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Bridging the reading gap:

An Exploratory Study into the Possibilities of Graphic Novels for Dutch teachers of English in Secondary Education.

Abstract

Dutch English as a foreign language education faces two challenging developments, namely the gap between the lingual school culture and the visual popular culture, and the transition from the lower forms to the upper forms marks a sudden shift from reading education to literature education. Secondary school pupils do not read less, but they read differently. This study argues that the graphic novel is a perfect tool that can bridge the gap between the two cultures and between the more reader-oriented lower years and more culture-oriented upper years. This study attempted to map the educational possibilities of the graphic novel for teachers in Dutch EFL education and was carried out in two third-year classes at a secondary school in the Netherlands. First, results were gathered from four third-year students who provided insights that were helpful for designing the materials and lessons. Subsequently, one havo and one vwo class participated in four lessons that used four graphic novels and thirteen different exercises. Interviews and questionnaires were used to gather the results. This study found that the success of the graphic novel is entirely dependent on the way it is implemented. Interesting results are that female participants enjoyed the exercises more and that the difficulty level of the graphic novels and exercises did not have an effect. The results suggest that selecting graphic novels and fragments that suit the student's interest is more important than selecting the right difficulty level.

Samenvatting

Het Engelse vreemdetalenonderwijs in Nederland heeft te maken met twee uitdagende ontwikkelingen, namelijk het verschil tussen de talige schoolcultuur en de visuele cultuur buiten de school, en de overgang van de onderbouw naar de bovenbouw markeert nog vaak een abrupte overgang van leesonderwijs naar literatuuronderwijs. Middelbare scholieren lezen niet minder dan vroeger, maar ze lezen vooral anders. Dit onderzoek toont aan dat de *graphic novel* een ideaal middel is om deze verschillen te overbruggen. Dit onderzoek had het doel om de educatieve mogelijkheden voor het Engelse vreemdetalenonderwijs in Nederland in kaart te brengen en is uitgevoerd in twee derdejaars klassen op een middelbare school in Nederland. Eerst zijn resultaten verzameld van vier derdejaarsleerlingen die inzichten hebben gegeven die nuttig waren bij het ontwerpen van de uiteindelijke lessen en materialen. Daarna hebben een vwo en een havo-klas deelgenomen aan vier lesuren waarin vier *graphic novels* en dertien opdrachten zijn ingezet en getest. De resultaten zijn verzameld door middel van interviews en enquêtes. Er is gebleken dat het succes van de *graphic novel* in het klaslokaal volledig afhankelijk is van de manier waarop het middel wordt ingezet. Interessante resultaten zijn dat meisjes meer plezier hadden in het maken van de opdachten dan jongens en dat de moeilijkheidsgraad van de opdrachten en de *graphic novels* geen effect had op hoe deze werd ontvangen. De resultaten suggereren dat het kiezen van *graphic novels* en fragmenten die bij de leerling passen belangrijker is dan het exact aansluiten bij het juiste moeilijkheidsniveau.

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1. Introduction

Nowadays, Dutch literature and reading education in secondary schools are subject to two major developments. The first development is the increasing difference between the current visual culture and the reading culture at school (SCP, 2013). According to Driessen, the visual culture entails digital texts that require a new type of reading that is different from the reading taught in secondary schools (2013, p. 6). Bridging this gap is important for a variety of reasons, such as increasing motivation and reading pleasure among students, and improving reading proficiency. This chasm could be bridged if reading education were to conform to student needs. Secondly, the introduction of the upper forms (Tweede Fase) in secondary education in 2007 has not yet bridged the gap between lower and upper forms (Ewalds, 2014). Ewalds investigated the transition between lower and upper years among teachers, library personnel and fifth year grammar school students at two Dutch secondary schools and found that English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers in the Netherlands still consider the transition "somewhat flawed" and according to them, bridging this chasm could significantly improve students' reading proficiency and pleasure (2014, p. 59). This research investigates a relatively new phenomenon in foreign language education: the graphic novel. The graphic novel is a medium that can support language acquisition, because it is multimodal (text and image) and motivating. Combining the challenge of the dominant visual culture with the lingual and visual character of the graphic novel, begs the question what the educational possibilities are for the graphic novel in the Dutch secondary foreign language classroom. The graphic novel can be the medium that provides a solution/answer to the two aforementioned developments because of its lingual and visual character. The graphic novel provides educational possibilities to bridge the gap between the students' visual culture and the reading culture in school (Van den Bossche, 2010, p. 51).

1.1 The importance of literature in the EFL classroom

The use of literature in the foreign language classroom is important, because it develops language acquisition, provides cultural background and critical thinking skills (Bloemert, Jansen, & van de Grift, 2016, p. 170). Gillian Lazar is the author of the comprehensive guide *Literature and Language Teaching* that provides tools to incorporate literature in the classroom by means of a language-based approach. According to Lazar, using literature in the language classroom is important because it improves pupils' interpretative abilities, language awareness, language acquisition and because it is an entry to themes on cultural background. (1993, pp. 15-19). Although she notes that literature is primarily meant for the upper forms because of its effectiveness, she acknowledges its relevance for lower forms as well.

1.2 Graphic novels in education

The graphic novel is not new as a medium or genre, but its use in the classroom is. Gradually, more scientific studies have been carried out into graphic novels in the classroom, especially from countries with a powerful comic tradition, for example the United States and Belgium. Hardeman investigated why Dutch foreign language education hardly makes use of the graphic novel, despite foreign studies pointing out its potential (Bucher & Manning, 2004; Carter J. , 2008). Hardeman argues that a fundamental difference exists in literature education between the Netherlands and the United States. Where Dutch foreign language education has evolved to being reader-oriented, the United States has a culture-oriented reading tradition (Hardeman, 2015, p. 230; Carter J. , 2008, p. 55). Hardeman shows that Dutch secondary school pupils are relatively positive about the use of graphic novels in the classroom, although almost half of the participants (teachers and students) were not familiar with the medium (2015, p. 242). Similarly, 85% of the investigated teachers have not yet utilized the graphic novel in the classroom, even though a vast majority is willing to use it (Hardeman, 2015, pp. 242-243). Ultimately, whether graphic novels are used in the EFL classroom or not comes

down to the teacher. Illustrating the educational benefits of using the graphic novel in the EFL classroom may persuade them. Moreover, the idea in education that graphic novels are inferior to novels has gradually decreased over the last decades (Monnin, 2010, pp. XII-XIII).

1.3 Practical relevance of the graphic novel for Dutch learners of EFL

The practical relevance of the graphic novel for Dutch learners of EFL in the third class is the fact that it enriches the teacher's toolbox with a multimodal means that motivates students to read in a foreign language and can reduce the gaps between lower and upper forms and between popular visual literacies and the books used in class. This study will explore the possibilities for graphic novels in Dutch EFL education. The medium of the graphic novel was chosen because it is potentially a powerful means that combines target languages with visual images (Monnin, 2010, p. XIII). Possible advantages of this combination for pupils are the fact that it suits their zone of proximal development, is easy to accommodate to their interests, develops reading proficiency, motivates, stimulates use of the target language, provides opportunities to differentiate, makes them aware of the power of visual culture, and bridges the gap between young adult literature and adult literature (Van Gysel, 2012, pp. 171-174; Van den Bossche, 2010, p. 51).

1.4 Current scientific situation

To date, previous studies have primarily investigated teacher and student attitudes towards this medium. Research into the way graphic novels can be employed in the language classroom has been predominantly conducted in the United States. However, results from their culture-oriented reading culture cannot be unconditionally generalised to the reader-oriented culture in the Netherlands (Hardeman, 2015, p. 230). This study will be carried out within this context. In comics studies, the term 'graphic novel' has long been the centre of debate with many critics pointing out its limitations regarding other forms of narrativity than novels (Meyer, 2013, pp. 274-76; Baetens & Frey, 2015, pp. 7-8, 19).

2. Theoretical framework

Prior to exploring the educational possibilities, it is pivotal to provide a definition of the graphic novel, because this medium has frequently been regarded as comic stories published as a novel (Van Gysel, 2012, p. 172). However, this approach fails to recognize the vast variety of differences in form and content. Baetens and Frey call for a dynamic definition of the graphic novel, because differences between genres in the field of graphic literature and visual stories are minor (2015, p. 9). They define the graphic novel as "a medium, the key features of which can sit on a spectrum on whose opposite pole is the comic book. [The] features can be situated at four levels: (1) form, (2) content, (3) publication format and (4) production and distribution aspects" (Baetens & Frey, 2015, p. 8). Hardeman adds that the graphic novel is more intrinsically literary than the comic book, because of its narrative layers and its artistic illustrations (2015, pp. 231-32). However, Meyer is critical of the term 'graphic novel' pointing out that it does not cover the extent of the graphic narrative, because the term is limited to novels (2013, pp. 274-75). Meyer maintains the term 'graphic novel' because it plays an important part in comics studies, pointing out its shift in meaning. This study will adopt Baetens and Frey's definition, adding that concerning form, the graphic novel both respects the conventions of the comic book and at the same time attempts to explore new artistic expressions (Baetens & Frey, 2015, p. 9).

2.1 The graphic novel acting as a bridge

This section will argue that the graphic novel is an adequate medium to bridge the gaps between reading and literature education, between lower and upper years in literature education and between the visual culture and lingual culture at school.

2.1.1   The graphic novel combining reading and literature education
In this section, EFL education at Dutch secondary schools with regards to history and organization will be depicted. Subsequently, it will be argued that literature is no longer the

content of reading education, but rather attempts to increase reading skills and pleasure. The different kinds of relationships between reading and literature education are described by Lazar as: "1. The language-based approach, 2. Literature as content and 3. Literature for personal enrichment" (1993, pp. 23-24). It will be argued that graphic novels provide the possibility of combining multiple approaches. Prior to this, an overview of Dutch EFL education will be outlined.

Dutch secondary education is divided into three major levels, vmbo (lower vocational education), havo (higher general secondary education) and vwo (pre-university secondary education)[1], and a distinction is drawn between the first three years (lower forms) and the remaining years until the national exams (upper forms). The length of the upper forms differs per level as well as the guidelines set by the Dutch government. English is a compulsory subject in the entire secondary education. However, Dutch foreign language education is mainly focused on text comprehension, which is in line with the central exams (Bloemert, Jansen, & van de Grift, 2016, pp. 171-172). Schools tend to focus on the way the central exams are designed, because text comprehension makes up for fifty per cent of their final mark (Meijer & Fasoglio, 2007, pp. 13-14). Apart from the national exams, no governmental rules are imposed that limit teachers and schools in the way and the extent something should be taught and tested. The Dutch government has significantly reduced restrictions on teachers and secondary schools, influenced by the second Balkenende-administration reformulating the attainment targets in 2006 and the parliamentary committee Dijsselbloem in 2008 (Hulshof, Kwakernaak, & Wilhelm, 2015, p. 329; Parlement, 2008). Literature is only part of the school exams, which enables schools to determine the extent to which they place emphasis on literature education (Meijer & Fasoglio, 2007, p. 55). The wide variety of approaches that are allowed by the government make it more difficult to depict Dutch foreign language education

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[1] Hereafter, the Dutch equivalents will be used.

(Bloemert et al., 2016, pp. 183-185). Bloemert et al. have conducted exploratory research into the variety of approaches in Dutch EFL literature education. This research starts with the premise that literature is beneficial to language learners (2016, pp. 169-70). They also point out the increasing emphasis on the communicative aspect of a foreign language in secondary education (2016, p. 170). These developments can be observed by looking into the curricula set by the government and the CEFR, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, which will be investigated in 2.3.

The heavy emphasis on communicative language teaching in Dutch EFL education is a recent development. Up until the 1970's, literature education was culture-oriented by means of translating literature from a foreign language. The acquisition of a language was considered a side issue compared to the main objective of reading classic literature (Kwakernaak, 2016a, p. 12). However, Kwakernaak points out that this period was confronted with the so-called transfer problem: a chasm between being able to translate separate parts of a sentence and being able to use the language in a meaningful context (2016a, p. 13). This led to a new development in which being able to use grammar rules was regarded superior to knowing the rules. In the 1980's the communicative focus increased and authentic, meaningful contexts were considered important, which resulted in an improved possession of receptive skills. However, the transfer problem was still present, because this approach did not have its desired effects on productive skills (Kwakernaak, 2016b, p. 11). The attempts to make the student independent and let it develop self-efficacy in the 1990's reduced the use of target language (Kwakernaak, 2016a, p. 14). This thwarted the objective of acquiring a language by means of a natural process. The key role that literature had taken as the content of foreign language education was gradually detached and substituted for communicative language teaching (Hulshof, Kwakernaak, & Wilhelm, 2015, p. 404). Literature education shifted from the culture-oriented approach in the 1970's towards the current reader-oriented approach in which

reading pleasure and reader motivation have gradually become dominant. Lazar argues that reading literature for personal enrichment "helps students to become more actively involved both intellectually and emotionally in learning English, and hence aids acquisition" (1993, p. 24).

The graphic novel can be a means to ensure reading pleasure, because of its visual character, and can be the connection between reading and literature education. Graphic novels are a medium that contains a narrative of print-text and image literacies (Monnin, 2010, p. 2). As already described in the introduction, graphic novels convey a narrative in which the reader generates the meaning by establishing relationships between text and image and between panels. A vast number of graphic novels contain narratives that are communicative and stimulate the use of target language because of their multimodality, and can be more easily used for exercises in class than monomodal novels. By using graphic novels, each student can already participate and establish the content (to a certain extent) by observing the images only and can literature be successfully integrated in reading education. This is, for example, supported by Basal, Aytan and Demir's research into the influence of graphic novels on the learning of idiomatic expressions, and it turned out that students who read graphic novels performed significantly better (2016, p. 95).

2.1.2   Improving transition from lower to upper years

The transition from lower to upper years in Dutch foreign language education has been described by Hulshof, Kwakernaak and Wilhelm as a literature shock: because the lower forms are predominantly concerned with reading pleasure, the transition to the more abstract, literature-oriented upper forms can be experienced by students as a shock (2015, p. 391). Ewalds conducted research into the transition from lower to upper year with regards to Dutch literature education and concluded that this transition is still flawed. An improved shift from lower to upper forms can improve students' reading skills and increase their reading pleasure

(Ewalds, 2014, p. 59). Reading education in the lower forms often pursues the objective of maintaining and increasing reader pleasure by making sure students have the possibility to read texts they find interesting. Reading education often merges (to at least some extent) with literature education in the upper forms for a variety of reasons, one of them being encountering new cultures. A continued reading curriculum may provide the solution to the problems described above.

2.1.3   Transition from young adult literature to adult literature

The transition from lower to upper years also marks a shift from young-adult to adult literature. Because schools are not restricted to rules concerning what and when to read, it is difficult to make definite statements on this transition. Bucher and Manning as well as Hardeman point out that a graphic novel can be an adequate medium to bridge the transition from young adult literature to adult literature (2004, p. 68; 2015, p. 244). Kwakernaak calls for a so-called integrated, continued curriculum that organizes and plans literature education by means of Witte's six levels of literary development (2016, p. 398). These levels will be elaborated on in 2.2. This continued curriculum should attempt to create a transition from young-adult to adult literature that is comparable to the literary development of a student. Carter considers the graphic novel as a tool that can be used to pave the way for introducing adult literature from the canon (2008). In order for the graphic novel to be effective, Carter calls for a supplemental approach: regarding graphic novels as equal to other literary texts (2008, p. 50). This contrasts the current culture in which teachers regard graphic novels as secondary texts. Hardeman carried out research into Dutch teacher attitudes towards the use of the graphic novel in the classroom and found that only 15% of them uses the graphic novel, but an equally large group of teachers is open to using it in the future (2015, pp. 242-243). The educational possibilities of the graphic novel for the transition from young adult to adult literature stems from its easily accessible nature. It allows students to encounter new literary

techniques, genres and skills that are useful when reading adult literature (Hardeman, 2015, pp. 233-34).

2.1.4   The impact of the current visual culture

The third major development in which graphic novel can play a role is the chasm between the lingual school culture and the currently dominant visual culture. The extent to which the visual culture will influence the lingual culture is depicted by Burmark: "the primary literacy of the twenty-first century is visual … [Students must] be visually literate, they must learn to 'read' / interpret and produce visually rich communications" (Weiner & Syma, 2013, p. 5).

The current reading culture among secondary school students has changed in two ways: adolescents read less and differently (Driessen, 2013, p. 5; SCP, 2013). Driessen makes a distinction between two kinds of reading: reading a longer text online or offline, and reading digitally. The latter kind is relatively new and is a result from adolescents' use of smartphones and social media. Most of the time, this concerns skimming or scanning a text, while higher education demands students to read longer digital texts (Driessen, 2013, p. 5). De Vriend summarizes these developments by stating that literature education has shifted from text-oriented to reader-oriented education and that experiencing literature is more important than studying it (2005, p. 4). Surprisingly, Hardeman points out that even in the American culture-oriented attitude towards reading education, American pupils have a negative attitude towards reading books they cannot identify themselves with (2015, p. 230). Dutch culture-oriented literary education from the 1970's and earlier has been replaced by reader-oriented literary competence (Witte, 2008, p. 23).

The total amount of time reading non-visual media per day still decreases, which has been the case since the 1970's (SCP, 2013; Van Gysel, 2012, p. 170). However, when the new, rapid, fragmented way of reading is calculated as reading as well, adolescents read more than ever before (SCP, 2013). This may be accounted for by the fact that almost every student

has access to these media. However, researchers have disagreed on whether these kinds of reading are similar. Kempen and Van den Bossche acknowledge that both reading and visual culture have a linguistic nature, and therefore should not be treated as a false dichotomy. Kempen: "cognitive image processing cannot function without language processing and language comprehension cannot function without images" (1995). Vaessens in his article on the future of Dutch literature education concludes that nowadays what students read is mostly fragmented: "they create their artistic sources by browsing (…) in new media like films, visual arts, video-art, etc." (2006, p. 63). According to him this does not limit or forebode the end of literature, but literature has been and should always be thwarting and subverting (Vaessens, 2006, p. 63). He regards a mixture from conventional literature (written books) and new media good circumstances for meaningful literature education, provided that literature education is adjusted to student demands (Vaessens, 2006, p. 64). Visual culture consists of both linguistic and non-linguistic elements that provide schools with the opportunity to relate this new culture to reading and literature education. Scientists and educators should not discuss whether this is a welcome educational development or not, but how these new media can be used most advantageously. The overlap of the currently dominant visual culture, literature education, and reading culture, creates opportunities for new genres and new media, like the graphic novel.

Weiner and Syma call for using the graphic novel in an educative context because it actively engages students (2013, p. 5). Both Weiner and Syma as well as Carter call for teaching visual literacy in class, for example by means of graphic novels, and they point out its necessity (2013, p. 5; 2008, pp. 49-50). Finally, Carter points out that visual literacy is a relatively new territory in foreign language education and that graphic novels "can help bridge the gap between real-world literacies and values and school-centric literacies and values" (2013, p. 59)

2.1.5 Educational power of the graphic novel

The currently dominant visual culture provides literature and reading education with opportunities to make use of new genres, like the graphic novel. The graphic novel combines images and words, which is according to Carter an effective way to "foster comprehension and memory skills" (2008, p. 48). Plentiful research is carried out into the effects of visual images, such as Varnum and Gibbons who conclude that "there is a synergy between words and pictures in comics such that their combined effect is greater than or different from what might have been predicted" and Schnorr & Atkinson who discovered that "encoding words visually helps students remember twice as many words as those who only encode verbally" (Schwarz, 2006, p. 59; Carter J. , 2008, p. 48). Leber-Cook and Cook point out that the graphic novel potentially is an extremely useful medium to facilitate vocabulary acquisition in secondary education, because of its multimodality (2013, p. 29). A multimodal text is a text that can be decoded by different literacies, such as text and image (Leber-Cook & Cook, 2013, p. 27). In addition, Leber-Cook & Cook and Flanagan consider the graphic novel a great medium to facilitate the learning of rhetorical techniques, because graphic novels are replete with metaphors and symbolism (2013, p. 30; Flanagan, 2013, pp. 76, 79). Graphic novels also increase students' reading pleasure, students obtain confidence in reading, and it motivates them to read more books (Krashen, 2004, p. 8). However, it is not only the close relationship between word and image that creates meaning, but also the void between the visual and lingual information (Monnin, 2010, p. 12). This void is also present in the gutter, the gap between the panels of a graphic novel. The reader is constantly processing the relationship between the word and image within a panel, but also between panels. Reading a graphic novel is different from reading a book or watching a film, because in addition to paying attention to conversation, plot and characters, they also encounter visual elements, like (non-)sequential panels, colour, drawing style, etc. (Schwarz, 2006, p. 59). From Smith and Wilhelm's research it was concluded that graphic novels are one of the only media that are

able to hold the interest of young men, which highlights its educational power (Carter J. , 2008, p. 48). Monnin summarizes its power by pointing out that when teachers use more image-dominant literacies like the graphic novel, "students would most likely become more successful literacy learners" (2010, p. XIX).

2.2 Literary development

Witte designed an instrument to map adolescents' literary development, by means of six levels. By means of this instrument, it is possible to make more definite statements on their literary development and provide possible reasons behind it. Witte acknowledges the fact that exam requirements influence the way literature education takes shape (2008, p. 198). The higher the level the more the adolescent will be influenced by factors like curriculum standards and exams. Adolescents' literary development at level 1, 2 and 3 will mainly be concerned with personal factors (Witte, 2008, p. 205). Labeling the graphic novels in this research with Witte's levels makes it easier to categorize the books and offer more detailed recommendations. Witte has provided information on the reader, the text and the exercise for all six levels. An elaborate description of Witte's levels specified to the text can be found in Appendix A.

2.3 CEFR-levels

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is a means to classify levels of language proficiency. CEFR consists of six levels and their names are: A1 and A2 (basic), B1 and B2 (independent user), C1 and C2 (proficient user). The Common European Framework provides a comprehensive description of what skills and knowledge learners need to master in order to be able to communicate (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 1). To make the levels more flexible, A2+, B1+ and B2+ exist as well. An elaborate description of the CEFR-levels with regards to overall reading comprehension can be found in Appendix B.

Apart from the national exams, no governmental rules are imposed that limit teachers and schools in the way and the extent literature should be taught and tested. Stichting Leerplanontwikkeling (SLO), commissioned by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science[2] developed guidelines that are aimed to help schools with their school exams. The text comprehension test during the central exams at havo level predominantly consists of B2-exercises, with some B1-exercises, and at vwo level it consists of mainly B2-exercises combined with a few C1-exercises. Many teachers feel that the unilateral focus on text comprehension from the government does not do justice to the communicative purpose of a language. On the other hand, policy officers from the Ministry of Education feel that schools and educators do not enjoy the freedom and explore the possibilities they have.

2.3.1 Role of literature in Central Exam

Literature education occupies a subordinate role in the exam programmes of foreign languages and literature at havo and vwo level. It appears from the exam programme of the *College voor Toetsen en Examens[3]* that the havo student is only expected to support his reading experience from three literary works (2015, p. 26). This requirement requires language proficiency, but no profound knowledge of literature. At vwo level there are two more requirements in addition to the first: (1) being able to recognize and distinguish between different text types and use literary definitions, and (2) being able to present an overview of literary history and place the literary works in a historical perspective (College voor Toetsen en Examens, 2015, p. 26).

2.3.2 Role of graphic novels in teacher training

In documents that explore the content of teacher training and education (*kennisbases*) little to no attention is paid to graphic novels (Burghout & Gronheid, 2012). Attention is paid to the fact that there is a diversity of literary (sub)genres and techniques, but from the *kennisbases* it

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[2] Hereafter, the term Ministry of Education will be used.
[3] Dutch governmental organisation that is responsible for the quality and level of central exams in education.

appears that a clear-cut distinction exists between written, literary works and their visual, online adaptations. Media that sit on a spectrum between these two opposites, like the graphic novel, are disregarded (Burghout & Gronheid, 2012). It may be possible that individual teachers pay attention to them, but this could not be retrieved from these documents.

2.4 Research question

After having set the boundaries for this research, the main question for this research is the following: what educational possibilities do graphic novels offer to Dutch third year students at havo and vwo level in English foreign language education?

In order to respond to this research question, it will be specified into three sub-questions:

1. How can the graphic novel support combining literature with reading education for Dutch third year students at havo and vwo level in English foreign language education?

2. How can the graphic novel support bridging the gap between lower and upper forms for Dutch third year students at havo and vwo level in English foreign language education?

3. How can the graphic novel support bridging the gap between the lingual school culture and the students' visual culture for English foreign language education in Dutch secondary schools?

3. Methodology

        3.1 School context

This study was conducted at a medium-sized secondary school in the province of Utrecht. The student population consists largely of students that come from underprivileged neighbourhoods. Among other things, financial errors have led to additional control by the Education Inspectorate in the last decade and a decreasing number of students. Since a complete overhaul in the board approximately two years ago, early positive signs have resulted in a basic control by the Inspectorate. The author of this study is employed as an English teacher at this school.

As mentioned in 2.1.1, there are hardly any restrictions on the way reading and literature education should be taught. This school attempts to stimulate the reading culture in school by giving students the freedom to choose their books. Besides, every teacher has complete freedom how to approach reading in his or her foreign language class. Every student needs to read a certain number of books per year, in contrast with a fixed, compulsory list. This approach puts emphasis on the pupil's own responsibility and capability to select books that attract him or her and suit their current reading proficiency. Each book is worth a number of points varying from one to three, which indicates the level of difficulty. This approach is based on Witte´s levels of literary development (2008, pp. 505-510). He argues that literary education is most effective when it conforms to the student's proficiency level (Witte, 2008, p. 445). Witte has made an overview which type of books are suitable per literary competence level. This overview can be found in Appendix A. Although Witte's levels concern general literary competence, Novellist has expanded these levels to English books. Novellist is an online platform that attempts to list and provide information on English books suitable for the EFL classroom. These levels were used to distinguish between different ways of reading, to select graphic novels and to create exercises that suit the graphic novel. The current minimal

number of books that pupils have to read for the upper forms is eight, together being at least sixteen points (St-Gregorius College, 2016). The school's library has some comic books, but no graphic novels. The graphic novels that are used in this study are worth points for students' reading list, being additional motivation to participate in this study. Knowledge on English literature is only tested twice in the school exams: once on Neoclassicism and Romanticism in the fifth year of vwo and an oral exam on the books read in the last three years (St-Gregorius College, 2016).

3.2 Research method

This study uses a mixed research method to analyse the educational possibilities of graphic novels for Dutch third year students at havo and vwo level in English secondary foreign language education. In short: four students read four graphic novels and these students provided the input for the way in which the graphic novels were implemented in the two classes. The two classes were divided in small groups of four and they all read different fragments of the graphic novel. The data from this second sample was collected by means of a questionnaire. The table below provides a schematic overview of the procedure:

	Part one: small group (N=4)		Part two: large group (N=46)
1.	Participants completed a semi-structured, written questionnaire.	5.	Participants were divided into groups of four.
2.	Participants read two graphic novels each.	6.	Each group read a fragment from a graphic novel and completed an exercise provided by the teacher.
3.	Participants completed one exercise per graphic novel.	7.	Repeat step 6. Make sure each group reads a new fragment.
4.	Participants partook in a semi-structured interview.	8.	Participants individually participated in a semi-structured, written questionnaire.

Table 1 provides a schematic, chronological overview of the procedure.

In this section, the mixed research method will be explained before elaborating on participants, materials and procedure.

Data from this research was gathered qualitatively by means of semi-structured interviews and quantitatively by means of questionnaires. After providing a comprehensive overview of definitions of mixed methods research in social science, Burke Johson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner concur and provide the following definition: "Mixed methods research is the type of research in which a researcher … combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches … for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration" (2007, p. 123). Combining multiple approaches enables this research to observe the way in which graphic novels can be used in secondary schools better. The idea of different perspectives on the same object is called 'triangulation' and improves the accuracy: it "tends to be richer and more comprehensive" (Neuman, 2014, pp. 166-167). This research only adopted *triangulation in method*, which means that data was gathered qualitatively from semi-structured interviews and quantitatively from questionnaires, because they have complementary strengths (Neuman, 2014, p. 167). The methods were used sequentially. Triangulation of observers and theory was not included due to the limited extent of this research.

3.3 Participants

Two groups of participants were set up: a small group consisting of four participants and a large group consisting of one havo and one vwo class. All participants are currently in the third year of secondary school and learn English as a second language. Prior to providing detailed information of the participants, the sampling technique will be explained.

The small group was set up heterogeneously by means of the nonprobability sampling technique called quota sampling (Neuman, 2014, pp. 248-249). When a sample is created by means of quota sampling, it means that participants were selected because they were readily

available and in this case indicated interest in reading graphic novels. The quota in this small sample group is four. The main objective of nonprobability sampling techniques is not ensuring representativeness, but "identifying relevant categories [that] (…) deepen understanding about a larger process, relationship or social scene" (Neuman, 2014, p. 247).

3.3.1 Small group

The four participants were equally distributed concerning level and sex. One male and one female participant were selected from the havo class, and one male and one female student from the vwo class. The participants will be referred to as participant A to D. Participant A is a 14-year-old girl from vwo. She reads at least once a week and her CEFR level is approximately A2+. Participant B is a 14-year-old boy from vwo. He reads every day and his CEFR level is good (B1). Participant C is a 15-year-old boy and is currently in third year havo. His reading comprehension is estimated at B1+, which is excellent. While he predominantly reads in the holidays, he reads many digital texts on a daily basis. Finally, participant D is a 15-year-old girl from the havo class and her CEFR level is A2. The approximate CEFR-levels were determined by means of a CEFR self-assessment test, in which the participants needed to assess whether they would be able to complete the reading task or not. All four participants' mother tongue is Dutch, and participant D was raised bilingual with Turkish and Dutch. In the interview, she commented on this saying that she was raised bilingual but can hardly speak Turkish anymore. The participants were selected from the havo and vwo class on the basis of willingness and current reading proficiency scores. The latter distinction could potentially result in the bias that proficient students might be more inclined to read books, because it takes less effort, and therefore might attach more importance to reading graphic novels than less proficient students. However, this bias is reduced by the fact that each student is required to read a minimum number of books per year. Although the sample size is too small to draw any conclusions from a relationship between

the proficiency scores and the interview results, it is included to ensure diversity among the participants.

3.3.2   Large group

One havo and one vwo class were selected for the large research group. The havo class consists of 27 students: 14 male and 13 female. The vwo class consists of 19 students: 6 male and 13 female. An overview of the age and sex of these two classes can be found in table 2 below. Both the havo and vwo class are in the third year of secondary school. At the end of this school year, all students that are allowed to move to the next year will proceed to the upper forms. 42 students are fourteen or fifteen years old, one student is thirteen and three students are sixteen years old. Among the participants are no native speakers of English. Because the four participants from the first part belong to the same havo and vwo class in which the second part of the research will take place, they were asked to not attend these lessons. The table below provides an overview of the participants' age and sex per group.

Group	Male	Female	Age (in years old)
Small group (N=4)	2	2	14-15: all
Large group (N =46)	20	26	13: 1, 14-15: 42, 16: 3
Havo	14	13	
Vwo	6	13	

Table 2 provides an overview of the age and sex of the participants in the small and large group.

3.4 Materials

The materials that were used in this study are: four graphic novels, thirteen exercises, two questionnaires, four individual interviews with four students, and approximately fifty literary and digital, academic texts. All materials will be discussed, starting with the four graphic novels that were central to this research.

3.4.1 Corpus: four graphic novels

The corpus that was created for this study consists of four graphic novels that differ in theme, plot, layout, language and difficulty. This study opted for different graphic novels, because this provides the opportunity to select only graphic novels that suit the participants' interests for the large sample group. Each graphic novel will be introduced briefly and relevant specifications as well as reasons why this graphic novel suits the participants' and school's desires will be provided.

The following four graphic novels that were used in this study were selected based on characteristics created by Bucher and Manning. The graphic novel should have visual power, be content and age appropriate, and should have both text and images (Bucher & Manning, 2004, pp. 68-69). In addition, the Witte-levels from 2.2 and appendix A were used to select graphic novels that differ in the literary competence that is required to read the graphic novels.

3.4.4.1 Macbeth the Graphic Novel: Plain Text

This adaptation of William Shakespeare's play *The Tragedy of Macbeth* bridges the gap between the students' current reading proficiency and literary classics from over four hundred years ago. The play tells the story of two war captains, Macbeth and Banquo, who encounter three witches that prophesize Macbeth's reign over Scotland. Macbeth takes matters into own hands, which starts a compelling storyline of revenge and murder. While the original play would have been too difficult for pupils on A2+ / B1 level, the graphic novel is historically comprehensibly adapted, with colourful images and use of English suitable for students at B1 level. Fellow teachers individually estimated this novel at B1+ level. The Witte level of literary competence is 3: modest literary competence, mainly because *Macbeth the Graphic Novel* is written in plain English but has a complex structure. Because this book is set about 400 years ago, students may not be directly able to relate to the characters. However, the closed ending of this graphic novel fits better in Witte's second level. The Novellist-level of

Macbeth would be C3d/C3e. The C indicates adult literature, 3 means simple language, and d/e indicates literary nature. Because *Macbeth* contains deeper layers of meaning, adult themes like revenge and fate, and evolving characters, it is suitable for more challenging exercises as well.

> Shakespeare, William
> Macbeth the Graphic Novel: Plain Text
> > Pages   144
> > Lay-out   Full colour
> > ISBN: 978-1-906332-04-4
> > Publisher: Classical Comics
> > Illustrators: Haward, Jon; Dobbyn, Nigel & Erskine, Gary;
> > Themes: ambition, power, guilt, supernatural

3.4.4.2 Nimona

The protagonist in Stevenson's *Nimona* is a young girl, a heroine, who is able to shapeshift into any creature. She serves Lord Ballister Blackheart, a scientist and evil genius, who fights his enemy Sir Ambrosius Goldenloin. This graphic novel is great for educational purposes, because the compelling story deals with themes of morality and self-identity in a fun and light-hearted manner. This graphic novel is also great for teaching about the medium itself, because the panels start of simple (sometimes even sepia/white) and end up very colourful and expressive. The ramifications of this transition will be taken into account when selecting fragments for the large sample size. *Nimona* is suitable for students with A2 level onwards. Fellow teachers rated *Nimona* at B1/B2 level, because of its vocabulary use. The Witte level of *Nimona* is 2: limited literary competence, because of its simple structure and pace at which events succeed one another. The vocabulary use will be sometimes more challenging than the literary complexity. The Novellist-level is B2c or B3c, B because it concerns young-adult literature, 2 or 3 because it can be read between the ages 13 and 16, and c because of its relatively basic literary level.

> Stevenson, Noelle
> *Nimona*
> > Pages   272
> > Lay-out   Full colour (sometimes sepia / white)

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ISBN:          9780062278227
Publisher:     HarperCollins Publishers Inc.
Illustrator:   Stevenson, Noelle
Themes:        morality, heroes, self-identity
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3.4.4.3 Child Soldier: When Boys and Girls are Used in War

Michel Chikwanine was forced to join a rebel militia at the age of five. This non-fiction graphic novel tells the story of how he escaped and rejoined his family. It is suitable for use in the classroom, because it deals with notions of autobiography, war, bullying and problem of child soldiers. It makes adolescents aware of social injustice and provides opportunities for discussion and provides ways children can help solve these problems. This graphic novel can be read from A2+/B1 level onwards. Fellow teachers rated this graphic novel at B1 level. However, categorizing *Child Soldier* into Witte and Novellist-levels will not reveal the serious and dramatic nature of this non-fiction graphic novel. Witte's first level (very limited literary competence) is required to read *Child Soldier*, because it storyline is simple and lack deeper narratives, despite its violent and highly emotional nature. In addition, the main character is a child in the story and as the narrator he is sixteen years old, which corresponds with the students. The Novellist-level is B3b, B because it is young-adult literature, 3 indicates its difficulty level and b the literay competence level.

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Humphreys, Jessica Dee; Chikwanine, Michel
Child Soldier: When Boys and Girls are Used in War
        Pages          48
        Lay-out        Full colour
        ISBN:          9781445145655
        Publisher:     Hachette Children's Group
        Illustrator:   Davilla, Claudia
        Themes:        morality, heroes, self-identity
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3.4.4.4 Friends with boys

This graphic novel about friendship tells the story of a girl who starts high school after being home schooled. Her brothers have always been her only friends, but Maggie tries to change this in high school. This coming-of-age story is suitable for the classroom because students

may be able to relate to the protagonist. The title may be a bit misleading, because it does not deal with the issue of gender. The difficulty level of this graphic novel is A2/B1. Fellow teachers rated this graphic novel at A2 level. To be able to read *Friends with Boys,* a limited literary competence (Witte's second level) is required. The main character is a young girl, which fits in the first two literary levels, tension is interrupted sometimes and the main character reveals her thoughts. In addition, language use is simple and the structure is clear. However, this graphic novel does have a closed ending, which fits into Witte's level three and higher and the metaphysical events do not match the student's everyday experience. The Novellist-level is B2b, B meaning it targets a young-adult audience, 2 indicating it is suitable to 13-14-year-olds and b the limited literary competence that is required. The themes and characters may be more suitable to the female reader.

Hicks, Faith Erin
Friends with Boys
Pages	224
Lay-out	Black and white
ISBN:	9781250068163
Publisher:	Square Fish
Illustrator:	Hicks, Faith Erin
Themes:	friendship, coming-of-age, family drama

These four graphic novels are selected, because they vary in topic, layout, length, themes and difficulty. Additional arguments for selecting these particular graphic novels are provided above. By selecting graphic novels that differ on a number of levels, it is possible to examine among the four participants which graphic novels suit the student needs best. These results will provide the basis for the way in which these graphic novels will be implemented in the two classes. The difficulty level of the graphic novels is presented in CEFR-levels. Below a concise, overview which graphic novels were read by the participants:

Participant	Macbeth	Nimona	Child Soldier	Friends with boys
Participant A		*		*
Participant B	*		*	
Participant C	*		*	
Participant D		*		*

Table 3 gives an overview of which graphic novel was read by whom.

With regards to the difficulty of the four graphic novels, no CEFR-levels were given in the graphic novels or on the publisher's website. To make the estimation more reliable, two young English teachers who are familiar with CEFR-levels were asked to approximate the levels separately. They are not employed at the school this study was conducted.

3.4.2 Questionnaires

Each sample group completed a questionnaire. Prior to reading the graphic novels, the four participants completed a questionnaire concerning questions on general information, such as age and sex, reading behaviour, reading preferences, reading proficiency, attitude towards the current reading culture at school and reading culture at home. The questionnaire can be found in Appendix C. The questionnaire is based on Oberon's comprehensive research into Dutch literature education and Witte's research into literary development (Oberon, 2016; Witte, 2008). When designing the questionnaires, Neuman's quality requirements for valid and reliable questionnaires were taken into account. Neuman distinguishes between three sequence issues that may affect the results of the questionnaires: organization, order effects and context effects (2014, pp. 338-339). In short, the way the questionnaire is organized, for instance tone, setting, and question order, affects the results. Order effects are defined by Neuman as "a result in survey research in which a topic or some questions asked before others influence respondents' answers to later questions" (2014, p. 338). It was vital for this research to minimize order effects because the participants are expected to lack a strong view because of their age and, therefore, may be more easily affected by the context of the questions. This

research adopted Neuman's recommendation of using a funnel sequence from general questions to specific questions to decrease the effects above (2014, p. 339). The first set of questions (on reading patterns) was necessary to contextualize the results of the interviews. For example, a frequent reader of English novels will have less trouble reading a more difficult graphic novel, like *Macbeth*. Moreover, the questionnaire shed light on Driessen and Van Gysel's analysis that adolescents read less and differently. In addition, the second set of questions asked about reading in school, which revealed whether the school's approach to reading and literature education is fruitful.

The second questionnaire was completed by the 46 students from the havo and vwo class after the incorporation of graphic novels in the classroom has taken place. Because the 46 students differ widely in cultural background, questions were included that ask about the first language (use) and possible second languages. This questionnaire aims to provide information on the following categories set by Neuman: behaviour, opinion and expectations (2014, p. 317). Questions were asked about general information and the graphic novels and the exercises, such as utility, pleasure, difficulty level, whether the fragment stimulated to read the entire graphic novel, and whether they were able to comprehend the fragment and make the exercise without having read the entire graphic novel. The second questionnaire can be found in Appendix C. It shed light on the influence of sex, as described by Hardeman, and of school level. Is it necessary to treat the graphic novel differently in havo than in vwo? Moreover, questions on utility and pleasure provided feedback on the exercises, questions on the difficulty level gave information on the usefulness of the graphic novel, and questions were asked whether working with fragments is fruitful and feasible.

Because each participant read two fragments from two different graphic novels, the questions had to eliminate any possibility of ambiguity by asking the questions separately for each graphic novel. The two semi-structured questionnaires included both quantitative

questions (by means of Likert-scales) and qualitative questions (open-ended questions). The advantages of closed-ended questions are: ease of comparing and analyzing answers, they are less likely to be confusing and the student's level of articulation is less likely to be a drawback (Neuman, 2014, p. 333). The advantages of open-ended questions are: the participant is not restricted in his or her answers, can answer in more detail, clarify and justify his/her answer and "permit adequate answers to complex issues" (Neuman, 2014, p. 333). The results of the questionnaires will be analysed by means of the programme IBM SPSS Statistics 22.

3.4.3 Interviews

The four participants in the small research group were individually interviewed after having read two graphic novels. The interview was semi-structured and was conducted within the school at which the research takes place. This data collection method was used, because "face-to-face interviews have the highest response rate and permit the longest and most complex questionnaires" (Neuman, 2014, p. 347). In addition, nonverbal communication could be perceived by the researcher and extensive probes to request elaboration on a question could be used as well. A potential danger in using face-to-face interviews described by Neuman is interviewer bias (2014, p. 347). This risk was minimized by the semi-structured nature of the interview: the questions and themes that were addressed in the interview were formulated in advance. The researcher was free to deviate from this structure if it concerned follow-up questions. After the participants were asked what exercises they would use, they were shown four example exercises. In this order, the exercises could not influence the open question. The aim of this interview is reflecting on the use of graphic novels as a didactic tool to stimulate reading (pleasure) and the second language acquisition. Because the participants may not have been able to present their answers adequately in their second language English, the interview was carried out in Dutch. In this research, priority is given to the accuracy and adequacy of the answers rather than the probable learning effects of providing the answers in the second language. The interviews are included in the appendix D.

3.4.4 Exercises

The four example exercises that were used during the interviews were labeled, and are referred to by this label hereafter: Puzzle, Facebook, Ending, and Theatre. In the Puzzle exercise, students received approximately twenty panels and were asked to put them in the right order and finish the story. The Facebook exercise was a digital exploration of a character. In the Ending exercise, students were asked to write an ending to a fragment. Finally, the Theatre exercise was an act-out exercise of a passage in front of class. The participants were asked to give feedback on these example exercises. This feedback was used in the process of designing the final exercises for the large group experiment in class. These four exercises were used in the interviews because they vary in tools, subject, creativity, and liveliness. The Facebook-exercise uses digital tools, the Puzzle-exercise requires logical thinking to form a coherent plot, the Ending-exercise requires creativity, and finally, the Theatre-exercise is a lively activity that requires courage, understanding of the plot, and empathy. The Facebook and Puzzle-exercise are easier exercises on A1/A2-level and Witte's first level of literary competence. The Theatre and Ending-exercise are A2-level exercises that require Witte's second level. Because they differ greatly on various aspects, it was easier to grasp the participants' view on, for example, the students' willingness to act out in front of class. The main reason to deviate from most of these exercises in the final design is Witte's recommendation to only use non-generic exercises that are unique for a book (2008, p. 445).

Next, the exercises that were designed based on the findings from the interviews and the theory will be discussed. The exercises can be found in Appendix E. The CEFR and Witte level of the exercises can be found at the bottom of the exercises in Appendix E. The four exercises created for *Child Soldier* were labeled: Family, History, Style and Dilemma. The Family-exercises attempted to map the family relations of the main character and asked questions on the role of upbringing in this story. The History-exercise was a more challenging exercise in which students were asked to schematically draw the history of Congo as

described in the opening pages. Subsequently, they discussed the relationship between happiness and wealth. Students were finally asked to digitally search for the current situation in Congo. This exercise was meant for the advanced havo, and vwo participants. The students who completed the Style-exercise worked with an original copy of the book to analyse the importance and role of colour in the graphic novel. The final exercise on this graphic novel addressed the dilemmas the main character faces. Afterwards, this exercise has been improved by including definitions of useful literary terms, like main, minor, flat, and round character. The four exercises used for *Friends with Boys* were referred to as: Map, Open end, Girls and Boys, and Puzzle. The Open end and Puzzle-exercises were already described above. With regards to the Map-exercise, Hicks uses maps in this novel to describe the main character's impressions of the school, and students were asked to draw a similar map of the school they attend, with the same type of notes like Hicks uses. It is an exercise in which students creatively process the style-figure from the graphic novel. The Girls and Boys-exercise dealt with the relationship between the main character and boys or girls, and their personal experiences and opinions on this. The three exercises on *Nimona* were labeled Time, Character, and Critical reading. The time-exercise was unique, because the graphic novel combines 21th-century objects with an almost medieval setting. It also focused on the difference between fiction and non-fiction and their attitude towards it. The Character-exercise put emphasis on the fantasy-elements in this graphic novel, and asked discussion questions on the distinction between 'good' versus 'evil'. The final exercise on *Nimona* required a close-reading of the text, and started with the distinction between 'good' and 'evil' as well. However, this exercise progressed towards discussing whether the end justifies the means, and students had to come up with existing examples. The exercises on *Macbeth* were referred to as Dilemma and Men-Women. The Dilemma-exercise dealt with Macbeth's dilemma and the notion of fate. Finally, they had to come up with examples of situations like

in *Macbeth* by using their mobile phone. The Men-Women exercise dealt with the role of women and children in *Macbeth* and whether they considered it modern or old-fashioned. In most cases, the exercises aimed to establish a relationship between the plot and the students' daily life. In all cases, students were encouraged by the teacher to use the target language.

3.5 Procedure

This research is divided into two parts with a small group consisting of four participants and a large sample group of 46 participants. Firstly, the small sample group consists of four participants who differ in reading proficiency. The participants were selected on the basis of willingness and the most recent reading proficiency scores. They completed a semi-structured, written questionnaire on self-reported reading proficiency, reading preferences, patterns, frequency, etc. Subsequently, the four participants entirely read two graphic novels each. There are a total number of four graphic novels, thus each graphic novel was read twice, as illustrated in Table 3. Assigning graphic novels to participants was based on the results from the questionnaire, e.g. sex, preferences and reading proficiency. Lastly, individual, semi-structured interviews were carried out with the participants in order to collect data on the appreciation and the usefulness of graphic novels in the classroom.

Secondly, the large sample group consists of 46 participants from one havo and one vwo class. Each class was divided into six groups and each group read two different fragments from the graphic novels. The researcher divided the groups and assigned the graphic novels to these groups. Each group completed an exercise during class, which involved reading the fragment, group discussion, and sometimes creating an end-product. The exercises are based on Monnin's comprehensive overview of exercises suitable for discussing the graphic novel in an educative context as well as Carter's essay *What the -?* (Carter J. B., 2013). Groups were encouraged to move to the next exercise after fifteen to twenty minutes. Afterwards, each participant individually partook in a written questionnaire, which included

closed questions on general information like age, sex and mother tongue, questions on graphic novel appreciation, quality of the exercises, reading preferences, reading frequency, level of proficiency, and open questions on improving the use of the graphic novel in the classroom. Lastly, students individually reflected on these lessons and this data was gathered by conducting survey research by means of a questionnaire. In order to prevent students from misinterpreting or not comprehending the questions, all questionnaires were written and answered in Dutch.

With regards to reliability in qualitative research like this, Neuman states that is accepted that "different researchers or researches with alternative measures may find alternative results", because the setting cannot be replicated (2014, p. 218). This is especially true for qualitative research in the classroom.

4. Results

In this chapter, the results of the conducted research will be presented in chronological order, starting with the questionnaire that was completed by the four participants prior to reading the graphic novels. Subsequently, the results from the interviews with the four participants will be presented. These first two data collections form the first part of the research. Four lessons were designed based on the findings of the first questionnaire and the interviews. At the end of each lesson, every student filled in the questionnaire. Finally, the results of the second questionnaire will be presented. The two classes filled in this questionnaire after two lessons with graphic novels.

4.1 Results questionnaire 1

The first questionnaire was set up to create context for the results of the interviews. Moreover, this questionnaire functioned as an inquiry into what extent these participants are representative of the rest of the two classes. The questionnaire starts with background questions on sex, school level and mother tongue. Secondly, questions are asked about the participant's reading behaviour outside school. Lastly, it is important to ask questions on the reading culture at school, because it shapes the way graphic novels can be implemented best at this particular school.

The first set of questions on reading behaviour reveal that the four participants are divergent in terms of reading behaviour. The table below provides an overview of the results regarding reading behaviour in their spare time.

How often do you read?	Varies from 'mostly in the holiday' to 'every day', but three participants are frequent readers.
How often do you read digital texts?	Varies from few (two participants) to many (two participants).
How often do you read English books?	Varies greatly from 'hardly' to 'at least once a month'.
How often do you read comics / graphic novels?	Apart from one participant, they frequently read graphic novels / comics.

Table 4 illustrates the participants' responses to questions concerning reading behaviour in their spare time.

Overall, these results suggest that the participants form a diverse group with different reading behaviours. Graphic novels and comics are read somewhat more frequently than other texts. This may account for their willingness to participate in this research.

The second part of this questionnaire asked about the reading culture in school. The number of English books read in the lower years of secondary school is very low. Two participants have not read any book in the last two and a half years, apart from short texts. One participant has read half a book and one participant has read three. These results suggest that depending reading books on the student's initiative is not fruitful. This is highlighted by the fact that two participants are not stimulated by school to read books. It is interesting to note that this concerns the two havo participants, because the two vwo participants respond that they are stimulated by their teachers to read books. Finally, all participants responded 'language development of the student' to the question what is focused on by reading books in the classroom, and two participants also ticked the answer 'reading pleasure'. This fits in the shift towards the reader-oriented approach, depicted by Kwakernaak, Hulshof et al. and Lazar, in 2.1.1. No student answered 'reading literary works', which is in line with the school policy for reading in the lower years. Taken together, these results suggest that this is a diverse population and therefore increases the chance of being representative of the rest of the two classes. In addition, it may be concluded that reading at school depends heavily on the student's initiative.

4.2 Interviews

The interviews aimed to gather the students' attitude towards the four graphic novels, while also commenting on their usability for the EFL classroom regarding difficulty level and themes, and the way they would like to use the graphic novels in class. The interviews took place after the participants had read two graphic novels each. Every graphic novel was read by two participants. During the interview, the participants were asked how they would

implement this graphic novel into the EFL classroom. The four participants reflected on the difficulty of the graphic novel and provided helpful suggestions on which didactic methods might be suitable to process the fragment in a whole-class setting. The results of the interviews are sorted and assembled per graphic novel.[4]

4.2.1   Child Soldier

Both participants, male, indicated that *Child Soldier* is suitable for use in the EFL classroom. Both reported that they enjoyed reading *Child Soldier*. While participant B indicated that he enjoyed the comic format in itself, participant C attributed this to the fact that it is a true story. The latter was stimulated by this to finish the graphic novel, while participant B was stimulated because he was touched by the story, which was increased by the lay-out. Both participants reported that they do not find the graphic novel difficult to read and that it will suit most students' level at havo and vwo level in the third class. Participant B reported that he finds the themes in *Child Soldier* interesting, because they are real, and currently present in the news. Both find the themes and content of *Child Soldier* suitable to be used in class.

It was more difficult to answer the open question how they would like to see *Child Soldier* implemented into the classroom. According to participant B, the short length of *Child Soldier* opens up possibilities to read it at length with the whole-class and ask reading comprehension questions. Participant C would like to summarize (a part of) the graphic novel. After having showed the four example exercises, participant C was favourably disposed towards the puzzle, the open end and the acting exercise. Participant B was positive towards all four exercises. It is interesting that both participants were not stimulated by *Child Soldier* to read more graphic novels in the future, although acknowledging its suitability for the EFL classroom. Participant B is unlikely to read more graphic novels because he is already a frequent reader of Dutch and English comics.

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[4] For legibility and comprehensibility purposes, the transcripts are edited. The transcripts of the interviews are included as Appendix E.

4.2.2 *Friends with Boys*

Friends with Boys was received by the two participants, female, as useful to girls in the EFL classroom, but exercises regarding characters were not considered useful. Both participants enjoyed reading *Friends with Boys* for different reasons. Participant D elaborated that she enjoyed the comic format because it left little room for interpretation and liked the plot. Participant A enjoyed reading *Friends with Boys*, but would not read it again, since it lacked suspense and colour. Although it is useful regarding difficulty, there were, however, negative comments on the universality of the graphic novel, since both participants think that *Friends with Boys* would thematically be more suitable for girls than for boys.

In the classroom, participant A would hand out passages to groups and discuss what the fragment is about. Participant D mentions using the reading comprehension questions as well, but also thinks that writing an (alternative) end is a creative and effective means to use *Friends with Boys* in class. However, both participants were hesitant to recommend using the Facebook-exercise since only one main character features in *Friends with Boys* and they are uncertain whether there is enough information on other characters in the novel. Concerns were expressed by participant A and D about the theatre-exercise, reporting that they do not prefer it and questioning whether the students would dare to take the stage in front of the classroom.

A shared view amongst the two interviewees was that *Friends with Boys* had stimulated them to read more graphic novels in the future. In summary, these results suggest that *Friends with Boys* is suitable for the EFL classroom, but limitations were revealed regarding sex (more effective for female students) and that the lack of colour and diversity in characters must be taken into account when designing exercises.

4.2.3 *Nimona*

The participants regarded *Nimona* as very suitable for the EFL classroom. On the whole, *Nimona* was well-perceived by both participants, especially praising its plotline and

illlustrations. While participant A praised the graphic novel for its fantasy-elements and the way one of the character turns from evil to good, participant D praised it for its happy tone, colours, challenging vocabulary and unpredictability. Both interviewees commented that *Nimona* is suitable for the EFL classroom in terms of difficulty, and participant D felt that the slightly challenging vocabulary of *Nimona* was an additional reason to finish the book. When asked about themes, the participants agreed that they were original, and participant A especially enjoyed the changing behaviour of multiple characters.

If we now turn to the implementation of *Nimona* into the classroom, similar results occured in relation to *Friends with Boys*, but opinions differed as to whether the Facebook-exercise is feasible. While participant A said that it was more feasible, because more characters feature in *Nimona* and the author elaborates further on them, participant D thought that the exercise would not be an effective means. The remaining exercises were considered suitable as well as exercises that dive into the dilemma's that occur in the graphic novel.

In their final statements, both interviewees concluded that they were stimulated by *Nimona* to read more graphic novels in the future. Participant A was surprised by the short time it took to read the entire novel and participant D was positive about the vivid and colourful illustrations.In summary, for the interviewees *Nimona* is an effective and entertaining graphic novel that suits the needs and level of the students.

4.2.4   *Macbeth*

The plain-text adaptation of Shakespeare's classic was well-perceived by the two participants, but for different reasons. Both participants enjoyed the fantasy-elements in the graphic novel and participant C described the language use as pleasant. However, participant C was also critical of the setting, calling it 'medieval' and 'unoriginal'. Despite these deviating preferences, the two participants reported that they were stimulated from the beginning to finish *Macbeth*. Participant B commented in more detail that the witches forecast and Macbeth's fighting skills added to this stimulus. This latter remark fits into the fact that both

participants indicate that *Macbeth* may be better received by boys instead of girls. Both indicated that *Macbeth* is at least suitable for the more advanced EFL student.

Participant B reported that he would design exercises that put emphasis on the main character, because initially he is a noble knight, then turns untrustworthy and is good again in the end. Participant C would like exercises that use the graphic novel as a means to learn the English language, for instance by translating words or paragraphs and applying grammar to fragments of *Macbeth*. He also considers the open-end exercise a good means to deal with the graphic novel. Participant C was stimulated to read more graphic novels in the future by *Macbeth*, but participant B was not entirely convinced. On the one hand, he would read more graphic novels because *Macbeth* is more challenging and looks attractive, but on the other hand the difficulty might discourage him and others.

Overall, these results show that all four graphic novels are useful and suitable to the EFL classroom, but some are more universally applicable than others. While *Child Soldier* and to some extent *Nimona* can be used by both girls and boys, *Friends with Boys* and *Macbeth* are graphic novels that need to be implemented in all-female and all-male groups, respectively. With regards to the exercises, the alternative end and the puzzle exercises were well-received, although most participants were uncertain about the feasibility of the Facebook-exercise and about students' willingness to act in front of class.

4.3   Results questionnaire 2

The second questionnaire was completed by one havo and one vwo class after each lesson. Two lessons were used for this research per class, and two graphic novels were discussed per lesson. The exercises used in class can be found in Appendix E. In many cases, students expressed their preference for a certain graphic novel or exercise, which resulted in some exercises being practically ignored. Preferably, the participants would have been distributed equally between the exercises, but the fact that they chose to ignore an exercise sometimes

also indicates that the exercise lacked appeal. No conclusions can be drawn from these exercises, but they will not be recommended for use in the EFL classroom either. Every participant individually completed one questionnaire, which can be found in Appendix C. The overall response rate was very good. 100% of the vwo participants completed the questionnaire each lesson. In both havo 6lessons, all but one participant filled in the questionnaire, which may be accounted for by the fact that attendance was obligatory. The five questions containing invariables (from question six onwards) were allocated a number in order to create a scale, which allowed for calculating averages. In all cases, answer A was given number 1 and answer E number 5. The next section will be divided into three parts. First, the results regarding to sex and school level will be reported. Second, the results from the questions on usefulness, pleasure, etc. will be discussed, and the final section will report the results per graphic novel.

4.3.1 Influence of sex and school level

First the results from the nominal variables sex and school level on factors like pleasure, utility, perceived difficulty, stimulation to finish the graphic novel, and ability to comprehend the text from a fragment, will be analysed. An independent samples T-test revealed that only sex has a significant effect on pleasure ($p < .05$). While the mean score for female participants was 3.74, the mean score for male participants was 3.29. This may be accounted for by the fact *Friends with Boys* (and to a lesser extent *Nimona*) were considered by the interviewees suitable for female participants only. Next, an independent samples t-test revealed that the school level (havo or vwo) has a significant effect on stimulation to finish the graphic novel ($p < .05$). With a mean score of 3.67 vwo participants were significantly more stimulated than havo participants with a mean score of 3.18. Finally, school level also effected the ability to comprehend the graphic novel while only having read a fragment ($p < .05$). The mean score for vwo participants (3.94) was significantly higher than the havo participants' score of 3.23.

4.3.2   Results of utility, pleasure, and stimulation

Subsequently, we will look at what variables have had influence on each other and to what extent. The questionnaire asked students to comment on usefulness, pleasure, stimulation to finish the book, difficulty level and ability to comprehend the book based on a fragment. The results may reveal whether pleasure is dependent on the difficulty level or not, or whether a hedonistic reading attitude is fruitful. A linear regression analysis revealed that the variable stimulation has a significant effect on pleasure (p <.01). Students have more pleasure in doing the exercises when they are stimulated to finish the entire graphic novel. These results are in accordance with Stokmans' research who emphasizes the importance of pleasure in reading. She conducted a comprehensive research into reading behavior of 11 to 15-year-old students, and she found a significant positive correlation between a hedonistic reading attitude and the reading frequency (Stokmans, 2006, pp. 282-283). Next, the two variables usefulness of and pleasure in the exercise have a direct effect on each other (p < .05). The beta coefficients of two linear regression analyses showed that pleasure has slightly more effect on usefulness (B = .45) than vice versa (B = .38). This result suggests that ideal exercises are at least to some extent profitable for the student, which in turn increases his/her pleasure in doing the exercise. Thirdly, students are increasingly stimulated to read the entire graphic novel after they have completed an exercise that they consider useful. A linear regression analysis revealed that the dependent variable usefulness has a significant effect on the student's stimulation to finish the graphic novel (p < .05). Finally, students have more pleasure in doing an exercise, when they consider the exercise as useful and when they are stimulated to finish reading the book. However, a linear regression analysis showed that the extent to which students consider an exercise useful depends significantly on pleasure (p <.05), and not on stimulation to finish the book. It is surprising that the difficulty level has no significant effect on pleasure or stimulation to finish a graphic novel. The table below provides a schematic overview of the

significant results that were found. Differences that are not discussed turned out to be insignificant. (SCP, 2013) (SCP, 2013) (SCP, 2013)

Dependent variable	Independent variable	Sign.	R^2	B
Stimulation	Pleasure	$p < .01$	.21	.56
Usefulness	Pleasure	$p < .01$	.17	.38
Pleasure	Usefulness	$p < .01$	.17	.45
Usefulness	Stimulation	$p < .05$	.13	.27

Table 5 shows an overview of the significant results. The keywords in the variable-columns represent questions from questionnaire two.

4.3.3.1 Results on comprehension per graphic novel

Finally, the results per graphic novel will be discussed. This time, the completed questionnaires were sorted per graphic novel and analysed per school level. Firstly, the results suggest that vwo students are more able to comprehend a story without having read the entire graphic novel. Secondly, an independent samples t-test revealed that there is a significant difference between havo and vwo on whether they could comprehend *Child Soldier* without having read the entire book ($p < .05$). While vwo has a mean score of 4.41 on understanding, havo only has a mean score of 3.33. Graph 1 provides an overview of the responses to this question.
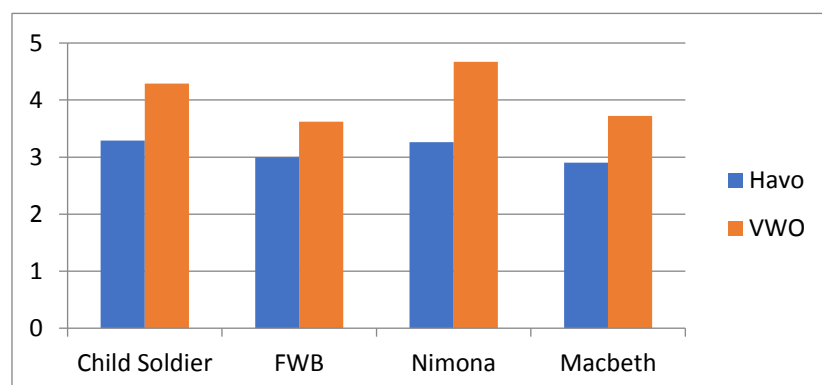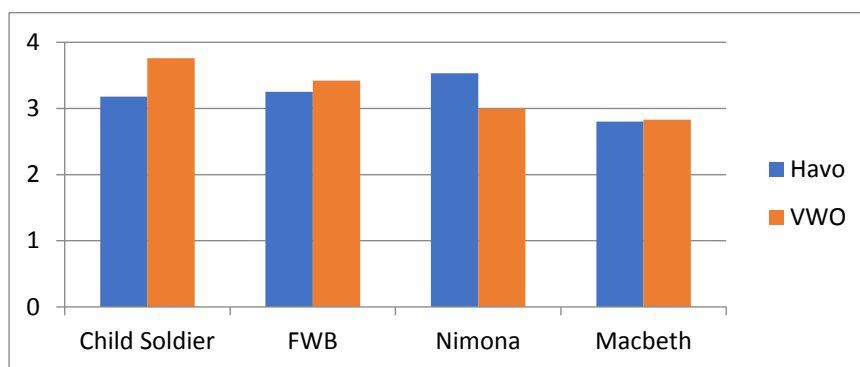

Graph 1 illustrating responses to the statement "I was able to comprehend the fragment without having read the entire graphic novel."

This pattern emerges in the results of *Nimona* as well. An independent samples t-test reported that vwo's mean score of 4.67 is significantly higher than havo's 3.26 (p < .05). Especially the History- and Style-exercises from *Child Soldier* were rated highly by both havo and vwo students with mean scores of 4.44 and 4.29 respectively. A possible explanation for this is the fact that these two exercises were based on the starting pages of *Child Soldier*, making it easier to comprehend the context. Besides, one hard-copy version of the graphic novel was available for the Style-exercise, which may have had a positive effect, because they were able to browse through the entire novel and they had more information on the use of colour.

4.3.3.2 Results on difficulty per graphic novel

Surprisingly, havo participants do not consider graphic novels in general more difficult than vwo participants do. The ideal difficulty level of a graphic novel differs per individual. The answers were ordered in such a way that answer 3 represents "exactly at my level". A score of 1 means that the novel was too difficult and 5 that it was too easy. An independent samples t-tests revealed that there is a significant difference between the havo and vwo participants in difficulty of the graphic novels *Child Soldier* and *Nimona* (p < .05). With a mean score of 3.88, vwo participants regarded *Child Soldier* significantly easier than havo participants (3.17). In contrast, havo participants considered *Nimona* with a mean score of 3.53 significantly easier than vwo participants (3.00). The different nature of the two graphic novels, in terms of genre, plot, characters, etc., may explain these results. While it was assumed that *Macbeth* would be perceived as increasingly difficult by havo participants because of its vocabulary use and historical genre, no significant differences were found between the two groups. Other differences that are not discussed turned out to be insignificant.

Graph 2 illustrating responses to the question "How difficulty/easy is the graphic novel?"

4.3.3.3 Results on utility per graphic novel

An independent samples t-test showed that there is only a significant difference between havo and vwo participants on utility for *Friends with Boys* ($p < .05$). Graph 3 below shows the results on comprehension per graphic novel. The difficulty level of the graphic novels could explain these results, because the two fellow teachers assigned a lower CEFR-level to *Child Soldier* (A2) than to the other graphic novels. *Child Soldier* was rated highest for utility, but was rated low for pleasure, which is understandable following the serious themes discussed in the graphic novel. Having pleasure is not the objective when making exercises about this graphic novel.
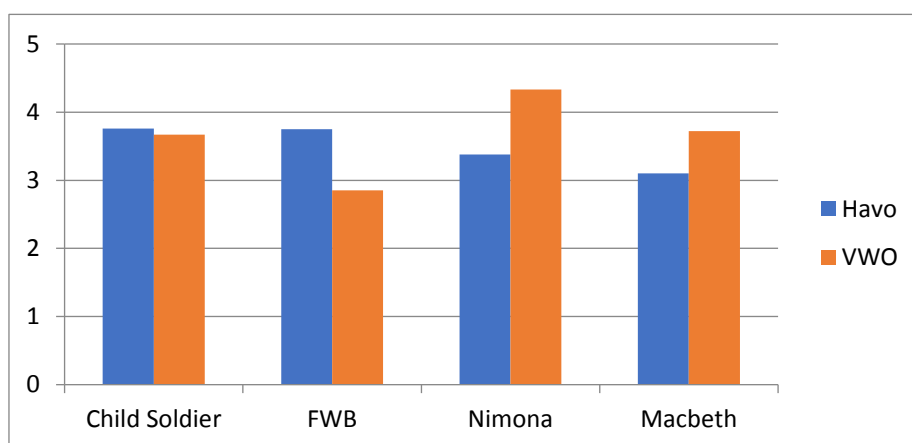
Graph 3 illustrating responses to the statement "The exercise was useful".

In conclusion, school level does make a difference when designing exercises about graphic novels. Havo students find it more difficult to work with fragments and are less stimulated to finish the graphic novel than vwo students. Surprisingly, difficulty level does not have a

significant effect on factors like utility and pleasure. The results suggest that selecting graphic novels that suit the students' interest is more important than selecting the right difficulty level. However, students rate graphic novels better when they are slightly above their current reading comprehension level than when they are too easy. Finally, utility of and pleasure in doing the exercises have a significant influence on each other. This should be taken into account when designing exercises for graphic novels.

5. Conclusion

Despite the limitations of this research that were mentioned in the discussion, this research has yielded some important results for research into the implementation of graphic novels in foreign language education. The main goal of the current study was to determine the educational possibilities of graphic novels for the EFL classroom. The main problems in the EFL classroom that were discussed in the theory are the gaps between the lower and upper years, between reading and literature education, and between the lingual school culture and the students' visual culture. While prior research has indicated that the graphic novel may be a perfect means to bridge these gaps, it lacked studies that implement the graphic novel in the Dutch EFL classroom and assess the effect of school level and sex on factors like pleasure in and utility of the exercises. Contrary to other studies, this research has identified that female participants had more pleasure in completing the exercises than male participants. In addition, the importance of selecting the right fragments is one of the main results of this study. Vwo participants are significantly better in working with fragments due to their increased metacognitive skills, while havo students in general may benefit from larger fragments or even entire graphic novels. The results of this study suggest that selecting graphic novels that suit the students' interest is more important than selecting the right difficulty level.

Dutch EFL teachers who intend to incorporate the graphic novel should note that lower year students dedicated the majority of the time to completing the exercise instead of reading the fragments. While this approach stimulated students to close read the fragments, it did not entirely pursue the school policy to stimulate the actual reading of the graphic novel. A possible solution for this problem is ensuring that the graphic novel is read in advance as part of the homework. From the graphic novels that were used for this study are *Nimona* and *Child Soldier* especially suitable for third-year students of havo and vwo. *Macbeth* is more suitable to the more proficient third-year student. This work contributes to existing knowledge

on graphic novels in the Dutch EFL classroom by providing an approach that assesses its educational possibilities and pitfalls by means of implementing a wide range of different exercises, for Dutch third-year students of English. While the results and recommendations from this research may be especially useful to the teachers and third-year students at this secondary school, it also provides suggestions and a starting point for more extensive research on the way graphic novels should be implemented. In conclusion, the graphic novel can be a highly useful educational tool for the EFL classroom, but its success is mainly dependent on whether the graphic novel suits the student's interest and the way in which it is used in class.

6. Discussion

This study aimed to explore the way in which the graphic novel can act as a bridge to third year students of havo and vwo in the EFL classroom. Several problematic gaps were discussed in the theory, namely the void between the lower and upper forms, the sudden transition from a focus on pleasure to literature education, and lastly, the gap between the students' visual culture and the reading culture in school.

A noteworthy result of this research is that girls significantly had more pleasure in completing the exercises than boys. Surprisingly, this contrasts with several studies that found that the graphic novel is the ideal tool to enhance reading pleasure among boys (Hardeman, 2015, p. 235). This could be explained by the nature of the graphic novels. In the interviews, the two participants who had read *Nimona* and *Friends with Boys* both indicated that they would suit female groups best. Another striking result is the fact that the difficulty level of the graphic novel has no significant effect on utility, pleasure, and not even on stimulation to finish the graphic novel. It could be the case that normally too difficult graphic novels are rated well when they increase reading pleasure. Van den Bossche points out that graphic novels can be both easy and challenging at the same time: it is easy to increase reading pleasure, but it can be challenging to read and comprehend particular images (2010, p. 51). Although difficulty level seemed to have no effect on the results, a significant difference was found between the havo and vwo class regarding ability to comprehend the story based on a fragment. The results per exercise reveal that exercises are rated better on comprehension by havo and vwo when they involve the opening pages of a graphic novel. Because the results suggest that this is simply dependent on school level, it may change the way graphic novels should be implemented in different school levels. Afterwards, (havo) students indicated that they preferred reading an entire graphic novel over a longer period instead of dealing with fragments. Whether this approach is fruitful should be subject to further research.

Generally, education profits from a good student-teacher relationship. However, the fact that I teach English to the participants may have influenced the results. Although the students were promised that the results would be analysed and reported anonymously, there is some potential bias in the results of the interviews. By carrying out an individual interview with a student, there is a potential that the participants are less critical than that they would have been with an unknown interviewer. To ensure that every participant would receive the same questions, they were formulated beforehand. In addition, the participants from the small group were selected on the basis of willingness. It could potentially have resulted in the bias that students might be more inclined to read books, because it takes less effort, and therefore might attach more importance to reading graphic novels than less proficient students. Gathering information from this small group of participants fits my conviction that students profit from education that is tailored to their needs. However, a drawback to this approach is that results obtained from this research are less applicable to other schools.

In this research, graphic novels have been approached like regular novels, instead of putting emphasis on the characteristics of the medium itself. The only exercise that looked at these characteristics was the Style-exercise in *Child Soldier.* The graphic novels were approached this way because the participants are still in the lower years and the school attempts to stimulate reading pleasure rather than studying the graphic novel as a device. Naturally, it is possible to ask more proficient students basic questions on the effect of colour and drawing style on reading experience, but questions on the gutter between the panels are more suitable to upper year students, as described in 1.1.5. While lower-year students subconsciously process the relationship between the panels, upper year students may be developed more awareness of this process and they can be asked questions on this technical aspect of graphic novels.

Unfortunately, because the havo lesson on Tuesday was late in the afternoon and because I had published marks an hour prior to this class, there was an unpleasant atmosphere resulting in a small group unwilling to participate. This may have had a negative effect on the results on Tuesday. The reliability could have been better when the two hours per class were adjacent to each other.

Another crucial aspect of this research is fragment selection. Fragments were used instead of reading an entire graphic novel, because of time restrictions. The drawback of this approach is that students do not have the context that is sometimes needed to complete more detailed exercises. Moreover, the results showed that havo participants had more trouble completing the exercises while only having read a fragment. One possible explanation for this result is that vwo students in general may possess more metacognitive skills, for instance comprehension, reasoning, and problem solving (Woolfolk, p.315). While vwo students may be motivated by fragments because they consider them puzzles, they might demotivate havo students. In addition, the difference between the two levels may be slightly biased because the vwo class is relatively more proficient in comparison with other vwo classes, while the havo class is not. To minimalize the lack of context, many fragments from the start of the graphic novels were used.

Unfortunately, the sample size of this study is not large enough to draw general conclusions from. The sample size for independent samples T-test should be larger than thirty participants per group (De Vocht, p. 160). This study does not meet this minimum, because of the class sizes. Nevertheless, the results were analysed because the results can be meaningful to this school and to third year students of havo and vwo in similar settings. However, more and larger research is needed to draw definitive conclusions on this topic. In conclusion, although some results appeared to be statistically significant, different approaches and more evidence are needed to safely draw general conclusions. It would be interesting to see

subsequent research approach the graphic novel more as a medium that is fundamentally different from a book, and research in which the participants read an entire graphic novel instead of fragments.

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Appendix A: Witte's levels of literary competence

The labels and definitions of the text can be found in Witte's *Het oog van de meester* (2008, pp. 528-533). The definitions used in this appendix are funneled down to the books that fit the literary competence level. Witte's levels were used to categorise and analyse the graphic novels in 3.4.

Level	Label	Definition
1	Very limited literary competence	"The books suitable for these students are written in simple, everyday language and are closely linked to the experiences of adolescents in terms of content and characters. The storyline is clear and simple, with exciting or dramatic events succeeding one another at a rapid pace. There are few structural elements, such as thoughts or descriptions, to interrupt the action."
2	Limited literary competence	"The books suitable for these students are written in everyday language, have a simple structure and relate to their experiences. Although the books are written for adults, the main character is usually an adolescent. There is a dramatic storyline in which actions and events succeed one another at a fairly rapid pace. It is not particularly problematical if the tension is interrupted from time to time by thoughts and descriptions. These students prefer a closed ending."
3	Modest literary competence	"The books suitable for these students are written in simple language and have a complex but nonetheless transparent structure with a deeper layer of meaning alongside the concrete one. The content and characters do not relate directly to the experience of adolescents, but the story addresses issues that interest them. …. Inasmuch as the text contains complex narrative techniques … these tend to be explicit. The story confronts the reader with questions that may remain unanswered and usually has an open ending."
4	Fairly broad literary competence	"The books suitable for students at this level are written in a 'literary' style and are not immediately related to the world of adolescents in terms of content and characters. This makes the storyline and character development less predictable. The literary techniques used are somewhat complex. These techniques encourage the reader to interpret the text."

5	Broad literary competence	"The books suitable for students at this level not only contain characters and themes that are far removed from their own experience, but may also differ greatly from what they are accustomed to in terms of language use and literary conventions. … With modern novels, we observe an increase in the complexity of the novel structure, which is characterized by ambiguities and implicitness, as well as by technical and stylistic refinements."
6	Sophisticated literary competence	"The texts suitable for these students are written in a fairly inaccessible literary style which may include experimental forms and styles. They have a multi-layered, complex structure, making it difficult … to interpret its meaning. The text has symbolic features and contains references to other texts and knowledge that are essential for a proper understanding."

Appendix B: CEFR-levels

The following CEFR-levels are specified to overall reading comprehension. All can-do statements on overall reading comprehension can be found in the framework designed by the Council of Europe (2001, p. 69).

CEFR-level	Label	Can-do statements on overall reading comprehension
A1	Breakthrough	"Can understand very short, simple texts a single phrase at a time, picking up familiar names, words and basic phrases and rereading as required."
A2	Waystage	"Can understand short, simple texts on familiar matters of a concrete type which consist of high frequency every day or job-related language." "Can understand short, simple texts containing the highest frequency vocabulary, including a proportion of shared international vocabulary items."
B1	Threshold	"Can read straightforward factual texts on subjects related to his/her field and interest with a satisfactory level of comprehension."
B2	Vantage	"Can read with a large degree of independence, adapting style and speed of reading to different texts and purposes, and using appropriate reference sources selectively. Has a broad active reading vocabulary, but may experience some difficulty with low frequency idioms."
C1	Effective Operational Proficiency	"Can understand in detail lengthy, complex texts, whether or not they relate to his/her own area of specialty, provided he/she can reread difficult sections."
C2	Mastery	"Can understand and interpret critically virtually all forms of the written language including abstract, structurally complex, or highly colloquial literary and non-literary writings." "Can understand a wide range of long and complex texts, appreciating subtle distinctions of style and implicit as well as explicit meaning."

Appendix C: Questionnaires

Questionnaire one

This questionnaire attempts to provide background information which will aide analysing the interviews. It was completed by the four participants.

Algemene vragen:

1. Geslacht
   a. Man
   b. Vrouw
2. Leeftijd

   ....

3. Schoolniveau
   a. Havo
   b. Vwo
4. Moedertaal (meerdere mogelijk):

   ....

De volgende vragen gaan over jouw leesgedrag buiten school:

5. Hoe vaak lees je in je vrije tijd?
   a. Ik lees niet of nauwelijks in mijn vrije tijd
   b. Ik lees voornamelijk in de vakanties
   c. Ik lees ten minste 1 keer per maand
   d. Ik lees ten minste 1 keer per week
   e. Ik lees iedere dag

6. Hoeveel lees je digitaal (boeken/ korte teksten /nieuws)?
   a. Zeer weinig
   b. Weinig
   c. Gemiddeld
   d. Veel
   e. Zeer veel

7. Wat is jouw leesvaardigheidsniveau voor het vak Engels?
   a. Zeer laag
   b. Laag
   c. Gemiddeld
   d. Goed
   e. Zeer goed

8. Hoeveel Engelstalige boeken lees je?

   a. Ik lees niet of nauwelijks Engelstalige boeken in mijn vrije tijd

      b.   Ik lees voornamelijk Engelstalige boeken in de vakanties

      c.   Ik lees ten minste 1 keer per maand Engelstalige boeken

      d.   Ik lees ten minste 1 keer per week Engelstalige boeken

      e.   Ik lees iedere dag Engelstalige boeken

9. Hoeveel stripboeken / graphic novels heb je in welke taal dan ook het afgelopen jaar gelezen?

      a.   Ik lees niet of nauwelijks stripboeken / graphic novels in mijn vrije tijd

      b.   Ik lees voornamelijk stripboeken / graphic novels in de vakanties

      c.   Ik lees ten minste 1 keer per maand stripboeken / graphic novels

      d.   Ik lees ten minste 1 keer per week stripboeken / graphic novels

      e.   Ik lees iedere dag stripboeken / graphic novels

De volgende vragen gaan over de leescultuur op school:

10. Hoeveel boeken heb je voor Engels in de onderbouw tot nu toe gelezen:

      a.   Geen, maar wel korte teksten

      b.   1 boek

      c.   2 boeken

      d.   3 boeken

      e.   4 boeken

      f.   Anders, namelijk ....

11. Word je op school gestimuleerd om (boeken) te lezen?

      a.   Ja

      b.   Nee

12. Zo ja, hoe word je door school gestimuleerd om (boeken) te lezen?

13. Waar ligt de nadruk bij het lezen voor school bij het vak Engels?

      a.   Leesplezier van de leerling.

      b.   Taalontwikkeling van de leerling.

      c.   Het lezen van literaire werken.

      d.   Anders, namelijk ....

Einde van de vragenlijst

Questionnaire two

This questionnaire was completed by the havo and vwo classes and aimed to gather information on the students' opinion on the graphic novels and the exercises.

Algemene vragen:

1. Geslacht
   a. Man
   b. Vrouw
2. Leeftijd

   ....

3. Schoolniveau
   a. Havo
   b. VWO
4. Moedertaal (meerdere mogelijk):

   ....

De volgende vragen gaan over de opdrachten die je gemaakt hebt in de les:

1ᵉ ronde

5. Welke opdracht heb je in de eerste ronde gemaakt?
   a. Child Soldier – Family
   b. Child Soldier – History
   c. Child Soldier - Style
   d. Child Soldier – Dilemma
   e. Friends with Boys - Map
   f. Friends with Boys – Open end
   g. Friends with Boys – Girls and boys
   h. Friends with Boys – Puzzle
   i. Nimona - Time
   j. Nimona - Character
   k. Nimona – Critical reading
   l. Macbeth - Dilemma
   m. Macbeth – Men /Women

6. Stelling: de opdracht was nuttig.
   a. Mee oneens
   b. Enigszins mee oneens
   c. Neutraal
   d. Enigszins mee eens
   e. Mee eens

7. Stelling: Ik had plezier in het maken van de opdracht.
   a. Mee oneens
   b. Enigszins mee oneens
   c. Neutraal
   d. Enigszins mee eens
   e. Mee eens

8. Wat is volgens jou de beste manier om het gelezen fragment te verwerken in de les?

9. Hebben de afbeeldingen van de graphic novel je gestimuleerd om het verhaal verder te lezen?
    a. Helemaal niet gestimuleerd
    b. Niet gestimuleerd
    c. Gemiddeld
    d. Wel gestimuleerd
    e. Zeer gestimuleerd

10. Hoe moeilijk/makkelijk vond je de graphic novel?
    a. Te moeilijk
    b. Een beetje te moeilijk
    c. Gemiddeld (Precies op mijn niveau)
    d. Een beetje te makkelijk
    e. Te makkelijk

11. Reageer op de volgende stelling: Ik was in staat het fragment van de graphic novel te begrijpen zonder het hele boek gelezen te hebben.
    a. Mee oneens
    b. Enigszins mee oneens
    c. Neutraal
    d. Enigszins mee eens
    e. Mee eens

Einde van de vragenlijst

The questionnaire that was handed out in class contained another identical round of questions as well for students who completed two exercises in one lesson.

Appendix D: Interviews

Interview participant A   **Utrecht 1 February 2017 (13:00-13:20)**

Friends with Boys

C: Heb je plezier gehad in het lezen van *Friends with Boys*?

P1: Ja, op zich wel leuk maar ik weet niet of ik hem nog een keer zou lezen. Het was wel een leuk verhaal, maar het was niet heel spannend.

C: Zou je nog een keer een soortgelijke graphic novel in dit genre willen lezen?

P1: Ja, maar dan vond ik Nimona leuker.

C: Heb je nog andere dingen die je wel of niet aanspreken bij deze graphic novel?

P1: Ja, *Friends with Boys* is helemaal zwart-wit. Het is niet stom, maar met kleur vind ik leuker. En het boek had een open einde en ik heb voorkeur voor een gesloten einde.

C: Heeft *Friends with Boys* je in het begin gestimuleerd om het helemaal uit te lezen?

P1: Ja, ik heb het in één ochtend uitgelezen. Het Engels was niet heel moeilijk; het was goed te begrijpen. En zo'n strip kan ook heel snel lezen.

C: Wat vond je van de moeilijkheid van het boek?

P1: Het was te doen. Er waren wel een paar woordjes die ik niet begreep, maar ik kon het verhaal nog helemaal begrijpen.

C: Denk je dat het qua moeilijkheidsgraad bruikbaar is in de klas?

P1: Ik denk het wel qua moeilijkheid. Ik weet niet of iedereen het leuk vindt. Ik denk dat jongens het boek minder leuk gaan vinden. Dan zou ik toch eerder *Nimona* gebruiken.

C: Zijn de thema's van *Friends with Boys* bruikbaar voor de les?

P1: Het kan, het is niet onbruikbaar, maar ik zou het niet als eerste inzetten. Als je hoort waar het verhaal over gaat denk je dat het best wel droevig is, maar als je *Friends with Boys* leest dan valt het ergens nog wel mee.

C: Stel dat je de klas opdeelt in groepen, hoe zou je *Friends with Boys* behandelen in deze groepen?

P1: Misschien zou ik het in fragmenten lezen en dan bespreken waar het over gaat.

C: Wat vind je van een opdracht waarin de groep een in stukken geknipt fragment in de goede volgorde moet leggen en daarna het verhaal verder moet schrijven?

P1: [aarzelend] Ja, bij deze opdracht is het vooral leuk om er mee bezig te zijn, niet alleen waar het over gaat maar dat je er ook echt iets mee moet doen.

C: Wat vind je van een opdracht waarbij je meer focust op de hoofdpersoon door er een Facebook-profiel van te maken?

P1: Deze opdracht hebben we bij het vak Nederlands gedaan. Het zou wel kunnen werken bij *Friends with Boys*, maar je hebt maar één persoon waar je echt genoeg over te weten komt in het boek. Daar zou het wel mee kunnen, maar met de rest van de personen wat minder. Je hebt wel de broers, maar daar is niet veel over bekend.

C: Wat vind je van een opdracht waarbij je het open einde leest en daarna zelf verder moet schrijven?

P1: Zoiets is heel leuk, omdat het past bij het boek. Je moet het boek echt lezen om te weten waar het over gaat.

C: Wat vind je van een opdracht waarbij je een fragment leest en dat gaat opvoeren in een toneelstuk?

P1: Ik vind dat soort opdrachten niet zo leuk, maar het kan voor anderen heel erg leuk zijn.

C: Ben je door *Friends with Boys* gestimuleerd om meer graphic novels te gaan lezen?

P1: Ja, want een graphic novel is best goed te lezen omdat er plaatjes bij staan en dan heb je ook sneller een idee waar het over gaat. En ik vind het leuker dan een normaal boek.

C: Denk je dat een graphic novel daarmee een goed middel is om Engels te leren?

P1: Ja, het is op een of andere manier wel gewoon leuker lezen dan een gewoon boek. En daarbij komt dat je sneller een graphic novel pakt en leest.

Nimona

C: Heb je plezier gehad in het lezen van *Nimona*?

P1: Ja die vond ik echt leuk, omdat het fantasy was en ook heel onverwacht was. In het begin leek die man echt heel erg slecht en uiteindelijk was hij toch nog een soort van goed.

C: Dus het feit dat het fictief is en ook fantasy-elementen heeft sprak je aan?

(Vocht, 2011)P1: Ja

C: Heeft het begin van de graphic novel je gestimuleerd om het helemaal uit te lezen?

P1: Het begin ging iets langzamer, maar dat kwam misschien ook omdat het vakantie was. Maar op een gegeven moment kom je net voor het midden en dan ben je wel heel benieuwd hoe het af gaat lopen, omdat je toen voor het eerst zag dat ze helemaal ging veranderen.

C: Heeft de lay-out invloed gehad op de leesbaarheid?

P1: [Aarzelend]. Ik vind het leuker dat er kleur was.

C: Vond je *Nimona* moeilijk of makkelijk?

P1: Ik vond het te doen. Het was op mijn niveau.

C: Denk je dat het qua moeilijkheid bruikbaar is voor de hele klas?

P1: Ik denk het wel, want ik ben niet de beste in leesvaardigheid, maar ook niet de slechtste.

C: Wat vond je van de thema's in *Nimona*?

P1: Leuk. Het meisje dat steeds verandert en daar uiteindelijk nog best een verhaal achter had sprak mij aan. En ik vond het leuk dat die man eerst heel slecht leek , maar uiteindelijk toch de redder was. Je ziet personen veranderen door het boek heen.

C: Zijn er nog andere thema's of gebeurtenissen die je aanspraken?

P1: De slechterik en de goede waren vroeger wel vrienden, en ze hadden een heel ander verhaal over hoe het was gegaan. En later bespreken ze dat je sommige dingen heel anders kan ervaren.

C: Zijn de thema's daarmee bruikbaar voor in de les?

P1: ik denk het wel.

C: Je hebt best veel fantasy-elementen in *Nimona*, maakt dat nog uit voor de rest van de klas?

P1: Ik denk het niet, ik denk dat best veel kinderen dit leuk vinden.

C: Hoe zou je *Nimona* behandelen in de les?

P1: Ik denk dat het acteren bij *Nimona* lastiger is, maar de rest van de opdrachten zouden kunnen. Je hebt ook iets meer personen in dit boek voor de Facebook-opdracht.

C: Wat zou je vinden van opdrachten waarin je de dilemma's uit het boek krijgt voorgeschoteld?

P1: Ja, dat zou goed zijn.

C: Zou je fragmenten uit *Nimona* kunnen pakken en die kunnen behandelen zonder de rest van het verhaal te weten?

P1: Ja hoor, bijvoorbeeld het stukje dat ze voor het eerst iemand wil doden. Dat is wel een leuk en interessant stukje. Dan vraag je jezelf voor het eerst af of ze wel zo goed is.

C: Ben je door *Nimona* gestimuleerd om meer graphic novels te gaan lezen?

P1: Ja

C: Zijn er nog andere dingen die je kwijt wilt over *Nimona*?

P1: Ja, ik had verwacht dat het veel langer zou duren, maar dat viel heel erg mee. Het lezen ging eigenlijk heel erg snel. *Nimona* heeft bijna 250 bladzijdes maar dat heb je heel snel uitgelezen.

Interview participant B   **Utrecht, 2 February 2017 (13:00 – 13:20)**

Child Soldier

C: Laten we met *Child Soldier* beginnen. Het klinkt misschien raar, maar heb je plezier gehad in het lezen van deze graphic novel?

P2: Ja, ik vind strips lezen altijd leuk.

C: Komt het puur omdat het strips zijn of specifiek *Child Soldier*?

P2: Het komt doordat ik strips lezen altijd leuk vind.

C: Waren er ook dingen die je minder aanspraken in de graphic novel?

P2: Nee

C: Heeft *Child Soldier* je in het begin gestimuleerd om het boek helemaal uit te lezen?

P2: Ja, want het begint met dit is mijn waargebeurde verhaal en dan wil je wel verder lezen. En je hebt het boek in een half uur uitgelezen.

C: Vond je *Child Soldier* moeilijk of makkelijk?

P2: Nou ik vond hem niet heel moeilijk.

C: En hoe denk je dat het voor de rest van de klas zal zijn?

P2: Ik weet niet precies hoe goed ze kunnen lezen. Sommigen zullen er iets meer moeite mee hebben, maar voor de meesten zal het zeker te doen zijn.

C: Denk je dat *Child Soldier* qua moeilijkheid bruikbaar is in de les?

P2: Ja

C: Wat vond je van de thema's in de graphic novel?

P2: Interessant.

C: Wat vind je interessant aan de thema's?

P2: Het is actueel. Zeker vroeger, maar nu is het minder in het nieuws. Heel veel problemen in Afrika worden verzwegen.

C: Wat vond je van andere thema's in *Child Soldier*, zoals opvoeding, jeugd of ouder-kind relatie?

P2: Dat Michel een klein jongetje is spreekt mij ook aan. Het gebeurde echt zo. De vader wist waarschijnlijk al dat er iets ging gebeuren, maar zei dat hij gewoon thuis moest zijn. Maar de jongen luistert niet naar zijn vader en de rebellen plukken de kinderen daarna gewoon van straat af.

C: Zijn de thema's die we net hebben besproken bruikbaar in de les?

P2: Ja

C: Hoe zou je deze thema's van *Child Soldier* behandelen in de les?

P2: Ik denk dat je de graphic novel in de les moet uitdelen en dan bijvoorbeeld eerst iedereen een kwartier laten lezen. Of dat je elke les een stuk leest, want het duurt niet lang om *Child Soldier* te lezen.

C: Zou je ook een fragment kunnen pakken uit *Child Soldier* en dat behandelen?

P2: Ja, dat zou wel kunnen, maar *Child Soldier* is zo dun dat je hem wel in een halve les kunt uitlezen.

C: Wat voor oefeningen zou jij met *Child Soldier* willen doen in de les?

P2: Ik zou veel begrijpend lezen-vragen stellen.

C: En wat vind je van vragen over de ethische dilemma's in het boek?

P2: Ja, dat zou ook kunnen.

C: Wat vind je van een opdracht waarin de groep een in stukken geknipt fragment in de goede volgorde moet leggen en daarna het verhaal verder moet schrijven?

P2: Ja, dat zou wel werken.

C: Wat vind je van een opdracht waarbij je meer focust op de hoofdpersoon door er een Facebook-profiel van te maken?

P2: Ja het werkte goed bij het vak Nederlands. Om de opdracht te maken moest je daarvoor het boek goed gelezen hebben.

C: Wat vind je van een opdracht waarbij je het open einde leest en daarna zelf verder moet schrijven?

P2: Ja, dit zou werken, maar of het leuk is hangt af van de graphic novel. Het gaat beter als je zelf je eigen boek mag kiezen.

C: Wat vind je van een opdracht waarbij je een fragment leest en dat gaat opvoeren in een toneelstuk?

P2: Ja, dit werkte ook goed bij het vak geschiedenis. Je moest jezelf echt in het onderwerp verdiepen.

C: Ben je door *Child Soldier* gestimuleerd om meer graphic novels te lezen?

P2: Nee, niet per se door dit boek want ik lees al heel veel strips en boeken.

Macbeth

C: Wat vond je van *Macbeth*?

P2: Ik vond het moeilijker dan *Child Soldier*, omdat de verhaallijn best moeilijk te volgen was.

C: Heb je plezier gehad in het lezen van *Macbeth*?

P2: Ja, maar minder plezier dan in *Child Soldier*, omdat ik de verhaallijn beter kon begrijpen.

C: Waren er nog meer dingen daar van invloed op waren, denk aan stijl, kleurgebruik, thema's.

P2: De achtergrond van *Macbeth* was heel donker. Soms ziet het er wel erg duivels uit.

C: Heeft *Macbeth* je in het begin gestimuleerd om het verhaal verder te lezen?

P2: Ja, vooral door de voorspelling en omdat er werd gezegd dat hij goed kon vechten.

C: Maakte het uit dat er veel fictieve fantasy-elementen in het verhaal terugkomen?

P2: Nee. Ik denk dat het voor de klas ook niet uitmaakt.

C: Vond je *Macbeth* moeilijk of makkelijk?

P2: Best wel lastig, maar wel te doen. Soms moest ik het even opnieuw lezen.

C: Je zegt dat het best moeilijk is, maar te doen is als je het een paar keer opnieuw leest. Is het daarmee bruikbaar voor in de les?

P2: Zou wel kunnen, maar het hangt echt af van het niveau van de klas.

C: Wat vond je van de thema's van *Macbeth*?

P2: Ik vond het spannend of *Macbeth* de koning wel of niet zou vermoorden en wat zijn vrouw ervan zou vinden.

C: Zijn de thema's bruikbaar voor in de les?

P2: Ja, maar ik denk dat *Macbeth* vooral jongens gaat aanspreken.

C: Hoe zou je de inhoud en vorm van deze graphic novel behandelen in de les?

P2: Bijna hetzelfde als *Child Soldier,* want ik zou bij *Macbeth* meer focussen op de hoofdpersoon, omdat hij eerst goed was, toen slecht en toen weer goed.

C: Ben je door *Macbeth* gestimuleerd om meer graphic novels te gaan lezen in de toekomst?

P2: Ja en nee. Ja, want *Macbeth* is uitdagender dan *Child Soldier* en het ziet er aantrekkelijk uit. Nee, omdat want het wat moeilijker is en dat kan mensen demotiveren.

Interview participant C   **Utrecht 26 January 2017 (13:00 – 13:20)**

Macbeth

C: Hoe vond je het om *Macbeth* te lezen?

P3: Ik vond het leuk, omdat het anders is dan boeken met alleen tekst. Thuis hebben we een abonnement op een wekelijks stripblad en dat vind ik vaak leuker om te lezen dan gewone boeken.

C: Waarom vind je dat leuker?

P3: Omdat ik me met strips beter en sneller kan inleven in het verhaal.

C: Heb je plezier gehad in het lezen van deze graphic novel?

P3: Ja, ik vond het taalgebruik prettig. Er waren maar weinig dingen die ik niet begreep.

C: Waren er ook dingen die je niet of wat minder aanspraken?

P3: Ja, ik vond het verhaal Middeleeuws en niet heel origineel.

C: Heeft *Macbeth* je in het begin gestimuleerd om verder te lezen?

P3: Ja

C: Vond je *Macbeth* moeilijk of makkelijk?

P3: Ik vond het niet zo heel erg moeilijk. Er waren wel een paar dingen die ik niet goed begreep, maar dat kon ik dan gewoon opzoeken of vragen aan mijn ouders.

C: Denk je dat het qua moeilijkheid bruikbaar is in de les?

P3: Dat weet ik niet, omdat ik mezelf met leesvaardigheid wat hoger inschat dan het gemiddelde van de klas. Maar het zou zeker kunnen voor de kinderen die wat beter zijn in Engels.

C: Zou het mogelijk zijn om een deel van de graphic novel te kopiëren en daarmee de klas in groepen opdrachten te laten doen?

P3: Ja, ik denk dat dat wel kan.

C: Wat vond je de thema's van *Macbeth*?

P3: Ik vond de thema's wat meer voor jongens, maar ik vond ze leuk! Vooral het fictieve, zoals de fantasy-elementen en de heksen spreken mij aan.

C: Denk je dat dit aansluit bij de rest van de klas?

P3: Nee, ik denk het niet, maar ik weet niet exact hoe zij hier over denken.

C: Zijn de thema's daarmee bruikbaar voor in de les?

P3: Als je niet heel ingewikkelde teksten erbij haalt denk ik wel dat het kan.

C: Hoe zou je *Macbeth* behandelen in de les?

P3: Het vertalen van bepaalde woorden, of dat je grammatica laat toepassen, zodat je goed leert schrijven. Je kunt ook leerlingen een fragment geven en dat ze dan verder moeten schrijven.

C: Wat vind je van een opdracht waarin de groep een in stukken geknipt fragment in de goede volgorde moet leggen en daarna het verhaal verder moet schrijven?

P3: Ja, dat lijkt me een goede opdracht voor een les.

C: Wat vind je van een opdracht waarbij je meer focust op de hoofdpersoon door er een Facebook-profiel van te maken?

P3: Nee, ik denk dat leerlingen door hun mobiel en het internet te snel zijn afgeleid van de opdracht.

C: Wat vind je van een opdracht waarbij je een fragment leest en dat gaat opvoeren in een toneelstuk?

P3: Ja lijkt me leuk, maar de klas zal waarschijnlijk alleen zich hiervoor inzetten als er een beloning of een cijfer tegenover staat.

C: Ben je door *Macbeth* gestimuleerd om meer graphic novels te gaan lezen in de toekomst?

P3: Ja

Child Soldier

C: Wat vond je van *Child Soldier*?

P3: Ik vond het een leuk en bijzonder boek omdat het gebaseerd is op een echt verhaal. Dit overkomt niet iedereen.

C: Is het omdat het waargebeurd is makkelijker of moeilijker om jezelf in te leven in het verhaal?

P3: Ik vond het makkelijker om in te leven dan bij *Macbeth*.

C: Heb je plezier gehad in het lezen van *Child Soldier*?

P3: Ja ik vond het interessant om te lezen.

C: Ben je in het begin van *Child Soldier* gestimuleerd om het boek helemaal uit te lezen?

P3: Ja, omdat het me raakte.

C: Heeft het er ook mee te maken dat je het in beelden voor je ziet?

P3: Ja, de plaatjes helpen daarbij.

C: Vond je *Child Soldier* moeilijk of makkelijk?

P3: Ik vond *Child Soldier* niet zo moeilijk. Het is makkelijker dan Macbeth.

C: Denk je dat het qua moeilijkheid bruikbaar is in de les?

P3: Ja, want het leest wat makkelijker. Daarnaast is het een wat moderner verhaal en de tekenstijl is iets meer op kinderen gericht.

C: Denk je dat het mogelijk is om een deel van het fragment te pakken en daarbij opdrachten te maken of moet je *Child Soldier* helemaal gelezen hebben?

P3: Nee, je kunt wel een fragment pakken.

C: Wat vond je van de thema's van *Child Soldier*?

P3: Ja, ik vond het goede thema's.

C: Zijn de thema's daarmee bruikbaar voor in de les?

P3: Ja.

C: Is geweld in *Child Soldier* of *Macbeth* een reden om het niet te behandelen in de les?

P3: Nee hoor, het zou best kunnen, want alle leerlingen zijn oud genoeg.

C: Hoe zou je *Child Soldier* behandelen in de les?

P3: Je zou leerlingen een samenvatting kunnen laten schrijven van het verhaal. Daarnaast zou je ook de opdracht met het toneelstukje kunnen doen. Verder geldt voor de opdrachten hetzelfde als bij *Macbeth*.

C: Ben je door *Child Soldier* gestimuleerd om meer graphic novels te gaan lezen in de toekomst?

P3: Nee, niet door *Child Soldier*, maar ik denk wel dat hij bruikbaar is voor in de les.

Interview participant D   **Utrecht, 31 January 13:00-13:20**

Friends with Boys

C: Heb je plezier gehad in het lezen van *Friends with Boys*?

P4: Ja

C: Wat sprak je specifiek aan?

P4: Het is niet echt dat het me aansprak, maar het was gewoon fijn om te lezen. Het was ook makkelijk en je ziet ook de plaatjes dus je hoeft ze niet zelf in te beelden. Het is wel fijn dat dat voor je wordt gedaan.

C: Heeft *Friends with Boys* je in het begin gestimuleerd om het helemaal uit te lezen?

P4: Ja, maar dat is niet per se omdat het een graphic novel is, maar dat komt meer door het leuke verhaal. En als ik aan een boek begin dan moet ik het uitlezen.

C: Vond je *Friends with Boys* moeilijk of makkelijk?

P4: Makkelijk. Er waren wel een paar moeilijk woorden, maar dat kon je gelijk uit de context halen.

C: Is het daarmee bruikbaar voor de les en de rest van de klas?

P4: Ja

C: Had je wel eens eerder graphic novels gelezen?

P4: Nee, maar wel strips als kind.

C: Heb je die ervaring nodig om het te kunnen lezen?

P4: Nee hoor, maar soms wist ik niet helemaal naar welk vak je moest gaan/lezen. Dan moet je goed kijken welke volgorde logisch is voor het verhaal.

C: Wat vond je van de thema's in *Friends with Boys*?

P4: Nog wel realistisch.

C: Denk je dat het qua thema's voor de hele klas bruikbaar is?

P4: Nee, ik denk dat het vooral voor meisjes leuk is.

C: Denk je dat ik een fragment van de graphic novel kan nemen en daarmee de klas in groepjes opdrachten laten doen?

P4: Ja

C: Hoe zou je het liefst de inhoud/vorm behandelen in de les?

P4: Dat je bijvoorbeeld de eerste bladzijdes krijgt en dat je dan het verhaal verder moet schrijven (niet per se tekenen, maar een verhaallijn bedenken). Of je kunt begrijpend lezen-vragen stellen.

C: Wat vind je van een opdracht waarin de groep een in stukken geknipt fragment in de goede volgorde moet leggen en daarna het verhaal verder moet schrijven?

P4: O ja dat is ook wel erg leuk!

C: Wat vind je van een opdracht waarbij je meer focust op de hoofdpersoon door er een Facebook-profiel van te maken?

P4: Deze opdracht is wat lastiger omdat het boek bijna alleen maar om dit meisje draait. Bij andere boeken zou het wel kunnen.

C: Wat vind je van een opdracht waarbij je een fragment leest en dat gaat opvoeren in een toneelstuk?

P4: Niet zou ik niet doen, want leerlingen gaan het zeker niet voor de hele klas doen.

C: Ben je door *Friends with Boys* gestimuleerd om meer graphic novels te gaan lezen in de toekomst?

P4: Ja aan de ene kant wel want het leest heel makkelijk, maar aan de andere kant wordt er al heel veel voor je ingevuld met de plaatjes. Ik zou een vrolijkere graphic novel met meer tekst sneller lezen.

Nimona

C: Hoe vond je *Nimona*?

P4: Ja, het was erg leuk om te lezen, omdat er meer fantasie in zit en het was een vrolijker verhaal dan *Friends with Boys*. Daarnaast ga je meer nadenken over het verhaal omdat het minder voorspelbaar is. En er was meer tekst met moeilijkere woorden en meer kleur.

C: Heeft de graphic novel je in het begin gestimuleerd om het helemaal uit te lezen?

P4: Ja, maar dat is niet per se omdat het een graphic novel is, maar om het verhaal. Als het verhaal was geschreven in een gewoon boek had ik het ook uitgelezen, maar dit leest leuk en makkelijker dus lees je hem in een keer uit.

C: Vond je *Nimona* moeilijk of makkelijk?

P4: Dit was nog wel te doen. *Nimona* is iets moeilijker en dat zit vooral in de woorden die gebruikt worden.

C: Denk je dat *Nimona* daarmee bruikbaar is voor de hele klas?

P4: Ja

C: Wat vond je van de thema's in *Nimona*?

P4: Ook wel erg leuk en heel origineel.

C: Wat denk je dat de rest van de klas van de thema's zou vinden?

P4: Ik denk dat ze het gaaf gaan vinden, maar de jongens iets minder leuk. *Nimona* gaat vooral om een meisje.

C: Hoe zou je de inhoud/vorm van *Nimona* behandelen in de les?

P4: Hetzelfde als *Friends with Boys*. De puzzel en het open einde zijn bruikbaar, maar de Facebook- en toneelopdracht minder.

C: Zijn er nog andere opdrachten waarmee je de inhoud en vorm goed verwerkt?

P4: Je zou bijvoorbeeld moeilijke woorden kunnen highlighten en dat de leerling dan het tekstballonetje opnieuw moet schrijven zonder dat moeilijke woord.

C: Wat zou je vinden van opdrachten die meer gaan over de inhoud, zoals dilemma's?

P4: Ja, leuk.

C: Ben je door *Nimona* gestimuleerd om meer graphic novels te lezen in de toekomst?

P4: Ja

C: heeft de kleur in *Nimona* invloed gehad?

P4: Ja, want kleur helpt dingen te onderscheiden. Soms zie je één grote zwarte vlek en dan weet je niet wat het precies is. Maar de lay-out van *Friends with Boys* past wel bij de sfeer van het boek.

Appendix E: Exercises

Dear group,

Instruction:

In Child Soldier family and upbringing are important to Michel, the main person. First you need to find out how Michel is raised and who plays an important part in his life and why.

Step 1: Make a scheme of Michel's family.

Step 2: Who is the most important person for Michel, and why?

Step 3: Does Michel's upbringing make a difference in the story? If yes, describe the scene and how it makes a difference. If no, describe what difference it could have made.

Step 4: Discuss in the group what family members are important for you and why. Who leads by example and are you an example to others?

CEFR-level: A2
Witte-level: 2

Dear group,

Instruction:

This story is set in Congo, an African country.

Step 1: Read pages 3 to 5. Discuss your impression of Congo. What kind of country is it? Write down the impression of all group members.

Step 2: Draw an overview of the history of Congo described by Michel. Draw at least three phases and mention who rules.

Step 3: Read pages 6 and 7. Michel describes his youth. Did it match your impression of Congo from pages 3-5? If not, how is it different?

Step 4: What does it tell us about the relationship between wealth and happiness?

Step 5: Use your mobile phone. What is the situation in Congo today? Has it improved? If yes, how? If not, why not?

CEFR-level: A2+
Witte-level: 2

Dear group,

Instruction:

This graphic novel has, like any other book, a certain style. It is like the signature of the writer. You will look at the layout and the style of the novel.

Step 1: Read pages 3 to 6. Discuss what happens in terms of the layout. Write down everything you notice and use the the terms 'panel' and 'gutter' that are explained below.

Step 2: From whose perspective is Child Soldier written? Can you see this in the layout of the story? If yes, how? If not, what would have made this layout 'child-like'?

Step 3: How is Canada portrayed in the first and the last pages? How does this differ from Congo?

Step 4: Write down your conclusion from looking at the layout. What is the relationship between the lay-out and the story?

Step 5: Name some advantages and disadvantages of a layout. Does the layout add something to the story or do you think a 'normal' book is better?

Panel: everything that happens in one frame, mostly with a white visual boundary around.

Gutter: the space between panels. In this gap, you go from one panel to the other and conclude what happens.

CEFR-level: B1
Witte-level: 3

Dear group,

Instruction:

Michel is only a child and he needs to make some big decisions in this story. His character plays an important part in making these decisions.

Step 1: Read pages 8 and 9. Give a description of Michel's appearance and his character. Use the terms below.

Step 2: Pages 8 and 9 also give some reasons why Michel is who he is. Mention at least three things and also tell how this has influenced Michel.

Step 3: Read pages 13 to 19. Something terrible happens. At page 14, Michel is very rude and bold. What is the result of this rude behaviour?

Step 4: Michel faces a difficult dilemma on pages 18 and 19. Does he make the right choice? What would you have done? Discuss.

Step 5: Read pages 24-25. What saves Michel's life? How?

A. Main character: most important character in the story. Almost any event is related to this person.

Minor character: character that has small role, but is important to the plot.

B. Round character: character develops throughout the story, unpredictable.

Flat character: character is static and does not develop throughout the story.

CEFR-level: A2+
Witte-level: 2

Dear group,

Instruction:

This graphic novel is about Maggie, a girl who goes to school for the first time. The school building plays an important part in this book. In the book, the author has made two maps.

Step 1: Look at the two maps that are included in the book. What is the function of the maps in this book? Read page 67 and 68 as well.

Step 2: Maggie seems to be struggling with the groups at her school. Does your school have these groups as well? Is it a good thing? Discuss in your group.

Step 3: Make an English map of your school building (Asch Van Wijckskade). Make sure you indicate all different groups of students and places you love / hate.

CEFR-level: A1
Witte-level: 1

Dear group,

Instruction:

This graphic novel is about Maggie, a girl who goes to school for the first time. "Maggie's big brothers are there to watch her back, but ever since Mom left, it just hasn't been the same. Besides her brothers, Maggie's never had any real friends before. Lucy and Alistair don't have lots of friends either. But they eat lunch with her at school and bring her along on their adventures. But when a ghost won't leave Maggie alone, can her new friends help her? Or is she destined to be haunted forever?

Step 1: Read the final pages of the book. The book has an open ending. What do you think of the ending of the book?

Step 2: An open ending leaves a lot to the imagination of the reader. It is your turn to finish the story. Discuss in English together how this story could end.

Step 3: Design some comic pictures with the end that you have created. You can also write it down as normal text.

CEFR-level: A2
Witte-level: 1

Dear group,

Instruction:

The title 'Friends with boys' is an important theme in the story. Maggie is homeschooled and struggles with finding new friends at her new school.

Step 1: Read pages 98 and 99. Why is Maggie mostly friends with boys?

Step 2: Read pages 171-175. How does Maggie feel about being friends with boys? Can you understand her?

Step 3: Do you think it is a taboo for a girl to be friends with boys (or vice versa) on this school and in this society? Why?

Dear group,

Instruction:

In this exercise, you will solve a puzzle. You will read a fragment on Maggie who has stolen something from the museum. She is caught by her dad who is a policeman. The scenes after this fragment are included and cut. Arrange the pictures in the correct order so that it forms a logical story.

Step 1: Solve the puzzle.   (use the A3-page, glue, and pen)

Step 2: Write 100 words on what you think will happen next, either in normal text or draw comic pages yourself.

Dear group,

Instruction:

Time is a very important and interesting thing in the graphic novel Nimona. Nimona is a girl who joins the villain Blackheart and both want to do evil things together. Nimona has an interesting magic power: she can turn into any animal she wants.

Step 1: Read pages 1 to 8 of the book. What is your impression of the time or period the story is set in? Write down the impression of all group members.

Step 2: Read page 25 and 31 as well. Is this graphic novel fiction or non-fiction? Discuss the meaning of these two terms first. Discuss the following question: can a book be in the present ánd in the past at the same time?

Step 3: How do you feel about fiction/ non-fiction? What do you prefer? Does it make a difference when reading a fictive book or watching a fictive film/TV-series?

CEFR-level: A2
Witte-level: 2

Dear group,

Instruction:

Nimona is a girl who joins the villain Blackheart and both want to do evil things together. Nimona has an interesting magic power: she can turn into any animal she wants. This is a very interesting power for Blackheart's evil plans. However..

Step 1: Nimona is the only person in the story with these magic powers. Where do these magic powers come from? Read pages 25-29.

Step 2: Halfway the novel, Blackheart and Nimona battle their enemy and they lose. Nimona is shapeshifted (turned) into a dragon, and her dragon's head is cut off. Blackheart thinks Nimona is dead, but she isn't. Read pages 167 to 169 and pages 224-225. Reconsider your first answer. Do you like fictive, fantasy elements in stories like these?

Step 3: On page 29, the author reveals something why Nimona wants to be evil. Do you think this is fair? Make a prediction: who is more dangerous: Blackheart or Nimona, and why?

Step 4: Define 'good' versus 'evil' and 'hero' versus 'villain'. How different are these words?

Dear group,

Instruction:

Nimona is a girl who joins the villain Blackheart and both want to do evil things together. Nimona has an interesting magic power: she can turn into any animal she wants.

Step 1: Blackheart has an evil plan to get rid of the ruler. Read pages 3-4, 41-43. On these pages, we see three players: Nimona and Blackheart, and the Institution, the ruler. Who is good and who is bad? Why?

Step 2: Blackheart wants to sabotage the Institution by doing something evil. Is it okay to do some evil to prevent a greater evil? Write down the opinions of all group members. Can you think of real examples in the world of doing bad things to prevent even worse things?

Step 3: There is a saying: "The end justifies the means." Do you know what is means? Do you agree with it?

Dear group,

Instruction:

Macbeth is a Scottish general (high rank in army) who has just won a battle. When returning home, three witches predict that he will become king in the future. When Macbeth tells his wife, they decide to take matters in own hands...

Step 1: Read pages 23 to 28. Where is the scene set? What is Macbeth's dilemma in this chapter? Why is it extra difficult? Name at least three things.

Step 2: Describe the relationship between Macbeth and his wife on pages 23 to 28. Who wants what exactly?

Step 3: Who is the driving force behind their decision?

Step 4: If it were possible, would you want to know what is going to happen to you in the future? (and there is no way you can change it). Does this change your view on Macbeth and his wife? Why?

Step 4: Can you think of other kings/rulers who killed people that were a threat to the throne? Use your mobile phone if necessary.

Dear group,

Instruction:

Macbeth is a Scottish general (high rank in army) who has just won a battle. When returning home, three witches predict that he will become king in the future. When Macbeth tells his wife, they decide to take matters in their own hands...

Step 1: Read pages 23 to 28. Describe the relationship between Macbeth and his wife on pages 23 to 28. Who wants what exactly?

Step 2: On page 28, Macbeth says something remarkable about children. What does he say? Why is that remarkable? Does it fit into your answer to step 1? (Mind the time Shakespeare wrote this play/story).

Step 3: Read the scene in which the witches fortell Macbeth's future on page 14-15. Why does Macbeth want certain children on page 28?

Step 4: Discuss in your group your expectations of a play written in 1607. Is it in some things old-fashioned or very modern? Explain why. Also comment on the stereotypes regarding men and women.