy of creating, engagement and the urge to explore”. This section explains why and how education shall support children’s development of the aesthetic sense. The word “Aesthetic” is defined by Merriam-Webster as “a branch of philosophy dealing with the nature of beauty, art, and taste and with the creation and appreciation of beauty” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). One can infer from this that this section of the core curriculum intends to instill in students a sense of appreciation or understanding of art and how something feels or appears to them. This is made further evident by the section itself, stating “The pupils must learn and develop through sensory perceptions and thinking, aesthetic forms of expression and practical activities” (Norwegian Directorate of Education, 2017). This thesis adheres strongly to this point, prioritizing creative and varied working methods, allowing students to explore and find the methods that their “aesthetic sense” feels most attracted to. Section 1.4 advocates further still for this creativity: “Pupils who learn about and through creative activities develop the ability to express themselves in different ways, and to solve problems and ask new questions” (Norwegian Directorate of Education, 2017). Solving problems and asking new questions may suggest a level of criticality. This is not the goal of our thesis, but by virtue of the creative and explorative working methods available for the students, it may still serve to expand their repertoire of response methods, which could later be employed for critical purposes.

The English subject has a section titled “Interdisciplinary topics”, where one can find “Health and life skills” and “Democracy and citizenship”. “Health and life skills” advocates for certain abilities students are required to have, such as the ability to express opinions, experiences, thoughts, and feelings, orally and through written text. These elements lie at the centre of what this study has students do in a classroom setting. Students work through their

own thoughts and feelings when working with the text and get the opportunity to express themselves by creating and sharing their productions (Ministry of education and research, 2020). “Democracy and citizenship” mentions that one has to make students aware that one’s worldview is culturally dependent, and that students, by learning English, can “experience different societies and cultures by communicating with others around the world, regardless of linguistic or cultural background”, which “can open for new ways to interpret the world, and promote curiosity and engagement and help to prevent prejudices” (Ministry of education and research, 2020). “Culture” can be understood in many ways. In the case of this thesis, culture refers to the background assumptions that the students have acquired from participating in social life, that they draw from when engaging with *Rumpelstiltskin*. The student-produced works that will be analysed and discussed later reveal that the students draw from their own genius as well as the culture in which they are, and continue to be, socialised in when asked to describe Rumpelstiltskin’s appearance and behaviour. Frequent representations of already existing ideas such as elves, trolls and dwarves show that the students’ view is influenced by pop culture. This study seeks to encourage students to create and share something with personal flair, which is not limited to original ideas but includes the individual student’s culturally-dependent assumptions, as these are essential in shaping the foundation for the individual’s understanding. As will be explored in further detail in later sections, this aligns with reader response theory, as the theory values the reader’s pre-established knowledge and experiences in relation to the reader’s interpretation of a text.

We consulted the benchmarks in the English subject before choosing 7th grade as the target group for our project. We thought that it could be smart to look at benchmarks of earlier years, as they are still ones that should be learnt. After year 4, students are supposed to be able to talk about the content of different types of text, talk about their own and others’ feelings and needs, and ‘write simple texts’ about their opinions and thoughts (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2020). For this study, students became more familiar with fairy tales, and how they could create creative works and express themselves in relation to a fairy tale. In the benchmarks for English after year 7, the word “reliability” appears for the first time. It asks students to “talk about the reliability of various sources...” (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2020). This is a process that students have engaged in intuitively. The exercises innately require students to consider motivations and potential ulterior motives of characters in the tale. For example, when asked who the villain is, or if there is one, students need to consider the (in)actions of characters. The benchmarks for year

7 also mention roleplay. This is an option that this study provides students with through in-role interviews where they take turns playing Rumpelstiltskin. Other benchmarks reveal that students are expected to have reached a higher level of oral and written English after having finished year 7 (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2020). While we do not claim that *Rumpelstiltskin* cannot be used with younger students, a more advanced level of English allows the students to express their opinions cohesively and in-depth, which we believe is necessary for addressing the more nuanced aspects of the fairy tale and enabling critical response.

While it is of great importance for Norwegian educators to work within the lines of the curriculum, the design of LK20 has drawn some criticism. According to Svein-Erik Andreassen and Tom Tiller (2021), LK20 has many issues when it comes to ambiguity and (a lack of) specificity. As an example of this, they point to the confusing nature of the benchmarks. By operating with benchmarks (kompetansemål), rather than knowledge aims (kunnskapsmål), the curriculum is asking educators to partake in a very complex undertaking, with it being more challenging to evaluate benchmarks versus knowledge, since benchmarks are based on competency. The large majority of LK20 benchmarks can be “loosely evaluated” (vurderbarhet), but not “measured” (målbarhet) (Andreassen & Tiller, 2021, pp. 141-142). It stands to reason that this can make it more difficult to determine how individuals within the class perform. As seen above, this thesis aligns itself with certain benchmarks. We can see how the challenges outlined by Andreassen and Tiller are indeed challenges, but what might be a negative in some instances can be positive in another. This thesis benefits from the open-ended nature of the benchmarks.

For example, one of the benchmarks mentioned above states that students are required to talk about the feelings and needs of themselves and others. How would an educator measure the success of such an activity when giving a final grade? For the current thesis, the goal is to make students share their authentic responses, which, if authentic, should account for their own feelings. In our mind, there is no bad way to do this, none that shows a lower level of competency, assuming they allow themselves to be authentic. Determining the reliability of works is another benchmark employed in this thesis. When attempting to evaluate such a competency, how does the educator determine how capable the student is? Whether something is reliable can depend on a variety of factors, none of which the benchmark in question highlights. For this thesis, students are innately and intuitively challenged to consider

the reliability (motives, motivations, etc) of characters as they formulate their authentic response. This can be observed in the answers they provide and the content they produce, as there is significant variation from student to student, suggesting that they have reflected on characters in different ways. In other words, due to the student-centric focus of this thesis, the loose benchmarks serve as freeing rather than inconveniently vague.

There are several things that are important when considering the given research's strength. From the perspective of May Britt Postholm and Dag Ingvar Jacobsen (2018), how your research compares to that of peers within the same research field is of particular importance. When performing research and considering the results, one must look to peers who have performed similar research to judge whether the results are consistent. If one's results are inconsistent with earlier results in the field, one must ask why or how it has come to be. In the work with this thesis, we have read a considerable amount of literature that attempts similar classroom practice. Below, we will reference parts of this literature to showcase some of the work that has been done in the field, and how our thesis compares.

Brett Elizabeth Blake's research shares similarities to the current thesis. She employs reader response and believes in the importance of Louise Rosenblatt's transactional theory. She found that students get bored responding to typical classroom literature. For this reason, the students are given the opportunity to produce their own works, then respond to these works. This created texts that were far more relevant for the students and yielded responses that reflected society around them. She called this "critical reader response" (1998). Our thesis shares common ground through reader response and the transactional theory, as well as opportunities for responding to the work of other students through sharing (though less of a focal point in our work). The current thesis differs in that it employs a fairy tale as the key object of response, and the utilization of critical expressionism for the purpose of providing creative and motivational options.

Similar to ourselves and Blake, Larry Anderson (1991) also employs reader response theory. In his teaching, however, the purpose serves a stricter academic goal. He describes an introductory literature lecture for college students in which he had the students read Irving's "The Stout Gentleman" and write a response to the text. He explores the pre-established assumptions, values and biases that are revealed in the students' responses and discusses these with the students. The study aims to argue that it is beneficial for the students to use their initial responses as a starting point for developing an academic argument. Anderson states that

he is using a rhetorical approach to incorporate reader response theory in his teaching. He lectures his students about the rhetorical approach, which assumes that discourse is never context-free nor random, meaning that one must consider discourse a social phenomenon in which all language is purposeful.

In the lessons on *Rumpelstiltskin*, the students are encouraged to respond to the text in other ways than by writing, whereas Anderson does not provide his students with other options. The authentic response that our lessons seek to promote is dependent on the student's expression of their pre-established assumptions, values and biases. For Anderson, this response is valued but considered a stepping-stone to an academic essay. The level of difficulty is increased with Anderson explaining the rhetorical approach to his students, increasing the focus on critical literacy. Most of the differences are understandable due to the age of our respective groups of students.

Nazanin Biglari and Majid Farahian (2017) differ from ourselves, as well as Blake and Anderson, through their usage of reader responses for predominantly language learning purposes. These include reading comprehension, vocabulary retention and test anxiety for adult EFL learners through the works *Gulliver's Travels* and *Little Women*. Their statistical evidence did not indicate a significant improvement in reading comprehension or vocabulary retention but did suggest a strong positive correlation between reader response and reduced test anxiety (Biglari & Farahian, 2017). Our thesis and this one shares the fact that they are not performed with native learners, and both employ the reader response method. They differ in that their thesis has more measurable results and assesses language learning. Our thesis shifts the focus from language learning to the facilitation of authentic response as its key component, focusing on creativity through critical expressionism and fairy tales with younger learners. In the same vein, Young Ju Lee (2020) also seeks to encourage student responses. She does not utilize reader response explicitly, but rather a more critical approach through the comparison of four different versions of "Cinderella". While it does not explicitly work with reader response theory, it does encourage students to share their responses to the tales, and write reflections and their own versions of the tale. This takes place with 8-10 year old EFL learners in South Korea.

The final article we will look at comes from Camea L. Davis and Lauren M. Hall. They have students perform spoken word poetry in opposing racism (Davis and Hall, 2020). The goal of the described project is to create awareness surrounding racial injustice and promote activism.

This has students partake in discussions with their authentic responses. While we also offered poetry as one of our alternative response methods, a key difference is that Davis and Hall (2020) encourage explicit activism and a racial focus. We do, however, believe that critical expressionism has potential for activist purposes. This will be brought up anew in section 7.1, “suggestions for further research,” as this topic deserves a study of its own.

2. Fairy tales

This thesis explores how to use fairy tales to promote the development of authentic response through creative expression. The following section examines the key elements that make fairy tales an appropriate and beneficial choice for Norwegian year 7 students. The section then explains why *Rumpelstiltskin* is an ideal fairy tale to use in the classroom.

2.1 Why fairy tales?

There are several advantages to using Fairy tales as classroom texts. Fairy tales are particularly useful for language teaching, as they may be utilized in ways that enhance the students’ linguistic skills – reading, writing, speaking and listening (Kaliambou, 2019). Another benefit of using fairy tales as a classroom text is that fairy tales contain certain cross-culturally valid themes and conventions, such as the well-established opening and ending lines of fairy tales (“once upon a time” and “they lived happily ever after”), the existence of a “hero”, and the “fairy tale numbers” (3, 7, 12) (Bland, 2013). These conventions may contribute in providing opportunities for creative and imaginative student productions, as they give the story elements of predictability, which assists the students’ understanding so that they may focus on producing rather than translating. Fairy tales also provide the readers with an approximately equal foundation for interpreting the tale, as no reader is likely to be significantly more knowledgeable of the tale or able to relate to the setting to a greater extent than other readers. Other arguments that promote the use of fairy tales in the classroom are similar to the arguments made by Jessica Allen Hanssen and Ken Hanssen in relation to the use of fantasy literature. Fantasy literature is popular among young readers as it allows the reader to use their imagination as well as relate to characters and plot in a world that does not exist (Hanssen and Hanssen, 2013). Fairy tales also take place in storyworlds, which give the reader the same creative freedom and invites self-exploration in a context that is engaging, but still sees the reader benefit from the comfort and safety afforded by a separation of fiction and reality.

2.2 Rumpelstiltskin

This section addresses the history, tropes and plot elements of *Rumpelstiltskin*, and why we have chosen *Rumpelstiltskin* for this project. The tale dates back to the 16th century at the least and is thought to be of predominantly European descent (Carruthers, 2016). The tale of *Rumpelstiltskin* has many different versions, but in the interest of keeping our discussion concise, we will look briefly at but a handful of them. We will be using Howard Wight Marshall (1973) as our source for these editions. They are:

“Tom Tit Tot” (English)

“Whuppity Stoorie” (Scottish)

“The Lazy Wife” (English)

“King Olav, Master Builder of Seljord Church” (Norwegian)

“Purzinigele” (German)

“The Little Devil in the Forest” (French)

“Straw into Gold” (American)

Marshall notes the undeniable similarities between the different works, despite their differing locations. For example, in all of the presented versions of the tale, there is a woman spinning. This was a common activity for women to do at that time in history. The only exception among the ones selected is the Norwegian version, which centres around King Olav. Marshall further notes that all the selected versions have a “demon” who is supposedly very clever. These include fairies, trolls, dwarfs, devils and so on. In a similar way, deals are always struck with this creature for the purpose of solving something of immediate concern, followed by an “escape clause” through guessing their name. This name guessing game is what makes *Rumpelstiltskin* and the stories referenced above “Type 500” fairy tales (Marshall, 1978). In explaining the frequent occurrences of all these elements, Marshall references Edward Clodd, who says that “The fundamental idea about the core of certain stories is explained by the fact that at corresponding levels of culture the human mind accounts for the same things in much the same way. Ideas are universal; incidents are local” (Clodd, 1898, as cited in Marshall, 1978). Through these universal and local levels that Clodd proposes, we can see how tales transcend global boundaries and root themselves in the local, while remaining recognizable.

The current thesis uses the version by the Brothers Grimm because of the ending, which is unique to this version. The story ends with Rumpelstiltskin “plung[ing] his right foot so deep into the earth that his whole leg went in; and then in rage pull[ing] at his left leg so hard with both hands that he tore himself in two” (Roos, 2022). The goal is for the absurdity and abruptness of the ending to inspire the students to write their own alternative ending, which is one of the activities that the students are to do in relation to the fairy tale. It is worth mentioning that while the version that is used in the classroom is largely the Brothers Grimm version in Roos (2022), Rumpelstiltskin’s song is taken from the Brothers Grimm version as presented by *Stories to Grow by* (2022) (appendix a). The latter is more suitable for a Norwegian year 7 English class because of the language, which is more modern. We have also made some language changes to the version used in relation to this project in the search for a suitable level of difficulty. Some of the changes are inspired by *Stories to Grow by*, whereas some adjustments we have provided ourselves.

The key element that makes *Rumpelstiltskin* a better choice than other fairy tales is that Rumpelstiltskin diverts our eyes and attention onto him, away from stereotypes. When most old fairy tales are brought into modern classrooms for the purpose of analysis or work, the focus quickly lands on stereotypes. The “nasty witch” is often one-dimensional, the “prince and princess” trope privileges royalty, and the “knight and princess” trope paints girls as submissive and waiting, which may promote a hero complex for boys. These stereotypes are problematic and should therefore be addressed when working with fairy tales in which they occur. This would make stereotypes the main focus of work with such tales and leave little room for exploring the depth of the story, and as we do not wish to focus on stereotypes nor ignore obvious stereotypes, we chose to use a fairy tale that does not rely on stereotypical tropes. *Rumpelstiltskin* includes a “damsel in distress” (the miller’s daughter), but the portrayal of Rumpelstiltskin overshadows this trope. Rumpelstiltskin captures the readers’ attention by being a highly ambiguous character. He asks for the child of the miller’s daughter, which might initially seem like a disgusting thing to do, but the pilot lesson for this project partly suggests otherwise. One student seemed positive towards Rumpelstiltskin, and believed he was lonely and just wanted a child to raise for himself. When asked if Rumpelstiltskin had the right to take the miller’s daughter’s child, some students answered yes, since the miller’s daughter had promised to give it to him, thus helping shift blame from Rumpelstiltskin. Others still insisted that one cannot ask for someone’s child. The Brothers Grimm exclusive ending of Rumpelstiltskin tearing in half is also very open, which allows for

myriad responses because of how sudden and drastic it seems. This ambivalence of character makes the fairy tale a perfect fit for our reader response-centric lessons. Promoting authentic response is more naturally facilitated if the subject matter is inherently ambiguous.

A counter-argument of sorts is provided by Jack Zipes. He argues that the strong focus on the name (from researchers) is a big mistake. Zipes believes the act of naming itself, while carrying significance in a variety of ways in history, is not the most important aspect of the tale. He believes instead that there should be far more focus on the “blackmailing” Rumpelstiltskin does of the miller’s daughter. Similarly, he also wishes more focus was put towards the common female profession of spinning at the time (Zipes, 1993). Blackmailing is certainly something that should be addressed when reading *Rumpelstiltskin* together with children. Using *Rumpelstiltskin* in relation to the development of authentic response naturally means engaging with moral questions. Blackmailing was not specifically mentioned, but it was addressed indirectly through questions such as whether Rumpelstiltskin has the right to take the miller’s daughter’s baby. The students were not told by the teachers what is correct in this situation, as that would defeat the purpose of the lessons. One student disapproved of Rumpelstiltskin’s method, telling us that Rumpelstiltskin should not ask the miller’s daughter for any of her belongings, but help her for free because it is a kind thing to do. Others suggested in their worksheet that a baby is not a commodity. *Rumpelstiltskin* provides a good opportunity for discussing morals, and should be used as such with younger children, but this project explores the moral codes that the students have already been taught and the arguments that they are able to form based on these. The act of spinning straw is relevant as a topic for discussion if one is focusing on the fairy tale in a historical context, but that is not a priority in these lessons as it holds little relevance for the development of authentic response.

3. Theoretical background

The current section presents the theories that constitute the theoretical foundation for this thesis. The thesis mainly depends on the theories of reader response and critical expressionism, as it seeks to answer the MRQ, “How can a combination of reader response theory and critical expressionism promote the development of authentic response when working with fairy tales in the Norwegian year 7 English classroom?”

Reader response theory is a textual approach that is transactional in the sense that it considers the act of reading to be an interaction between reader and text (Holland, 1986; Iser; 1978;

Rosenblatt, 1938/1956). The reader's interests, personality and past experiences influence their interpretation of the text, and since each individual reader is unique in these aspects, there cannot be one, single correct interpretation of a text (Rosenblatt, 1938). Rosenblatt (1938) claims that children are not encouraged to read for pleasure in school as the lack of a correct answer promotes learning that cannot easily be measured. As a result, children often automatically ignore their own response to a text in favour of focusing on the factual, which is easily measurable and has become familiar, such as theme, year, author, etc. (Rosenblatt, 1956). Our experiences suggest that children spend more time reading for pleasure now than earlier, as it has become more normal that the teachers implement "lesekvart" – a 15-minute session for the children to read in a self-selected book – as part of their teaching, but we have not yet experienced that the children are encouraged to reflect on their reading. We believe that this is unfortunate, as the opportunity to reflect on one's personal response invites to self-exploration. Rosenblatt elaborates that working on one's own interpretation means pondering "what in this book, and in me, cause this response" (Rosenblatt, 1956).

The current thesis seeks to promote the use of reader response, which is an innovation following New Criticism. The thesis takes interest in the way that reader response theory views reader, author and text, and thus it is natural to make a comparison to the expectations that New Criticism sets to the same components. A key characteristic of New Criticism was its rejection of the author as a significant piece for understanding a text. One of the most influential New Critics was I. A. Richards, who advocated for Practical Criticism, which is a textual approach within New Criticism that encourages reading a text isolated from its author and context (West, 2017). The inspiration behind Richards' *Practical Criticism: A Study of Literary Judgment* (1929), and presumably Practical Criticism as a concept, was a psychological experiment that Richards conducted in 1923, in which he introduced students to a variety of poems, withholding the author and context, to elicit a response to the text itself. Richards was shocked that the responses varied as greatly as they did, and opted to "develop a typology that could account for why people respond to the same object in different ways, and why people seemed to vary so wildly in their aesthetic judgment and 'misinterpret' (Richards, 1929, p. 310) these short stretches of text; and, finally, to put forward practical solutions to counter such misjudgements and misinterpretations" (West, 2017, p. 90-91). Although Richards used the poems as bait in his experiment, his idea that a text can be "misjudged" and "misinterpreted" suggests that he considers the text to be a self-contained piece for which there is a correct interpretation that the reader must seek to acquire. This stands in stark

contrast to Rosenblatt's later idea that the text is simply "ink-spots on paper" until the reader interacts with it (Rosenblatt, 1956, p.66). The fact that Richards considers the text detached from its author and its reader leaves us questioning who is responsible for determining the "correct" interpretation that is implied.

Other influential figures within New Criticism are William K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley, who share the view of Richards when it comes to the level of importance applied to the author. They state that "the design or intention of the author is neither available nor desirable as a standard for judging the success of a work of literary art" (Wimsatt and Beardsley, 1946, p. 468). Wimsatt and Beardsley believe that the poem detaches from its creator upon being released to the world, which makes the poem autonomous and the creator's initial intention irrelevant. They call this "The Intentional Fallacy" (Wimsatt and Beardsley, 1946). A successful work reveals what the author tried to do, and thus, if a reader feels the need to decipher a possible author intention outside of the poem, the implication is that the poem is unsuccessful (Wimsatt and Beardsley, 1946). This indicates that the only author intention one should consider is the intention that in this context has become a given; to create a successful, autonomous work: "The poem is not the critic's own and not the author's", write Wimsatt and Beardsley (1946, p. 470). Not only does the poem not belong to its creator, but it also does not belong to the critic, "[It] belongs to the public" (Wimsatt and Beardsley, 1946, p. 470). The non-critics that constitute the public may interpret the poem in whichever way they wish, but their interpretation would then be considered psychology rather than criticism, which is outside of the field of New Criticism (Wimsatt and Beardsley, 1946, 476). These ideas do not align with the mindset of Richards, as he takes the poem as his own by claiming the right to decide that his students' psychological engagement with the poems are misinterpretations. We question Wimsatt and Beardsley's idea that the poem does not belong to the critic, as we believe that the critic would need to apply their personal interpretation as foundation for their critique. We therefore support Wolfgang Iser's (1978) claim that even the staunchest supporters of literary works as autonomous have their own unique responses to literature.

Our view of New Criticism is supported by John Paul Russo, who describes the movement as "inconsistent and sometimes confused [...]", and states that the "differences among its exponents were possibly greater than the similarities" (Russo, 1988, p. 199). Even though Russo comments on the New Criticism of the 1950's, and even though the golden age of New

Criticism was during the mid-twentieth century, we deem the critique to be relevant, as there are twenty-first century movements that have taken inspiration from New Criticism - movements that constitute what Jeffrey R. Di Leo calls New New Criticism (Di Leo, 2020). This thesis will not explore New New Criticism further as reader response theory is its main focus, but it is worth mentioning New New Criticism to show why it is relevant to consider New Criticism when suggesting using reader response instead, which is the goal of the current thesis.

Rosenblatt and reader response theory are not without critics, and we would like to address some of that criticism here. Blake believes that reader response is not adequate for addressing the diverse societies we face today: “As instructional practices, response-oriented approaches often fail to encompass the social complexity of classroom communities with students of varying backgrounds, abilities, and experiences and the possibilities for critical inquiry into literacy practices themselves (Rogers & Soter, 1997, as cited in Blake, 1998, p. 238). To exemplify this, she references an experience she had with an African-American girl who said that “everything I read is about white people and boys?” (Blake, 1998, p. 238). This creates an issue where students are not seeing sufficient representation in the works that they read. Blake is still in favour of Rosenblatt’s transactional theory, but believes it has to be expanded to address modern societal diversity (Blake, 1998). She argues that in the diverse classrooms of today, many students have not been exposed to literary works that connect with them. For this reason, she believes that students responding to each other’s texts is a natural starting point, as they (the texts) “...reflect the student’ own ideologies and stances” (Blake, 1998, p. 239). During the classroom practice that was conducted in relation to this thesis, the vast majority of students were positive to a reader response approach. Similarly to Blake, we gave the students the opportunity to respond to each other’s works, but the primary focus was on a single chosen text. The weaknesses Blake identifies in the reader response method are indeed of legitimate concern, but there are still ways to account for them. Blake mentions that the students responding to their own texts is a starting point. Our project does not conflict with her claims, as much as it finds fairy tales to be a viable starting point as well.

Reader response may be associated with Stanley Fish, the creator of the interpretive community, which is a concept that resides within the theory of reader response. An interpretive community is a community in which all members share a way of thinking. This shared mindset may be based on similar values, procedures, purposes, goals, etc. (Fish, 1980).

Such a community is formed, in the words of Fish, "if the understanding of the people in question are informed by the same notions of what counts as a fact, of what is central, peripheral, and worthy of being noticed - in short, by the same interpretive principles-the agreement between them will be assured, and its source will not be a text that enforces its own perception but a way of perceiving that results on the emergence to those who share it" (Fish, 1980, p. 337). Although the works created by the students who participated in this project vary greatly, there are some similarities in the students' interpretations of *Rumpelstiltskin* due to their shared ground in pop culture. While we did not intend for the students to share one interpretation, it is the requirement for Fish's interpretive community. We agree with Erie Martha Roberts' (2006) concern that this requirement ultimately gives the one interpretation a stronger standing and creates an echo chamber and a power dynamic similar to the dynamic in religious groups and cults. Although Fish's intention is to encourage the reader to create meaning, he ends up giving this power to the interpretive community, in which a social hierarchy determines whose interpretation the community promotes (Roberts, 2006). The students' exposure to and experiences within pop culture could lay the foundation for an interpretive community, but so could the shared social norms and rules within a classroom. Roberts argues that the teacher holds power in the classroom and that the smallest indication of the teacher's own interpretation therefore may be perceived by students as the superior interpretation. We became acutely aware of this same hierarchical structure when going into our classroom teaching for this project and had to word ourselves carefully and give ample opportunity for the students to "communicate" with their work, to avoid a prominent hierarchy. Some smaller interpretive communities naturally formed as students conversed about their work, but they were given little to no significant hierarchical positioning among peers.

One of the practical elements of this thesis is inspired by Norman Holland's work as documented in a 1986 thesis. Holland (1986) set out to test a group of professors by having them read a poem and then answer questions that were designed in a manner that sees their level of abstraction increase with each subsequent question. The first two questions were concrete and were therefore largely answered in a similar manner by the professors. The next three questions saw increased variety in answers, due to the increased abstraction level of the questions which demanded the professors to apply more of their imagination, assumptions and personal opinions to their answers. We use the same manner of questioning in the worksheet that we created for the students, as we believe the gradually increased abstraction

can be utilized as a method for scaffolding the development of authentic response. Rosenblatt (1938) suggests that children are accustomed to doing schoolwork that gives easily measurable results, and thus the first questions, to which the answers may be found in the text, are likely to provide a comfortable starting point for the students. Each subsequent question offers less guidance, which gradually challenges the students to develop an authentic response of their own. These authentic responses are not intuitively measurable for a teacher. For this reason, we employ relevance theory at certain points, which aids us in understanding the work the students did. Relevance theory seeks to understand how communication functions. For example, it presents the idea of “weak” and “strong” communication. The former describes “vague” communication that leaves much up to the reader, while the latter communicates strongly, thus making intention clear to the recipient. This is not a binary, but a matter of degree (Wilson, 2012). In the case of the worksheet, knowledge of relevance theory helps us gain an understanding of how students may have arrived at their answers, which grow increasingly diverse due to the increasingly abstract (or “weakly communicated”) questions.

Following the work with the worksheet, the participating students were to create a product from the perspective of Rumpelstiltskin, which is an activity that was inspired by Glenn DeVoogd and Maureen McLaughlin’s critical expressionism. DeVoogd and McLaughlin argue that developing a personal response entails working in a creative manner. To better understand critical expressionism, we need to understand reading from a critical perspective, which DeVoogd and McLaughlin describe as “...thinking beyond the text to understand issues such as why the author wrote about a particular topic, wrote from a particular perspective, or chose to include some ideas about the topic and exclude others” (2020, p. 587). Critical reading may be linked to reader response theory due to critical reading requiring the reader to reflect on the text, and reader response theory emphasising the role of the reader as an active meaning-maker in the interaction with text (Holland, 1986; Iser; 1978; Rosenblatt, 1938/1956). DeVoogd and McLaughlin’s experience is that discussion is often the only method that is utilized for reflecting after one’s interaction with the text. They believe it is important to employ different ways of responding, such as through song, multimodal texts, and various forms of art and drama activities. Critical expressionism is the term they use when referring to these varied and critical response methods. This study seeks to elicit students’ reader responses through critical expressions in the form of poems, diary entries, in-role interviews, comics and social media threads, which are all intended to aid students’

development of authentic response. Critical expressionism has not garnered much traction in English education circles, but throughout this thesis we aim to inspire more work with the ideas that the theory presents.

4. Methodology

In the following section we go through the different data collection methods that were utilized and relevant classroom context, while simultaneously showcasing the exercises the students partook in. This will be followed by ties to phenomenology and hermeneutics with the intention of explaining the purpose and effect of the choices we made.

The classroom practice for this research was separated into three lessons of 60 minutes (appendix B), 55 minutes (appendix C), and 60 minutes (appendix D) respectively. Each lesson was conducted twice, with two different groups of students. 41 of the 49 students who participated consented to their data being used in this project, and thus the remaining 8 will not be included in the data. The students were 7th graders attending the same school. The two groups normally have the same teacher in the English subject. The first lesson was taught by the two of us, whereas the second and third lessons were taught by just one of us due to a bout of illness. We conducted the three lessons and concluded the gathering of data within the span of a week at the end of March 2022.

The very first thing we did was read *Rumpelstiltskin* for the students. The full version of the tale can be found in the appendix. We recommend reading this as it will provide context to the exercises we will be describing. The first of these exercises that followed the reading was a worksheet (appendix E). The questions on the worksheet are as follows:

1. What does the little man receive from the miller's daughter as payment for spinning straw into gold? Write a full sentence.
2. The miller's daughter cries when she has to spin straw into gold. Why is that? Write a full sentence.
3. Does Rumpelstiltskin have the right to take the miller's daughter's baby? Please write why/why not in a full sentence.
4. Is there a bad person in the story? If yes, who is it? Is there more than one? Explain your choice in a full sentence

5. Does the story have a happy ending? Please write why/ why not in a full sentence.

6. What does Rumpelstiltskin look like (clothing, body, face, hair, etc...) ?

7. Draw Rumpelstiltskin on the back of this paper.

These questions were intended to help scaffold the students' development of authentic response by using questions that gradually increase their level of abstraction. This was inspired by Holland (1986), who had structured questions that gradually increased their level of abstraction.

The fairy tale reading and the worksheet constituted the first lesson. In the second lesson, the students were given an information sheet (appendix F) which presented them with five different exercises which have them produce a work that bases itself upon the perspective of Rumpelstiltskin. The available exercises were poem writing, comic creation, writing a diary entry, creating a social media thread and performing in-role interviews. Once they finished an exercise, they would move on to another. For the third and final lesson, students were asked to write an alternative ending for the tale. The first class could only do this through writing, while the second one had the option of making a comic as well. This change was made after realizing that the students who continued their work from the lesson before were allowed to make comics (assuming it was their chosen mode for their work in lesson two), which some deemed unfair. Students being allowed to continue their work from lesson two in lesson three, meant that only 19 of 41 students made an alternative ending. This was still sufficient to get valuable data, which will be delved into further in the discussion section.

The final thing we had students do was answer a questionnaire (appendix G) towards the end of the third lesson. The questions used can be found below.

1. How did you like working with *Rumpelstiltskin*?

2. What could have been better?

3. Did you find these lessons to be challenging, just right or too difficult?

4. What did you enjoy the most about working with *Rumpelstiltskin*?

5. Are there other fairy tales you would like to work with in the same way? If so, which fairy tale(s)?

6. Do you like sharing your opinions in the classroom?

It is worth noting that we made a mistake on the third question. It was intended to say something along the lines of “Did you find these lessons to be easy, just right or too difficult”, but we added “challenging” instead of “easy.” Students still managed the question fine, however, when we explained what was intended. This questionnaire was intended to gather some overall opinions, both for the sake of our data collection, but also to prompt students to summarize their thoughts to themselves.

We used two data collection methods that did not rely on student productions, those were observation and a semi-structured interview with their teacher. Observation is the most fundamental method for gathering qualitative data as it requires the observer to use their senses to perceive and understand natural situations as they unfold (Postholm and Jacobsen, 2018). The lessons were taught by both of us, thus making us both active observers. The classes’ homeroom teacher was present during the lessons but acted predominantly as a passive observer. Having a passive observer added important nuance to the analysis of the work that happened in the classroom, as they could explain student performance in certain areas that were not obvious to us as active observers. Postholm and Jacobsen explain that although observations are considered important and trustworthy, a researcher must use supplementary data collection methods to avoid results that are solely based on their subjectivity and assumptions (Postholm and Jacobsen, 2018). For our approach, observation is only part of a larger set of data collection methods, such as the aforementioned worksheet, student productions and questionnaire.

The final method for gathering data that we employed, was that of a semi-structured interview (see appendix H for interview guide). Postholm and Jacobsen (2018) suggest that using an interview in combination with observation can help add an extra level of contextualization. The interview was semi-structured, which means that the researcher has prepared the topic and some questions beforehand but may also ask questions as they occur to them during the interview (Postholm and Jacobsen, 2018). The reason why this type of interview was chosen for this study is that a structured interview often limits the interviewee’s options for answering and does not allow for improvisation (Postholm and Jacobsen, 2018). This creates a formal atmosphere that may discourage the interviewee from sharing their experiences, thus making it difficult to gather the qualitative data that this study seeks to obtain. The interview was conducted after the last lesson of the classroom practice so that the teacher would be able

to share their observations from all lessons. The interview was included as a data collection method for this study due to the idea that insight into the teacher's observations and pre-existing knowledge of the students could aid in contextualizing the researchers' observations in the classroom, as well as their interpretation of student work and students' questionnaire answers.

Certain changes were made based on a pilot lesson leading up to the main lessons. The goal of this pilot lesson was to identify potential weaknesses of the classroom practice that should be addressed to ensure a good experience for the students and valuable data for us. Drawing was cut as a response method from the second lesson and moved to the first lesson as part of the worksheet, since it acted as a natural follow-up to them describing Rumpelstiltskin.

Additionally, we also deemed comics to adequately replace drawing as a response method for the second lesson. Writing was cut from the second lesson altogether due to other activities offering enough writing options by themselves. In-role interview proved challenging when situated in a single scene, and was therefore adjusted to encompass the entire tale. The worksheet was also adjusted to say "bad person" instead of "bad guy". We noticed that no one mentioned the girl as the bad guy, which was expected, but we still decided to switch to "bad person" in order to not mistakenly suggest that only "guys" can be bad. The updated version of the question is therefore "Is there a bad person in the story? If yes, who is it? Is there more than one?" The reason why we avoided using the word "villain" was that we did not want the students to seek a stereotypical singular villain whose goal is mass destruction or world domination, but rather to consider the actions of the characters in the story to determine whether they are morally good or bad. The only other change made following the pilot lesson was to our own teaching. We decided to use more English in the main lesson, as 7th grade students proved very capable when we kept reasonable pacing and clear pronunciation. These were all the adjustments we made based on the pilot lesson. We believe the inclusion of a pilot was well worth it, particularly when one considers the size differences between the classes. The pilot lesson class consisted of only 14 students, while the main lesson classes consisted of over 40 students combined. Any issues encountered in the pilot lesson would likely, if unaddressed, create exacerbated problems with more students to monitor. Additionally, it helped reduce the redundancy of certain activities (e.g, drawing overlapping with comics, and writing with poetry and diary writing).

4.1 Phenomenology and hermeneutics

In the following section we will be tying the activities above with phenomenology and hermeneutics as a way of explaining the purpose and effect of choices we made clearer. Section 5 will look at more specific examples and present “deep dives” into the work of select students. This section is intended to ground what we do in phenomenology and hermeneutics, using only brief examples from student produced works.

Phenomenological studies intend to find an understanding for everything that can be experienced through our human consciousness (Postholm and Jacobsen, 2018). Dan Zahavi elaborates on this, explaining that “Rather than focusing on, say, the weight, rarity, or chemical composition of the object, phenomenology is concerned with the way in which the object shows or displays itself, i.e., in how it appears” (Zahavi, 2018, p.2). In the context of the work we had the students do, we are not concerned with grammatical errors, sentence structure, spacing or even story pacing, beyond the extent to which they contribute towards an authentic response and our ability to make inferences of that response. For example, in the discussion section we will showcase a wide array of potential pop culture references the students make. In these instances, the “mechanical” aspects of their writing are not important, but rather how they utilized their pre-existing knowledge to portray something authentic and creative.

Another important idea within phenomenology is that of spatial location in relation to objects. Zahavi (2018) explains that an object can be perceived in different ways based on the individual’s spatial location in relation to the object, which allows for angle and intensity of lighting to influence the individual’s perception. In essence, no matter how you look at an object in your vicinity, there are always parts of it you cannot see. We believe this theory may be applicable to text as well, but instead of angles limiting our ability to gain a full perspective, it is the author. We can only infer what the author is trying to tell us. Even so, humans are quite adept at filling in the blind spots. Zahavi explains that “When we perceive an object, we always experience more than is intuitively presented” (2018, p. 11). So even when we scrutinize every side of a text and (un)knowingly make inferences, we are doing so to fill in for the blind spots we cannot possibly see. This will become very evident in section 5, where we discuss the responses students have made, and attempt to trace certain aspects of their work to pop culture influences.

The phenomenological perspective above may be closely tied to hermeneutics, which Nils Gilje and Harald Grimen (2018) describe as attempts to explain what understanding and interpretation are, how interpretation is possible, and which challenges interpretation of meaningful phenomena present. Gilje and Grimen describe meaningful phenomena as phenomena that present a meaning. They explain how “meaning” can be attributed to human activity (human interaction), in our case a class discussion about *Rumpelstiltskin*, as well as results produced following human activity (such as films and other productions), in our case, student produced work of *Rumpelstiltskin*. We would then consider their productions as meaningful phenomena. These meaningful phenomena produced by the students can, in turn, produce a variety of interpretations in other interpreters. For example, the students have produced many unique alternative endings. It is possible for us to interpret an ending close to how a student envisioned it, but there are societal elements that can affect our ability to do so. An example could be their social circles, interest in pop culture niches and so on. This means that we do not have the same prerequisites to interpret their work in the way that may have been intended. Gilje and Grimen explain this through an example using Plato. He lived in a society significantly different from our own, so understanding his work or manner of writing may require knowledge of the unique intricacies of his time (Grimen & Gilje, 2018, p. 142). In this sense, we are a small-scale example, through potential generational differences, rather than larger historical ones. The historical prerequisites may be better observed in the relationship between the students and *Rumpelstiltskin*, which we believe may have worked to our advantage. *Rumpelstiltskin* is a tale that is hundreds of years old. This gives students a good opportunity to “modernize” aspects of the tale through their responses, making the response more authentically theirs. The best example, which will be delved into further later, is the social media thread. It turned out to be a popular mode of response, where students included and utilized social media features that were entirely unavailable when *Rumpelstiltskin* was made. It allowed characters of the tale to partake in “typical” social media discourse, and post “selfies” and pictures of their belongings. Tying this to the larger hermeneutics perspective, we believe that students have been provided with valuable opportunities for producing meaningful phenomena. These meaningful phenomena may be far removed from their source material in terms of age, but that makes them no less ideal for producing an authentic work in response, if not more effective than using modern literature.

4.2 Research ethics

Before conducting any research, it is essential to be aware of what is ethically acceptable research procedure. This section elaborates on key points within research ethics that were considered in relation to this study. This includes information on the amount of signed consent forms, types of data collected, and ties to the core curriculum to ground and justify the decisions we made.

A researcher might be telling the truth, but from a biased perspective. As researchers, we could be choosing to highlight some findings and ignore other findings that we deem less important. Other researchers might prioritize differently. It is impossible for us to remove ourselves entirely from our research, and a level of bias is therefore inevitable. We attempt to keep our bias to a minimum by questioning the findings, applying several perspectives to them, and making arguments to support the different interpretations of the findings. Frode Nyeng (2012) advises to make careful suggestions rather than bold statements when commenting on fragile findings, and thus it is implied throughout the discussion section that our conclusions are products of our personal interpretation. Some of the data these findings are based upon will take the form of pictures (e.g, drawings, diary entries, poems), whereas other findings are not intuitively captured with pictures (e.g, in-role interviews, and the students' observable engagement). Collecting student data in this manner, through pictures or otherwise, requires students and their parents to sign the NSD form they were given (see appendix I). We received 41 of 49 fully signed consent forms. This meant that eight students had their data collected for "evaluation" (in interest of creating no "otherness"), but did not have this included in the thesis, which they were assured of when we collected it. In addition to the consent form, the teacher and students were given an information form, which also had an informal Norwegian version sent to them ahead of our first meeting.

The information form describes the purpose of the project, matters regarding the participants' personal information and the methods of data collection. The consent form asks whether the guardian/parent consents to their child being subject to each of the data collecting methods that we would be utilizing, whether it would be acceptable for their child's teacher to discuss matters regarding the child with us, and whether it would be acceptable for information about the child to be published in a way that the child could be recognized. The latter is a safety measure as it is unlikely that the students will be recognized, because, as disclosed in the information form, we are using pseudonyms as opposed to the children's real names. The

personal information that is revealed in this thesis is limited to the students' grade, effectively their age (as it is heavily implied by their grade), the number of students in the class and that the students attend school in Norway.

We choose to use safety measures in order to avoid a serious breach of moral principles. If a student should happen to be recognized, and we had not given a warning that this could happen, we would be operating without consent. The guardian/parent might have given consent for their child to participate in the project, but they were not given the opportunity to choose whether to consent to the risk. Lack of consent goes against the moral principle that says all individuals have the right to act independently and autonomously, and the non-consensual reveal of a participant's personal information could put the participant in danger, which goes against the fundamental principle that says the participants' safety must be prioritized over society's need for new knowledge (Nyeng, 2012).

A breach of consent would also be in conflict with the core curriculum. Section 3.5 on "professional environment and school development" asserts that "A teacher is a role model who shall instil confidence and guide the pupils on their journey through the learning path. The teacher is crucial when it comes to creating a learning environment that motivates and helps the pupils to learn and develop. To accomplish this the teacher must show care for each pupil" (Norwegian Directorate of Education, 2017). One could easily imagine that a breach of privacy would have the potential to harm a student's faith in their teacher when it comes to their safety and well-being, not to mention parents' as well. This would be a betrayal of trust and failure in establishing a safe and inspiring learning environment. This is further supported by section 1.1 of the core curriculum, titled "human dignity", which highlights the inviolability of the rights of every person (Norwegian Directorate of Education, 2017). It says students have a right to be treated with dignity and to make their own choices. One may consider a breach of privacy a breach of these rights.

Section 3.5 of the core curriculum also bears relevance in terms of the professional goals of teachers and researchers, how we "reflect on the value choices and development needs, and use research, experience-based knowledge and ethical assessments as the grounds on which to base targeted measures (Norwegian Directorate of Education, 2017). The section acknowledges the importance of school development, which is effectively what our own master's thesis is doing. We have hopes that the current thesis may positively affect classroom practice. As mentioned above, however, there are essential ethical dimensions to

this. We have to put students' well-being above all, and respect their wishes for privacy and discretion, because it is both a right and morally right. To ensure the quality of the measures that we are taking to secure the participants' privacy, we were required to send an application to the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD). This NSD application form was approved, and can be found in the appendix (appendix J).

5. Analysis and discussion of findings

The following section aims to answer the research question “How can a combination of reader response theory and critical expressionism promote the development of authentic response when working with fairy tales in the Norwegian year 7 English classroom?” This will be done through presenting and discussing data collected from two Norwegian 7th grade classrooms. The collected data is of a predominantly qualitative nature.

Before proceeding to this section, we need to clarify our usage of “sic”. The students in these classes do not speak English as their first language, resulting in writing that contains considerable grammatical imperfections. For this reason, we will not follow the custom of adding “sic” after every word when quoting them, but rather at the end of sentences. We believe this is best to ease the reading experience. In the same vein, transcriptions will be provided to aid comprehension.

5.1 Findings

In the upcoming subsections we present the collected data, and discuss it through inferencing, which necessarily introduces the risk of being wrong: “...the communicator’s informative and communicative intentions cannot be decoded, but only non-demonstratively inferred, so that comprehension necessarily takes place at a risk” (Wilson, 2012, p. 4). What is meant by “wrong” and “risk” is that we misinterpret what inspired and informed the students in their work. This “misinterpretation”, however, lends further credence to the overarching reader response idea that the reader is an essential part of interpreting a literary work. This inferencing aids us in spotlighting connections and connotations the students have developed, showing their rich repertoires and subsequently rich creations.

5.1.1 Analysis and discussion of worksheet

The following subsection concerns itself with how the students handled working with the worksheet. Our overall impression is that the majority of students performed well, in the sense that they managed to provide an authentic answer to all the questions. Perhaps most interesting was question six, which asked them to describe Rumpelstiltskin. Most students were able to infer that they were supposed to create him how they imagined him, as there was almost no information about how he looks. As expected, the first two questions had largely the same answers, while subsequent questions received increasingly unique answers as students were required to make more inferences.

To evaluate more concretely how students engaged with these questions, we employ relevance theory, in particular weak versus strong communication. Weak communication leaves much up to the recipient, while strong communication implies more strongly what the author or speaker wants the recipient to derive from their communication. There can be a mix of both, where certain phrasing might suggest something vaguely (weak), while simultaneously suggesting something else confidently (strong) (Wilson, 2012).

The first two questions ask what Rumpelstiltskin received as a reward for spinning the straw into gold, while the second question asks why the miller's daughter cries when she has to spin straw into gold. Their answers to these questions were largely the same, as was expected since the questions were designed to communicate strongly. The other answers are more varied, as there are more potential answers and details one may include or omit. Most students answered these questions in a satisfactory manner, answering what they believed and giving reasonable justification for that belief. This would suggest that questions which are designed to be weak in communication compared to the initial questions, are still strong enough to be manageable for most students.

As an example, the students argued with varied opinions when engaging with the third question, which asks whether Rumpelstiltskin has the right to take the miller's daughter's baby. 19 students answered yes, 17 students answered no, and two students could go either way. All 19 students who answered yes argued that Rumpelstiltskin does have the right to take the baby because the miller's daughter promised it to him. One of these students added "but it's kind of weird" and student 4 wrote "I don't think it's good to give someone's baby but a promise is a promise[sic]". Nine of the 17 students who answered that Rumpelstiltskin

does not have the right to take the baby, argued that it is not his. Student 1 wrote “No, Rumpelstiltskin have not the right to take the miller’s daughter because it’s her child and she can decide wath she want[sic]”. Three of the 17 students argued that Rumpelstiltskin does not have the right to take the baby because the miller’s daughter guessed his name correctly. Two of the 17 commented on the value of a human being, an example being student 5, who wrote “I think he doesn’t have the right to take the daughter because a human being is worth so much”. Student 35 argued no, “because it’s her child and she probably love the child more than anything else in the whole world[sic]”. The remaining two of the 17 students did not specify a reason for why Rumpelstiltskin did not have the right to take the baby. The answers of student 27 and student 36 cannot be placed squarely into one or the other. Student 27 said “I don’t really know if he actually does have the right to even tho she made a promise[sic]”, and student 36 said “you should keep a promise, but she had no choice and its not right to take a baby from someone[sic]”.

The fourth question asks the students to state who the bad person in the story is and provide an explanation for their choice. The question suggests that the story could have more than one bad person. The most frequently mentioned character was the king, who appeared in 25 student-answers in total, as the only bad person or in combination with other characters. The second most popular character was the miller, with 12 mentions. Rumpelstiltskin was mentioned 11 times. The miller’s daughter was the only prominent character that was unmentioned. 13 of the students who voted for the king explained that he is bad because he threatened to kill the miller’s daughter if she could not spin straw into gold. Seven students explained that the king is bad because he is greedy, some elaborated by also including the king’s wish for money and gold. Some students found other reasons to mention the king, for example that he trapped the miller’s daughter (student 9), that he “put the miller’s daughter on a hard test[sic]” (student 34) and that he forced her to do something she didn’t want to do (student 3 and student 45). The students who chose the miller as the bad person did so either because he lied to the king or because he endangered his daughter’s life. The majority of the students who included Rumpelstiltskin in their answer explained that he is bad because he wanted to take the miller’s daughter’s baby. Whereas five students provided this explanation, student 18 said that Rumpelstiltskin is a bad person because he makes unfair deals, student 35 answered that Rumpelstiltskin is bad because he “got mad”, and student 7 states that Rumpelstiltskin is bad because he wanted to experiment on a baby. This is an assumption, as it is mentioned nowhere in the story that Rumpelstiltskin wishes to experiment on the baby.

Student 30 mentioned Rumpelstiltskin in their answer but concluded that he is neither good nor bad: “I think the bad person here is the king and maybe the little man but he is not a bad or good man because he helped her and the king wanted to kill her”. Student 6 answered “I think the miller because he wanted her dead and lied to her”, which is not what happened in the story.

It is possible this misunderstanding is a result of the way the question was communicated. When determining whether the question was appropriate for an individual student, we look at whether their answer suits the question, and if their answer lacked details that one would expect based on the answers given by peers. We typically want to avoid peer comparison, but in this instance, it allows us to see differences and thus more accurately determine if the communication of certain questions might be too weak for some students. If that is the case, there may be potential to tweak the question while maintaining what made it communicate strongly to peers. In this case, we can assume that the communication was not the problem. The student's answer is similar to peers' answers when it comes to detail and aligns with the question asked in the sense that it explains why someone is a bad person. It may be assumed that student 6 did not pay enough attention to the reading of the fairy tale, which led to the student confusing the characters.

The fifth question asks whether the story has a happy ending. 30 students thought it had a happy ending, whereas four students answered that it did not. Four students argued that the ending was both happy and unhappy. 21 of the 30 students who thought that the story ended happily said so because the miller's daughter could keep her child. Five students included the death of Rumpelstiltskin in their argument for a happy ending, which is interesting considering that the only two students who provided an explanation for the story having an unhappy ending, referred to Rumpelstiltskin's death as the reason. Three students argued that it is a happy ending because the miller's daughter and/or her baby survives. Student 23 and student 24 said it is a happy ending because family is more important than gold, whereas another student said it is a happy ending because the miller's daughter is not poor. Student 3 answered “It is a happy ending the queen was happy when she heard the name[sic]”. Another student also argued that the ending is happy because the queen knows Rumpelstiltskin's name. As for the students who argued that the ending can be considered both happy and unhappy, one student answered that the ending is good for everyone except Rumpelstiltskin, and two students answered that it ends happily for the queen, who can keep her child, but

unhappily for Rumpelstiltskin, who dies. Student 28 answered “i guess she got to keep her child but also I didn’t want Rumpelstiltskin to be killed[sic]”.

For the sixth question, the students were asked what Rumpelstiltskin looks like. Aside from referring to Rumpelstiltskin as “the little man”, the tale provides no description of his appearance. The majority of the students caught on to the fact that no real description was given, thus reasoning for the need to use their imagination. Some students associated Rumpelstiltskin with other characters and fantasy creatures (e.g. dwarf, leprechaun, Rumpelstiltskin from the *Shrek* franchise), while others created humanoid characters that were unrecognizable to us. Some students seem to have had a more difficult time. Student 6 said “Im not gunna draw him because it isn’t any picture[sic]”. The “draw” mentioned by student 6 is in reference to the follow-up task, which asks them to provide a drawing. This student provided what one might call a joke drawing, a character called “penisman”, which looked the part. Another type of student answer was the borrowing of the tale’s description, “little man”, as seen in the answer by student 34: “Rumpelstiltskin is short/little I think”. Whether the student provided no description, such as student 6, or borrowed what little the tale provided, such as student 34, this is likely a case of the question being too abstract. In this case, the question is a blend of strong and weak communication. It is strong in the sense that the students know well what the author intends for them to do (describe Rumpelstiltskin), but also (deliberately) weak by offering little to no descriptions to base their answers upon.

The question may have communicated too weakly for this student, but this too, could be valuable practice. The goal is to facilitate an authentic response in students by giving them the room to develop that response. The worksheet is intended to scaffold this development with questions that gradually increase in abstraction. Vygotsky’s theory of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) may be used to explain how the students reacted towards the level of difficulty presented by the different questions. ZPD is based on the idea that one learns to do a task in interaction with others before one is able to complete a similar task alone, and the idea that individuals must receive guidance from a more knowledgeable other in order to obtain knowledge that will eventually enable them to complete the task on their own (Imsen, 2014, p.192). An individual’s zone of proximal development is to be found between the limit for what the individual manages to do on their own and the limit for what they manage to do with help from others (Imsen, 2014, p.192). Based on our data, most students’ placement within this model falls further and further away from the individual in centrum, and towards their

limit for what they can manage without receiving help, as the abstraction, and subsequent difficulty, of the questions increase. The vast majority of students provided the same answer for the first two questions, which implies strong communication and a relatively central placement in the proximal development model. For questions three, four, five and six, the communication is not nearly as strong as the first two, which leads students unfamiliar with such abstract questions to fall further out in the proximal development model. Students who struggle with any of these questions, such as 6 and 34 when working with question six, might have benefitted from closer assistance when approaching these questions. In the case with authentic response, however, it is a challenge to provide guidance without leading the students towards a specific answer, and thus the guidance the students received during the in-pair work with the worksheet was mainly the input from their classmate. As outsiders, we had to trust that the pre-established seating arrangement in the classroom was beneficial. It is, however, not always doable to have every student seated next to a classmate who is able to contribute positively to their learning. The best way for students such as students 6 and 34 to learn to engage with abstract questions is therefore that the teacher includes similar questions occasionally in their teaching, so that the students become familiar with the level of abstractness and know what is expected of them. Most students, however, provided ample description, suggesting that the questions were manageable for almost all the students. Even so, we have to keep in mind that this is no instant process. Developing an authentic response consistently and to increasingly more abstract questions can be challenging, seeing as many are simply not used to working with these types of questions.

5.1.2 Creating a product from Rumpelstiltskin's perspective

In the below section we want to look more closely at the individual working methods the students had available to them and discuss how they work in relation to the key theories our thesis bases itself upon. Many of the response methods here will be addressed further in a later section where we do a “deep-dive” into the works of select students.

5.1.2a Comics

Comics were discussed simultaneously through lesson two and lesson three. The reason for this is that usage of comics in both lessons told us many of the same things. We would say that the endings produced by those who chose writing were of an overall higher standard than those who chose comics. This might suggest that comics, while certainly usable, have some

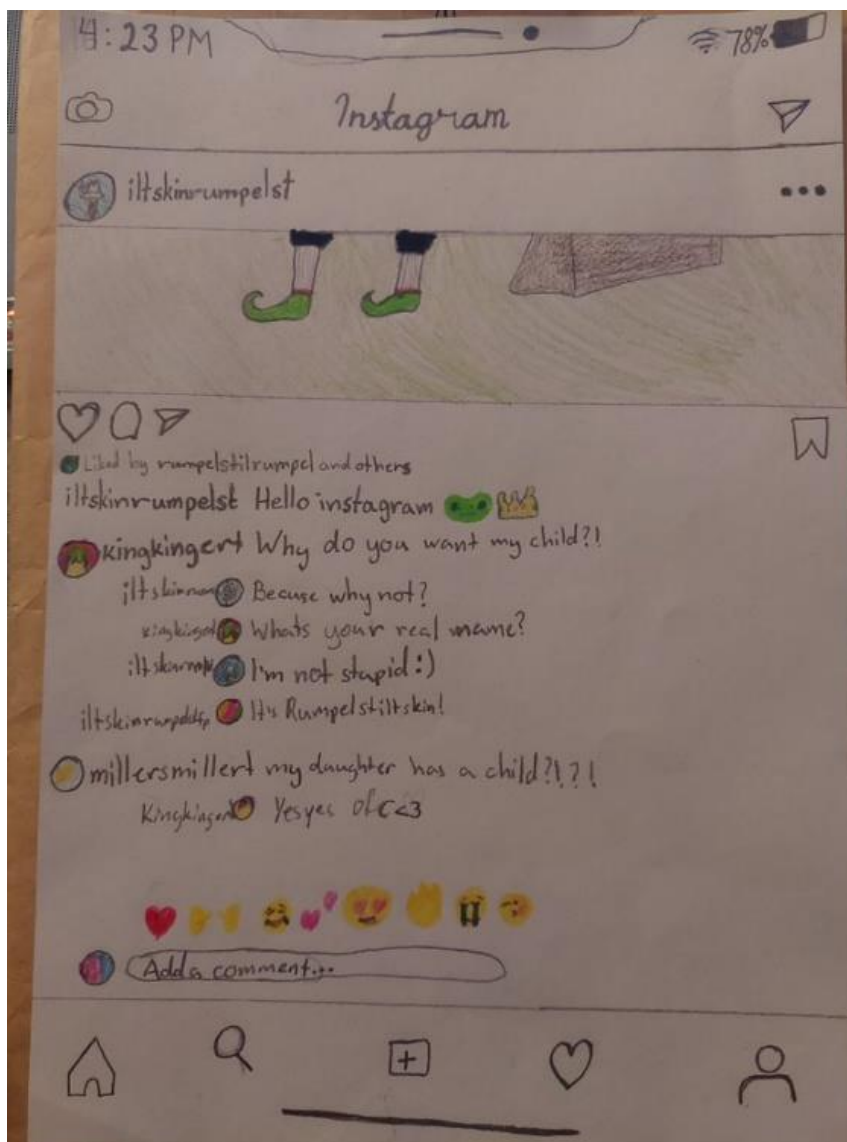
mechanics to them that students are less skilled at employing, perhaps owing to a lack of experience. Another potential explanation would be that the most skilled “storytellers” were the ones who chose to write. The potential challenge using comics might be better seen if we look to the second lesson. In this lesson, students were to present certain scenes from the perspective of Rumpelstiltskin. Comics were among the available options for this exercise. Many students who chose this method had difficulty utilizing the appropriate “bubbles” the information sheet showed them (e.g speech bubbles, thought bubbles, narrative bubbles), instead always opting for a basic speech bubble. This makes the narrative and characters rather flat, as there is little “setting the scene” or inner monologues.

There were also very few students capable of dividing the panels in a creative manner. One class was shown a very basic example of what panel division could look like (six equal sized squares, easily done with a ruler), while the other class was shown no example at all. The outcome was largely the same, with students defaulting to very proportionate and intuitively simple panel divisions. When you combine this with a lack of varied speech bubbles and the fact that you need to be very selective with wording due to limited space, you have a medium that is deceptively difficult, albeit fun and motivating for many. Comics may be best employed if students have been taught prior how to create them. The teacher must also consider whether their students know how to read a comic. Our experience of using comics with students who were unfamiliar with how to read comics taught us that this is not a skill that can be taken for granted. It would stand to reason that it is difficult to make a quality comic if you are unsure of how to read one. This difficulty utilizing common comic conventions (e.g, varied bubbles and “dynamic” panel division), may suggest that critical expressionism becomes increasingly difficult to employ depending on the quantity of response methods and the experience the class in question has with those methods. If we look at this through our MRQ, we see reader response theory and critical expressionism combine to allow for personal expression but this combination is potentially held back by a lack of prior knowledge and experience with comics. This gives the feeling that the provided response methods, if unfamiliar to students, reduce their ability to “articulate” their expressions to others, though not necessarily to themselves. The latter point may be a valuable subject of further research in itself, “to what extent does unfamiliarity of approach play a role in students (in)ability to produce a “self-satisfactory” expressive work?” Such research may contribute to an understanding of why they find a mode enjoyable, even if it is potentially unable to capture their intended expression, or why they would choose such a mode in the

first place. These potential challenges with comics may be why student productions of this type seemed of a lesser quality than the written work.

5.1.2b Social media thread

Social media thread turned out to be quite a successful mode of response. Perhaps unlike comics, social media is something many of the students are intimately familiar with. The idea of the social media thread was for the students to create a “post” as Rumpelstiltskin, and then have other characters from the tale comment on the post. Certain students got very absorbed in this work, spending considerable amounts of time capturing their favourite social media platform.



(Social media thread by student 35)

“Instagram”

“iltskinrumpelst Hello instagram”

“kingkingert Why do you want my child?!”

“iltskinrumpelst Becuse why not?”

“kingkingert What’s your real name?”

“iltskinrumpelst I’m not stupid”

“iltskinrumpelst It’s Rumpelstiltskin!”

“millersmillert my daughter has a child ?!?”

“kingkingert yesyes ofc <3[sic]”.

[Transcription]

Student 35 based their social media post on Instagram, doing their utmost to capture every detail. The post only shows a snippet of the full image, presumably because the person is scrolling. What we see is the feet of Rumpelstiltskin and the comment section underneath. True to the nature of most social media platforms, it is a place where everyone can see everything. For example, the king found the post and angrily commented asking why Rumpelstiltskin wants his child. The original tale never lets the reader know if the king is aware of the deal between Rumpelstiltskin and the miller’s daughter for their baby, or even Rumpelstiltskin’s existence in the first place.

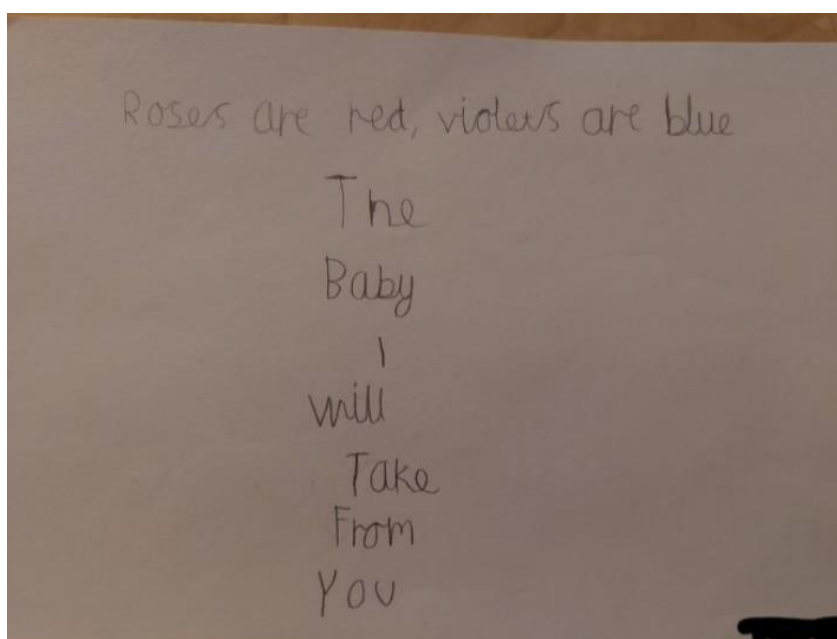
The comment section of a social media post almost creates a separate pocket universe for all the characters to partake in. It seems intuitively accepted by students that when making a social media post, characters can say almost anything, and it will not seem out of place. Perhaps it can be likened to how we view spin-off shows, movies or games as compared to the original. In spinoffs, certain things may carry over such as the characters or the universe, but we still accept a host of differences. There could be a multitude of reasons for this. For example, with this tale seemingly taking place in a fantastical version of the Middle Ages, portraying it through social media already feels so far removed from the source material, that some plot or character modifications feel par for the course. For this same reason, it feels

intuitively obvious that the tale presented through social media will not be “canon”, and is thus open to alterations, a previously mentioned example being the king’s awareness of the deal between his wife and Rumpelstiltskin.

The students’ familiarity with social media seemed to give them more freedom in how they expressed themselves, as they know most of the relevant “conventions” of social media. This gives us the impression that if no instruction is given ahead of time, creating a social media thread may be a stronger alternative than comics when trying to develop an authentic response. The critical expressionism idea of varied response methods, coupled with reader response theory opening these methods up to the students’ wishes, meant the prerequisites were in place for students to (potentially) authentically express themselves to the best of their ability. For this reason, creating a social media thread might have been the best exercise in addressing our MRQ of “How can a combination of reader response theory and critical expressionism promote the development of authentic response when working with fairy tales in the Norwegian year 7 English classroom?”.

5.1.2c Poem

The second student group (on recommendation from their teacher) were given “roses are red, violets are blue” as an example for how to start a poem. We therefore have two poems that start this way, and one that does not. First, we have student 26 utilizing this phrase with a rather creative structure.

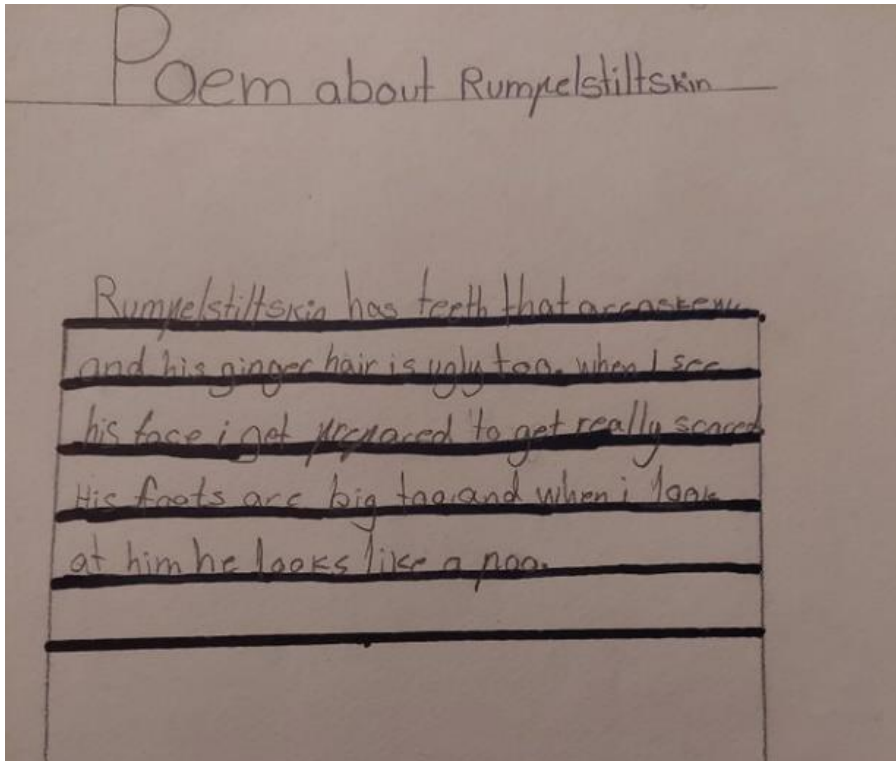


(Poem by student 26)

“Roses are red, violets are blue The Baby I will Take From You”. [Transcription]

We are not familiar with this student’s knowledge of poems, but to us this seems like an attempt at a creative minimalist approach. There is also the usage of rhyme with “blue” and “you”, contained in a poem that captures the main plot point of the poem: Rumpelstiltskin’s attempt at taking the queen’s baby. With the structure and rhyme, the student has done a good deal considering how concise they are.

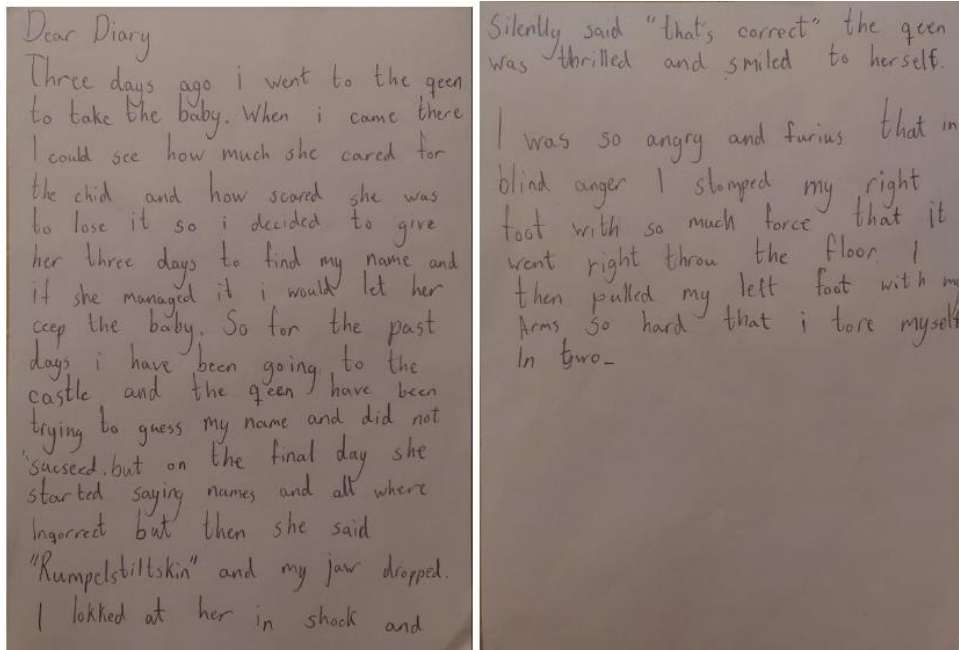
Another poem entry was provided by student 33. Unlike the previous poem, this one is focused almost solely on Rumpelstiltskin’s appearance. The student has managed a lot of rhymes with words like “askew” and “too”, “prepared” and “scared”, and “too” and “poo”. What is most interesting about this poem is how it ties back to the student’s worksheet, as there are consistent elements between the two. The poem is predominantly focused on describing Rumpelstiltskin in a negative way. This correlates with the student’s answer to question number four, in which they argue that Rumpelstiltskin is the villain of the story. The sentiment seems to remain the same for question five, where they say the ending is happy due to Rumpelstiltskin dying. When describing Rumpelstiltskin for question six, the student mentions that he has red hair (“ginger”) and big feet, both being elements they brought into their poem. This might indicate that the abstract questions of the worksheet acted as effective scaffolding that became an aid in a later creative activity.



(Poem by student 33)

“Rumpelstiltskin has teeth that are askew and his ginger hair is ugly too. When I see his face i get prepared to get really scared. His foets are big too, and when i look at him he looks like a poo[sic]”. [Transcription]

5.1.2d Diary entry



(Diary entry by student 39)

“Dear Diary

Three days ago i went to the queen to take the baby. When i came there I could see how much she cared for the child and how scared she to lose it so i decided to give her three days to find my name and if she managed it i would let her keep the baby. So for the past days i have been going to the castle and the queen have been trying to guess my name and did not succeed, but on the final day she started saying names and all where incorrect but then she said “Rumpelstiltskin” and my jaw dropped. I looked at her in shock and silently said “that’s correct” the queen was thrilled and smiled to herself.

I was so angry and furious that in blind anger i stomped my right foot with so much force that that it went right throu the floor. I then pulled my left foot with my Arms so hard that i tore myself in two[sic]”. [Transcription]

The diary entry written by student 39 is well written and shows some of the potential that the activity has for students who are interested in writing. While this diary entry is in many ways a retelling of events, it does contain thoughts unique to Rumpelstiltskin, thoughts that readers are not privy to in the original tale. For this student’s diary entry, Rumpelstiltskin “could see how much she (the miller’s daughter) cared for the child and how scared she was to lose it” and seemed to want to give her a chance. The student has also made attempts to add some

emotive language, such as when Rumpelstiltskin's "jaw dropped" when the miller's daughter guessed his name. Similarly, he "looked at her in shock[sic]" and "silently said...". The student's version of Rumpelstiltskin could also perceive that the miller's daughter "was thrilled and smiled to herself", something that was not mentioned in the tale. Anger was mentioned in the tale as a reaction by Rumpelstiltskin, but student 39 further added that it was "blind anger" and that he was "furius[sic]". It should be uncontroversial to say that this type of language-play is very much what a teacher hopes to see when their students are engaged in writing. It is even better if students have the opportunity to engage with it of their own free will. The key word here is "opportunity". Every time a teacher teaches a lesson with a multitude of opportunities for the students, the odds increase that some of them will eventually "take the plunge" by trying something new.

5.1.2e In-role interview

In-role interview is an interesting activity that proved to have both positive and negative sides. On the positive side, students overall seemed to enjoy working in this way. In terms of student performance, there seemed to be a blend of everything. Some students, predictably, would periodically wander about when left to interview one another in the hallway. Others handled it much better, interviewing each other for over half an hour using little to no Norwegian, while never running out of questions. Even when we were not there to supervise them (but could still hear them around the corner), they would still be using English. The majority of the students performed comparably between the in-role interview and their non-oral work. One pair of students, however, showed increased ability and motivation for this oral activity compared to their earlier performance when engaging with written work. The popularity of the in-role interview was surprising. Whereas only two students (one pair) chose to engage with the activity during the pilot lesson, the activity was chosen by 14 students (seven pairs) across the two project classes. Considering both the popularity and good performance by the students who chose the mode, we feel this may be one of the best exercises for addressing SQ1, "How do students in the year 7 classroom respond to the use of a more reader-centric teaching method for fairy tales?" The in-role interview exercise arguably demands the most of students as they are required to formulate questions and answers in real time. Some students relished this opportunity, while others proceeded through it contently, sticking with it despite being made aware that they were allowed to cut it short at any time to pick a different mode. The students seemed to appreciate the agency given to

them, as they were allowed to act and be creative as they showed their interpretation of the tale and its characters.

We are not making the claim, however, that there are no challenges when using this exercise. Assuming the average popularity of this activity lies closer to our most recent experience, certain challenges present themselves. The number one thing is the availability (or lack thereof) of work spaces where a pair can perform an oral activity in relative peace, while remaining within reach of the teacher. It is also very difficult for a teacher to check in with several of these pairings while still watching over the main body of the class. This will likely require the teacher to have an aid. Another option could be to use larger groups instead of pairs, so that the teacher can more easily reach all parties, but the effectiveness of such an approach for an interview activity remains untested on our part. Assuming a teacher can accommodate for these issues of a largely practical nature, then we believe the activity to be well worth considering. Throughout this paper, we have continuously expressed our wish for more varied classroom work. At the most basic level, this activity provides an oral option for students who feel better equipped for that.

5.1.3 Creating an alternative ending

Below, we will briefly showcase some of the creative endings that students have provided. It is not feasible to go in depth about them all, but a later section will do more of a deep dive into the works of select students, including some of their alternative endings.

Writing an alternative ending entailed students rewriting scene seven of the tale. The cut-off point was set here to give students a frame of reference to work within. 19 of 41 students got as far as making an ending. The reason for this rather low number is that students were allowed to keep working on unfinished work from the previous lesson. These two lessons were taught in the span of two days. This means that the decision to allow work designated only for lesson two to be continued in lesson three was made on short notice following students' requests. The endings are quite varied in nature, with many of them being very clever and thinking "outside the box".

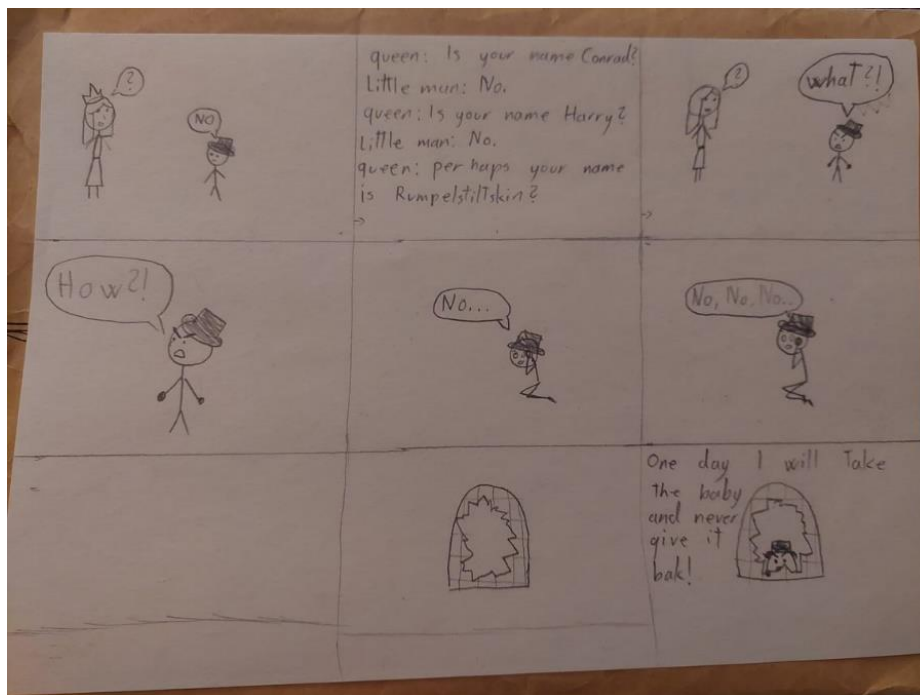
Student 22 wrote an ending where Rumpelstiltskin had his name legally changed so that the queen who had spied on him, and thus learnt his name, presented him with the incorrect name. Rumpelstiltskin could do this as they (the student) rewrote the plot so that he realised he was being spied on.

The new ending of Rumpelstiltskin

The girl asked the little man if his name was rumpelstiltskin but the little man said no and laughed so hard he fell on the ground.
The little man said "I saw you last night when I was singing so I knew that I needed a new name so I went and changed my name legally"
The girl was so stunned that she fell on the ground, the baby started to cry and soon the king came to check out what all the sound was. The king saw the little man and called for the guards. He got the guards to put the little man in the littlest of little jail cell they could find and put a spinning wheel and some straw so he could have something to do when the little man got bored. Some years later the king learned that he should not have been so greedy, so he shared all the gold the little man had spun with the kingdom.

(Alternative ending by student 22)

Student 30 used a comic to present their ending. They fill an entire panel with text from the original tale, providing them with more space to tell the story they want in subsequent panels. The miller's daughter guesses Rumpelstiltskin's name correctly, leaving Rumpelstiltskin despairing, until eventually he jumps out the window and provides the cartoony "I will get you next time" kind of answer. This cartoony feel is aided by Rumpelstiltskin barely managing to poke his head into the window opening when making his statement.



(Alternative ending by student 30)

Panel 1: "No"

Panel 2: "queen: is your name Conrad?". "Little man: No". "queen: Is your name Harry?". "Little man: No". "queen: perhaps your name is Rumpelstiltskin?"

Panel 3: "What?!"

Panel 4: "How?!"

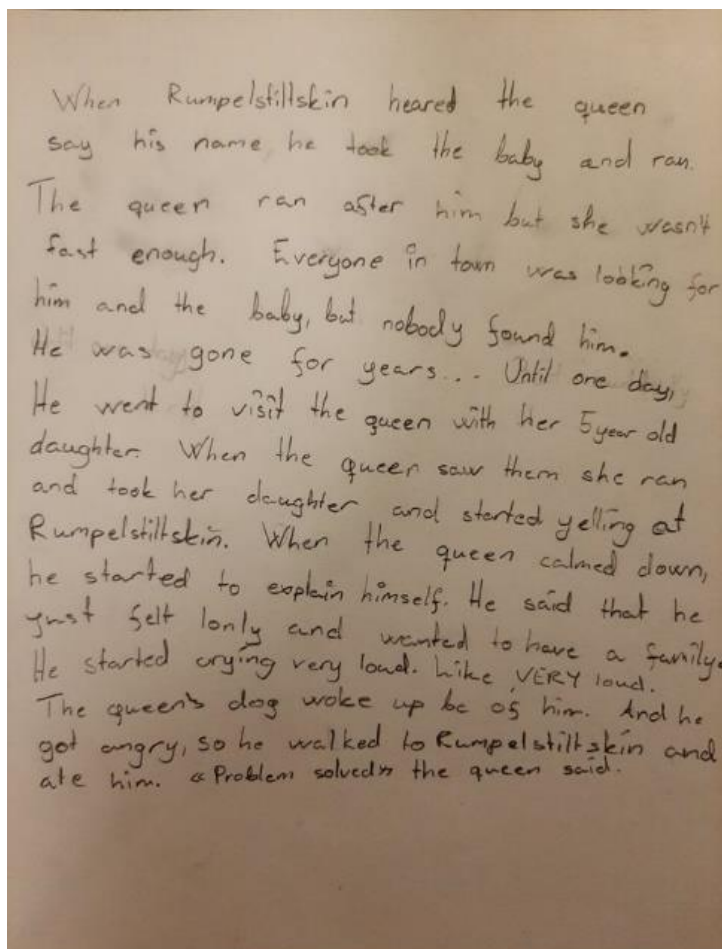
Panel 5: "No..."

Panel 6: "No, No, No.."

Panel 9: "One day I will Take the baby and never give it bak! [sic]"

[Transcription]

Student 11 created an ending in which Rumpelstiltskin got the baby, but returned to visit the queen much later when the stolen child was 5 years old. Rumpelstiltskin had come to explain himself, saying that he was lonely and wanted a family. He cried loudly, which woke up the queen's dog, which subsequently ate him, something the queen took great pleasure in.

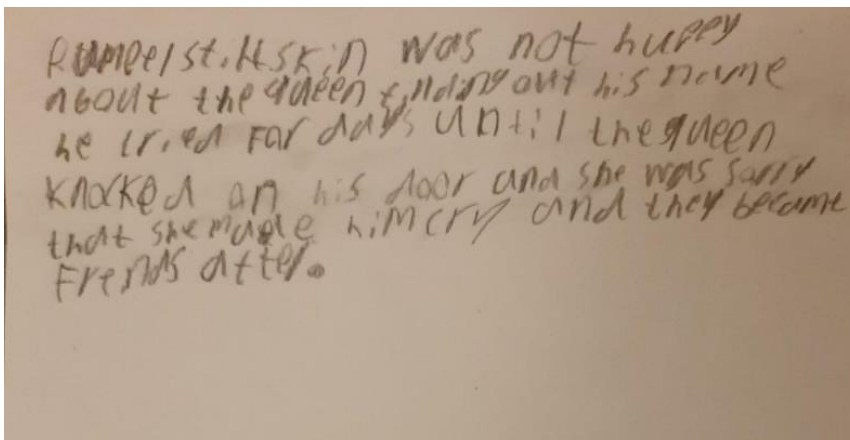


When Rumpelstiltskin heard the queen say his name he took the baby and ran. The queen ran after him but she wasn't fast enough. Everyone in town was looking for him and the baby, but nobody found him. He was gone for years... Until one day, He went to visit the queen with her 5 year old daughter. When the queen saw them she ran and took her daughter and started yelling at Rumpelstiltskin. When the queen calmed down, he started to explain himself. He said that he just felt lonely and wanted to have a family. He started crying very loud. Like VERY loud. The queen's dog woke up bc of him. And he got angry, so he walked to Rumpelstiltskin and ate him. "Problem solved" the queen said.

(Alternative ending by student 11)

“When Rumpelstiltskin heard the queen say his name he took the baby and ran. The queen ran after him but she wasn’t fast enough. Everyone in town was looking for him and the baby, but nobody found him. He was gone for years... Until one day, He went to visit the queen with her 5 year old daughter. When the queen saw them she ran and took her daughter and started yelling at Rumpelstiltskin. When the queen calmed down, he started to explain himself. He said that he just felt lonely and wanted to have a family. The queen’s dog woke up bc of him. And he got angry, so he walked to Rumpelstiltskin and ate him. “Problem solved” the queen said[sic]”. [Transcription]

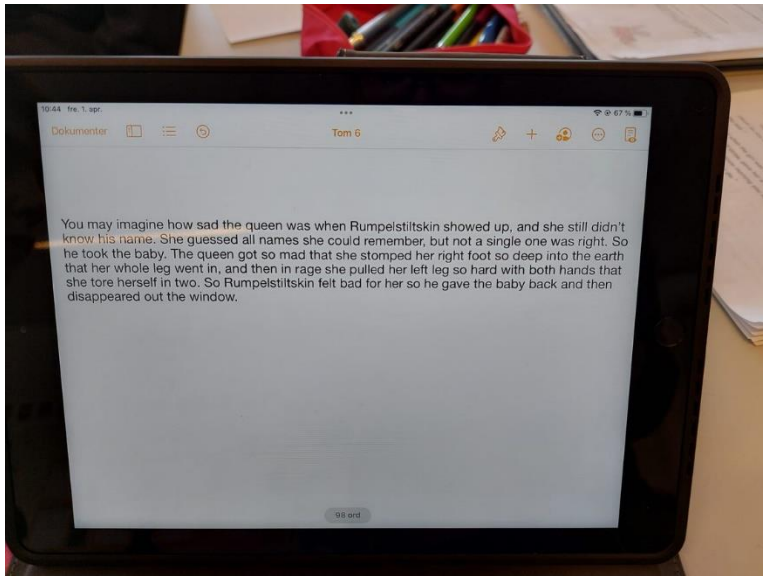
Other students strived for a happy ending. In one ending, student 3 let the miller’s daughter keep the baby as she guessed Rumpelstiltskin’s name correctly, but had her visit Rumpelstiltskin to apologise for making him cry (as he did not get the baby), which resulted in them becoming friends.



(Alternative ending by student 3)

“Rumpelstiltskin was not happy about the queen finding out his name he tried for days until the queen knocked on his door and she was sorry that she made him cry and they became friends after[sic]”. [Transcription]

Student 26 reversed the situation so that the girl was the one stomping and tearing in half. Rumpelstiltskin then felt bad and gave the baby back, presumably to a girl who is now dead.



(Alternative ending by student 26)

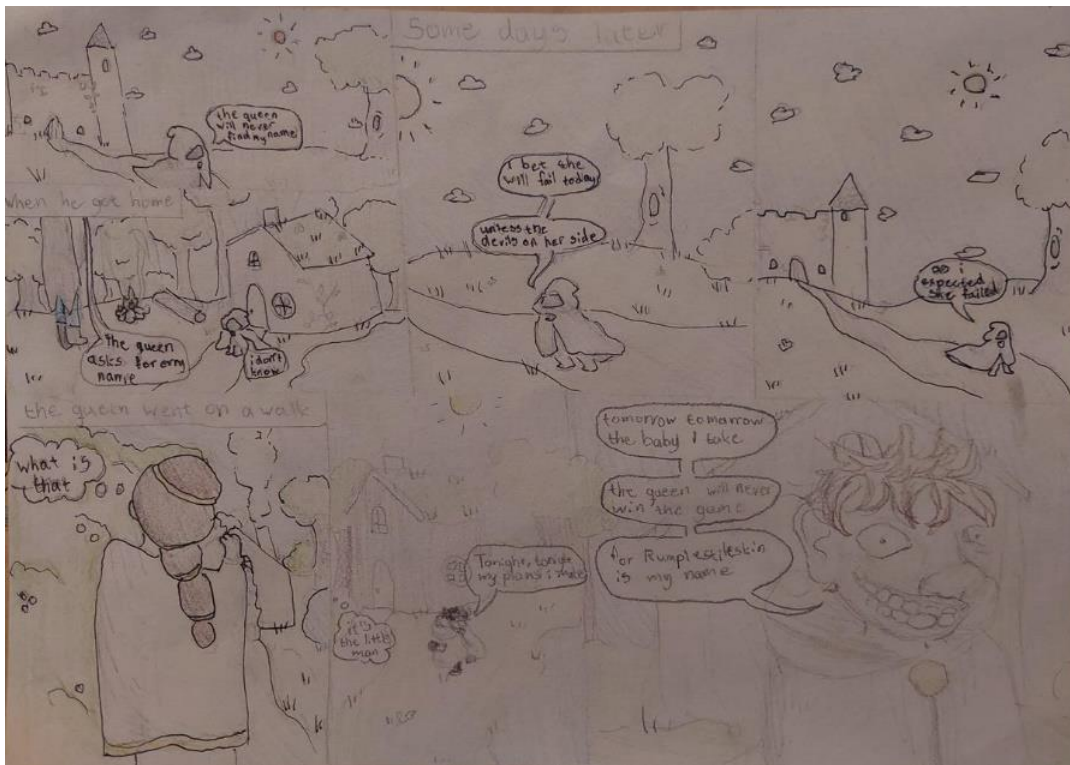
Our impression is that the act of creating an alternative ending was a fruitful activity for the students. Creating an alternative ending was the final creative activity we had the students do, and it was potentially the most daunting activity as it offered few requirements for the students to use as guidance. As mentioned prior, some endings will be explored in-depth in a later section, where we consider the connection between individual students' works, to infer where the individual student may be pulling their inspirations from.

These significantly varied endings make it evident that students have “read against” the tale in different ways. The second research question, “How capable are students in the year 7 English classroom of reading against a fairy tale without being instructed to do so?” aims to gain an idea of how well students were able to read against the tale. We believe the students maintained their ability to question what they read despite being given largely “free rein”. When authors create their work, they have a certain recipient in mind, the “implied reader” (Iser, 1978). The Grimms would be no different. If we make an assumption that Rumpelstiltskin is the intended villain, given that the villains often lose in children’s tales, we see that many students had different ideas. Rumpelstiltskin may have had more “screen time”, but one may argue that he had more redeeming qualities than the king as he gave the girl a chance to keep her baby and did technically save her life. Some may have felt that it was an unjust ending for Rumpelstiltskin, and therefore made him the “winner”, while others, such as

student 3, simply wanted everyone to be happy, and therefore had Rumpelstiltskin and the miller's daughter become friends. Our goal was for the students to feel validated in their interpretations of the different characters, instead of accepting that which is perceived to be correct or intended. This is the “reading against” we wanted for this project, as opposed to the acceptance of an objective truth laid out by the author.

5.2 Interpretations of works created by select students

5.2.1 Student 7



(Comic by student 7)

Panel 1: “The queen will never find my name”

Panel 2: “When he got home”. “The queen asks for every name”. “I don’t know”.

Panel 3: “Some days later”. “I bet she will fail today, unless the devil’s on her side”.

Panel 4: “as expected she failed”

Panel 5: “The queen went on a walk[sic]”. “What is that[sic]”.

Panel 6: “Tonight, tonight my plans I make”. “it’s the little man”.

Panel 7: “tomorrow tomorrow the baby i take, the queen will never win the game, for Rumpelstiltskin is my name”

[Transcription]

The process students are engaged with when developing their productions can be better understood by employing Adrian Pilkington’s “Exploration of context”. The idea is that a person is given a prompt, which is then enhanced through subsequent contextually situated content (e.g words, phrases, imagery) (Pilkington, 2000b, p. 128). In practice, this can see a positive snowball effect that starts with weak connotations, which gradually evolve into something much richer. Student 7 likely noted the repeated mentions of “the little man” in the reading, which may have sparked their knowledge of hobbits, which are short beings from *Lord of the Rings* (1954-2003) and *The Hobbit* (1937-2014). In the process of designing a presumably hobbit adjacent character, we see these weak connotations grow stronger.

Rumpelstiltskin’s house is small with a grass roof, similar to those of hobbits, and he has a cape with a medallion, like Frodo and Sam, who are two of the best-known hobbits from *Lord of the Rings*. The student’s act of pulling from *Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* could be further evidenced through the “deranged” outlook of their Rumpelstiltskin representation.

This could bear connections to the corrupting power of the ring from *Lord of the Rings*, with Rumpelstiltskin presumably wearing a ring himself that he got from the miller’s daughter. There is also a sign that the student might have pulled inspiration from elsewhere, which is made clearer if we look at the student’s worksheet drawing.



(Worksheet drawing by student 7)

In this drawing, we can see a lot of conventional clown elements, such as a very big smile, a prominent nose, makeup under the eye, messy hair and (presumably) coloured lips. All these elements (perhaps most uniquely the eye makeup running downwards) share elements with Pennywise, the clown from Stephen King's *IT* (1986-2019), arguably the most well-known clown in modern pop culture. At the same time, however, the student describes Rumpelstiltskin as wearing a "Jester outfit", suggesting perhaps that the two terms blend somewhat together. This drawing, however, seems to have evolved into a hybrid when seen in the student's comic. The deranged outlook, prominent nose, big smile and messy hair remain, while the eye makeup is replaced by a short stature, a cape and a medallion (and presumably the ring). The student, whether knowingly or not, may have created their own unique being which could be described as a "deranged clown/jester hobbit". It is worth mentioning that there is no guarantee that our inferences are correct, as they are just inferences. The "Exploration of context" we believe this student was engaged in applies to us as well through our inferencing. "Deranged clown/jester hobbit" was not a starting point for our inferencing, but the culmination of prolonged thought following analysis of the student's work.

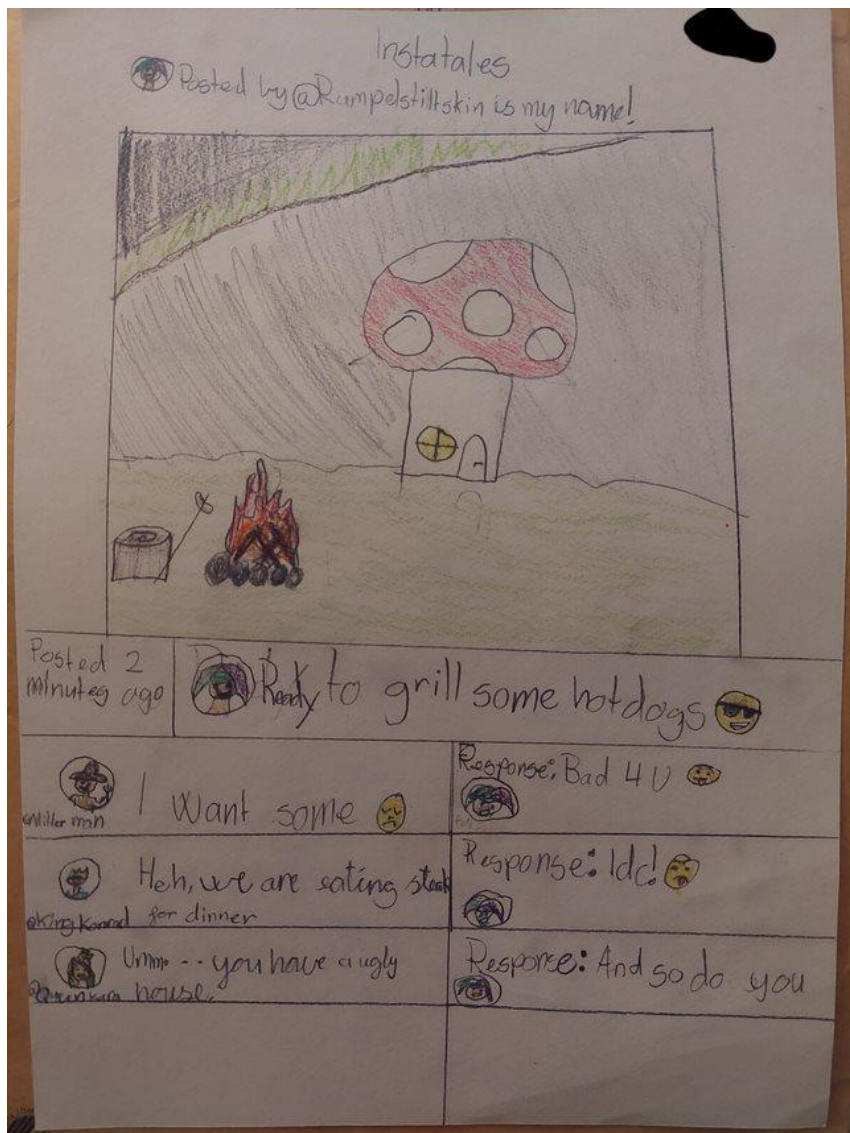
The act of continually inferencing naturally involves past experience and the things that make a person uniquely them. This aligns the "Exploration of context" with Rosenblatt's reader response theory. Rosenblatt claims that past experiences, interests and personality influence how a text is interpreted (Rosenblatt, 1938). Keeping these background elements in mind, it becomes apparent that this student's work is just one of the endlessly unique ways that Rumpelstiltskin can be represented. The key here is "can be", as students need to be given the opportunity to present their authentic response. This is where critical expressionism is useful. It advocates for the inclusion of diverse and creative response methods that allow students the freedom to use what they know. It should be uncontroversial to claim that the response from student 7 would not have had the same creative potential had they only been able to respond through a predetermined method. This gets us to the crux of what has made critical expressionism most useful in the classroom, which is that students can choose "their" medium. The students' teacher told us that this student really likes drawing and takes drawing classes during their free time. It would then stand to reason that creating a comic is something that would stimulate the student's creative senses. It allowed them to take the weak implicature of "the little man" and expand on it through a medium they (presumably) favour.

Other students may not find comics to be an appealing approach, and therein lies the value of the varied methods offered by critical expressionism. With enough varied methods, the teacher is likely to find something that can stimulate the creative side of their students. Even as educators who did not know the students, we still managed to structure lessons that included appealing options for the majority of the students and aided them in creating something unique. As such, we can only imagine that the success would be even greater for a teacher who knows their students well and can choose methods based on that knowledge.

We believe that the discussion above reinforces the positive relationship between reader response theory and critical expressionism which our MRQ inquires about: “How can a combination of reader response theory and critical expressionism promote the development of authentic response when working with fairy tales in the Norwegian year 7 English classroom?” It is clear to us that reader response theory and critical expressionism manage to strengthen each other in a mutually beneficial way. Reader response theory adds a stronger theoretical foundation to critical expressionism, while critical expressionism provides reader response with a practical dimension that acts to further the reader response ideal of “no correct interpretation”, through facilitation of personal interpretation and authentic response.

5.2.2 Student 22

In the above example, we have a rather technical and detailed comic of *Rumpelstiltskin*, which seems to pull inspiration from a variety of places. For this section, we have a student who chose to present a scene in *Rumpelstiltskin* through a social media post. Whereas student 7 seemed to create a hybrid of different fantasy universes and archetypes, student 22 gained a more realistic side to their work through the social media thread. On the fantasy side, we have the house of Rumpelstiltskin taking the shape of a fly agaric mushroom (seen below this paragraph). Mushrooms often make appearances in fantastical works, and in a variety of ways, such as food, alchemical components or even housing. A quick online search of “mushroom house” reveals a near endless quantity, the vast majority taking the shape of a fly agaric. The student could also have pulled inspiration from the *Super Mario* video game series, where the fly agaric is a common “power up” for one’s character. Interestingly, this power-up mushroom doubles the size of one’s character. Perhaps there is a level of irony intended with “the little man” living inside such a mushroom. This is almost certainly a thinly stretched inference on our part, but this only makes it further evident that the individual is a crucial component in understanding a text.



(Social media thread by student 22)

“Instatales”

“Posted by @Rumpelstiltskin is my name”

“Posted 2 minutes ago”

“Ready to grill some hotdogs”

“Miller man I want some” “Response: Bad 4 U”

“King Konrad Heh, we are eating steak for dinner” “Response: Idc!”

“Queen Kara(?) Umm... you have a ugly house” “Response: And so do you”

[Transcription]

This act of inferencing plays into the phenomenological train of thought. Zahavi states that “When we perceive an object, we always experience more than is intuitively presented” (2018, p. 11). In essence, this means that however we perceive the work of student 22, we intuitively fill in the blanks so that what we are observing makes sense to us. The idea that we perceive more than is presented to us, is something the students are using to their advantage, even if they may not realise it. The house may “intuitively” be presented as a mushroom house, but from the perspective of the unique reader, it could symbolise any number of things, as evident through us connecting it to the *Super Mario* series. This idea of experiencing more than is presented is perhaps most clear through the standard comic convention of “gutters”. These gutters (blank space in-between panels) are intuitively registered as the “animation” of a comic, and sometimes contain important plot points. This is clearly portrayed by student 7, who uses gutters to transition between scenes in their comic. Depending on the reader, any number of things could have taken place beyond that which is clearly presented. Even in the case of student 22, we can imagine scenarios that are absent from their social media thread, that may still be automatically considered or inferred by certain readers. For example, this social media thread might seem far removed from the tale in many ways, but some readers may still see connections through the dynamic between the present and the absent. Where is the baby? Is Rumpelstiltskin trying to lure people to his home by showing it to them? Are the characters in the comment section simply playing along to make Rumpelstiltskin think that they will not arrive at his door? We can conclude is that students, knowingly or not, balance the present and the absent to create a narrative.

The social media aspect introduces facets of reality into *Rumpelstiltskin*. Nowhere is this more evident than the creative title given to the platform, “Instatales”, presumably a combination of “Instagram” and “fairy tales”. Perhaps the most fascinating aspect is the juxtaposition of an old fairy tale and common social media discourse. Rumpelstiltskin is posting a picture where he is “Ready to grill some hotdogs”, with typical social media comments in the reply section. You have the “I want some”, being the typical “that looks tasty” reply to a social media post about food, as well as those reciprocating by sharing what they are having “Heh, we are eating steak for dinner”. There is (even) a person (the miller’s daughter) insulting Rumpelstiltskin for something that has nothing to do with the subject of the original post, “Umm...you have an ugly house”. This comment section could perhaps speak to the social media experience, or overall perception the student has.



(Worksheet drawing by student 22)

Another interesting element is the Jester-esque character we see in Rumpelstiltskin's profile picture. Like student 7, student 22 carried this aspect over from their worksheet drawing, but, unlike student 7, this student made no explicit mention of a Jester. This student's perception of a Jester may be better gleaned from their alternative ending. Rumpelstiltskin "...laughed so hard he fell on the ground", and knowingly tricked the miller's daughter by changing his name. As punishment for this, he was jailed and set to spin gold, which was later distributed to the kingdom by the king. This intense laughing and trickery suggests a rather villainous or negative view of (presumably) jesters. Perhaps the laughter and trickery, contributing to an overall villainous perception, is a reference to the Joker of *Batman* (1940-present). The villain is even thrown in jail, something Batman no doubt would want for the Joker. Further, there is an exposition of the trickery by the villain himself, which is a tendency of overconfident villains. The Joker is commonly considered a clown, but this may go back to the blurring of the lines between a jester and a clown, mentioned for student 7. The reference to *Batman* gains further strengthening from Harley Quinn, who, depending on the iteration, shares traits with both clowns and jesters.

The new ending of Rumpelstiltskin

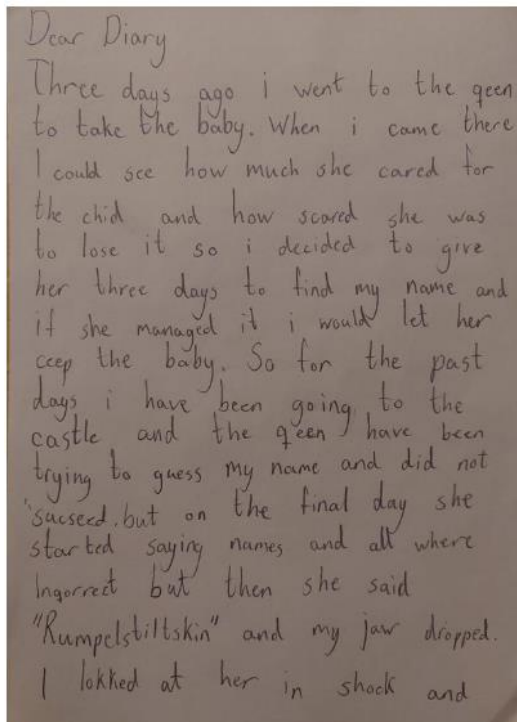
The girl asked the little man if his name was rumpelstiltskin but the little man said no and laughed so hard he fell on the ground.

The little man said "I saw you last night when I was singing so I knew that I needed a new name so I went and changed my name legally"

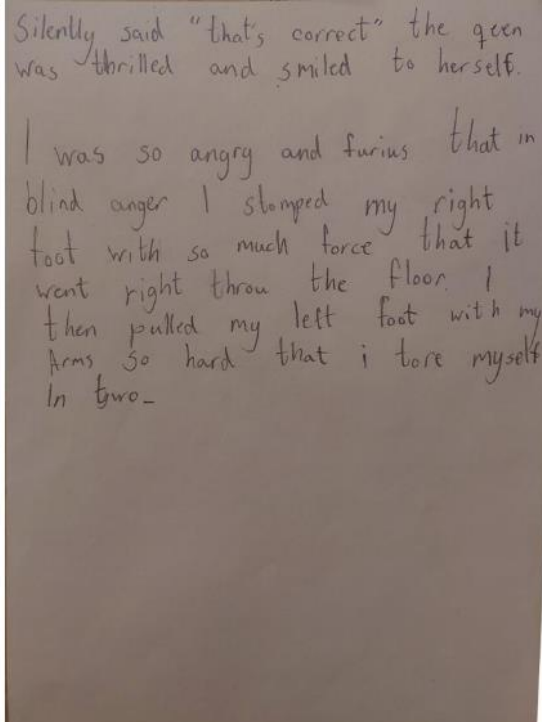
The girl was so stunned that she fell on the ground, the baby started to cry and soon the king came to check out what all the sound was. The king saw the little man and called for the guards. He got the guards to put the little man in the littlest of little jail cell they could find and put a spinning wheel and some straw so he could have something to do when the little man got bored. Some years later the king learned that he should not have been so greedy, so he shared all the gold the little man had spun with the kingdom.

(Alternative ending by student 22)

5.2.3 Student 39



Dear Diary
Three days ago i went to the queen to take the baby. When i came there I could see how much she cared for the child and how scared she was to lose it so i decided to give her three days to find my name and if she managed it i would let her keep the baby. So for the past days i have been going to the castle and the queen have been trying to guess my name and did not succeed. but on the final day she started saying names and all where incorrect but then she said "Rumpelstiltskin" and my jaw dropped. I looked at her in shock and



Silently said "that's correct" the queen was thrilled and smiled to herself.
I was so angry and furious that in blind anger I stomped my right foot with so much force that it went right throu the floor. I then pulled my left foot with my arms so hard that i tore myself in two.

(Diary entry by student 39)

"Dear Diary

Three days ago i went to the queen to take the baby. When i came there I could see how much she cared for the child and how scared she to lose it so i decided to give her three days to find my name and if she managed it i would let her keep the baby. So for the past days i have been going to the castle and the queen have been trying to guess my name and did not succeed, but on the final day she started saying names and all where incorrect but then she said

“Rumpelstiltskin” and my jaw dropped. I looked at her in shock and silently said “that’s correct” the queen was thrilled and smiled to herself.

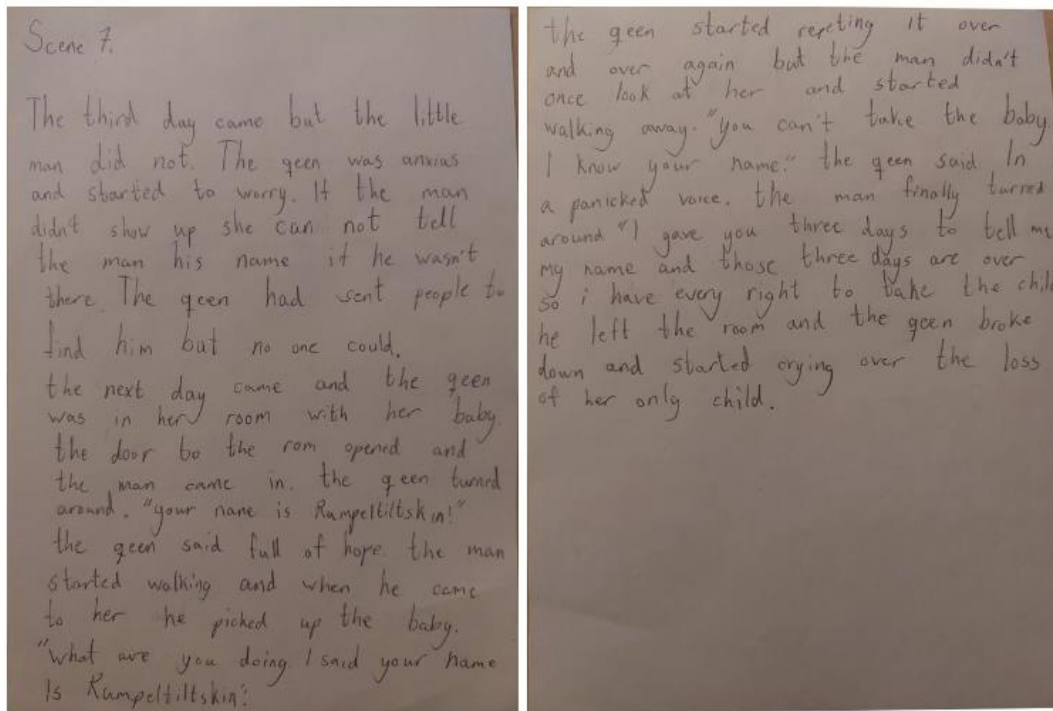
I was so angry and furious that in blind anger I stomped my right foot with so much force that that it went right through the floor. I then pulled my left foot with my arms so hard that I tore myself in two[sic]”. [Transcription]

In the previous two examples, we have looked at works containing very prominent visual elements. This time, however, we intend to look at the work of student 39, which contains predominantly written elements. We start by looking at the student’s diary entry, written from the perspective of Rumpelstiltskin. As we have already commented on this work in section 5.1.2d, “Diary entry”, due to this work being the only diary entry that we were given permission to include in the thesis, we will not go in depth on all aspects of the work here. See 5.1.2d for information that is not included in this section. This work seems to have been created by someone who appreciates the opportunity to write, as is evident not just through the choice of exercise itself, but the emotive language that was never stipulated as a requirement.

The reason for this language play may be to elicit “...perlocutionary effects – boring or amusing readers, insulting, angering or shocking them” (Wilson, 2012, p. 10). This type of emotive language, intended to elicit certain feelings, is what teachers generally look for in their students’ writing. It may suggest that a student cares about their work. The use of such language provides the text with a sense of “artistry”, which may help the reader remember the text for a longer time after it has been read.

It becomes further evident that student 39 enjoys writing, as they also chose writing as their mode for creating their alternative ending. The act of creating an alternative ending really tests the student’s creative ability, as they have to expand upon elements of the original tale. This activity produced some of the most impressive results, suggesting that more creatively demanding activities can still bear fruit. Among the impressive alternative endings, we find the one made by student 39. As in the original tale, the student has the queen guess Rumpelstiltskin’s name. This ending takes place after the messenger learns about Rumpelstiltskin’s name and passes it onto the miller’s daughter, now queen. At this point, the original tale has Rumpelstiltskin approach the queen, at which point she would pronounce his name. In the ending created by student 39, however, Rumpelstiltskin does not appear. Student 39 is playing to the fact that in the original tale, the queen is given three days to guess the

name correctly. Therefore, they simply have Rumpelstiltskin not appear before the queen until the deadline has passed, thus respecting their agreement, but still coming out on top. The student has also created a scenario of desperation, with the queen realizing that something is wrong as Rumpelstiltskin keeps a steady pace towards her child despite her repeatedly declaring his name. The outcome, from the reader's perspective, could perhaps be seen as one of pity or emptiness, as the story ends with the queen crying over the loss of her child.



(Alternative ending by student 39)

“Scene 7.

The third day came but the little man did not. The queen was anxious and started to worry. If the man didn't show up she can not tell the man his name if he wasn't there. The queen had sent people to find him but no one could. the next day came and the queen was in her room with her baby. the door to the room opened and the man came in. the queen turned around. “your name is Rumpelstiltskin!” the queen said full of hope. the man started walking and when he came to her he picked up the baby. “What are you doing. I said your name is Rumpelstiltskin”. the queen started repeating it over and over again but the man didn't once look at her and started walking away. “You can't take the baby. I know your name.” the queen said in a panicked voice. the man finally turned around “I gave you three days to tell me my name and those three days are

over so i have every right to take the child” he left the room and the queen broke down and started crying over the loss of her only child [sic]”. [Transcription]

This response is interesting in terms of literary inspirations. Like student 22, student 39 has Rumpelstiltskin trick the queen, thus staying true to the trickster persona many students seem to hold him to. In the case of student 22, however, the outcome is positive for everyone except the trickster, which demonstrates the idea that the “bad guys” get what they deserve in the end. The ending created by student 39 is very different, with there being no typical happy ending. The Rumpelstiltskin presented by student 22 also seems less evil than the one presented by student 39, because, although he plays a trick on the queen that would have lost her the child, he was only prompted to do so by the queen spying on him and thus discovering his name. The distribution of Rumpelstiltskin’s gold to the kingdom then shifts attention from Rumpelstiltskin to the positive act of the king providing for his kingdom. Student 39’s Rumpelstiltskin, in comparison, comes off as colder and more calculated, leaving a crying victim in his wake. It does not come off as a spontaneous decision to trick her, but one that was prepared well in advance. This stoic and cold version of Rumpelstiltskin may pull inspiration from the harshest villain scenes in which a character establishes themselves as the defining villain in the mind of the reader. These are the scenes in which there is no room for fun or quirkiness from the villain, just cold-blooded stoicism as they perform their defining villainous act.

It is worth taking a look at this student’s answer to question six and seven in the worksheet as it provides further context for the student’s view of Rumpelstiltskin as a villain. When asked to describe Rumpelstiltskin, the student wrote “he is Ginger. thin hair, small, short, skinny, wears a white sweater with a dark brown vest, light brown pants, bad theets, and a rund face[sic]”. The attributes were present in the drawing in their answer to question seven. Both description and drawing are clearly inspired by the depiction of Rumpelstiltskin in Dream works’ animated movie franchise, *Shrek*. The student did not specifically mention *Shrek* but did admit to being familiar with the animated movies upon being asked. In the fourth *Shrek* movie, *Shrek: Forever after*, Rumpelstiltskin is the villain whose goal is to become King. To reach this goal, he makes a deal with Shrek that involves Shrek giving him a day of his childhood. Rumpelstiltskin withholds the information that the day he is taking is the day of Shrek’s birth, thus indirectly killing Shrek (Mitchell, 2010). Given that the student has taken

inspiration from *Shrek*, it is understandable that the student presents Rumpelstiltskin as calculated and evil in their alternative ending.



(Worksheet drawing by student 39)

5.3 Questionnaire

The students were asked to fill out a questionnaire at the end of the last lesson. The opening question asks the students how they liked working with *Rumpelstiltskin*. 31 students expressed that they enjoyed the lessons. These students stated that they liked it or thought it was “quite”, “kinda”, “really” or “very” fun or interesting. Student 44 added that they liked when they got to draw Rumpelstiltskin, student 43 added that they liked the tasks, students 7 and 47 thought it was fun to do something they do not normally do, student 34 said it was fun because they had not heard the fairy tale before, and student 4 said “I liked it because we had many options and it was a fun subject”. Six students answered variants of “it was okay”. One student expressed that they disliked the lessons. This was student 16, who wrote “no I didnt like it[sic]”, without any further explanation. The vast majority answered that they enjoyed the lessons. We are aware of the possibility that the students may not have answered the questions truthfully, but we have no other option than to assume that their answers are honest.

The second question asks how the lessons could have been better. 24 student-answers are variations of “no” or “I don’t know”. Some of the suggestions for improvement we received include more writing, more drawing, more oral activities, less questions, more activities (presumably something that lets the students move), more fairy tales and more time. This shows us that students have many different preferences, which is part of what makes our approach of using different working methods valuable in the first place. As for the allotted time, there were students who did not finish everything. This would likely be of less concern in a typical classroom setting, where the students’ regular teacher can allot the required time.

The third question in the questionnaire is “Did you find these lessons to be challenging, just right or too difficult?” We made a mistake when phrasing this question, something that could have affected the students’ answers despite the oral correction that they received in the classroom. “Too easy” should have been included as an opposite to “too difficult”, and “challenging” should have been cut from the question, considering that it may be interpreted as synonymous to “just right” or as a grade level between “just right” and “too difficult”. The question was not presented as a Likert scale question, and thus the students could provide answers other than the alternatives provided in the question. The students’ answers reveal, however, that they have taken inspiration from the question, as 28 students answered that they found the lessons to be “just right.” Seven students wrote that they thought the activities were easy. Four of the seven used the word “funny” in combination with “easy”. Examples would be student 9, who answered “it was not hard at all it was fun and entertaining”. This reveals that the idea that easy equals fun and difficult equals boring could be common among the students. While we are happy that the students had fun, we had also hoped that the lessons would be experienced as challenging. If the students are not challenged, they will not develop their knowledge but simply present the knowledge that they already possess. We can, however, be certain that some students associate challenge with enjoyment, as students 25 and 35 answered “it could have been more challenging”. Three students reported that they found the lessons difficult. While students 10 and 29 did not provide elaborate answers, student 34 explained that they had had difficulties due to a lack of English language skills. In hindsight, we see that we should have made the reading and tasks available in Norwegian, in case there were students in the group who struggled considerably with English. Student 7 wrote “They [the lessons] were easy, but I needed to think more on the abstract questions[sic]”. The student was referring to the worksheet, in which the questions become gradually more abstract in order to scaffold the students’ learning. The student recognized that the questions

became more challenging, but instead of losing motivation, managed to provide answers for every question. This student said they liked the lessons in answer to question one, and, judging by the quality of the student's answered worksheet, it can be assumed that the fact that the abstract questions required more thinking contributed to the student's enjoyment.

The fourth question asks the students to comment on their favourite part of working with *Rumpelstiltskin*. This question prompted a variety of answers. Nine students mentioned drawing, making it the most popular activity. This was followed by reading the fairy tale at five, creating a comic at four, creating an alternative ending at three, worksheet at three, writing twice, social media thread twice and in-role interview twice. There were also some answers that did not mention working methods specifically. Student 23 enjoyed the social elements, while student 7 enjoyed that it was different from their usual lessons. Student 5 enjoyed theorizing about Rumpelstiltskin (presumably when making an alternative ending or designing him). Students 21, 35 and 36 all enjoyed the ability to choose working methods freely. Finally, two students answered, "I don't know", while student 16 answered "nothing".

This question, asking simply what students enjoyed the most, is rather vague. Many seem to have interpreted the question as what working method was their favourite. This is, of course, a fine answer, but could perhaps funnel the answers in some way. Three students did, however, answer that they enjoy the ability to choose, rather than mentioning a specific method. This answer, seen in relation to the fact that the students who did answer a specific method had highly different preferences, suggests that the ability to choose was experienced as positive not only by the three students who said so directly. The students who enjoyed the specific activities they chose, may only have found this enjoyment because they were able to choose that approach. There was also mention of the social elements, suggesting that the opportunity to work in pairs for the worksheet may have been a good choice. Student 16, who answered "nothing" to the question of what they liked the most, was among the students who did the least. It is difficult to tell exactly what went wrong without knowing the student well. This student did answer that the difficulty of the lessons was "just right", suggesting that the questions communicated themselves in a comprehensible manner. Regardless, it is valuable information to bring along, as even when the majority enjoy the lesson, it is not a guarantee for everyone.

In terms of the highlighted working methods, the biggest standout may be the five who said they enjoyed reading the tale the most (presumably accompanied by the reading we did for

them). Their teacher provided insight on this, stating that youth of today are not accustomed to others reading for them, and referencing common traditions of bedside reading. It is not unthinkable that this “deprivation” could be contributing to the current popularity of audiobooks and podcasts. DeVoogd and McLaughlin (2020) mention podcasting among their examples for critical expressionism. It may well be that an audio-based activity could be a good addition to our available options.

The fifth question in the questionnaire is “Are there other fairy tales you would like to work with in the same way? If so, which fairy tale(s)?” The vast majority of the students answered either “no” or “I don’t know”. This could be interpreted as the students not wanting to, or being unsure about whether they want to, work with fairy tales in this way again. As all but one student said they enjoyed the lessons to some degree in answer to the first question, we do not think this is the case. We believe that these students answered the part of the question that asks if there are any specific fairy tales they would want to use in class. The answer would be “no” or “I don’t know” if the students were unable to think of a specific fairy tale. Another reason for this assumption is that six students admitted in their answer that they do not know many fairy tales. Considering these answers in relation to the same students’ answers that they enjoyed working with *Rumpelstiltskin*, increases the probability that they have a positive attitude towards doing similar work related to fairy tales again. The answer of student 23, “no I liked *Rumpelstiltskin*”, and the answer of student 43, “I haven’t heard about this fairy tale before so I don’t think so”, indicate that the question was understood by these students as a question of whether they would have liked to use another fairy tale instead of *Rumpelstiltskin*, to which their answer was no. A small minority of the students seemed to have interpreted the fifth question the way it was intended. We believe this is due to the way the question was formulated. The communication of this question is too weak to ensure that everyone shares one specific interpretation of it. Our understanding of the students’ interpretations leads us to believe that the question offered room for misinterpretation. Although our lessons promote the idea of there being multiple equally correct interpretations of one single object, action or story, sometimes the sender is looking to communicate one single meaning, making every other interpreted meaning a misinterpretation. In this case we should have used stronger communication, so that the students’ answers would satisfy the question the way we intended the question to be.

The feedback from the students reveals that they are interested in using fairy tales in the classroom, despite their answer to this question being “no” or “I don’t know”. Additional examples that imply a positive attitude include comments by student 3, that the lessons “would have been better if [they] learned some other fairy tales too”, and student 39, who “enjoyed the fact that [they] learned a new story”. Some students interpreted the question as intended, mentioning “Cinderella”, “Askeladden”, “Red riding hood”, “Mulan”, “Beauty and the Beast”, “Goldilocks and the Three Bears”, “The Three Billy Goats Gruff” and “The Fox’s Widow” as fairy tales they would like to work with in the future. Except from the students who answered, “no not really I like watching movies not reading”, and “nei og komer ikke på noen andre eventyr” (“no and I cannot think of any other fairy tales”), as well as student 16 who answered “no” and said they did not like the lessons in answer to question one, we believe that this student group would appreciate learning other fairy tales through similar activities as the ones used in these lessons in relation to *Rumpelstiltskin*.

The last question asks whether the students like sharing their opinions in the classroom. 16 students answered “no”, 11 students expressed that they “sometimes” or “not often” like to share their opinions, one student answered, “I don’t know” and another answered, “some opinions, not every”. The remaining nine of 38 stated that they enjoy sharing their opinions in the classroom. The reason why this question was included is that we think there is a connection between sharing one’s opinions and expressing an authentic response. Expressing an authentic response does not have to include vocalizing one’s opinions, but if one has a good experience with sharing one’s opinions it could imply that one has practice in reasoning, which is an element in authentic response. More importantly, especially when considering that the majority of the students who participated in this project are not fond of sharing their opinions, one may use activities that cultivate authentic response to prepare the students to share their opinions, as these activities encourage the students to create something of their own that they know well enough to feel comfortable sharing. We believe that providing the students with the opportunity to choose their preferred working method and work over the course of several lessons with the content matter, helps them develop a level of comfort with the idea of sharing. It aids in removing some of the intimidation factor if the opportunity has been given to internalize the content, thus reducing the odds of making any potentially embarrassing mistakes.

6. Conclusion

This study has explored the research question “How can a combination of reader response theory and critical expressionism promote the development of authentic response when working with fairy tales in the Norwegian year 7 English classroom?” The question may be considered two-dimensional, as it touches upon the students’ attitude towards the classroom practice and the students’ effort and ability as shown during the classroom practice. To make sure that both dimensions were addressed, the research question was separated into two sub questions, SQ1: “How do students in the Norwegian year 7 English classroom respond to the use of a more reader-centric teaching method for fairy tales?” and SQ2: “How capable are students in the Norwegian year 7 English classroom of reading against a fairy tale without being instructed to do so?” The results of this study, as based on data collected through observation, semi-structured interview with the teacher, questionnaire answered by students and documented student-produced works, indicate that the participating students are interested in and capable of developing and expressing their authentic response when given the opportunity to choose the way in which to work with the material.

Considering the main research question, we believe that there is a clear beneficial relationship between reader response and critical expressionism. Reader response theory may not make immediately apparent what a teacher should do in a classroom setting, as the theory encourages personal interpretation but not specific classroom activities. We have found that critical expressionism complements reader response theory through its advocacy of diverse working methods. When it comes to the authentic response of students, which reader response strongly values, critical expressionism is concerned with finding ways to facilitate this response and make it a natural or attractive proposition, rather than defaulting to a perceived correct answer. Through the teaching and content produced by students, it has become evident to us that offering a variety of options holds value. Student 7 excelled in comic creation, student 39 mastered diary writing, while student 35 did an excellent job with the social media thread, just to mention some. It should stand to reason that many students would not be able to produce works of equal quality if the medium of creation was a single predetermined one, as less students would be able to use their strengths.

In the context of an ESL classroom, such as the Norwegian year 7 classroom, there were no major weaknesses of the approach that would have us reconsider using it again. There are, however, areas that might require some preliminary work from the teacher to get the most out

of their chosen exercises. As mentioned in earlier sections, the students may benefit considerably from being taught how to create a comic ahead of time, so that they have some knowledge of how to read comics and how to utilize common conventions. This will provide students with more tools with which they can present their authentic response. Even by 7th grade, it cannot be taken for granted that students are familiar with these conventions through personal reading. Most mediums of response have some elements that could be beneficially taught to give students the best opportunity to accurately convey their response, which is something a teacher will have to consider ahead of time based on their knowledge of the students they are teaching.

The study shows how fairy tales may be useful when working to develop an authentic response. The participating students reacted positively to the reading of *Rumpelstiltskin*, partly due to the fairy tale itself, which multiple students reported that they enjoyed, and partly due to the reading theatre style in which the tale was read. *Rumpelstiltskin* prompted students to ponder questions about morality and to imagine an ending that feels more complete than the one presented in the fairy tale, which naturally led into the activities.

When asking ourselves “how” students respond to a more reader-centric method, whether they enjoy the work or not is one way to answer that question. One telling aspect is the comfort the students show surrounding the knowledge they pull from their previous experience and background assumptions. We have seen many students pull, both loosely and explicitly, from pop culture. This suggests to us that the approach has struck a good note with the students by allowing them to utilize knowledge that may traditionally be deemed to have little or no relevance in school. It suggests that students feel creatively enabled, which in turn creates more layered works, partially evident by the considerable amount of inferencing their works have required on our part. We believe that this creative enabling serves to intellectually involve students in a manner that is motivating, as it does not brand parts of their knowledge as irrelevant with no chance of creating a connection, but rather sees this knowledge as a resource.

Our research question, “How do students in the Norwegian year 7 English classroom respond to the use of a more reader-centric teaching method for fairy tales?” sought to determine whether an approach heavily focused on the students’ interpretations is well received and welcomed by the students. In attempting to answer this question, much of it was done inferentially, barring the questionnaire which specifically asks the students how well they

enjoyed working with the tale as well as other questions which may contribute to gaining an understanding. The overall impression we gathered from our teaching is that the students in very large part seemed to enjoy the work. Students mentioned many of the aspects they enjoyed. Some of these include doing something out of the usual, getting to choose how they work, specific working methods and so on. Of the 41 participating students, only one wrote that they did not enjoy the lessons. Not all student-productions were of the same quality, but the majority of students performed at least one activity well, suggesting again that students have their particular strengths. If we were to make a conclusion on whether a reader-centric approach is worth the investment, then, based on our experience, the answer is yes. We believe that this approach is only likely to improve in quality and efficiency as students grow accustomed to the working methods on offer as well as the idea of trying new working methods, as they may wish to explore options when repeatedly provided with the opportunity. As mentioned before, the process of getting accustomed to developing and sharing an authentic response cannot be expected to work as a simple switch. Continued work with this approach is required to see the true long-term benefits of it. In the short term, however, the results and reception has been positive.

The secondary research question, “How capable are students in the Norwegian year 7 English classroom of reading against a fairy tale without being instructed to do so?” aims to determine if a focus on authentic response could contribute to a strengthened ability to read against text. This is based on the assumption that authentic response encourages critical reading. Janks describes critical reading as such: “Reading critically is about understanding the ways in which a text is positioned and is working to position us, the readers” (Janks, 2019, p. 563). Our hypothesis was that creating an authentic response could inspire the students to read against the text in the sense of questioning the way characters and events are presented by the authors and exploring alternative ideas. Reading against the text does not necessarily mean that the reader disagrees with the text, it means that the reader is willing to question the text before forming their own opinions of it, which may or may not align with the bias presented in the text. Questioning the morals of characters and actions prevents the reader from being blind to the way in which the text positions them. The students who participated in this study showed different levels of ability to read against text upon being asked such questions relating to the fairy tale. Some students easily adapted to using their personal opinions and assumptions, whereas other students opted for close reading the text for answers. By reading against the text on their own and then listening to the differing opinions of classmates, while

under the impression that no interpretation is superior, the students explored different perspectives. The students practiced criticality when deciding whether to stick to their initial interpretation or let themselves be convinced by classmates to change their opinions.

6.1 Suggestions for further research

There is a wide variety of things that could have been done differently depending on what the educator in question would wish for their teaching. In our case, we chose to look at a specific tale. If one wanted to expand on our thesis, one could do like Lee (2020) and involve several versions of the same fairy tale to allow more readily for comparative critical analysis. One may take inspiration from Zipes (1993), who suggests a stronger focus on the historical context of spinning as a way of understanding *Rumpelstiltskin*. It is also a possibility to test our approach with students of other ages and nationalities. This could add different perspectives tied to age, language ability (itself tied to age and EFL/ESL/native proficiency) and national/local culture (e.g, trolls being popular in Norway, but not necessarily elsewhere). One may also choose to use this approach but take a different direction regarding background theories. For example, critical expressionism does not have to be contained to literary work. It could be applied to the modern political landscape as a means for students to practice activism. An example would be the way Comber et al. (2001) observed second and third grade Australian students produce local redevelopment plans with the aid of their teacher. The students noted problems that they encountered while on excursions in their local community and were then aided in gathering information from the authorities regarding these problems. In response to everything they learned, they produced their own redevelopment plans for their area (Comber et al., 2001). This shows a clear example of how taking a critical expressionism approach can lend itself towards activism. DeVogd and McLaughlin (2020) themselves provided a similar example where students had learned about clean water issues, and subsequently responded by creating a weekly podcast for discussing these issues. This shows that critical expressionism is as applicable to classroom work with texts as it is to societal activism.

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Rumpelstiltskin

SCENE 1

Once there was a miller who was poor, but who had a beautiful daughter. Now it happened that he had to go and speak to the king, and in order to make himself appear important he said to him, "I have a daughter who can spin straw into gold."

The king said to the miller, "That is amazing, if your daughter is as clever as you say, bring her tomorrow to my palace, and I will put her to the test."

And when the girl was brought to him he took her into a room which was quite full of straw, gave her a spinning-wheel, and said, "Now set to work, and if by tomorrow morning you have not spun this straw into gold during the night, you must die."

He locked up the room, and left her in it alone. So there sat the poor miller's daughter, and for the life of her could not tell what to do, she had no idea how straw could be spun into gold, and she grew more and more scared, until at last she began to cry.

SCENE 2

But all at once the door opened, and in came a little man, and said, "Good evening, mistress miller, why are you crying so?"

"I have to spin straw into gold, and I do not know how to do it," answered the girl.

"What will you give me if I do it for you?" asked the little man.

"My necklace," said the girl.

The little man took the necklace, seated himself in front of the wheel, and whirr, whirr, whirr, three turns, then again, whirr, whirr, whirr, three times round. And so it went on until the morning, when all the straw was spun to gold.

SCENE 3

By daybreak the king was already there, and when he saw the gold he was astonished and delighted, but his heart became only more greedy. He had the miller's daughter taken into another room full of straw, which was much larger, and commanded her to spin that too in one night if she valued her life. The girl did not know how to help herself, and was crying, when the door opened again, and the little man appeared, and said, "What will you give me if I spin that straw into gold for you?"

"The ring on my finger," answered the girl.

The little man took the ring, again began to turn the wheel, and by morning had spun all the straw into glittering gold.

The king was beyond delighted, but he still wanted more gold, and he had the miller's daughter taken into an even larger room full of straw, and said, "You must spin this, too, in the course of this night, and if you succeed, you shall be my wife."

Even if she is just a miller's daughter, he thought, I could not find a richer wife in the whole world.

SCENE 4

When the girl was alone the little man came again for the third time, and said, "What will you give me if I spin the straw for you this time too?"

"I have nothing left that I could give," answered the girl.

"Then promise me, if you should become queen, to give me your first child."

Who knows whether that will ever happen, thought the miller's daughter, and, not knowing what else to do, she promised the little man what he wanted, and for that he once more spun the straw into gold.

And when the king came in the morning, and found all the gold that he could have wished for, he took her in marriage, and the pretty miller's daughter became a queen.

SCENE 5

A year after, she had a child, and she forgot about the little man. But suddenly he came into her room, and said, "Now give me what you promised."

The queen was horror-struck, and offered the little man all the riches of the kingdom if he would let her keep the child. But the little man said, "No, something alive is more valuable to me than all the treasures in the world."

Then the queen began to cry, so that the little man felt sorry for her.

"I will give you three days. If by that time you find out my name, then you can keep your child."

SCENE 6

So the queen thought the whole night of all the names that she had ever heard, and she sent a messenger over the country to ask, far and wide, for any other names that might exist. When the little man came the next day, she began with Caspar, Melchior, Balthazar, and said all the names she knew, one after another, but to every one the little man said, "That is not my name."

On the second day she had asked for all the names in her neighborhood, and she repeated the strangest names to the little man. Perhaps your name is Shortribs, or Sheepshanks, or Laceleg, but he always answered, "That is not my name."

On the third day the messenger came back again, and said, "I have not been able to find a single new name, but as I came to a high mountain at the end of the forest, where the fox and the hare bid each other good night, there I saw a little house, and in front of the house a fire was burning, and near the fire a silly little man was jumping, he hopped upon one leg, and shouted -

Tonight, tonight, my plans I make

Tomorrow tomorrow, the baby I take.

The queen will never win the game

*For **Rumpelstiltskin** is my name!*

SCENE 7

You may imagine how glad the queen was when she heard the name. And when soon afterwards the little man came in, and asked, "Now, mistress queen, what is my name?"

At first she said, "Is your name Conrad?"

"No."

"Is your name Harry?"

"No."

"Perhaps your name is Rumpelstiltskin?"

"The devil has told you that! The devil has told you that," cried the little man, and in his anger he stomped his right foot so deep into the earth that his whole leg went in, and then in rage he pulled at his left leg so hard with both hands that he tore himself in two.

Appendix b – Lesson plan 1

Lesson 1

Preparations		Prepare x copies of <i>Rumpelstiltskin</i> and x copies of question sheet to hand out to students	
What	How	Why	
1. Reading of the brothers Grimm <i>Rumpelstiltskin</i> . (15 min.)	1. Teachers read aloud. Teachers are assigned a few characters each to voice. The students follow along by looking at a handout.	1. Both teachers partake in the reading as this was well received in the pilot lesson. The reading is done in plenum to ensure that all students get through the text before moving on to the task. The teachers do the reading so that they can pause to translate difficult words and so that the text is read effectively. While having the students read aloud would be great as an exercise, reading practice is not our main goal for this lesson. We have chosen to use <i>Rumpelstiltskin</i> due to its accessible language and plot. The reader will naturally question the characters and imagine alternative endings to the story, which are activities we will explore in later lessons.	
2. Students work with a question sheet, which includes five questions that relate to <i>Rumpelstiltskin</i> .	2. Students work in pairs with the question sheet.	2. Working in pairs might make the students more comfortable with sharing their answers in class later, especially as we are new to them. Working together and getting to share their thoughts with someone might also lead to heightened engagement. The reason for the	

The questions start out concrete (the students can find the answer in the text) and gradually move towards abstract (there are no correct answer; the students must share their own thoughts and opinions). When the students have answered the questions, they may draw a picture of <i>Rumpelstiltskin</i> . (30 min.)		questions going from concrete to abstract is that we want to challenge the students to develop their own interpretations and be creative. The first questions have in-text answers as we believe that students are accustomed to finding one correct answer per question. Gradually moving away from a place of familiarity to new ways of thinking is scaffolding strategy.
3. Students share their answers in class. (15 min.)	3. In-class discussion.	3. We want the students to share their answers to the questions to create a sense of community. The students have all heard the same story and should have similar answers to the concrete questions. The abstract questions, however, challenge the students to explain their answers. We hope that the students will find their classmates' answers to the more abstract questions interesting and inspiring, accept the possibility of there being multiple "correct" answers and realise that personal interpretation is valuable.
Competence aims for after year 7 that are relevant for this lesson		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Listen to and understand words and expressions in adapted and authentic texts - Read and listen to English-language factual texts and literature for children and young people and write and talk about the content - Express oneself in an understandable way with a varied vocabulary and polite expressions adapted to the receiver and situation 		

Appendix c – Lesson plan 2

Lesson 2

Preparations	Prepare x copies of information sheet, blank papers and coloured pencils
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What	How	Why
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain the new activity to the students. (10 min.) 2. Hand out the sheet with the available exercises. 3. Students choose an activity. 4. Students work with chosen activity. (30 min.) 5. Lesson ends. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To explain the activity, it will also be necessary to help students recall the tale of Rumpelstiltskin from the previous lesson. Once this has been done, the teacher can talk about the activity of the day, which is creating a “product” that tells the tale of Rumpelstiltskin from Rumpelstiltskin’s (the character) perspective. 2. The sheet will contain the various exercises and descriptive information about them. Some of the 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. However long the timespan is between the first two lessons, it is a good idea to ensure you have as many students as possible on board before heading into an activity that hinges on the previous lesson. The purpose of retelling the story is twofold; we believe it will help students develop the understanding that each story has more than one account, and secondly, that this retelling offers creative avenues for self-expression. 2. The handout is intended to inform students about the different activities to help them choose and get started, without being restrictive. 3. We wish to have a good number of activities to choose from for the purpose of promoting creative expression. The

	<p>exercises on the sheet contain tips to get started</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. The activities available for the students are poem writing, writing a diary entry, create a social media thread, hold an in-role interview, and making a comic. 4. In-role interview will have to be done in pairs, while the rest of the activities are designed to be done individually, though we are open to the idea that students may sit together if they produce their own piece of work. 5. This is all that is planned for this lesson. Students are, however, asked to choose either a new exercise or the same exercise with a different 	<p>students should feel that there are modes here that suit their tastes and allow them to show their “authentic” response, rather than partaking in a creatively stifling activity that does not utilize the source material to its potential and only aims to “academically” please the teacher.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. The in-role interview will naturally have to be done by more than one person. We believe a pairing is best suited. Students may be able to motivate each other and conjure up creative ideas if they sit together, which may be an aid in developing their individual work. 5. We already believe this plan may stretch for time, as such, we do not want to schedule anything else for this lesson. In the scenario that the lesson runs short, the ability to choose different combinations of exercises and scenes ensures that all the time will be utilized.
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Appendix d - Lesson plan 3

Lesson 3

Preparations		
		Prepare x copies of questionnaire, blank papers and coloured pencils
What	How	Why
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain the activity of this lesson. 2. Students write and alternative ending. 3. Present works 4. Summary 5. Questionnaire 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The students are asked to write an alternative ending to the tale "Rumpelstiltskin". 2. For this exercise, the students will have to do writing. They do this individually. 3. This could be in the front of the class, or from their own desk. 4. We will here attempt to summarize the work that has been done in the last three sessions with Rumpelstiltskin. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creating an alternative ending should be an exercise that is aided by the fact that they have already listened/read through the story and remade the story from the perspective of Rumpelstiltskin. 2. We have narrowed it down to one exercise for creating an ending. This is due to us wanting the creation of ending itself to take precedent over the mode of the response. Doing the same exercise like this makes it more practical to talk about the various interpretations, as all the students have the same starting point. Showing their authentic response is still being facilitated through working with the ambiguous ending of the tale. 3. The option of doing it from their own desk might make it more approachable. The
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. They work with the questionnaires individually at the end of the lesson. 	<p>goal is not necessarily a long-winded run-through, but whatever they feel inclined to share.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Here, we wish to gather their thoughts surrounding the tale of Rumpelstiltskin and the various responses they have to it, be it their initial interpretations, or a more gradually developed and personally authentic understanding of the work as a whole. 5. This is a brief questionnaire intended to give us an idea of how they enjoyed the three lessons, and what could potentially be altered for more success in the future.
Competence aims for after year 7 that are relevant for this lesson		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use simple strategies for language learning, text creation and communication - Write cohesive texts, including multimedia texts, that retell, tell, inquire about and express opinions and interests adapted to the recipient - Follow rules for spelling, word inflection and syntax - Read and listen to English-language factual texts and literature for children and young people and write and talk about the content 		

Appendix e - Worksheet

Rumpelstiltskin

1. What does the little man receive from the miller's daughter as payment for spinning straw into gold? Write a full sentence.

2. The miller's daughter cries when she has to spin straw into gold. Why is that? Write a full sentence.

3. Does Rumpelstiltskin have the right to take the miller's daughter's baby? Please write why/ why not in a full sentence.

4. Is there a bad person in the story? If yes, who is it? Is there more than one? Explain your choice in a full sentence

5. Does the story have a happy ending? Please write why/ why not in a full sentence.

6. What does Rumpelstiltskin look like (clothing, body, face, hair, etc...)?

7. Draw Rumpelstiltskin on the back of this paper



Appendix f – Task information sheet

The Perspective of Rumpelstiltskin

1) Poem

Write a poem from Rumpelstiltskin's perspective. A poem can be long or short. It can include rhyme, but rhyme is not required.

If you want to use rhyme, there are several types of rhyme to choose from.

Alliteration is when the words in a sentence start with the same letter.

Example: Seven sisters slept soundly on the sand

End-rhyme is when the end of a sentence rhymes with the end of another sentence.

*Example: Tonight, tonight, my plans I **make**, Tomorrow tomorrow, the baby I **take**.*

2) Social media thread

Create a social media thread. You are Rumpelstiltskin in this thread. Create a "post", with a comment section. This comment section can use all the characters from the tale. Rumpelstiltskin has to respond to their comments. Choose one scene.

Follow normal social media guidelines, meaning you need to behave when online

3) Diary entry

Rewrite a scene from the perspective of Rumpelstiltskin. Describe what he felt and what he did, and any other experiences. If you wish, you can start with "Dear diary", or "Today I...", or however you wish. Choose one scene

4) Comic

Create a comic from the perspective of Rumpelstiltskin. Use the appropriate bubble for the situation. Choose one scene.



5) In-role interview

Interview each other in pairs. Take turns being Rumpelstiltskin. The other person interviews him.

When you finish one activity, you can start a new one. You can also do the same activity again, but using a different scene

Appendix g - Questionnaire



Questionnaire

1. How did you like working with *Rumpelstiltskin*?

2. What could have been better?



3. Did you find these lessons to be challenging, just right or too difficult?

4. What did you enjoy the most about working with *Rumpelstiltskin*?

5. Are there other fairy tales you would like to work with in the same way? If so, which fairy tale(s)?

6. Do you like sharing your opinions in the classroom?



Appendix h – Interview guide

1. Did you perceive this as a fruitful lesson for the students?
2. What could/should have been done differently?
3. Did this teaching method seem age appropriate?
4. How did you interpret x student's engagement during this lesson as compared to the student's usual level of engagement?
5. Do you think the students have the necessary prerequisites (independence, imagination, inquisitively) for benefiting from such teaching?

**Are you interested in taking part in the research project,
“Working with Fairy Tales to help Norwegian year 7 ESL
students develop authentic response through the use of critical
expressionism and reader response theory”?**

This is an inquiry about participation in a research project where the main purpose is to assist year 7 students’ development of authentic response when working with text. In this letter we will give you information about the purpose of the project and what your participation will involve.

Purpose of the project

We wish to carry out three to four lessons in the English subject with focus on the fairy tale *Rumpelstiltskin*. We intend to assist the students in developing their own interpretation of the fairy tale and share their interpretation with classmates through one creative mode of response (there will be several options). Our goal is to encourage students to express themselves critically and creatively in the classroom. This focus aligns with the content of LK20’s section 1.4 *The joy of creating, engagement, and the urge to explore*, section 1.3 *Critical thinking and ethical awareness*, as well as the interdisciplinary topic *Health and life skills* in the English subject.

Our main research question is:

How can a combination of reader response theory and critical expressionism promote the development of authentic response when working with fairy tales in the Norwegian year 7 classroom?

For practical reasons, we have separated our main question into sub questions:

- *How does critical expressionism aid the application/usage of reader response in the year 7 classroom?*
- *How do students in the year 7 classroom respond to the use of a more reader- centric teaching method for fairy tales?*
- *How capable are students in the year 7 classroom of reading against a fairy tale?*
- *How can relevance theory help to explain our understanding of fairy tales?*

The research that we are doing will be used for a master’s thesis that is due spring 2022

Who is responsible for the research project?

Nord university is the institution responsible for the project.

Why are you being asked to participate?

We wanted to teach students in 7th grade because we think they would enjoy using fairy tales in the classroom. We also believe that students in 7th grade could benefit from practice in developing their own opinions, something we hope to teach them during this work. Our hope is to get a class with enough students for a decent sample size (roughly 20 or above). We also hope that we get to teach two groups of students (approximately 40 students in total) for the sake of sample size and so that we are able to compare the outcome of the lessons in different groups.

What does participation involve for you?

Data will be collected in a variety of forms, these include:

- Student produced writing
- One questionnaire
- One worksheet with questions
- Observation (by one active teacher and one passive)
- Various “modes of expression” (poetry, writing, drawing, comic, in-role interview, handmade social media thread)

The student produced writing is focused on the rewriting of Rumpelstiltskin’s ending and story (as separate tasks). The questionnaire is used to gather general opinions on how students liked the lessons. The worksheet asks questions about the fairy tale. Students will be able to choose among the “modes of expression”, meaning data will be collected based on the chosen method. The plan is to use three to four lessons to teach our content. All data is intended to be used in our thesis and will as such exist electronically.

The student’s regular teacher will be consulted in a semi-structured interview to add context to what we observe and experience in the classroom

Parents are free to request a viewing of any materials that will be used for data collection (questionnaire and worksheet with questions), as well as any data collected of their child after the lessons are finished.

Participation is voluntary

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

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

We will only use your personal data for the purpose(s) specified in this information letter. We will process your personal data confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation (the General Data Protection Regulation and Personal Data Act).

- We will require the participants’ first name, but all names will be made anonymous through the use of pseudonyms in the thesis. The names of the participants will only be available to the students working with the thesis and their supervisors.
- The participants’ age may be inferred as it will be revealed that they are in 7th grade.
- The master’s thesis will be read and evaluated by an extern examiner, who may have knowledge of the school in question but will not be informed of the students’ names.
- The master’s thesis may be published online.

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

The project is scheduled to end May 2022. Any data stored electronically will be deleted once the project is finished

Your rights

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

- access the personal data that is being processed about you
- request that your personal data is deleted
- request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified
- receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and

- send a complaint to the Data Protection Officer or The Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data

What gives us the right to process your personal data?

We will process your personal data based on your consent.

Based on an agreement with Nord University, NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with data protection legislation.

Where can I find out more?

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

- Nord University via Jessica Allen Hanssen ([REDACTED]) and Patrik Anders Bye ([REDACTED])
- Our Data Protection Officer: Toril Irene Kringen (personvernombud@nord.no)
- NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS, by email: (personverntjenester@nsd.no) or by telephone: +47 55 58 21 17.

Yours sincerely,

Project Leader
(Researcher/supervisor)

Student (if applicable)

Consent form

I have received and understood information about the project *Working with Fairy Tales to help Norwegian year 7 ESL students develop authentic response through the use of critical expressionism and reader response theory* and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent on the behalf of my child

- to take part in observational data.
- to have pictures taken of my work for the duration of this project (over the span of three to four lessons).
- to fill out a questionnaire relating to my opinions on working with the fairy tale *Rumpelstiltskin*.
- for my teacher to give information about me to this project (the teacher may be asked about their perception of my engagement in the project).
- for information about me to be published in a way that I can be recognised (it will be revealed that I am in 7th grade and that I go to school in Norway).

I give consent for my child's personal data to be processed until the end date of the project, approx. May 2022

(Signed by parent/guardian, date)

Appendix j – Approval from NSD

Vurdering

 Skriv ut

Referansenummer

759597

Prosjekttittel

Working with Fairy Tales to help Norwegian year 7 ESL students develop authentic response through the use of critical expressionism and reader response theory

Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon

Nord Universitet / Fakultet for lærerutdanning og kunst- og kulturfag / Grunnskole

Prosjektansvarlig (vitenskapelig ansatt/veileder eller stipendiat)

Jessica Allen Hanssen, [REDACTED]

Type prosjekt

Studentprosjekt, masterstudium

Kontaktinformasjon, student

Marit Sæther, Adrian Lorentzen, [REDACTED] administrasjon@nord.no, 01.02.2022

Prosjektperiode

01.02.2022 - 30.06.2022

Vurdering (1)

10.02.2022 - Vurdert

Det er vår vurdering at behandlingen av personopplysninger i prosjektet vil være i samsvar med personvernlovgivningen så fremt den gjennomføres i tråd med det som er dokumentert i meldeskjemaet 10.02.2022 med vedlegg. Behandlingen kan starte.

TYPE OPPLYSNINGER OG VARIGHET

Prosjektet vil behandle alminnelige kategorier av personopplysninger frem til 30.06.2022.

LOVLIG GRUNNLAG FOR UTVALG 1

Prosjektet vil innhente samtykke fra foresatte til behandlingen av personopplysninger om barna. Vår vurdering er at prosjektet legger opp til et samtykke i samsvar med kravene i art. 4 og 7, ved at det er en frivillig, spesifikk, informert og utvetydig bekreftelse som kan dokumenteres, og som den registrerte/foresatte kan trekke tilbake.

LOVLIG GRUNNLAG FOR UTVALG 2

Prosjektet vil innhente samtykke fra de registrerte til behandlingen av personopplysninger. Vår vurdering er at prosjektet legger opp til et samtykke i samsvar med kravene i art. 4 og 7, ved at det er en frivillig, spesifikk, informert og utvetydig bekreftelse som kan dokumenteres, og som den registrerte kan trekke tilbake. Lovlig grunnlag for behandlingen vil dermed være den registrertes samtykke, jf. personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a.

LOVLIG GRUNNLAG FOR TREDJEPERSON

Under datainnsamlingen kan det fremkomme personopplysninger om elevene som deltar i forskningsprosjektet. Lærere vil bli spurt om elevenes innsats. Denne informasjonen forekommer under intervjuene. Det skal bare registreres alminnelige kategorier av personopplysninger om tredjeperson. Tredjepersoner for informasjon og samtykker til behandling. Vår vurdering er at prosjektet legger opp til et samtykke i samsvar med kravene i art. 4 og 7, ved at det er en frivillig, spesifikk, informert og utvetydig bekreftelse som kan dokumenteres, og som den registrerte kan trekke tilbake. Lovlig grunnlag for behandlingen vil dermed være den registrertes samtykke, jf. personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a.

Lovlig grunnlag for behandlingen vil dermed være foresattes samtykke, jf. personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a.

PERSONVERNPRINSIPPER

NSD vurderer at den planlagte behandlingen av personopplysninger vil følge prinsippene i personvernforordningen om:

- lovlighet, rettferdighet og åpenhet (art. 5.1 a), ved at foresatte får tilfredsstillende informasjon om og samtykker til behandlingen
- formålsbegrensning (art. 5.1 b), ved at personopplysninger samles inn for spesifikke, uttrykkelig angitte og berettigede formål, og ikke viderebehandles til nye uforenlige formål
- dataminimering (art. 5.1 c), ved at det kun behandles opplysninger som er adekvate, relevante og nødvendige for formålet med prosjektet
- lagringsbegrensning (art. 5.1 e), ved at personopplysningene ikke lagres lengre enn nødvendig for å oppfylle formålet

DE REGISTRERTES RETTIGHETER

NSD vurderer at informasjonen om behandlingen som de registrerte og deres foresatte vil motta oppfyller lovens krav til form og innhold, jf. art. 12.1 og art. 13.

Så lenge de registrerte kan identifiseres i datamaterialet vil de ha følgende rettigheter: innsyn (art. 15), retting (art. 16), sletting (art. 17), begrensning (art. 18) og dataportabilitet (art. 20).

Vi minner om at hvis en registrert/foresatt tar kontakt om sine/barnets rettigheter, har behandlingsansvarlig institusjon plikt til å svare innen en måned.

FØLG DIN INSTITUSJONS RETNINGSLINJER

NSD legger til grunn at behandlingen oppfyller kravene i personvernforordningen om riktighet (art. 5.1 d), integritet og konfidensialitet (art. 5.1. f) og sikkerhet (art. 32).

For å forsikre dere om at kravene oppfylles, må dere følge interne retningslinjer og eventuelt rådføre dere med behandlingsansvarlig institusjon.

MELD VESENTLIGE ENDRINGER

Dersom det skjer vesentlige endringer i behandlingen av personopplysninger, kan det være nødvendig å melde dette til NSD ved å oppdatere meldeskjemaet. Før du melder inn en endring, oppfordrer vi deg til å lese om hvilke type endringer det er nødvendig å melde: <https://www.nsd.no/personverntjenester/fylle-ut-meldeskjema-for-personopplysninger/melde-endringer-i-meldeskjema>. Du må vente på svar fra NSD før endringen gjennomføres.

OPPFØLGING AV PROSJEKTET

NSD vil følge opp ved planlagt avslutning for å avklare om behandlingen av personopplysningene er avsluttet.

Kontaktperson hos NSD: Olav Rosness, rådgiver.

Lykke til med prosjektet!