



The Faculty of Arts and Education

## MASTERS THESIS

Study program: MA in English and Literacy Studies	Spring term, 2022
Author: Ine Skårland Gausel	
Supervisor: Silje Normand	
Title of thesis: LGBT representation in the English foreign language classroom	
Keywords: LGBT literature, textbooks, school library, EFL teachers, queer critical literacy	Words: 22545 Number of attachments/other: 1  Stavanger, 3 <sup>rd</sup> of June 2022

## Abstract

This project addresses teacher's attitudes and pupils' access to LGBT representation in the English foreign language (EFL) subject in six Norwegian schools by examining what is available in their school libraries, what kind of representation is found in their EFL textbooks, and by conducting a voluntary and anonymous teacher survey at the selected schools. In order to develop critical awareness of LGBT representation, pupils need to be introduced to accurate and authentic representation of LGBT identifying people; meaning texts with explicit LGBT characters, that avoid problematic stereotypes, and that can act as mirrors and windows where the reader can see themselves and others reflected (Bishop, 1990). Previous studies also show that schools can have a positive impact on pupils if teachers are good role models and create environments where LGBT issues are addressed, for example through the use of LGBT-inclusive literature.

The results from this study show that there is very little LGBT representation in the school libraries and the English textbooks in the selected schools. The textbook representations of LGBT identities are problematic, and when included there is only one representation throughout the entire work. LGBT representations from the school libraries provide more authentic portrayals, but the majority of schools that participated in this study had a very tiny collection that largely included representation of homosexual men. Very few teachers were aware of which LGBT resources they had at their school, and a majority of them had never included LGBT topics in their English teaching. The study suggests that teachers should become more aware of the LGBT resources available to them and where to find additional resources. School libraries should aim at having larger collections of LGBT literature with a wider variety of LGBT identities. And lastly, the textbook producers need to incorporate more authentic and varied representations of LGBT identities.

## Table of content

Abstract .....	2
1 Introduction.....	5
2 Literature review .....	8
2.1 LGBT books in libraries .....	8
2.2 LGBT topics in education textbooks .....	9
2.3 Teacher attitude and implementation of an LGBT-inclusive curriculum.....	10
3 Theory .....	12
3.1 Critical literacy .....	12
3.1.1 The dimensions of critical literacy .....	13
3.1.2 Queer Critical Literacy .....	16
3.1.3 Heteronormativity .....	17
3.2 LGBT YA literature, critical literacy perspectives, and teacher responsibility.....	18
3.2.1 Books as windows and mirrors .....	21
3.3 Teaching LGBT topics .....	21
3.4 What is authentic and accurate representation?.....	25
4 Methods.....	26
4.1 Methodological approach .....	26
4.1.1 Quantitative versus qualitative methods .....	26
4.1.2 The characteristics of qualitative research .....	27
4.1.3 Strengths and weaknesses of qualitative research.....	28
4.2 Data collection.....	30
4.2.1 Sample.....	30
4.2.2 School library visits.....	31
4.2.3 Textbook analysis.....	31
4.2.4 Survey.....	33
4.3 Data organization and analysis .....	33
4.4 Ethical considerations.....	34
4.5 Validity and reliability .....	34
5 Results.....	36
5.1 Library search .....	36
5.1.1 School 1.....	39
5.1.2 School 2.....	39
5.1.3 School 3.....	40
5.1.4 School 4.....	40

5.1.5	School 5.....	40
5.1.6	School 6.....	40
5.1.7	Books that did not make the cut .....	41
5.2	Textbook analysis .....	42
5.2.1	Quest.....	42
5.2.2	Engelsk .....	44
5.2.3	Link .....	45
5.2.4	New Flight.....	46
5.3	Teacher survey.....	48
5.3.1	School 1 .....	48
5.3.2	School 2.....	49
5.3.3	School 3.....	50
5.3.4	School 6.....	52
6	Discussion .....	53
6.1	Availability and authenticity of the LGBT representation .....	53
6.2	Teachers' view on LGBT representation.....	57
7	Conclusion .....	61
7.1	Implications .....	62
7.2	Further research .....	63
8	Bibliography .....	64
	Appendices .....	70
	Appendix 1 – Survey .....	70

# 1 Introduction

In 2020 the new LK20 curriculum was implemented in Norwegian schools. This study focuses on LGBT representation in the English subject specifically. Although the English subject curriculum does not say anything specific about introducing LGBT representation in teaching, it can easily be interpreted to include this kind of representation, and there are also many good reasons to implement an LGBT-inclusive classroom.

The importance of including a variety of perspectives can be observed in the relevance and central values paragraph of the new English subject curriculum which highlights the important role that the English subject has for pupils' identity development: "English is an important subject when it comes to cultural understanding, communication, all-round education and identity development" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019). It further incorporates critical literacy perspectives by highlighting the importance of opening for new perspectives by exploring different lifestyles and ways of thinking: "knowledge of and an exploratory approach to language, communication patterns, lifestyles, ways of thinking and social conditions open for new perspectives on the world and ourselves" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019). The subject curriculum also specifies the important role that texts can have in developing pupils' knowledge of culture and society: "by reflecting on, interpreting and critically assessing different types of texts in English, the pupils shall acquire language and knowledge of culture and society" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019).

Interdisciplinary topics in the English curriculum that are also extremely relevant when reflecting on LGBT representation are *health and life skills* and *democracy and citizenship*. *Health and life skills* should help teach the pupils to "express their feelings, thoughts, experiences and opinions and can provide new perspectives on different ways of thinking and communication patterns, as well as on the pupils' own way of life and that of others" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019) both orally and in writing, and it is supposed to help the pupils develop a positive self-image and secure identity. The purpose of *democracy and citizenship* is to help "the pupils to develop their understanding of the fact that the way they view the world is culture dependent [...] [and] experience different societies and cultures by communicating with others around the world, regardless of linguistic or cultural background" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019). This interdisciplinary topic is important to help develop the pupils' curiosity and prevent prejudices.

The discussion of LGBT representation in the English classroom is especially made relevant now that this issue has been debated frequently in the United States of America. There has been a large amount of book bans in the US in 2021 and 2022, with more than 1500 books being banned in several school districts across different states. A large amount of the books that were banned were books that focused on LGBT and race issues and books written by people who were non-white or identified as LGBT. Altogether, 33% of the books that were banned explicitly addressed LGBT issues and had protagonists or important secondary characters who identified as LGBT (Gabbat, 2022).

In early 2022 the Parental Rights in Education bill was signed in the state of Florida; a bill that was labeled the “Don’t say gay” law (Phillips, 2022). This law bans instruction and discussion in the classroom about LGBT issues for kindergarten through third grade. For older pupils, the discussion must be age appropriate. It also authorizes parents to sue school districts that teach things they do not like. Lastly, it also requires the school to tell parents if their children are getting mental health services, and it takes away the ability for the school to discreetly provide pupils with the opportunity to talk to someone else about their gender identity or sexual orientation (Phillips, 2022).

Research suggests that 3 to 10 percent of any community is gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender (Williams Institute, 2011; Downey, 2013). LGBT youth have a higher rate of suicide, depression, and social isolation (Collier et al., 2013; Downey, 2013). It is important for young people to be able to find resources, have the freedom to learn about issues that concern them, and be able to grow confidently into their identities (Downey, 2013). Hermann-Wilmarth and Ryan (2015) also state the importance of having an LGBT-inclusive curriculum, as it makes the pupils less likely to hear homophobic remarks, less likely to miss school, and they are more likely to feel included in the school community. All of this points toward it being beneficial to include LGBT representation in teaching, including the English classroom, which provides pupils with a place to read LGBT literature, discuss the topics and learn terminology in English, and at the same time participate in making an inclusive classroom environment.

According to Paiz (2019), research also highlights that pupils, even young learners, are ready to address LGBT themes and issues in the language classroom. This topic is after all a part of their lived experiences, either because they identify as LGBT themselves, because their family members or friends are LGBT, or because of their encounters with LGBT-identified individuals in popular media. Paiz also mentions Moita-Lopes (2006) who examined pupils from a

Brazilian middle school and found that the pupils wanted to engage in LGBT issues in the English language classroom, but these conversations were often shut down by teachers. This hindered the creation of a safe space to discuss such issues, and the discussions were then had in the hallways and locker-rooms instead of the classroom, leaving the pupils without adult guidance to keep the conversation respectful and validating. This often led to the conversations filled with homophobic language and attitudes. Two reasons for creating English language teaching professionals and teaching practices more inclusive and critical are therefore introduced. The first one is that pupils of varying ages have shown an interest to working with LGBT topics. The second reason is that failing to engage pupils in critically examining how the discursive construction of sexual identities actualizes damaging heteronormative worldviews may open up the door to bullying and marginalization (Moita-Lopes, 2006, cited in Paiz, 2019).

Within the EFL subject, pupils can gain access to LGBT representation through different means such as English library books, EFL textbooks or through teacher resources. The purpose of this research was to examine how prevalent LGBT representation was in the English texts that were found in the selected schools and to be aware of whether or not pupils were introduced and familiarized with the topic in their English classes, especially in a manner that promoted critical literacy. It was also to be aware of what was introduced to the pupils, the way in which it was done, and if they had the opportunity to explore these types of texts through the means of the schools. The study therefore addresses the following research questions:

- 1) To what extent are English-language texts that explore LGBT protagonists and representation available in the selected school libraries and textbooks and to what extent are the representations authentic?
- 2) What are the English teachers' views on acknowledging and familiarizing pupils with LGBT topics through English-language literature or additional resources they have available?

The thesis is divided into seven parts. Following this introduction, part 2 provides a literature review of previous studies on LGBT books in libraries, LGBT topics in education textbooks, and teacher attitudes towards LGBT-inclusive literature in the classroom. Part 3 introduces the theoretical background for the study, discussing LGBT literature, teacher responsibility, teaching LGBT topics, and authentic representation, all in the light of critical literacy and queer critical literacy. In part 4 the methods are addressed, including the methodological approach, a detailed description of the criteria and how the data were collected, ethical considerations, and validity and reliability. The results are then presented in part 5, which addresses what was found

in the school libraries, survey answers, and the textbook analysis. Part 6 then discusses the results in light of the previous literature and theory. Finally, in part 7 the conclusions and implications that can be drawn from the study are presented, as well as suggestions for further research.

## 2 Literature review

The following literature review highlights previous studies that have examined relevant topics related to this study's research questions, including LGBT books in school libraries, LGBT topics in education textbooks, and teacher attitude and implementation of LGBT-inclusive curriculum in schools.

### 2.1 LGBT books in libraries

According to Downey (2013) studies have shown that a majority of libraries, in this case in the US, lack collections of high-quality and extensive LGBT literature. Downey explains that there are several "traps" one might fall into when considering ordering LGBT literature for a library.

One of the traps that might be more common in a school library could be that there isn't enough money in the school budget. Downey's argument is that "[...] the things we forego during tight budget times reflect our values. When LGBT materials are the first things to hit the chopping block, a statement is being made that these items are expendable, unnecessary luxuries" (p. 106). Another trap that might be more common for school libraries could be that one believes that there are not that many LGBT pupils at the school (p. 106).

Tsabet (2018) looked at selection of LGBT literature in school libraries in England in 2018 and concluded, similarly to Downey (2013), that there was little to none. Tsabet suggests that the reason for the lack of LGBT literature in school libraries could be that it is still lacking or absent in bookshops, and also that school libraries obtain texts from library services which provide a filtered assortment of books that usually do not contain smaller publishers, which is often where LGBT literature for teenagers stem from. Another reason may be that it still is a controversial or taboo topic that adults are reluctant to discuss or believe children should not be exposed to. Tsabet also reflects on whether the reason that LGBT literature is so scarce in schools could be that it has been overshadowed by a large amount of fiction for children and teenagers, and that LGBT literature has been overlooked in favor of, perhaps, bestsellers and celebrated favorites.



## 2.2 LGBT topics in education textbooks

Jennings and Macgillivray (2011) researched, in the United States, the treatment of LGBT topics in 12 popular multicultural education textbooks. The textbooks were reviewed for subject index entries that might reference sexual orientation or transgender identity, looking for terms such as “gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer, gender identity, sexual diversity, sexual identity, homosexual, heterosexual, sexual orientation, sexual preference, and transgender” (p. 45). They moved on to doing a page-by-page and line-by-line reading of each text, looking for the inclusion of LGBT topics that were not mentioned in the indexes and tables of contents.

What they found was that “among the 10 texts that had indexes, nine included at least one reference to an LGBT, sexual orientation, or gender identity topic” (p. 46). When analyzing the books’ tables of contents, it was indicated that “five of the 12 texts included table of contents references to sexual orientation, LGBT people, or gender identity” (p. 46). The line-by-line analysis of each text indicated that “11 of the 12 textbooks contained some LGBT content or referenced sexual orientation or transgender identity, even if not referenced in the tables of contents or the indexes” (pp. 46-47).

The textbook analysis revealed nine thematic categories. Five of them were related to representation of LGBT people, which included: list inclusion, discrimination, experiences, family, and history. The other four categories were related to recommendations for teachers and included: strategies, legal/ professional, beliefs and concepts.

When examining the portrayal of LGBT people in the texts they found that two-thirds of the analyzed texts relied on describing harassment directed at LGBT youth, and seven of the texts “represented LGBT youth as “at risk” for suicide, substance abuse, academic failure, and drop-out” (p. 53). It is rare for LGBT youth to be depicted as empowered people who form positive LGBT identities.

The texts’ discussions on sexual orientation and gender identity were also analyzed, revealing that “a number of the texts conflated terms, failed to define terms, applied terms inappropriately or excluded discussion of the relationships or non-relationships between sexual orientation and gender identity” (p. 53). An example of a conflated term used by the several authors was “gender orientation”, and some also used outdated terms like “sexual preference”, which is a term that implies that sexual orientation is a choice. It is argued that sexual orientation and gender identity are two separate issues, where sexual orientation is of greater concern to gay, lesbian, and bisexual people, and gender identity is more applicable to transgender people, yet

“none of the texts adequately explored this important conceptual distinction” (p. 54). While most of the texts “appropriately associated sexual orientation with discussions of what it means to be hetero-, homo-, or bisexual” (p. 54), only one of the texts linked discussions of gender identity to transgender identities and explained what being transgender means. When examining which topics were excluded, they found that the topics of gender identity, transgenderism, and bisexuality were consistently excluded from the texts. These findings are similar to what Smedstad (2018) found in Norwegian-published textbooks 7 years later. There has been little research done on how much LGBT literature and representation there is in Norwegian school textbooks, but according to the research that has been done by Smedstad, there is very little representation.

Smestad (2018) examined LGBT representation in 129 Norwegian-published textbooks in several subjects in both primary and lower secondary school. He found that in all these 129 textbooks, 246 textbook pages include LGBT issues, but that it was most prevalent in English and Norwegian textbooks, and also that homosexuality is more widely represented than bisexuality and transgender identities. Smestad found that LGBT issues were for the most part ignored in textbooks, and that the LGBT content that was found largely ignored bisexual and transgender people. The illustrations that were found were mostly depicting homosexuals who were white. LGBT issues were also less visible in textbooks for earlier grades. He also stated that the most important single finding in his project was that “texts of fiction in the subjects Norwegian and English make up a significant part of the LGBT content in the textbooks” (2018, p. 17).

### 2.3 Teacher attitude and implementation of an LGBT-inclusive curriculum

Page (2017) conducted survey research to examine English language arts (ELA) teachers’ level of comfort in integrating LGBT themed literature into their classroom practice. What she found was that there were “significant relationships [...] between teachers’ age, comfort, awareness of resources, and implementation levels” (p. 1). Younger teachers had a higher comfort level with LGBT texts but showed a lower resource awareness and more static rates of implementation. Additionally, “comfort, awareness, and implementation of LGBT curriculum materials were also correlated with teacher location and with strength of religious belief, with rural teachers and strongly religious teachers displaying lower comfort and implementation levels” (p. 1).

Page's (2017) online survey was sent out to ELA teachers in middle and secondary school in the state of Minnesota.

The survey inquired about ELA teachers' experiences with their media center, their views on curriculum, their instructional purposes, their comfort levels related to LGBT young adult literature in the classroom, their awareness of LGBT resources, their priorities regarding literature selection, and other topics such as school policies. (p. 3)

The participants of the study were 75% female and 25% male. The majority of the teachers were under the age of 51, and the majority had been teaching from 0 to 20 years, with the largest proportion teaching 11 to 15 years. The respondents were mainly White and were generally of Christian faith (52,2% Catholic, 8,5% Protestant, and 0,2% Evangelical). 97% of the participants identified as heterosexual, 2,6% as homosexual/lesbian, 0,2% bisexual, and 0,2% questioning. Summed up, "the homogeneity of the participants is striking, especially in terms of sexual orientation and also race [...]" (p. 3).

In the survey, the teachers were presented with several Likert-type scale items "related to comfort level in utilizing [LGBT] literature in various ways in their classrooms" (p. 3). The results showed that over half of the respondents felt comfortable using literature with LGBT characters and storylines and that they felt comfortable discussing LGBT topics in the classroom. 60% also responded that they felt comfortable promoting LGBT literature for pleasure reading.

When asked to rate their agreement with the statements about whether they were aware of resources in their school library or media center that were related to sexual orientation issues or whether they were aware of at least 5 young adult works that contained LGBT characters or storylines, "only 28,1% of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement about being familiar with library resources while 33,2% strongly agreed or agreed with the statement related to familiarity with young adult works" (p. 4). Even though teachers were comfortable with using LGBT literature in their classrooms, they were not familiar with the resources that were available to them.

23,7% of the participants reported that they integrated LGBT literature in their teaching. However, "the most common method of including LGBT literature in the classroom was allowing it or promoting it for pleasure [...] reading [...]. Few teachers reported explicitly teaching about sexual orientation or gender or including these topics in whole-class activities."

(p. 4). The data also revealed that “26% of the 20 to 30 years old group reported using LGBT literature in some way, 28% of the 31 to 40 years old group, 26% of the 41 to 50 years old group, 23% of the 51 to 60 years old group, and 35% of the older than 60 years old group” (p. 5). This suggests that even though younger teachers felt a higher level of comfort implementing LGBT literature in their instruction, it did not necessarily translate into a higher rate of curricular inclusion. Page also found that few teachers reported using LGBT literature in their classroom, and fewer reported using such texts for anything other than pleasure or choice reading for their pupils. According to Page, the most common reason for not using LGBT texts in the classroom was a fear of being confronted by parents or other members of the community.

In her conclusion, Page (2017) states that “the curriculum reflects who and what are valued in schools. If teachers and administrators truly respect and care for all students, [they] must be willing to transform our curricula to address issues of sexual orientation and gender identity” (p. 13).

### 3 Theory

The following theory section addresses what one could expect to find of LGBT literature in the late 1900s, how it has changed, and how it affects the reader. It also highlights the importance of teacher attitudes, and how the teachers can incorporate LGBT topics and representation in their teaching by queering text or asking questions with the basis of critical literacy. Lastly, it explores what authentic representation is. The study is inspired by critical literacy perspectives, and they will also be delineated below.

#### 3.1 Critical literacy

Critical literacy does not have a set definition or a normative history, but Vasquez et al (2019) present key tenets that have been described. However, they do note that the key tenets “would likely take on a different shape depending on one’s orientation to critical literacy, the level at which one is working, and one’s social context” (p. 306). Here, the most relevant points will be presented.

Firstly, critical literacy should be viewed as a “lens, frame, or perspective for teaching throughout the day and across the curriculum [...], rather than a topic covered or unit studied” (p. 306). Critical literacy is supposed to be an ingrained critical perspective on text and practices.

Secondly, pupils learn best when what they are learning is important to their personal lives, and “as such, using the topics, issues, and questions that they raise should be central to creating an inclusive critical curriculum” (p. 306). Listening to how pupils understand texts will make it possible for teachers to understand how the pupils read and problematize the world they live in. They underline that “it is [the teachers’] job to show them how to assume agency and act to make a difference” (p. 306).

Vasquez et al (2019) also point out that the practice of critical literacy can be transformative, because it can “contribute to changing inequitable ways of being and problematic social practices” (p. 307). When pupils engage in critical literacy from a young age, it prepares them “1) to make informed decisions regarding issues such as power and control, 2) to engage in the practice of democratic citizenship, and 3) to develop an ability to think and act ethically” (p. 307). This equips them with knowledge on how to make the world a more equitable and just place.

Lastly, Vasquez (2019) argues that critical literacy is about imagining ways to rethink text, images, and practices in a way that relays different and more socially just messages and introduces other qualities of being that have an impact on the world.

### 3.1.1 The dimensions of critical literacy

Similar to the tenets presented by Vasquez et al (2019), Lewison et al (2002) claim that there are four dimensions to critical literacy: disrupting the commonplace, interrogating multiple viewpoints, focusing on sociopolitical issues, and taking action and promoting social justice. These dimensions are interrelated.

#### 3.1.1.1 *Disrupting the commonplace*

This dimension is all about seeing the “everyday” through a different viewpoint. It is about using language and other forms of communication and recognizing what is implied and considering new ways of understanding the experience (Lewison et al., 2002).

Vasquez et al (2013) state that the dimension of disrupting the commonplace “calls for a new level of conscious awareness” and that “things that seem normal need to be re-thought” (p. 8). They point out that often when looking at issues one tends to “respond to the surface structure of [the issue] rather than to the deep structure” (p. 9). As an example, Vasquez et al (2013) bring up the issue of hunger, stating that instead of taking action and examining the forces that make hunger an issue, it is more normal to react at the surface level. Being critically literate is

to look at the underlying forces, i.e. that hunger, poverty, and race overlap, and that eliminating poverty and racism will contribute to eliminating hunger.

Another idea correlating to this dimension, is that no text is neutral. Language actively positions the reader and gives them a particular identity as they read. Seeing i.e. hunger through the lens of “poverty and collective responsibility” or through the lens of “racism and individual volunteerism” impacts the reader in different ways (Vasquez et al., 2013).

### *3.1.1.2 Interrogating multiple viewpoints*

This dimension is about being able to understand experience and text both from one’s own perspective and from the perspective of others, for example by considering these different viewpoints at the same time (Lewison et al., 2002).

Vasquez et al (2013) define a critically literate citizen as someone who inquires and interrogates their own beliefs and actions. Education as inquiry means that as learners and critical citizens one should engage in both creating and producing knowledge. “To be a literate citizen is to be an inquirer who interrogates multiple perspectives and is willing to take a stance based on personal involvement and understanding” (p. 11). Another part of being a critical inquirer is to constantly examine one’s own knowledge from multiple perspectives and let one’s “current understanding from past experiences [be] tested, critiqued and enhanced through engagement with new information” (Wells, 1999, cited in Vasquez et al., 2013, p. 11). However, while it is important to be open to different perspectives, not all perspectives are equal. Some perspectives are privileged or dominant, while others are marginalized.

[M]ultiple perspectives provide us with a self-correction strategy. By seriously considering different points of view and how such points of view advantage and disadvantage, we can metaphorically see around corners for purposes of identifying problematic arguments. [...] While competing perspectives may seem equally valid when first proposed, over the long haul some perspectives will prove to be more robust or to have more explanatory power. (Vasquez et al., 2013, p. 11)

### *3.1.1.3 Focusing on sociopolitical issues*

When looking at critical literacy from this dimension it is about looking at systems, power, relationships, and language, and analyzing how they work together. The focus would then for example be on challenging unquestioned legitimacy of unequal power relationships by looking at how language is used to create power (Lewison et al., 2002).

It is argued that for teachers it is important to redesign education by disrupting the way language is being used to support dominant ways of thinking, finding ways to provide spaces for non-dominant groups to acquire an entry into powerful discourses that do not diminish their language and culture, and upholding diversity as a cultural resource (Janks, 2000, cited in Vasquez et al., 2013, pp. 12-13). It is also argued that teachers should have a critical perspective that questions and confronts the validity of unequal power relationships, hierarchies, and social structures that give few people a lot of power (Lankshear & McLaren, 1993, cited in Vasquez et al., 2013, p. 13). Vasquez et al. (2013) argue that “critical educators interrogate privilege and status [...], investigate oppression [...], and use resistance, dialogue, and public debate as tools to engage in the politics of daily life” (p. 13).

Understanding the socio-political can be difficult and complicated because it often involves making inferences and connections between things that are not obviously linked (Vasquez et al., 2013, p. 13). When addressing socio-political issues, it can be easier to start locally before moving on to thinking globally (Kamler, 2001, cited in Vasquez et al., 2013, p. 14).

#### *3.1.1.4 Taking action and promoting social justice*

Critical literacy from this dimension is about taking informed action against oppression and promoting social justice. This dimension is tightly linked to the other three and is usually a product of having expanded one’s perspectives through the help of the other dimensions (Lewison et al., 2002).

This dimension of critical literacy makes the issues relevant to the lives of the pupils, because using critical social practices aid teachers in creating spaces that give pupils the ability to disrupt what is considered to be normal. This happens when pupils are encouraged to ask questions, see issues through different lenses, define views that have been naturalized, and visualize how things could be different (Vasquez et al., 2013).

With the help of critical literacy, pupils are taught that text, in the broad sense of the term, positions them and gives them an identity. By making their own texts, they will get the opportunity to “express their critical understandings and to get messages of justice and democracy out into the world” (p. 17). Doing this removes the pupils from a position of helpless victims, instead giving them the opportunity to use their critical social practices to “rewrite their identities as social activists who challenge the status quo and demand change” (p. 17).

### 3.1.2 Queer Critical Literacy

According to Vasquez, Janks, and Comber (2019) critical literacy is “a way of being, living, [and] learning [...]” (p. 302). With this in mind one can infer that queer critical literacy is about being and doing critical literacy in a way that “takes seriously queer identities, perspectives, and experiences; ways of queering common-sense understandings of gender and sexuality; and ways of (re)constructing identities and more socially just representations” (Govender & Andrews, 2021, p. 83).

Govender and Andrews (2021) argue that as a noun “queer refers to an analytical framework and theoretical position that interrogates how heterosexuality, heterosexism, (hetero)patriarchy, and cisgender norms have become naturalized, and legitimized, in a range of ways across contexts” (p. 83). Intrinsically, queer perspectives can recognize how social and cultural practices both produce and reproduce norms. Through language and literacy education, teachers and learners can participate in identifying, constructing and deconstructing, disrupting, and transforming social norms.

They further indicate that norms that regulate sexuality and gender are deeply connected with the norms that regulate i.e. “race, ethnicity, nationality or citizenship, (de)coloniality, the environment, [and] indigeneity [...]” (p. 83). They maintain that there should be a queer perspective in the classroom that acknowledges how issues of sexuality and gender diversity appear in texts, and that takes part in the practices of queering, which is understood as synonymous with interrupting heteronormativity. The interruptions of heteronormativity would involve: “(1.) deconstructing established systems of power, (2.) exploring resistance, reconstructions of identity, and subversion, and (3.) turning the self into an object for analysis by locating it within prevailing ideologies” (p. 84). The concept of heteronormativity will be explained further in the next section.

According to Govender and Andrews (2021), “queering literacy means developing a vocabulary and analytical prowess to see how heteronormativity, (hetero)sexism, and (hetero)patriarchy—powerful ideologies—are instantiated in and across texts and discourses” (p. 84). One could do this i.e. by using texts that are found in the classroom and interrogate how the audience is assumed to be heterosexual and cis-gender or examine whether the characters in the texts play passive or active gendered roles.

Queering literacy also means that it is necessary for one to engage in the “long history of [LGBT] activism, identities, culture, and scholarship [...] for queering language and literacy



curriculums. [...] It is necessary to interrogate [LGBT] texts in the face of heteronormativity so as to unpack how resistance and nonconformity emerge” (p. 84). According to Govender and Andrews (2021), that means that one should actively access, question, deconstruct and disrupt multimodal representations of gender and sexual diversity “that do not place [LGBT] people outside mainstream curriculums and pedagogies, nor engage with these representations by merely adding them to existing curriculums” (p. 84).

### 3.1.3 Heteronormativity

According to Blackburn and Smith (2010), heteronormativity is “the concept that heterosexuality is normal and homosexuality is not” (p. 626). They also quote Cohen (2004) saying that “heteronormativity is the collection of practices and institutions that legitimize and privilege heterosexuality and heterosexual relationships as fundamental and ‘natural’ within society” (Cohen, 2004, cited in Blackburn & Smith, 2010, p. 626).

By categorizing heterosexuality as normal it bypasses criticism and becomes invisible, which renders all other orientations abnormal (Blackburn & Smith, 2010). This leads to

gross civil rights abuses against LGBT individuals and forces limitations upon straight women and men in that it insists that boys and men behave in masculine ways, including but not limited to being attracted to girls and women, and that girls and women behave in feminine ways, such as by being attracted to boys and men, among other expectations of girls and women. Thus, heteronormativity keeps people in their places. (pp. 626-627)

Blackburn and Smith (2010) state that schools enforce heteronormativity through the establishment of rigid gender roles. “[...] [Pupils] are systemically calibrated with “normal” characterizations of one of the two gender assignments, male or female, and these manipulations, in turn, are used to inform and enforce heteronormative school cultures, curricula, and policies” (p. 627). Blackburn and Smith argue that in school, pupils are indoctrinated with an understanding of gender and attraction to the opposite sex, and gender roles and ideas about gender are enforced also through curricula and pedagogy. They give an example of how the curriculum enforces heteronormativity, where they talk about how high school pupils are required to read i.e. Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*, a text which revolves around heterosexual love, sex, and marriage instead of books that feature homosexual protagonists, for example *Brokeback Mountain*. This leads to the school curricula not only

denying access to texts that feature LGBT characters but it also presumes and encourages the pupils to identify with couples such as Romeo and Juliet.

Requiring adolescents to read a text focusing on a heterosexual couple and to identify with those characters as heterosexuals presents only one option, that of an unchangeable binary: You are either Romeo or Juliet, a boy attracted to a girl or a girl attracted to a boy. (p. 627)

Røthing and Svendsen (2010) examined Norwegian values with regard to homotolerance and heterosexuality. They mention that the idea that identity is stable, absolute, and predetermined can be dangerous and create the feeling of being fundamentally different. A combination of feeling different and not being able to see a future where a particular identity fits in or is absent can create a feeling of hopelessness. By analyzing teaching and textbooks, they found that three approaches to understanding the fear and reluctance young people have of imagining themselves as nonheterosexual: a) the double message of homotolerance, b) the self-evidence of heterosexuality, and c) the absence of nonheterosexual futurescapes. In their studies they found no evidence of textbooks that tried to fundamentally challenge the privileged position that heterosexuality has in Norwegian society.

Another point brought up by Røthing and Svendsen (2010) is that teaching and textbooks in Norwegian schools assume that the pupils are heterosexual and will lead heterosexual lives, and homosexuality is only addressed in special sections. Heterosexuality is often seen as the norm, and when creating positive attitudes, for example by stating that “we accept homosexuals”, it creates a heterosexual “we” that can choose whether or not they tolerate the homosexual “others”.

### 3.2 LGBT YA literature, critical literacy perspectives, and teacher responsibility

Banks (2009) mentions his own experiences when talking about LGBT literature, and then especially literature in the young adult (YA) genre. As a young man he struggled to find literature about LGBT people that reflected his own experience, and in the process learned “to hope for [...] escape, a calculated move away from [his] family and community and, if possible, the good sense not to call home again” (p. 33). He states that gay literature that he read in his youth taught him to “disconnect and move on” (p. 33). But Banks also remarks

From 1980 to 1995, most of the LGBT characters in YA fiction were secondary, often dead or killed off during the narrative, or run out of town and separated from community and/or family [...]. More recently LGBT characters get to live,

and because these characters are often the protagonists of their stories, readers are challenged to understand them as fuller human beings with thoughts, desires, and interests that may mirror their own and that are not necessarily silenced by novel's end. (p. 35)

Banks (2009) goes on, saying that having LGBT texts available is not enough. Teachers have to be aware of which texts they introduce to their pupils, keeping in mind how their choices can be perceived. He also states the importance of there “[needing] to be something *there* in the books beyond just queer characters” (p. 34). Inclusion of LGBT characters in books is not enough, because one has to go beyond just recognizing the existence of LGBT people.

To challenge the pupil's views, one could approach the subject with the help of critical literacy and make them think about how the texts that surround them actively influence their lives. Banks (2009) states that “a critical literacy approach to LGBT literature might, for example, ask [pupils] to compare an experience of violence as represented in a novel to [...] attacks on queer youth, and ask questions about how and why [this happens]” (p. 34). But he also makes it clear that one has to address more than the violence against LGBT people, because through literature one is presented with life's possibilities. Telling stories about LGBT people's lives, for example coming out stories with friends and family where they can be both resistant and accepting to an LGBT person's identity will help young readers see the possibilities that are available to them. Banks also mentions *The God Box*, a YA book written by Alex Sanchez. The book's main characters are two young boys who are exploring their different interpretations of the Christian faith in relation to their emerging identities as gay men. According to Banks (2009) the book can offer young readers a repertoire of language and arguments they can use if they find themselves criticized for how they identify, and that it also helps the readers develop “a critical literacy of self” (p. 34).

Stone and Farrar (2020) state that teachers who have a critical literacy approach use their pedagogical practices to challenge and critique. Their aim is to enact social change and transformation to advance both the children they teach and society as a whole. To do this, teachers need to have an understanding of how power is constructed and maintained by educational structures and practices.

Stone and Farrar (2020) also cite Kanpol (1999), who explains that teachers who enact critical pedagogies

challenge stereotyping, find ways to subvert tracking through alternative teaching methodologies, build curriculum with open and critical spirits, become involved in the policy-oriented decisions of the state and local school district site, and form group solidarity over issues of value-laden importance. (p. 100)

They go on to explain that to teach about LGBT issues, educators need to be able to confront and examine their own viewpoints and opinions. The classroom has to be a space where it is possible to have open discussions about gender, stereotypes about sexuality, and the exclusion and bullying of people who identify as LGBT. Logan et al (2014) relay the same message, saying that integration of YA literature can only happen after teachers have observed and challenged their own attitudes on the issue. Banks (2009) also says that when introducing LGBT literature to pupils

[...] part of our work can be to encourage [pupils] to read the available texts both *empathetically* and *critically*, aware of the contexts that bring these books into existence and how changes in our culture could provide more positive, complex experiences for us all. (p. 36)

Teachers play the roles of both educator and role model, and it is therefore important to consider which views and opinions are conveyed to the pupils. By being proactive, teachers can create a school environment that helps make a positive impact on LGBT pupils. DeWitt (2012) uses examples like “creating policies, using sexually diverse literature that depicts same-sex couples in a positive way, and offering groups such as gay–straight alliances” (p. 31). Similarly, Blackburn and Clark (2009) argue that “by refusing to position students as homophobes, teachers can, from the start, disrupt the heteronormativity that is so typical in classrooms and challenge students to live up to the expectation of being supportive of LGBT rights and people” (p. 28).

DeWitt (2012) also mentions Gabriel Flores, who investigated teacher attitudes regarding gay-themed literature. Flores focused on the importance of including a diverse curriculum, saying that “a goal of multicultural education is to accomplish the development of togetherness among people through knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes [...]. Schools are the most effective place for educating minds toward a pluralistic society” (Flores, 2009, cited in DeWitt, 2012, p. 33).

### 3.2.1 Books as windows and mirrors

Windows and mirrors (Bishop 1990) are metaphors frequently used to refer to representations in texts. Windows are the texts that provide readers with representations that are different from their own identities or experiences, whilst mirrors are texts that provide “reflections of one or more of the reader’s identities” (Crawley, 2020, p. 29). When a mirror text is written in an authentic and respectful manner, they provide the readers with strengthened validation and self-worth. Bishop (1990) states that:

Books are sometimes windows, offering views of worlds that may be real or imagined, familiar or strange. These windows are also sliding glass doors, and readers have only to walk through in imagination to become part of whatever world has been created [...]. [H]owever, a window can also be a mirror. Literature transforms human experience and reflects it back to us, and in that reflection we can see our own lives and experiences [...]. Reading, then, becomes a means of self-affirmation, and readers often seek their mirrors in books. (p. ix)

She also maintains that when children either cannot find themselves or the representation they find of themselves is distorted, negative or mocking in the books they read, what they learn is that society does not value them.

### 3.3 Teaching LGBT topics

Hermann-Wilmarth and Ryan (2015) introduce three different ways one can address LGBT topics through literature in classrooms, and that each approach comes “with its own benefits, drawbacks, possibilities, and risks” (p. 436). These approaches are “including books with LGBT characters, reading “straight” books through a “queer lens,” and queering LGBT-inclusive books” (p. 436).

The first approach, including books with LGBT characters, is simply reading texts with LGBT characters in them. “These kinds of texts supply powerful windows and mirrors for students and disrupt the single story that only straight people exist in children’s worlds” (p. 438). These types of books can be read “in isolation”, but it is also possible to tie them to lessons in different subjects:

For example, social studies units on the Civil Rights Movement or the Harlem Renaissance could include biographies and informational texts about [...] LGBT-identified leaders. Likewise, genre study around poetry, prose, and fairy

tales can be enriched by the addition of texts from those genres that include LGBT characters. And [...] these books can be vehicles through which teachers address a wide range of literacy standards and skills (e.g., making inferences, determining an author's purpose) while simultaneously opening the door to conversations about respecting differences, celebrating diversity, and combating bullying. (p. 438)

According to Hermann-Wilmarth and Ryan (2015) the drawbacks to such an approach could for example be that by reading only one book that includes LGBT characters, one could risk tokenizing LGBT people and their identities. They also mention that it could leave pupils with the impression that the book is responsible for bringing sexuality into the classroom, “[missing] the fact that sexuality already circulates in classrooms, [...] as when students call a teacher “Mrs.” or read a book with a mom and a dad or read a fairy tale where the prince kisses the princess [...]” (p. 438). Lastly, they also mention that, even though the number of LGBT books continually grows, many of them still fail to include a lot of diverse representation, and therefore “teachers [...] cannot count on inclusion to provide a window into the full range of LGBT lives” (p. 438).

The second approach is to read “straight” books with a queer lens. These are books without any explicit LGBT characters, but the books still address questions about gender, sexuality, and identity.

When considering how gender and sexuality already are present in common, non-LGBT texts, teachers and [pupils] can reflect on the systems that normalize some forms of sexuality and gender identity/expression while marginalizing others, all by introducing books already on teachers' shelves. (p. 438)

By addressing the topic of gender and sexuality not only through the means of LGBT texts, the pupils have the “opportunities to explore how these identities are not relegated to only LGBT people, but are parts of how every human moves in the world” (p. 439).

Hermann-Wilmarth and Ryan (2015) mention some of the questions one could consider when discussing gender and sexuality in texts (p. 438):

- Is the story shaped by the character's refusal to conform to social norms? How?
- Does the way the character looks to others match the way the character understands him/herself?

- How and to what extent are the characters able to resist others' definitions in defining themselves?
- Does the author rely on stereotypes of what makes a boy and what makes a girl?
- Are there situations where one characteristic (e.g., maleness) is expected to accompany another (e.g., never crying)? What happens to characters when those characteristics don't come in expected sets?
- What happens if characters want something forbidden?
- How might this story be different if the male character were female or vice versa?

And they also give examples of questions one can ask to push further, inviting the pupils to use the same ideas to make connections from the text to learn about themselves (p. 439):

- How do you label yourself? Why? What characteristics are often associated with those labels? What happens when the characteristics of those labels don't apply to you?
- Do those characteristics have to be like that for everyone? What if some people are different?
- Who decides what those labels mean?
- What happens to people who don't fit in?
- What relationships do people make fun of and why?
- What are "rules" about how we are supposed to act even if they aren't written down?

Questions like these open up for discussions, reflections, and action about "how the world works and for whom" (p. 439). These are questions without any right or wrong answers, which can make conversations about them unpredictable, but they also help guide conversations in topics about gender and sexuality that often times are not brought up. "These conversations can destabilize assumptions about these categories and open up space for students and teachers to explore how these ideas are portrayed in the books they read and the worlds in which they live" (p. 439).

The reading straight texts through a queer lens approach is an approach that accommodates for conversations about LGBT topics without introducing pupils to gay characters, which may make it possible to talk about in more contexts. It also provides LGBT teachers and pupils with "mirrors into their own experiences and windows into the experiences of others" (p. 439) within a safer space for those who are not ready or do not have the possibility to come out. This approach also changes the conversation from "other" to "all", including people who challenge the norms of gender and sexuality but who are not LGBT. The downside to this approach is that

it can be too general. By not using the terms from the LGBT community, i.e. “gay”, “lesbian”, and “transgender”, one “maintains silences about specific oppressions that continue to marginalize LGBT people” (p. 440).

The last approach proposed is a combination of the first two approaches: reading LGBT-inclusive books with a queer lens. Hermann-Wilmarth and Ryan (2015) point out that one might find it counterintuitive to queer texts that already are inclusive of LGBT people, but that the reason to do it is that

[M]embers of the LGBT community live in a heterosexist culture, and have been conditioned to value the privileges that heterosexuality affords, many gay and lesbian people assimilate themselves into “we’re-just-like-them” configurations. People who claim both an LGBT identity and other typically privileged identities—e.g., white, upper middle class, male, Christian, and able-bodied—are able to rely on their privilege to be culturally accepted, to the detriment of other queer people who don’t share those identities. That is, they might use their privileged identities to be “acceptable” gay people, maintaining access to benefits others are still denied rather than changing the overall system. (p. 440)

According to Duggan (2002) this kind of assimilation is called homonormativity. Herman-Wilmarth and Ryan (2015) agree with this sentiment, saying that stories with LGBT characters often represent such homonormative stories, where the LGBT characters are “presented in privileged, normative ways” (p. 440). This creates a limited view of LGBT people, where only the privileged ones are represented. “Layering a queer approach onto LGBT-inclusive texts can highlight these homonormative stories, help readers notice where other kinds of privilege intersect with LGBT identities, and alleviate stereotypes of LGBT people reified through traditional representations” (p. 441).

The strength to this approach of introducing LGBT topics is that it brings attention to how LGBT people are being represented and what the consequences of these types of representations are. Readers are encouraged to pay attention to the representations that are present and the systems that take part in creating those identities. By questioning the taken-for-granted ideas about identity, one interrupts the representations that are not complex or diverse. The approach of reading LGBT texts with a queer lens is an approach that encourages and helps develop sophisticated comprehension skills, because “[pupils] are asked to consider myriad subtleties” (p. 442). This is also an approach that “allows us to think outside of ‘use-it or-don’t-use-it’



binaries when choosing texts” (p. 442), because books with LGBT characters that don’t capture a wide variety of identities can be noticed and questioned by the reader. This is however an approach that can be inaccessible to some teachers, based on their access to LGBT-inclusive literature.

### 3.4 What is authentic and accurate representation?

In Crisp’s (2018) article, he examines what type of LGBT representation can be considered authentic and accurate. He draws on examples such as J.K. Rowling’s paratextual canonification of Dumbledore’s homosexuality, and Dav Pilkey’s in-text revealing that a leading character in his Captain Underpants series is homosexual. Crisp questions Rowling’s choice to not disclose Dumbledore’s sexuality until after the Harry Potter series was done, and Pilkey’s choice to wait 18 years after the first publication of the Captain Underpants series to reveal that a character was homosexual. How do these characters fit into LGBT representation in literature, and should this be considered representation?

It has been widely debated whether people outside a cultural identity should write from the perspectives of people who have those identities. A result of this debate is that scholars often encourage teachers who select literature that portray homosexual male characters to choose books that are also written by homosexual men. Crisp (2018) indicates that it is not a stance based on the belief that people who identify as LGBT can write LGBT experiences better, but that LGBT literature for children also should be written by LGBT-identifying individuals, as this also applies to LGBT literature for older readers. He also states that many readers want to know about authors who have written a book that “speaks” to them or a story that they identify with, and that seeing books about LGBT characters that were written or illustrated by LGBT people matters.

When reading literature, it is possible for readers to “queer” characters in the texts they read, however, literary scholars recommend writers of children’s books to write characters that identify explicitly as LGBT. By not making characters explicitly LGBT, the writer relies on the readers’ abilities to recognize and interpret subtextual clues that are intended to signal a character’s LGBT identity. This also puts the responsibility of looking for these clues on LGBT-identifying readers and their allies, while other readers remain unaware. People who identify as LGBT might also be depicted through harmful and problematic stereotypes, that have and continue to be portrayed in children’s media, when people are coding their fictional characters

as LGBT. When LGBT characters are being coded, the coding relies on stereotypes with a longstanding cultural and literary heritage of what it means to be LGBT (Crisp, 2018).

Crisp (2018) says that “there will never be a perfect book and a single text can never represent the range of possible ways to “be” a gay male” (p. 366). However, teachers can ensure that the book collections that are available include varied and nuanced representations of what it can mean to be a gay male, having gay male characters depicted in a diverse range of literary roles, and written for every kind of audiences. Including multiple stories and depictions of gay males will help young readers understand that there is no “right way” to be gay. Although Crisp (2018) talks specifically about the representation of homosexual men, this can be extended to the representation of other LGBT identities as well.

## 4 Methods

In this section of the paper the methods will be presented. Firstly, the methodological approach will be introduced. Secondly, the data collection methods will be presented, which include textbook analysis, examining availability of LGBT themed books in school libraries, and a teacher survey. Then the methods of how to analyze the data will be explained. Thereafter, the ethical considerations will be reviewed. Lastly, issues of validity and reliability will be discussed.

### 4.1 Methodological approach

In order to investigate to what extent English-language texts that explore LGBT protagonists and representation are available in school libraries and textbooks, to what extent the representations are authentic, and how much focus English teachers put on acknowledging and familiarizing pupils with LGBT issues through literature, this study has taken a qualitative approach.

#### 4.1.1 Quantitative versus qualitative methods

Quantitative and qualitative research methods are distinguished by more than using figures versus non-quantitative data, i.e. open-ended interviews (Davis, 1995, cited in Dörnyei, 2007, p. 24). Quantitative research “involves data collection procedures that result primarily in numerical data which is then analyzed primarily by statistical methods. Typical example: survey research using a questionnaire, analyzed by statistical software such as SPSS” (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 24), and qualitative research “involves data collection procedures that result primarily in open-ended, non-numerical data which is then analyzed primarily by non-statistical methods.

Typical example: interview research, with the transcribed recordings analyzed by qualitative content analysis” (p. 24).

Dörnyei (2007) points out that at first the distinction between quantitative and qualitative research may seem straight forward, but examining it further reveals that they are quite similar in some aspects. One example of this is that the distinction between numerical and non-numerical data is not a clear enough guideline, because some numerical data is almost always collected when qualitative research is being done, and similarly quantitative research also collects non-numerical data (Richards, 2005, cited in Dörnyei, 2007, p. 25). Another argument is that all data are qualitative because the data contains information about people, objects and situations. When converting raw experiences into data, sometimes they are converted into words (qualitative) and sometimes into numbers (quantitative) (Miles & Huberman, 1994, cited in Dörnyei, 2007, p. 25).

Unlike quantitative practitioners, who generally agree on the main features and principles of a quantitative approach, the practitioners of qualitative research find it more complicated to define the qualitative research method clearly, as “it has no theory or paradigm that is distinctly its own [...] Nor does qualitative research have a distinct set of methods or practices that are entirely its own” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, cited in Dörnyei, 2007, p. 35). However, there do exist some core features that characterize a properly conducted qualitative study. In this text only the relevant characteristics will be mentioned.

#### 4.1.2 The characteristics of qualitative research

The first characteristic of qualitative research that Dörnyei (2007) mentions is that qualitative research works with a number of different data, i.e. field notes, diary entries, recorded interviews, photos, and videos. Analysis of qualitative data is usually done with words, and even though qualitative data usually is not counted or measured, sometimes some of the data can be quantified. Qualitative methods are used to “make sense of a set of (cultural or personal) meanings in the observed phenomena, it is indispensable that the data should capture rich and complex details” (p. 38), therefore one can recognize any relevant information as qualitative data.

Another characteristic is that qualitative research concerns itself with “subjective opinions, experiences and feelings of individuals” (p. 38). In other words, the goal is to investigate the views of the participants and get an understanding of how they interpret their own experiences

and actions. Researchers who work with qualitative methods “strive to view social phenomena from the perspectives of the ‘insiders’” (p. 38).

Another feature of this method is that it is fundamentally interpretive, “which means that the research outcome is ultimately the product of the researcher’s subjective opinion of the data” (p. 38). This inherently means that there can be several possible interpretations of the dataset. In qualitative research, “the researcher's own values, personal history, and 'position' on characteristics such as gender, culture, class, and age become integral part of the inquiry” (p. 38).

It is also normal for qualitative research to have a small sample size compared to quantitative research. The reason for this is that “well-conducted qualitative research is very labor intensive” (p. 38).

#### 4.1.3 Strengths and weaknesses of qualitative research

Dörnyei (2007) made a list of the strengths of qualitative research that he found significant. One strength is the exploratory nature of this research method. It is described as “an effective way of exploring new, uncharted areas” (p. 39), and it is a method that does “not rely on previous literature or prior empirical findings” (p. 39) when researching little known about phenomenon.

Qualitative research methods are also useful when one wants to make sense of complicated situations. It can be easy for researchers to interpret the data in simplified ways that misrepresents the bigger picture. However, qualitative methods have the benefit of participant-sensitivity, which helps guide the researchers when deciding which aspects of the data should be focused on because the participants take part in validating the priority guidelines (Dörnyei, 2007).

Answering ‘why’ questions is also considered a strength. When using quantitative methods, it is not unusual to get results that are surprising or contradictory, and in these cases the collected data rarely provides any explanation as to why. Qualitative methods can, in contrast, ask further questions to get a deeper understanding (Dörnyei, 2007).

Qualitative methods are also used to broaden the understanding of human experience. Instead of searching for a generalized “correct interpretation”, the aim is to broaden the range of possible interpretations. The comprehensive data obtained about the experiences of the

participants can widen the scope of one's understanding, which again adds depth to the analysis which is data-driven rather than speculative (Dörnyei, 2007).

When doing research, a lot of things can go wrong, which when using quantitative methods can in the worst case render a study meaningless. Qualitative methods are however very flexible, and unexpected events can become a resource that provides exciting data rather than an inconvenience (Dörnyei, 2007).

The last significant strength of qualitative research is that it in the end provides rich material for the research report. As Dörnyei (2007) puts it:

One disheartening aspect of quantitative studies can be when the results of several months of hard [labor] are summarized in one or two small tables [...] In contrast, qualitative accounts that use the words and categories of the participants make it much easier to produce a convincing and vivid case for a wide range of audiences. (pp. 40-41)

Dörnyei (2007) also made a list of significant weaknesses of qualitative research. It is pointed out that there are usually found two types of criticisms of qualitative research methods. The first type includes complaints that are quantitatively motivated about some aspects of qualitative research that differ from quantitative research, which qualitative researchers would consider a strength or normal feature. The second type includes complaints from qualitative researchers themselves.

One of the most frequent criticisms made by quantitative researchers concerns the "idiosyncratic nature of the small participant samples that most qualitative studies investigate" (p. 41). Qualitative practice may give insight in different phenomenon, but it is pointed out that "the specific conditions or insights may not apply broadly to others" (Duff, 2006, cited in Dörnyei, 2007, p. 41). Another possibility is over-reading the individual stories (Yates, 2003, cited in Dörnyei, 2007, p. 41).

The role of the researcher may also be seen as an issue. The data analysis depends on the researcher's competence in analyzing it, and as discussed above, may be influenced by their own personal biases. Quantitative researchers would prefer for there to be firm safeguards to make sure that results are not influenced by this (Dörnyei, 2007).

Another criticism made is that qualitative research lacks methodological thoroughness. "For quantitative researchers, who are used to standardized instruments and procedures and

statistical analytical techniques, qualitative research can easily appear unprincipled and 'fuzzy'" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 41).

Qualitative methods have also been criticized for having too complex or too narrow theories. When using qualitative methods, it can be more challenging to assess which findings are of more general importance and which are more individualistic and linked to a particular case. There is both the danger of building too narrow theories based on the individual cases studied, but also the intensive use of rich data can lead to a theory becoming overly complex (Dörnyei, 2007).

Lastly, qualitative methods are criticized for being very time consuming and labor-intensive. This is a point that both quantitative and qualitative researchers agree on. Qualitative research and the process of analyzing qualitative data is noticeably more time consuming than quantitative research (Dörnyei, 2007).

## 4.2 Data collection

### 4.2.1 Sample

Four primary schools and two lower secondary schools participated in the study. The schools were contacted first and asked whether they would want to contribute to the study by allowing the researcher to visit their school libraries to look for LGBT literature. Only teachers from the schools that participated were able to answer the teacher survey, and the textbooks that were analyzed were the textbooks that were available at these schools.

The primary schools and lower secondary schools that were contacted for the study were picked for a few different reasons. Firstly, all primary schools and all lower secondary schools were located approximately 15 to 30 minutes away from each other by car, so that the sample would be spread over a wider area and several municipalities. Secondly, all the schools were built or refurbished between 1970 and 2020, which could in some way influence which books they had in their libraries or how old their textbooks were.

The sample from the survey could be described as a voluntary response sampling, as the participants of this study were all English teachers from the different schools that were visited for the reason of collecting data. They were recruited by the school administration and could participate if they wanted to. The participants were six English teachers, where five of them worked at a primary school, and one worked at a lower secondary school in Western Norway. Gender, age, or how long they have been teaching is unknown. To maintain their anonymity,

the participants are referred to using pseudonyms (i.e. Teacher 1A, Teacher 1B...) in the results section.

#### 4.2.2 School library visits

The first way of collecting data was to visit schools and search the school library for LGBT literature. The literature would have to be meant for 5<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> graders, or for 10–16-year-olds and written in English. The criteria for the LGBT literature were:

- Any genre
- The text is written in English
- Characters have to be explicitly LGBT, the book has to confirm their identity
- The LGBT character(s) is a protagonist or an important secondary character

To do this data collection it was important to be aware of the LGBT literature that was already published so that it was possible to do the search effectively. A list of popular LGBT book titles was therefore compiled before starting the data collection to be aware of which titles to look for. The list was made by searching for “LGBT YA Books” on the search engine Google and in the website Goodreads. Because of the huge amount of LGBT titles, it was not possible to make a list of all of them. The list therefore ended up being a compilation of both the most popular and the newest titles of LGBT YA literature. Limitations to this approach will be addressed later on.

#### 4.2.3 Textbook analysis

The textbook analysis was based on English textbooks between 5<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> grade that were available at the schools that were visited for this study. Textbooks for primary school include Aschehoug’s *Quest* textbook 5-7 from 2015-2017, Cappelen’s *Engelsk* 5-7 from 2020-2021, and Fagbokforlaget’s *link* 5 from 2021. The textbook for lower secondary school include Cappelen Damm’s *New Flight* 1-3 from 2006-2007. Two of the schools had digital resources instead of English textbooks, but this study did not look at the potential LGBT representation in these resources. For this study it would be too extensive to look at the digital resources that teachers use for the English classroom, also because it usually would require a valid login for the school’s subscription to that resource or website. Even though the teachers have textbooks available to them, these are not necessarily used as frequently as their digital resources.

The textbooks were analyzed by reading, scanning, and considering the whole work, including the table of content. Textbooks were examined for any LGBT representation, both in pictures and text, based on these criteria:

- Excerpts from LGBT literature or stories with prominent LGBT characters
- Pictures of same sex relationships/attraction or transgender identities
- Illustrations of same sex relationships/attraction or transgender identities
- Questions related to texts that involve LGBT issues

When reading, the number of times heterosexuality versus LGBT identities was mentioned was counted for the sake of comparison, based on the following criteria:

- An explicit mention of a couple that is either hetero-, homo or bisexual. A couple can be mentioned several times but is only counted one time. If one character is described as being in two different relationships each relationship will be counted.
- An explicit mention of the same couple in a new text.
- The mention of being or falling in love with someone of a specific gender by someone of a specific gender.
- The mention of someone who identifies with the opposite sex
- The mention of someone who has, will, or wants to transition into the opposite sex.

This was to examine to which extent new and old textbooks differed in representing LGBT identities, but also to see whether there was an imbalance in representation or not. For example, there could be an imbalance in heterosexual versus homosexual representation, but also in homosexual vs transgender representation.

A hypothesis was that some pictures and illustrations might be up for interpretation, for example if there were an illustration of two people of the same sex holding hands. Such an interpretation might also be influenced by gender roles; two girls holding hands could be interpreted as a platonic relationship, whilst two boys holding hands could more likely be interpreted as a romantic relationship in certain cultures. In these cases, one would have to see whether there were enough clues suggesting that the illustration was depicting LGBT people. For similar reasons, pictures or illustrations of people challenging gender roles, for example boys wearing dresses, would in this research not count as LGBT representation unless it was explicitly stated that the character depicted identified as LGBT.

There was also the possibility of finding pictures and illustrations that could be interpreted as LGBT representation because a description explained it to the reader, or because the context of where the picture or drawing was placed implied that it was supposed to be interpreted as LGBT. For this research it was decided that it would count as LGBT representation if it was



described through text or through context, though this was the bare minimum and would not necessarily be considered good representation.

For the research study, good representation of LGBT characters is representation that presents LGBT characters as fully fleshed-out people who the readers can see their own experience reflected in (Banks 2009), both as mirrors where they see themselves, and windows through which they can get a glimpse into other people's experiences (Bishop 1990). The character's identity should be explicit in the media they are presented in and should not be coded by stereotypes (Crisp 2018); though the character's journey throughout the story might require them to keep their LGBT identity hidden at first, the end conclusion should not leave room for doubt. This description also refers to the LGBT books found in the school library.

#### 4.2.4 Survey

The last way of collecting data was an anonymous survey for English teachers from the six different schools to answer. The survey was made with the use of the University of Oslo's tool for conducting online surveys called "Nettskjema". It included eleven mandatory questions and one non-mandatory question. The survey's mandatory questions were about the teachers' view on LGBT literature in school, whether they had introduced or thought about introducing it to their English class, and whether they had thought about LGBT representation in their textbooks, library books, and during their teaching. The non-mandatory question asked the teachers whether they had any sources of LGBT representation that they would like to recommend (Appendix 1).

The schools that were visited for the library search were asked to send a survey link to the English teachers so that they could fill out the survey if they wished. The survey was written in English, but the participants could choose between answering the questions in English or Norwegian.

### 4.3 Data organization and analysis

The data was organized based on which school the data came from. Each school was given a number from 1 to 6, so that the data could be correlated back to each specific school for the purpose of the study. The titles of the books from the school libraries and the titles of the English textbooks were written down alongside the number given to that school to keep track of which books had been found in which school library. In the survey, the teachers were instructed to write down the number that their school was assigned.

#### 4.4 Ethical considerations

Because it is a sensitive topic that was being dealt with in this study, there were no data collecting methods that required personal information, such as names or audio recordings. NSD, which is the national center and archive for research data, was contacted to ensure that there was no duty to register the study. Schools that were visited were not be mentioned by name, and the program that was used to create the survey was one that did not register the IP-address or any personal information from the user. The survey was also anonymous and voluntary for teachers who wished to examine their own thoughts about the topic. They were able to withdraw from the study at any time.

#### 4.5 Validity and reliability

Reliability in qualitative studies relate to “being thorough, careful and honest in carrying out the research” (Robson, 2002, cited in Kriukow, s.a.). Noble and Smith (2015) assert that reliability in a qualitative study refers to consistency, which relates to how trustworthy the study’s methods are, i.e. thoroughness in explaining the approach the researcher has taken or whether the researcher’s decisions are clear. Other researchers should be able to find similar or comparable results.

Kriukow (2018) mentions that one part of reliability is the wording of interview questions, which is relevant regarding questions from the teacher survey. It was important for the researcher in this study to formulate the survey questions in a neutral manner, as to not influence the participants by making it seem as if there were any correct or incorrect ways to answer the questions. It was also important to make the questions clear and easy to understand, because there was no way for the participants to ask the meaning of any of the questions.

It was also a conscious choice for the teacher survey participants to all be English teachers who were working at a school at the time of the study. This meant that, presumably, they knew the English curriculum and competency aims for the grades that they taught and that their opinions and knowledge of LGBT literature in their school libraries and representation in their teaching would be based in this. Although it might be difficult to find similar or comparable results regarding the teacher survey, as the results are based on subjective opinions that are influenced by i.e. age, gender, culture, and geographical confines, the results still reflect professional opinions.

The criteria laid out in this study regarding both the school library search and the textbook analysis have also been carefully constructed in a way that includes as much text as possible,

but at the same time tries to exclude the texts that have superficial representation. When searching for LGBT representation in text using these criteria, it should be possible to consistently compile a list of LGBT texts that explicitly and authentically represent these identities.

Another important part is the validity of the study. Kriukow (2018) states that validity very often addresses three common threats regarding qualitative studies, which are researcher bias, reactivity and respondent bias. Researcher bias refers to any negative influence of “the researcher’s knowledge, or assumptions, of the study, including the influence of his or her assumptions of the design, analysis or, even, sampling strategy” (Kriukow, 2018, paragraph 4). Reactivity refers to the influence the researcher might have on the studied situation and people. Respondent bias refers to a situation where respondents do not provide honest responses, for example if they perceive a given topic as a threat, or because they give a response based on what would ‘please’ the researcher.

A factor supporting the validity of the teacher survey regarding all the three threats is that the survey was anonymous, meaning that the researcher could not influence or draw conclusions from the participants personal lives. The data analysis depends on the researcher’s competence in analyzing it, and as discussed above, may be influenced by their own personal biases (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 41). Because the teacher survey was anonymous, the researcher’s personal biases of the participants’ race, gender, culture, class, or age were inconsequential to the analysis of the data. Similarly, the anonymity might have made it easier for the participants to give honest answers and not take into consideration the researcher’s opinions. Another aspect of the survey was that the participants had no word limit when answering, making it easy for them to fully articulate their thoughts and points of views.

One challenge concerning the validity of the data was that because libraries lend books to the pupils, it meant that the school libraries without librarians could not give any insight on whether there were any LGBT books being borrowed when the school libraries were being visited. Therefore, if the schools had LGBT books that pupils were borrowing during the visit, the study would not be able to sample those particular books. Also, because it was not possible to read the books in detail for the study and the familiarity with LGBT book titles was based on the search on Google and Goodreads, some LGBT titles may have been overlooked during the library search. Similarly, some may have been spotted because of personal reading history and prior knowledge of LGBT characters.

Another challenge was that because it was a voluntary survey not all English teachers at the schools answered the survey and at some schools no teachers did. Therefore, there could have been teachers that did have resource awareness that didn't answer the survey. However, the choice to not answer the survey could also be because they did not have anything to say on the topic.

## 5 Results

The results are presented in three sub-sections. First, the results from the library search; second, the results from the textbook analysis; and lastly, the results from the teacher survey.

### 5.1 Library search

When analyzing the results from the library search, the books that belonged to a series were only counted if the books had explicit LGBT representation, i.e. if book three in the series reveals an LGBT character, book one and two were not counted even though that character was still part of the story. Similarly, book series who contained LGBT characters where their LGBT identity was revealed in a spin-off series, did not count as representation either, i.e. books from the *Percy Jackson* series were found at one school, but the character Nico di Angelo was revealed to be homosexual in the spin-off series *The Heroes of Olympus* and did therefore not count as LGBT representation in this study.

The following tables provide an overview of the LGBT literature found at the different schools. Table 1 provides a complete overview of the books available at the different schools 1-6. The first column includes all the LGBT titles, and the following four columns categorize these in terms of being lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender books. Table 2 presents an overview on which texts are from a series and which are stand-alone books. The first column shows which grades, from 5-7 or 8-10, they would be suitable for, and the last two columns show whether the LGBT characters in the texts are protagonists or side-characters.

A description of each of the schools and the LGBT books found in their libraries follows the two tables.

Table 1: School library books from schools 1-6 categorized as L, G, B, or T books based on identities represented

School	LGBT Book Titles	L Books	G Books	B Books	T Books
1	<i>Laura Dean Keeps Breaking up with Me</i> – Mariko Tamaki, illustrated by Rosemary Valero-O'Connell	Laura Dean Keeps Breaking up with Me	Will Grayson, Will Grayson  They Both Die at the End	The Vampire Chronicles: The Vampire Lestat	-

	<p><i>Will Grayson, Will Grayson</i> – David Levithan and John Green</p> <p><i>They Both Die at the End</i> – Adam Silvera</p> <p><i>Simon and the Homosapien Agenda</i> – Becky Albertalli</p> <p><i>My Lesbian Experience with Loneliness</i> (Book 1) – Kabi Nagata</p> <p><i>My Solo Exchange Diary Vol. 1</i> (Book 2) – Kabi Nagata</p> <p><i>The Vampire Chronicles: The Vampire Lestat</i> (Book 2) – Anne Rice</p> <p><i>Red, White and Royal Blue</i> – Casey McQuiston</p> <p><i>Six of Crows</i> (Book 1) – Leigh Bardugo</p>	<p>My Lesbian Experience with Loneliness</p> <p>My Solo Exchange Diary</p>	<p>Simon and the Homosapien Agenda</p> <p>Red, White and Royal Blue</p> <p>Six of Crows</p>		
2	<p><i>Red, White and Royal Blue</i> – Casey McQuiston</p>	-	<p>Red, White and Royal Blue</p>	-	-
3	<p><i>The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones</i> (Book 1) – Cassandra Clare</p> <p><i>The Mortal Instruments: City of Ashes</i> (Book 2) – Cassandra Clare</p> <p><i>The Mortal Instruments: City of Glass</i> (Book 3) – Cassandra Clare</p>	-	<p>The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones</p> <p>The Mortal Instruments: City of Ashes</p> <p>The Mortal Instruments: City of Glass</p>	-	-

4	-	-	-	-	-
5	<i>The Deep-Sea Duke</i> (Book 2) – Lauren James  <i>Bad Dad</i> – David Walliams	Bad Dad	The Deep-Sea Duke	-	-
6	-	-	-	-	-
Total Sum	15	4	10	1	0

Table 2: School library books categorized based on which grades they belong in and whether the LGBT characters are protagonists or side-characters

Type	Age Group	LGBT Protagonist(s)	LGBT Side-character(s)
Series	Grades 8-10	Will Grayson, Will Grayson  Simon and the Homosapien Agenda  My Solo Exchange Diary  My Lesbian Experience with Loneliness  The Vampire Chronicles: The Vampire Lestat  Six of Crows	The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones  The Mortal Instruments: City of Ashes  The Mortal Instruments: City of Glass
	Grades 5-7	The Deep-Sea Duke	
Stand-alone	Grades 8-10	Laura Dean Keeps Breaking up with Me  They Both Die at the End  Red, White and Royal Blue	
	Grades 5-7		Bad Dad

### 5.1.1 School 1

School 1 was a lower secondary school built in the early 2000s with a slightly above average amount of pupils for that municipality [1]. When visiting the school library there was a librarian who could help find LGBT literature. The librarian had found some of the LGBT literature before the visit, showcasing that they had some knowledge on the topic. The librarian seemed very open to suggestions on other LGBT books to add to the school library.

This school had nine English YA books about LGBT people, all of them with the protagonist(s) identifying as LGBT. With the exception of two, all of the books are part of a series or have had companion novels written in the same fictional universe. However, it appeared that *My Lesbian Experience with Loneliness* was the only book at that school library to be accompanied by its sequel, *My Solo Exchange Diary*. *The Vampire Lestat* was also the only sequel that did not seem to have its predecessor or successors present, though it is possible that the library had some other books from the *Vampire Chronicles* that were being borrowed by pupils during the visit. *Six of Crows* has representation of different LGBT identities, but because the majority of the characters seem to be gay or end up in “gay relationships”, it was considered gay representation. The fictional universe within this book does not use terms like “gay”, but it is still supposed to be easy to understand that there is same-sex attraction between some of the characters. Combined, School 1 had three books that included lesbian characters; five books that included gay characters; one book about bisexual characters; and zero books about transgender characters.

### 5.1.2 School 2

This school was a primary school built in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, then refurbished during the early 2000s, and they had slightly less than the average amount of pupils for that municipality [1]. There was no library visit to this school because they had already compiled a list over the LGBT literature available. However, it might be possible that some LGBT books were missed because of this, i.e. books with LGBT side-characters or books that do not focus on LGBT narratives but have LGBT characters.

School 2 had one English YA book about LGBT characters. The book is a stand-alone with the protagonists as the LGBT characters. School 2 had one book featuring gay representation, and zero featuring lesbian, bisexual, or transgender representation.

### 5.1.3 School 3

School 3 was a primary school that was built in the late 1990s that had slightly less than the average amount of pupils for that municipality [1]. During the visit to the school library, there was no librarian who knew about or could help search for LGBT literature.

This school had three English YA books that included LGBT characters, where all the books were part of a fantasy series. The LGBT characters in these books were classified in this study as side-characters because the story does not mainly center around these characters, even though they can be seen as part of the main cast of characters and are important to the story. The LGBT characters are homosexual and bisexual, but because they end up in a “gay relationship” it was considered gay representation in this study. School 3 therefore had three books about gay characters, and zero books about lesbian, bisexual, and transgender characters.

### 5.1.4 School 4

School 4 was a newly refurbished lower secondary school that had almost double the average amount of pupils for that municipality [1]. However, the school library did not have its own librarian, nor did it have its own section of English books, and the selection was scarce.

School 4 had no English YA books that featured LGBT representation.

### 5.1.5 School 5

This school was a brand-new primary school, with the population of pupils a little less than average for that municipality [1]. The school library was not visited, but an order confirmation of all the English books that they had bought was provided. Similar to School 2, it is reasonable to assume a complete overview of the LGBT literature available at this school library has been collected.

School 5 had two YA books. One of the books was a stand-alone book that had the LGBT characters as side-characters, whilst the other one was a part of a series and had an LGBT identifying protagonist. The book that was part of a series was a sequel, but the first book could not be found in the list of books that the school had ordered in. Altogether, this school had one book containing lesbian representation, one containing gay representation, and zero books featuring bisexual or transgender representation.

### 5.1.6 School 6

This school was a primary school that had been refurbished and upgraded a few times since it was first built. It was a school that had approximately a hundred more pupils than the average



school in that municipality [1]. The teacher that was the contact for the study was aware of the library selection, stating that they had a few Norwegian LGBT books, but none in English. This teacher was however open for suggestions and seemed interested in expanding the selection of LGBT literature in the school library.

School 6 had no English books that featured LGBT representation.

#### 5.1.7 Books that did not make the cut

During the search for books containing LGBT themes and characters, some of the books that were found in the school libraries were more difficult to decide whether fitted the predetermined criteria.

The first was a Japanese manga series called *Ninja Girls* by Hosana Tanaka. The plot revolves around the main character Raizo, a boy who has a horn growing out of his forehead, which in the story proves that he is the lost illegitimate son of a mighty family. Because of this, three female ninjas pledge allegiance to him. One of these ninjas named Himemaru turns out to be a crossdressing man. Throughout the story, Himemaru tries to seduce both Raizo and other lords in order to gain wealth, fame, and more allegiances for Raizo's family household.

Himemaru could be read as a homosexual character, and presumably he does fall in love with Raizo after a while. However, the reason the *Ninja Girls* series did not count as LGBT representation in this study is because Himemaru's sexuality is hard to decipher when it seems like the character's motivation to flirt with other men is that it gives him advantages in his quest to reach his own personal goals. Himemaru's apparent homosexuality seems more like a plot device created to make a few humorous scenes where Himemaru and the other girls fight for Raizo's attention, or to make fun of men who are seduced by him when he dresses as a woman.

*The Boy in the Dress* by David Walliams was the second book that this study did not include in the list of books with LGBT representation. The book is about a boy named Dennis who is interested in both football and fashion. Dennis has had a fascination with dresses that neither his father nor brother understands. Then he meets Lisa, an older girl who wants to be a designer, and who helps him realize that being different is all right.

The book is generally about how Dennis finds joy in crossdressing, and that it is fine to be different. However, crossdressing does not necessarily have anything to do with sexuality or gender identity, even though it closely relates to LGBT topics and issues. Because the book says nothing explicitly about Dennis' sexuality or gender identity, and because it was stated

earlier that challenging gender roles did not count as LGBT representation in this study, this book was excluded from the list.

## 5.2 Textbook analysis

Four schools mentioned that they had access to English textbooks. School 2, 5 and 6 were primary schools where School 2 had access to Aschehoug's Quest 5-7 from 2015-2017, School 5 stated that they would order in Cappelen Damm's Engelsk 5-7 from 2020-2021, and School 6 used Fagbokforlaget's link 5 from 2021. School 4 was a lower secondary school that had access to Cappelen Damm's New Flight 1-3 from 2006. School 1 and 3 only had digital resources.

The tables are organized by textbook series. Tables 3, 5, 7, and 9 show the different textbooks in the series and which LGBT texts, illustrations, and missed opportunities for LGBT representation there are in the different books. These texts and illustrations are also organized by chapter, theme, and page number. Tables 4, 6, 8, and 10 show how many times heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality, and transgenderism are mentioned as a whole in the different textbooks.

### 5.2.1 Quest

Table 3: Quest textbooks 5-7 overview of LGBT representation and missed opportunities for LGBT representation

	Chapter	Theme	Page no.
<b>Quest 5 Textbook</b>			
LGBT Texts	-	-	-
LGBT Illustrations	-	-	-
Missed Opportunities	Chapter 1: It's My Life Chapter 4: Let's Read	Different Families Book Excerpts	p. 10-13 p. 96-125
<b>Quest 6 Textbook</b>			
LGBT Texts	-	-	-
LGBT Illustrations	-	-	-
Missed Opportunities	Chapter 1: Friends and Foes Chapter 4: Let's Read Chapter 4: Let's Read	I Loved my Friend Book Excerpts Relative Pronouns	p. 30 p. 114-151 p. 139
<b>Quest 7 Textbook</b>			
LGBT Texts	-	-	-

LGBT Illustrations	-	-	-
Missed Opportunities	Cover Chapter 1: Big Dramas Chapter 4: Let's Read	Multiculturalism Romeo and Juliet Book Excerpts	Cover p. 36-45 p. 140-171

Table 4: Quest textbooks 5-7 overview of heterosexuality versus LGBT identities mentions

	Quest 5	Quest 6	Quest 7
<b>Heterosexuality Mentioned in Text</b>			
Heterosexuality	16	20	25
<b>LGBT Mentioned in Text</b>			
Homosexuality	0	0	0
Bisexuality	0	0	0
Transgenderism	0	0	0

The Quest 5-7 textbooks had no LGBT texts or illustrations, either explicit or ones that could be interpreted as LGBT through context. None of the textbooks mentioned any type of LGBT identities.

Quest 5 could have mentioned LGBT identities in Chapter 1. Here they wrote about different types of families, and it would be a good place to for example introduce a family with two fathers or two mothers. Chapter 4 consisted of different book excerpts, and it would be possible to add one from an LGBT book.

Quest 6 had a poem in chapter 1 called *I Loved My Friend*, and beside it is an illustration of two boys who seem to care about each other. Had the theme of that chapter not been “friends and foes”, one could have interpreted it as more romantic. The questions could perhaps have asked whether it reminded the pupils more of platonic or romantic love.

Chapter 4 is similar to Quest 5, where excerpts from LGBT book could have been added to provide some representation. This could also have been done in their *Language Work* section of chapter 4, where they give examples of the relative pronouns “who” and “which”. One of the examples is “Nate is a boy who likes girls”. They could have made this example a representation for LGBT identities or made one more to add LGBT representation.

One of the missed opportunities written up from Quest 7 was the cover. This was because the cover focused a lot on multicultural representation. The cover could therefore also have been a good place to represent LGBT identities as well.

Chapter 1 focused a lot on the story of Romeo and Juliet, but instead of dedicating the whole chapter to that story, it could have been possible to add a similar story with LGBT characters, for example for comparison. They could also have told the reader about queer productions of *Romeo and Juliet*. Chapter 4 in Quest 7 could also have had LGBT books excerpts.

### 5.2.2 Engelsk

Table 5: Engelsk textbooks 5-7 overview of LGBT representation and missed opportunities for LGBT representation

	Chapter	Theme	Page no.
<b>Engelsk 5 Textbook</b>			
LGBT Texts	-	-	-
LGBT Illustrations	-	-	-
Missed Opportunities	-	-	-
<b>Engelsk 6 Textbook</b>			
LGBT Texts	-	-	-
LGBT Illustrations	-	-	-
Missed Opportunities	Chapter 2: Stay Together	Play Your Part	p. 66-77
<b>Engelsk 7 Textbook</b>			
LGBT Texts	-	-	-
LGBT Illustrations	-	-	-
Missed Opportunities	Chapter 2: Rise Up Chapter 3: Beyond Words	I Am Who I Am PRIDE – Be Proud of Who You Are	p. 75-101 p. 133-137

Table 6: Engelsk textbooks 5-7 overview of heterosexuality versus LGBT identities mentions

	Engelsk 5	Engelsk 6	Engelsk 7
<b>Heterosexuality Mentioned in Text</b>			
Heterosexuality	10	22	12
<b>LGBT Mentioned in Text</b>			

Homosexuality	0	0	0
Bisexuality	0	0	0
Transgenderism	0	1	1

The Engelsk 5-7 textbooks had no LGBT texts or illustrations, but transgenderism was mentioned twice in the text: once in Engelsk 6 and once in Engelsk 7. The mentions were not counted as LGBT texts because of how the characters were represented. In Engelsk 6, the character that was introduced was not a major part of the story and did not have any name. The person introduced in Engelsk 7 used they/them pronouns, but it was never explained and the article about this person was about climate activism and not about transgenderism.

Engelsk 6 focused a little bit of chapter 2 on theater, where they told the reader about the musical *Annie*. Here they could have talked about an LGBT inclusive play instead, i.e. *Rent* or *Everybody's talking about Jamie*.

Engelsk 7 had some themes that would fit very well with adding LGBT representation. In chapter 2 the theme is *I am who I am*, which is perfect for introducing LGBT topics. In this part they had an excerpt from *The boy in the dress*, but it was not added to the list of LGBT texts because the character is not explicitly LGBT. In chapter 3 there is a section called *PRIDE – Be proud of who you are*, where a character is writing letters to people in their lives, asking these people to love them for who they are. Because the word “pride” has connotations with the LGBT community, it could be a very nice place to add representation, for example by making the character writing these letters LGBT and writing about their feelings regarding this.

### 5.2.3 Link

Table 7: link textbook 5 overview of LGBT representation and missed opportunities for LGBT representation

	Chapter	Theme	Page no.
<b>link 5 Textbook</b>			
LGBT Texts	-	-	-
LGBT Illustrations	-	-	-
Missed Opportunities	Chapter 7: International Food	Chapter Illustration	p. 126

Table 8: link textbook 5 overview of heterosexuality versus LGBT identities mentions

	<b>link 5</b>
<b>Heterosexuality Mentioned in Text</b>	
Heterosexuality	16
<b>LGBT Mentioned in Text</b>	
Homosexuality	1
Bisexuality	0
Transgenderism	0

The link 5 textbook had no LGBT texts or illustrations. There was however one mention of homosexuality when the characters of the textbook introduced themselves and the male teacher states that he has a husband.

The characters in this book do not change, meaning that the teacher continues to be homosexual throughout. However, he is never seen with his husband in any of the illustrations. This seems like a missed opportunity, especially on page 126, where he is out eating alone.

#### 5.2.4 New Flight

*Table 9: New Flight textbooks 1-3 overview of LGBT representation and missed opportunities for LGBT representation*

	<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Page no.</b>
<b>New Flight 1 Textbook</b>			
LGBT Texts	-	-	-
LGBT Illustrations	-	-	-
Missed Opportunities	Chapter 1: Day by Day	Magazine Column – Asking for Advice	p. 25-27
<b>New Flight 2 Textbook</b>			
LGBT Texts	-	-	-
LGBT Illustrations	-	-	-
Missed Opportunities	Chapter 7: Fight for Your Rights	Civil Rights	p. 151-174
<b>New Flight 3 Textbook</b>			
LGBT Texts	Chapter 1: Say You'll Be There	Excerpt of Rainbow Boys by Alex Sanchez	p. 21-25

	Chapter 1: Say You'll Be There	Rainbow Boys – Let's Talk!	p. 25
LGBT Illustrations	Chapter 1: Say You'll Be There	Rainbow Boys	p. 23-24
Missed Opportunities	Chapter 6: Our Inner and Outer Selves	Body Image and Trends	p. 143-168

Table 10: New Flight textbooks 1-3 overview of heterosexuality versus LGBT identities mentions

	New Flight 1	New Flight 2	New Flight 3
<b>Heterosexuality Mentioned in Text</b>			
Heterosexuality	18	25	39
<b>LGBT Mentioned in Text</b>			
Homosexuality	0	0	1
Bisexuality	0	0	0
Transgenderism	0	0	0

The New Flight 1 and 2 textbooks had no LGBT texts or illustrations and none of them mentioned any LGBT identities.

In New Flight 1, the missed opportunity was in chapter 1, where they talk about magazine columns where the readers can send in questions to get advice. Here they could have introduced a reader who asks about advice concerning i.e. same sex attraction.

In New Flight 2 the missed opportunity was in chapter 7. In this chapter they focus on civil rights and the Civil Rights Movement and apartheid. It would be possible to add a part about Gay Pride and the LGBT community's fight for acceptance, as this also pertains to a fight for civil rights.

New Flight 3 did however include an LGBT text called *Rainbow boys*. Alongside the text were two illustrations of the two main characters, one where they sit beside each other at a cinema, and one with their hands interlocking. One had to extrapolate through context that these illustrations showed homosexuality, as they could have been interpreted differently had they not been presented alongside the story.

No LGBT identities were mentioned before or after introducing the story *Rainbow boys*. However, they could have mentioned for example transgender identities in chapter 7, where the focus is on, among other things, body image. This could be a good place to explain how some people do not identify with their biological sex, and perhaps explain what it is like for a trans person to transition.

### 5.3 Teacher survey

In this section, the teachers have been given pseudonyms based on which school they belonged to, i.e. Teacher 1A for school 1, or Teacher 2A for school 2.

#### 5.3.1 School 1

One teacher from this lower secondary school answered the survey. When asked whether the English textbooks or digital resources that were available at that school included LGBT characters or dealt with LGBT themes, Teacher 1A answered that the resources available did include this kind of representation, both in text and accompanying pictures. The next question was whether any books from the school library had English books with LGBT characters or that dealt with LGBT themes, and if they knew about any specific books. Teacher 1A answered:

Yes, we have quite a few I believe. The ones I can remember are "Red White and Royal Blue" and "Will Grayson, Will Grayson" that discuss LGBT themes, and several other books that have LGBT characters, such as Six of Crows and many others.

Teacher 1A had not used any LGBT books in their teaching because they hadn't found the right book to incorporate. However, they did want to "[...] do a project using the Heartstopper graphic novels and tie it in with the Netflix series based on the books".

Answering the question of whether they had addressed LGBT topics through other means than English textbooks or books from the school library, Teacher 1A wrote: "Have not [addressed] this very often in English class, but more in other classes I teach. It has come up in discussions about identity and students often use media and books as examples".

On the topic of LGBT themes being part of the English curriculum, Teacher 1A meant that it had a place when teaching pupils "to discuss themes such as being young, identity, [life changes], being a diverse society, [discrimination] etc".

Teacher 1A also thought that the obstacles that could be encountered when introducing LGBT topics in the English classroom were that:



Not all students are able to process what we are discussing or willing to think before they speak. This might depend on the age of the students, class environment and the student group. But we need to be able to deal with issues that might arise, because it is important to [discuss] these things in the classroom, as not all students have another platform to discuss these topics.

Teacher 1A had not had any discussions of LGBT issues in their English classroom because of exposure to LGBT literature. However, if given the opportunity to discuss it, their focus would have been on “Acceptance of each other, everyone should be able to be who they are. What can we do to make everyone feel welcome and included, and the fact that we are not necessarily that different”.

This teacher said that they would recommend the “Heartstopper” series to their pupils, because it deals with a wide variety of issues and characters, and the characters are also of a similar age to their pupils.

### 5.3.2 School 2

Two teachers from this primary school answered the teacher survey. When asked if they knew whether the English textbooks or digital resources that were available to them included LGBT characters or dealt with LGBT themes, both answered that to their knowledge, none of these resources included such representation. When asked if the school library had English books with LGBT characters or that dealt with LGBT themes, Teacher 2A answered that they had been told there was one book, but they did not mention which book it was. Teacher 2B answered that they did not know of any.

The teachers were also asked if they had used books with LGBT characters in their own teaching. Teacher 2A answered:

No. I have been teaching for about half a year, and there is a lot I have not yet done. It also has not [occurred] to me to seek it out. Since it is not presented in the resources that I use frequently, it would have to be something I look for.

Teacher 2B had not used such books in their teaching either. Neither of these teachers used other resources to address LGBT topics or to provide LGBT representation, however, Teacher 2A stated that they do not address it systematically, “[...] but when the children ask/talk about it”, also adding that “Most of them are very positive and accepting, but some also use slang in negative connotation”.

The teachers were also asked whether they thought providing LGBT representation was part of the English curriculum. Teacher 2A answered, “The English curriculum states that through exploring and learning about different lifestyles and social conditions, the children can be presented new perspectives on themselves and the world. LGBT representation could be a part of this”, whilst Teacher 2B answered, “No, we have two lessons pr. week and a huge curriculum. We have a lot of topics to cover, more than we can handle during a year”.

The obstacles the teachers thought could be a problem, was for Teacher 2A “Cultural. Some parents might be opposed to this being [presented] in the classroom”. However, Teacher 2B commented that “I have not seen any literature, films, videos etc. about the topic suitable for primary school English lessons”.

Neither teacher had had any discussions in their classrooms about LGBT topics, but Teacher 2A explained that if they were to discuss LGBT topics, that their focus would have been “[t]o normalize it. No [harassment], love is love”. In contrast, Teacher 2B stated “It is not a topic I would have discussed in an English lesson”.

Lastly, none of the teachers from this school had any or knew of any LGBT books that they would recommend for their pupils.

### 5.3.3 School 3

Two primary teachers from school 3 answered the survey. When asked whether the English textbooks, digital resources, or school library books available to them contained any LGBT representation, both teachers answered that, to their knowledge, none of these resources had any LGBT representation or LGBT themes.

When asked if they had used a book with LGBT characters in their teaching, both answered that they had not. Teacher 3A had not done it because “up until now there has not been a "topic" in our curriculum for 5.-7th grade”, whilst the Teacher 3B answered that “[...] it's probably down to the fact that it's not at the forefront of my mind when it comes to teaching English”.

The teachers were then asked whether they thought providing LGBT representation was part of the English curriculum. Whereas Teacher 3A answered, “[w]ith the new curriculum, we see that there is a need for [broader] topics in our English library, also because of the ‘citizenship clause’ in the curriculum.”, Teacher 3B answered:

Perhaps, but realistically speaking this is the sort of thing that needs to be addressed in a subject such as Social Studies or KRLE. I firmly believe that my

mandate as an English teacher in 5th-7th grade is to teach the language. Sometimes this happens through genuine texts and realistic dialogue, but I try to keep the themes as familiar as possible so as to keep the focus on developing the pupils' language skills.

Teacher 3A answered that the obstacles one could encounter when working with LGBT topics in the English classroom were “Negative comments, Negative [self-images], Low awareness and understanding among [teachers]”. Teacher 3B did not mention any obstacles, referring back to the previous answer that the English subject should be about teaching the language first and foremost.

Both teachers answered that they had not had any discussions about LGBT issues in their English classrooms because of exposure to LGBT literature. When asked what they would focus on when discussing LGBT topics, Teacher 3A answered, “Equality Understanding Respect”. In contrast, Teacher 3B answered:

That it's a difficult subject; there's no monopoly on any "right" or "wrong" answers, and there's certainly no reason to [criticize] anyone's opinion. You should, however, be aware that using your opinion to [criticize] other people is a definite no-go. This is why I think it better fits to discuss these things in KRLE, especially if you consider these competency aims for 7th grade in KRLE: [The student must be able to talk about and convey ethical ideas from key figures in the history of philosophy. explore and describe own and others' perspectives in ethical dilemmas related to everyday and societal challenges. reflect on existential issues related to human life and living conditions and the future of the planet. give an account of what human rights mean for freedom of expression, freedom of religion and the situation of religious minorities in Norway].<sup>1</sup>

When asked if they had any recommendations on literature about LGBT people, Teacher 3A suggested *Boy Meets Boy* by David Levithan, because this teacher had “read it for enjoyment and understanding, and [believed] that it [explained] the feelings and social awkwardness when being ‘out [of] the box’”. Teacher 3B did not have any recommendations, stating “I can't say that I'm aware of any”.

---

<sup>1</sup> Translated from Norwegian

#### 5.3.4 School 6

One primary teacher from school 6 answered the survey. When asked if they, to their knowledge, had English textbooks, digital resources, or English books in the school library that included LGBT characters or deal with LGBT themes, Teacher 6A said that they did not.

For the question of whether they had used a book with LGBT characters in their teaching, Teacher 6A answered that “I have only used articles from internet and a pupil that have been open about being lesbian”. Teacher 6A also stated that she used other resources than English textbooks or books from the school library to address LGBT topics:

[...] I have used movies. After watching it, we do different tasks such as hunt for scenes they found [interesting]/shocking/funny/sad and so on. We also talk a lot about being critical about the way we act/behave/talk about others/put people in boxes and why. We draw feelings they have about this topic, make five line poems, make graphic novels using our [iPads]. Sometimes we make [«tableau»] and role plays and [much] more. We often use think-pair-share as a method to [include] everyone.

Teacher 6A also thought that providing LGBT representation was part of the English curriculum, saying “[...] They need to know the vocabulary for this topic. They need this to be able to discuss (in a [critical] way), have a conversation, write different texts, read different printed text in books or online, make their own [opinions]”.

The obstacles Teacher 6A thought they might encounter were “Vocabulary, [resources] for schools, be able to change perspective, think critically about themselves and others, the teacher”.

There had been no discussions on LGBT topics in Teacher 6A’s classroom because of exposure to LGBT literature, but they said that they would have focused on “that everyone has the right to be whomever they want, don’t put people in boxes, respect, values, choices, behavior, perspectives”.

Teacher 6A did not have any English LGBT books that they could recommend to their pupils.

## 6 Discussion

The following section discusses the results of the library search, textbook analysis, and teacher survey in light of the study's research questions, theoretical considerations and literature review. The purpose of this study was to examine:

1) to what extent are English-language texts that explore LGBT protagonists and representation available in the selected school libraries and textbooks and to what extent are the representations authentic?

2) what are the English teachers' views on acknowledging and familiarizing pupils with LGBT topics through English-language literature or additional resources they have available?

The discussion first addresses the availability and authenticity of the LGBT representation in the schools' textbook and literature selections, then considers the teachers' view on LGBT representation in the EFL subject.

### 6.1 Availability and authenticity of the LGBT representation

Reviewing the data collected for this study, it seems that resources that contain LGBT representation in the selected schools are scarce. The schools did in general not have a large collection of books with LGBT characters, as the average amount of LGBT books in the library ended up at 2.5; the textbooks had at best one mention of LGBT identities which all together resulted in 4 instances of LGBT mentions, whereas only 1 of the mentions was an actual text about LGBT people; and few of the teachers focused on introducing literature or other resources that contains LGBT topics.

*Table 11: Overview of the number of LGBT books and which textbooks were available at schools 1-6*

School	Number of LGBT books	Textbooks
School 1	9	-
School 2	1	Quest 5-7
School 3	3	-
School 4	0	New Flight 1-3
School 5	2	Engelsk 5-7
School 6	0	Link 5

Downey (2013) found that the majority of libraries lacked collections of high-quality and extensive LGBT literature, and Tsabet (2018) also noted that there was a lack of LGBT

literature in school libraries. The findings in this study match their statements, with 15 LGBT books altogether found in six schools, and nine of them being found in one of the lower secondary schools. The majority of the LGBT books found in the school libraries were books about homosexual men, with a few also having lesbian or bisexual protagonists or side characters. There were no books about transgender identities.

Seven books were written by women (without the same author being counted twice), and three were written by men. Six of the books that depict homosexual or bisexual men, not counting more than one book from a series, were written by women. As mentioned by Crisp (2011), there has been debate about writing from the perspectives of identities that the writers do not identify with themselves. Often, the most popular and best-selling books about male/male relationships are written by women for women readers, and many of these women are presumably heterosexual (Foster, 2015, pp. 509-510). Whether that affects the authenticity of the LGBT identities represented in the literary works is debatable. However, for this study it was mostly an interesting observation, considering that Crisp (2011) argued that it was important to represent LGBT authors as well as LGBT literature.

Regarding the authenticity of the LGBT representations in the various books found in the school library, it is somewhat difficult to determine exactly how authentic these books are unless one decides to read them all. However, because of the criteria this study had for the books added to the list of LGBT literature, one could at least say that these books should contain explicit LGBT characters. Some of the books might nonetheless be more unclear than others or have the LGBT characters be the less important side-characters.

As stated previously, *Six of Crows* contains a fictional universe where terms like “gay” are not used. One could question if this makes the representation less explicit, because the characters can not express their sexualities “verbally” in a way that perhaps is common to the reader. This is similar with *The Vampire Lestat*, as the characters supposedly never say that they are “gay”, but Haggarty (1998) argues that “[...] the central characters who emerge throughout the *Chronicles* [...] can be read as gay. To understand the *Chronicles* [...] they must be read as gay, and their relations can only be understood in terms of male-male desire” (Haggarty, 1998, p. 5). The character Lestat also calls Louis, another male vampire, his “beloved” (Rice, 2008, p. 16).

Now, these books were written many years apart, with *The Vampire Lestat* first being published in 1985, and *Six of Crows* being published 30 years after in 2015, but it seems their ways of

representing LGBT character might be quite similar. Although the terms “gay” and “bisexual” are not used to describe these characters in the text, they are however depicted as such through their thoughts and actions throughout their books.

There is also *The Mortal Instruments* series, where the LGBT characters are mostly in the background. These books have a female protagonist with a male love interest. The homosexual character in this series is called Alec, and he is in a romantic relationship with a bisexual warlock named Magnus. These characters can be categorized as important side-characters.

In this fictional universe, being homosexual is frowned upon, and being outed as one would result in exile from family and society. This is something LGBT youth might recognize as a real-life dilemma (Banks, 2009). Later in the series, the society changes its mind and becomes more accepting of homosexuality. Some of these themes can be compared to real-life experiences that LGBT people have with society, family dynamics, and struggles with one’s own sexuality.

A downside to the books with LGBT side characters, is that LGBT youth that wants to read a series with an LGBT character might not know that these characters exist in books like these. However, *The Mortal Instruments* did become a best-selling book series, which means that people more often might recommend it to others, and people might unknowingly get to read a book that provides them with the opportunity to see themselves through mirrors and windows (Bishop 1990; Crawley, 2020).

The series of graphic novels called *Heartstopper* by Alice Oseman was also recommended by Teacher 1A, even though that book was not available at their school library. Volume one in the *Heartstopper* series was first published in 2018, and it was adapted into a TV series for the streaming service Netflix in 2022. A majority of the main characters could be considered LGBT, and there are a lot of different identities depicted, including homosexuality (gay and lesbian), bisexuality, and transgenderism. The relationships are depicted as healthy and diverse, with one purely homosexual couple; one couple consisting of a homosexual man and one bisexual man; one lesbian couple, and one couple consisting of a cis man and a trans woman. The themes also include searching for one’s identity, self-acceptance, bullying, and mental health.

One book and one manga series, *The boy in the dress* and *Ninja girls*, were the only literary works that had some LGBT themes in them but were not counted as LGBT books in this study. The reason was that they were not explicit enough, not giving their characters an LGBT identity

or making the identity questionable. Other than that, all the other LGBT books that were found in the libraries had explicit and dynamic LGBT characters who in their books went through experiences that LGBT youth might have experienced and that readers can recognize or empathize with.

When looking at the representations from the English textbooks, the authenticity of the representation that is given can be difficult to determine. On the one hand, textbooks like *New Flight 3* and *link 5* have good representations of homosexuality. *New Flight 3* introduces two young boys who fall in love and are scared to hold hands in public because of how the people around them might react, and *link 5* normalizes it somewhat by making the teacher character openly gay in his introduction. However, *New Flight 3* has illustrations alongside this text that could barely be recognized as romantic, and one of the pictures is just of two hands holding each other, so it is formerly hypothesized, that when there was LGBT representation in written text in the English textbooks, the pictures alongside it had to be interpreted as LGBT and could not be taken out of context. In *link 5* they never show the reader the teacher's husband in any of the stories or in the pictures either, and in one of the pictures he sits and eats by himself at a restaurant, which leaves the reader wondering why they did not depict him with his husband. Here one could bring up Banks' (2009) statement, that it is important that there is "something *there* in the books beyond just queer characters" (Banks, 2009, p. 34). It is not enough just to include LGBT character and recognize their existence.

On the other hand, there are the textbooks with questionable representation, which are *Engelsk 6* and *7*. The representation of transgender identities in these works can be considered inadequate. The mention in *Engelsk 6* was a brief one, introducing a nameless character who "was on medication because he felt like a girl inside" (Solberg & Unnerud, 2020, p. 36). They misgender this character several times by using he/him pronouns, and in addition to this, the character is in a school for disabled children, seemingly for the sole reason of being transgender. It also seems odd that the main character mistakes "him" for a boy, which would be unnatural if the character dressed like the gender they identified with or grew their hair long. However, the character is not described for the reader at all, except that they looked like a boy but felt like a girl inside. The text does not mention words like "LGBT", "transgender", or "gender identity", and the questions pertaining to the text do not mention it either.

In *Engelsk 7*, the mention is that an activist uses they/them pronouns. "They/them" is translated into "hen" (Norwegian gender-neutral pronoun) in the glossary at the bottom of the page. However, the text is about climate activism and leaves no room to mention why this person is



using gender-neutral pronouns. This is the only text in *Engelsk 5, 6, and 7* that uses gender-neutral pronouns for a singular person, and it seems strange to then have all three *Engelsk* textbooks with practically no other LGBT content. These books were also published in 2020-2021, and there is not a single hint of same-sex couples or marriages. As mentioned in the results section, *Engelsk 7* even has a part called *PRIDE – be proud of who you are*, where they do not mention the celebration of Gay Pride. In this part the texts deal with being able to be yourself, but there are several other texts in all of these textbooks that deal with the same topic and relay the same message, so introducing LGBT identities in the “PRIDE” part of chapter 3 could perhaps have been a good way to integrate LGBT topics into that particular textbook. Furthermore, in *Engelsk 5, 6, and 7*, the authors have written a lot of the short stories especially for these textbooks, so adding a mention of LGBT parents or a same-sex crush to these stories should have been entirely possible.

There is a lack of representation in all of the English textbooks, but even the small amount of representation that is there seems inconsequential because it is not explained thoroughly in the text, or it is never brought up again in the questions affiliated with the text. This is especially so when some of the textbooks include a slight reference to LGBT representation, then neglect it afterwards. The textbooks findings from this study seem to align with Jennings & Macgillivray’s (2011) study, where they found that topics of gender identity and bisexuality were consistently excluded from the texts, and that the textbooks rarely explained what being transgender means. It is also consistent with Smedstad’s (2018) findings, that LGBT topics were mostly ignored in textbooks.

## 6.2 Teachers’ view on LGBT representation

School 1 was one of the lower secondary schools and the school that stood out the most, with nine English LGBT books found in their school library. Teacher 1A was also the only one in the survey that answered that they knew that their digital resources and library books contained LGBT representation. This is one of the digital resources that the study was not able to explore and that would perhaps have provided more authentic examples if one had been able to examine it. They also gave three examples of books that they could find in the school library. Teacher 1A had not yet used an LGBT book in their teaching but was the only one in the survey who stated that they planned on doing so. and who also mentioned which book they might choose.

Another interesting observation is that only Teacher 6A had spent time on familiarizing pupils with this topic in English class by for example using articles, movies, making poems, and

making graphic novels. This was also a teacher from a school that had no LGBT books in the library and no LGBT texts or pictures in their English textbook, except one mention of homosexuality in the textbooks for 5<sup>th</sup> year. This shows that a lack of representation within traditional classroom resources can be mitigated by the concerted efforts of classroom teachers to provide such representation themselves (Page, 2017).

One obstacle that Teacher 2B found with introducing LGBT topics in the classroom was that they did not know of any LGBT resources, whether literature or film, that was suitable for primary school. However, there is an increasing amount of LGBT (or LGBT coded) books being published that would be suitable for these age groups, for example *Julian is a mermaid* by Jessica Love; *Red: a crayon's story* by Michael Hall; *My shadow is pink* by Scott Stuart; or *Prince and knight* by Daniel Haack. It is therefore reasonable to say that there is not a lack of published LGBT literature that is suitable for primary school, but rather a lack of information on, and perhaps interest in, the LGBT literature that is available.

Similar to what was found in Page's (2017) study, even though the surveyed teachers had not introduced LGBT topics in their English classroom, most of the participants did not seem opposed to it. The reason for not doing so might be that they have not thought about it. Teacher 3A said that it had not been a "topic" for 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> grade, and Teacher 4A said that it had not occurred to them because LGBT topics are not presented in the resources they use. This could perhaps suggest that adding LGBT representation in the textbooks (and digital resources) could make it easier for the teachers to introduce the topic to the pupils.

When asked what they would focus on when discussing LGBT topics, the teachers from the survey said things like equality; understanding; respect; values; choices; behavior; perspectives; to normalize; and accepting each other. Most of the participants did not mention critical literacy specifically, but some of the topics they mentioned, for example understanding, perspectives and normalizing, would fit well with using a queer critical literacy approach (Govender & Andrews, 2021). Teacher 6A did however mention that their class did "talk a lot about being critical about the way [they] act/behave/talk about others/put people in boxes and why", and also that it is important to teach the pupils to discuss LGBT topics in a critical way. If the teachers were to work with queer critical literacy, it seems their focus would mostly be on the first two dimensions; disrupting the commonplace and interrogating multiple viewpoints (Vasquez et al., 2013; Lewison et al., 2002)

2 out of 6 survey participants found LGBT topics to not be a part of the English curriculum. Teacher 3B argued that the topic was better suited for social studies or KRLE (religion and ethics) because the English subject was about teaching the language, and Teacher 4B said that there were too many topics to cover already and that there would be no time to talk about LGBT topics. However, the topics of love, identity, and self-acceptance are so often brought up in texts from English textbooks and incorporating LGBT themes could happen very naturally. These textbooks are also filled with heterosexual couples and love stories which do not hinder the learning of the language, so the addition of homosexual or bisexual couples and love stories would not hinder language learning either. Incorporating LGBT themes, topics, and issues is not necessarily about making it its own topic, but rather about incorporating it naturally into the broad definition of text and normalizing it. The questions about gender and sexuality in text that were suggested by Hermann-Wilmarth and Ryan (2015) are also closely tied to the curriculum and health and life skills where students are supposed to develop the vocabulary to discuss their feelings, thoughts and opinions in an effort to develop a secure identity.

The textbooks analyzed in this study were extremely heteronormative, and after having mentioned LGBT identities once it was never brought up again in any of the books. All couples were heterosexual, save one from link 5 and one from New Flight 3, making heterosexuality “natural” and the default (Cohen, 2004, cited in Blackburn & Smith, 2010). This observation is further supported by the fact that the tables 4, 6, 8, and 10 only counted explicit mentions of heterosexuality, and that many other couples would be considered heterosexual through context, some examples being “later he married and had children” or “she loved her parents”.

Though a small sample, the findings are similar to Røthing and Svendsen’s (2010), who in their study did not find any evidence of textbooks that tried to challenge the privileged position that heterosexuality has in Norwegian society. Writing textbooks that normalize LGBT identities is about small changes, for example adding pictures or illustrations of homosexual or bisexual couples when introducing the topic of love, having LGBT characters who are open about their identities and who are accepted, and introducing famous LGBT people/plays/movies/books. It is about exploring these identities alongside topics like love, identity, and self-acceptance, not about “othering” it by making it a new topic (Røthing and Svendsen, 2010).

Also, as some of the survey participants mentioned, LGBT topics could be interpreted as part of the English curriculum because the pupils “[...] need to know the vocabulary for this topic. They need this to be able to discuss (in a [critical] way), have a conversation, write different

texts, read different printed text in books or online, make their own [opinions]” (Teacher 6A), and it is a topic that is relevant “when we are teaching students to discuss themes such as being young, identity, [life changes], being a diverse society, [discrimination]” (Teacher 1A), and the “English curriculum states that through exploring and learning about different lifestyles and social conditions, the children can be presented new perspectives on themselves and the world. LGBT representation could be a part of this” (Teacher 2A), and “we see that there is a need for [broader] topics in our English library, also because of the ‘citizenship clause’ in the curriculum” (Teacher 3A). Therefore, even though the curriculum does not state anything specific about introducing LGBT topics and representation, there are many good arguments for introducing it in EFL teaching; and not only because of the contents of the curriculum, but also because of the positive effects it can have on the pupils if they can see themselves represented in an authentic and respectful manner that validates them and strengthens their self-worth (Crawley, 2020).

It is also possible to introduce LGBT themes and topics into the English classroom without having access to LGBT literature, for example by reading “straight” books with a queer lens or queering characters (Hermann-Wilmarth & Ryan, 2015), although Crisp (2018) argues against this practice of queering to avoid relying on stereotypes. And if there is access to LGBT literature or textbooks but with less authentic and varied representations, this can be problematized and discussed in the classroom (Hermann-Wilmarth & Ryan, 2015). However, this necessitates that this is something on the teachers’ agenda, that they see the relevance for the English curriculum, and that they have the competence and the interest in doing so. Whichever approach one chooses, it will always be advantageous for teachers to become more aware of what is available regarding LGBT texts, and to orient oneself on what is available at the school library and in textbooks. It can be easier to get ideas if you already have resources that can help you search, for example one can get familiar with authors who are LGBT or write LGBT literature. There are also a lot of resources online, such as Listopia on the website Goodreads, where one can find huge lists of recommended LGBT literature and see other people’s ratings of the books. It is also possible to ask public libraries for recommendations, although some libraries might be more familiar with the genre than others. Lastly, it would also be beneficial for teachers to recommend LGBT books to each other as they grow more familiar with the literature that is available.

## 7 Conclusion

The LGBT representation found in the school library books and English textbooks was very scarce. In the LGBT books found in the library, the representation appeared to be authentic, introducing a diverse range of LGBT experiences and literary genres. Altogether there were 15 books containing LGBT themes, however, the majority of these were at one lower secondary school. Most of the books were about gay people, but lesbians and bisexual people were also represented several times. None of the books from the library represented transgender people.

The authenticity of the representation in the textbooks were questionable. The transgender representation was flawed in the sense that one character was continuously misgendered, and they/them pronouns were introduced in an article about climate activism. In none of these texts transgenderism was explained. Only one textbook had an excerpt from an LGBT book about a gay couple, and one of the male characters from one of the books was homosexual. Lesbians or bisexual people were never mentioned.

Only one school had a wide variety of LGBT literature, whilst the others had a maximum of three. The teachers knew little of whether the resources they had contained LGBT representation, with the exception of the one teacher who worked at the school that had the largest collection of LGBT books. One teacher, Teacher 6A, had talked about LGBT themes in their English lessons, using a variety of different teaching methods and with resources they had found themselves. Five out of six survey participants had not introduced LGBT themes in their teaching, although a majority of them seemed willing to do so and mentioned several reasons why it was relevant in relation to the English curriculum. It seemed that what stopped them was mostly the lack of resources, which made the topic less prioritized. On the other hand, Teacher 6A had barely any available resources at their school but had still introduced LGBT topics. This might have been that introducing these topics have been more relevant for this teacher and their group of pupils considering that they had a pupil that was open about being a lesbian. It could also be possible that having resources with LGBT themes can make one more knowledgeable about what kind of LGBT literature there is, such as Teacher 1A knowing about the LGBT literature available in their school library and mentioning *Heartstopper* even though it was not part of the school library collection.

The English curriculum and competency aims can be interpreted by teachers who end up having very different conclusions and who focus on different things in their teaching. Some teachers' interpretations even excluded LGBT topics from the English curriculum all together. However,

competency aims in the English subject like: “explore and describe ways of living, ways of thinking, communication patterns and diversity in the English-speaking world” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019) and “read, interpret and reflect on English-language fiction, including young people’s literature” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019) can invite teachers to include LGBT topics. However, because different schools and teachers will focus on different things, the data of how many LGBT book titles and which ones there are will vary a lot depending on which geographical part of Norway the data is collected, how big the school is, the teachers’ personal opinions and interpretations, and which books the schools decide to purchase. It is therefore difficult to generalize the findings to other schools both in close proximity to each other and on the other side of the country.

## 7.1 Implications

There are several implications that arise from these findings, regarding teachers’ views and practices, regarding textbook producers, and LGBT books found in the school libraries. It has been argued that, because at least 3% of any community identifies as LGBT (Williams Institute, 2011; Downey, 2013), introducing LGBT representation in teaching practices can counteract bullying, thoughts of suicide, and depression (Collier et al., 2013; Downey, 2013). The English curriculum opens up for introducing LGBT themes in the English classroom and such themes should therefore not be ignored simply because they are not explicitly mentioned. Not only can including LGBT representation improve the classroom environment, but LGBT youth will also feel included and be less likely to miss school (Hermann-Wilmarth & Ryan, 2015). LGBT themes should be incorporated where it feels natural to do so and does not have to be its own topic.

It would be beneficial for teachers to become more aware of what resources are available, both regarding what they do have at their school and how to search and find resources. The resources they do use should have authentic LGBT characters (Crisp, 2018) that they can use as windows and mirrors and see themselves and others through (Bishop, 1990; Crawley, 2020).

Textbook producers seem to have focused little on LGBT representation throughout the years, and when they did choose to include it, it is often just a few pages and then never mentioned again. When producing textbooks, it would be preferable to focus on several small and authentic inclusions. When mentioning someone’s sexuality, such as the homosexual teacher in *link 5*, the authenticity could be strengthened by showing this through illustrations and pictures as well.

One could also consider showing a wider variety of LGBT identities, as the most common one, that is also explained in the text, is male homosexuality.

As with the textbooks, the LGBT representations in the school library books mostly represented male homosexual characters, with some lesbian characters, and bisexual men in gay relationships. Not only should school librarians, or the people who buy books for the school library, think about the amount of LGBT literature they have, but also which identities they represent in their literary collections.

## 7.2 Further research

As a survey does not provide the same opportunities to explore teacher's opinions, it could be beneficial to have more extensive interviews with teachers to explore their reasons for including or excluding LGBT literature, topics, and issues from their teaching more in-depth. It would also be possible to do more extensive research on more schools across the country to investigate whether the amount of LGBT literature in school libraries correlates with the school's geographical position, as was found by xxx in their study

For this study, it was not possible to examine the schools' digital resources. Given the increased use of such digital resources, it would be advantageous to also consider the digital resources that are used by teachers and whether they contain more LGBT representation than the English textbooks. Because the analysis of textbooks in this study was limited to the books used in the specific schools, several of the texts analyzed were written in alignment with the LK06 curriculum. It might therefore be fruitful to analyze if the textbooks made for LK20 are more diverse in their representation of sexuality and gender identities.

## 8 Bibliography

- Banks, W. P. (2009). Literacy, Sexuality, and the Value(s) of Queer Young Adult Literatures. *The English Journal*, 98(4), 33–36. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40503258>
- Bishop, R. S. (1990). Mirrors, windows and sliding glass doors. *Perspectives: Choosing and Using Books for the Classroom*, 6(3), ix-xi.
- Blackburn, M. V., & Smith, J. M. (2010). Moving beyond the inclusion of LGBT-themed literature in english language arts classrooms: Interrogating heteronormativity and exploring intersectionality. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 53(8), 625-634. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1598/JAAL.53.8.1>
- Blackburn, M. & Clark, C. (2009). Reading LGBT-themed literature with young people: What's possible?. *English Journal*. 98(4), 25-32.
- Collier, K. L. (2013). Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity/Expression Related Peer Victimization in Adolescence: A Systematic Review of Associated Psychosocial and Health Outcomes. *The Journal of Sex Research*. 50(3-4), 299-317. [10.1080/00224499.2012.750639](https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2012.750639)
- Crawley, S. A. (2020). Peritext as Windows, Mirrors, and Maps: LGB+ Representation in the Backmatter. *Voices from the Middle*, 28(2), 29-32.
- Crisp, T. (2018). Beyond harold and dumbledore: (Re-)considering children's books depicting gay males. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 15(4), 353-369. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19361653.2018.1500507>
- DeWitt, P. M. (2012). *Dignity for all: Safeguarding LGBT students*. ProQuest Ebook Central <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.uis.no>
- Downey, J. (2013) Self-Censorship in Selection of LGBT Themed Material. *Taking Issues*, 53(2), 104-107. <https://doi.org/10.5860/rusq.53n2.104>
- Duggan, L. (2002). The new homonormativity: The sexual politics of neoliberalism. *Materializing democracy: Toward a revitalized cultural politics*, <https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822383901-007>



- Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics: Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methodologies*. Oxford University Press.
- Foster, G. M. (2015). What To Do If Your Inner Tomboy Is a Homo: Straight Women, Bisexuality, and Pleasure in M/M Gay Romance Fictions. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 15:4, 509-531. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2015.1092910>
- Haggerty, G. E. (1998). Anne Rice and the Queering of Culture. *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, 32(1), 5–18. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1346054>
- Hermann-Wilmarth, J., & Ryan, C. L. (2015). Doing What You Can: Considering Ways to Address LGBT Topics in Language Arts Curricula. *Language Arts*, 92(6), 436-443. <http://ezproxy.uis.no/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/doing-what-you-can-considering-ways-address-lgbt/docview/1692493463/se-2?accountid=136945>
- Gabbat, A. (2022, April 7). Unparalleled in intensity’ – 1,500 book bans in US school districts. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/apr/07/book-bans-pen-america-school-districts>
- Gates, G. J. (2011). *How Many People are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender?*. Williams Institute. <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/how-many-people-lgbt/>
- Govender, N. & Andrews, G. (2021). Queer Critical Literacies. In Pandya, J.Z., Mora, R.A., Alford, J.H., Golden, N.A., & de Roock, R.S. (Eds.), *The Handbook of Critical Literacies* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003023425>
- Kriukow, J. (2018). Validity and Reliability in Qualitative research. <https://drkriukow.com/validity-and-reliability-in-qualitative-research/>
- Lewis, M., Amy, S. F., Katie, V. S., & Henkin, R. (2002). Taking on critical literacy: The journey of newcomers and novices. *Language Arts*, 79(5), 382-392. <http://ezproxy.uis.no/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/taking-on-critical-literacy-journey-newcomers/docview/196851767/se-2?accountid=136945>

- Logan, S. R., Lasswell, T. A., Hood, Y., & Watson, D. C. (2014). Criteria for the selection of young adult queer literature. *English Journal*, 103(5), 30-41.
- Ministry of Education and Research. (2019). *Curriculum in English (ENG01-04)*. Established as regulations. The National curriculum for the Knowledge Promotion 2020. <https://www.udir.no/lk20/eng01-04?lang=eng>
- Noble, H., & Smith, J. (2015). Issues of validity and reliability in qualitative research. *Evidence-Based Nursing*, 18(2), 34-35.
- Page, M. L. (2017). From Awareness to Action: Teacher Attitude and Implementation of LGBT-Inclusive Curriculum in the English Language Arts Classroom. *SAGE Open*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244017739949>
- Paiz, J. M. (2019). Queering Practice: LGBTQ+ Diversity and Inclusion in English Language Teaching. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, 18:4, 266-275. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.uis.no/10.1080/15348458.2019.1629933>
- Phillips, A. (2022, April 22). It bans instruction or classroom discussion about LGBTQ issues for kindergarten through third grade. *Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2022/04/01/what-is-florida-dont-say-gay-bill/>
- Røthing, Å & Svendsen, S. H. B. (2010). Homotolerance and Heterosexuality as Norwegian Values. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 7(2), 147-166. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19361651003799932>
- Smestad, B. (2018). LGBT Issues in Norwegian Textbooks: Shared or Fragmented Responsibility?. *NJCIE*, 2(4), 4–20. <https://doi.org/10.7577/njcie.2208>
- Stone, K., & Farrar, J. (2021). Advancing an LGBTI-inclusive curriculum in Scotland through critical literacy. *Improving Schools*, 24(2), 99–111. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1365480220943322>
- Jennings, T., & Macgillivray, I. K. (2011) A content analysis of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender topics in multicultural education textbooks, *Teaching Education*, 22(1), 39-62, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10476210.2010.538474>
- Tsabet, L. (2018). How many LGBT books do you have in your school library?. *The Times Educational Supplement*, (5293).

<http://ezproxy.uis.no/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/trade-journals/how-many-lgbt-books-do-you-have-your-school/docview/2028992035/se-2?accountid=136945>

Vasquez, V. M., Janks, H., & Comber, B. (2019). Critical Literacy as a Way of Being and Doing. *Language arts*, 96(5).

Vasquez, V. M., Tate, S. L., & Harste, J. C. (2013). *Negotiating critical literacies with teachers: theoretical foundations and pedagogical resources for pre-service and in-service contexts*. Routledge.

[1] Statistisk sentralbyrå, *Antall kommunale grunnskoler og antall elever i kommunale grunnskoler, etter region, statistikkvariabel og år, 2021*. [Online]. Retrieved from: <https://www.ssb.no/statbank/table/11971/tableViewLayout1/>

## **English Textbooks**

Bade, A. H. R., Pettersen, M. D., & Tømmerbakke, K. (2015). *Quest 5 textbook*. Aschehoug.

Bade, A. H. R., Pettersen, M. D., & Tømmerbakke, K. (2017). *Quest 6 textbook*. Aschehoug.

Bade, A. H. R., Pettersen, M. D., & Tømmerbakke, K. (2017). *Quest 7 textbook*. Aschehoug.

Bromseth, B. H., & Wigdahl, L. (2006). *New flight 1 textbook*. Cappelen.

Bromseth, B. H., & Wigdahl, L. (2006). *New flight 2 textbook*. Cappelen.

Bromseth, B. H., & Wigdahl, L. (2007). *New flight 3 textbook*. Cappelen.

Mezzetti, K., Oddvik, N., Stuvland, R. A. C., & Szikszay, H. (2021). *Link 5 textbook*. Fagbokforlaget.

Solberg, C., & Unnerud, H. D. (2020). *Engelsk 5*. Cappelen Damm.

Solberg, C., & Unnerud, H. D. (2020). *Engelsk 6*. Cappelen Damm.

Solberg, C., Unnerud, H. D., & Haegi, E. (2021). *Engelsk 7*. Cappelen Damm.

## **LGBT literature – Grade 8-10**

Albertalli, B. (2015). *Simon and the homosapien agenda*. Penguin Books.

- Bardugo, L. (2015). *Six of crows*. Henry Holt & Company.
- Clare, C. (2007). *The mortal instruments: city of bones*. Simon & Schuster.
- Clare, C. (2008). *The mortal instruments: city of ashes*. Simon & Schuster.
- Clare, C. (2009). *The mortal instruments: city of glass*. Simon & Schuster.
- Levithan, D., & Green, J. (2010). *Will Grayson, Will Grayson*. The Penguin Group.
- McQuiston, C. (2019). *Red, white and royal blue*. St Martin's Griffin.
- Nagata, K. (2016). *My lesbian experience with loneliness*. Seven Seas Entertainment LLC.
- Nagata, K. (2016). *My solo exchange diary vol. 1*. Seven Seas Entertainment LLC.
- Oseman, A. (2018). *Heartstopper vol. 1*. Selfpublished.
- Rice, A. (1985). *The vampire chronicles: the vampire Lestat*. Knopf.
- Silvera, M. (2017). *They both die at the end*. HarperTeen.
- Tamaki, M. (2019). *Laura Dean keeps breaking up with me*. First Second.

### **Listopia recommendations**

*2020 YA Books with LGBT Themes (242 books)*. Goodreads. Retrieved June 2, 2022, from

[https://www.goodreads.com/list/show/123267.2020\\_YA\\_Books\\_with\\_LGBT\\_Themes](https://www.goodreads.com/list/show/123267.2020_YA_Books_with_LGBT_Themes)

*Best YA Fiction with GLBTQQI themes / characters (1757 books)*. Goodreads. Retrieved June

2, 2022, from

[https://www.goodreads.com/list/show/653.Best\\_YA\\_Fiction\\_with\\_GLBTQQI\\_themes\\_characters](https://www.goodreads.com/list/show/653.Best_YA_Fiction_with_GLBTQQI_themes_characters)

### **LGBT literature – Grade 5-7**

Haack, D. (2018). *Prince and knight*. Little Bee Books.

Hall, M. (2015). *Red: a crayon's story*. Greenwillow Books.

James, L. (2021). *The deep-sea duke*. Barrington Stoke.

Love, J. (2018). *Julian is a mermaid*. Candlewick.

Stuart, S. (2020). *My shadow is pink*. Larrikin House.

Walliams, D. (2017). *Bad dad*. HarperCollins Publishers.


### **Listopia recommendations**

*LGBTQ Children's Literature (325 books)*. Goodreads. Retrieved June 2, 2022, from

[https://www.goodreads.com/list/show/15355.LGBTQ\\_Children\\_s\\_Literature](https://www.goodreads.com/list/show/15355.LGBTQ_Children_s_Literature)

# Appendices

## Appendix 1 – Survey

 Sjekk universell utforming i skjemaet

### LGBT representation in school

---

Obligatoriske felt er merket med stjerner \*

This survey is anonymous and can not be traced back to the participants in any way.

You can answer this survey in either English or Norwegian.

You will have been provided with a number, please give that number as an answer for the first question.

Please write down the number provided through email \*

Which English textbooks or digital resources do you use in your English class? \*

To your knowledge, do these English textbooks or digital resources include LGBT characters or deal with LGBT themes? If so, is this through pictures or text? \*

To your knowledge, does your school library have English books with LGBT characters or dealing with LGBT themes? If so, are there any specific books you know of? \*

Have you ever used a book with LGBT characters in your teaching? If yes, which book(s) and why? If no, why not? \*

Do you address LGBT topics through other means than English textbooks or books from the school library? (i.e. Pictures, printed texts from other sources, personal books, movies, YouTube clips) If so, what do you use and how? \*

Do you think providing LGBT representation is part of the English curriculum? Why or why not? \*

What obstacles can there be to working with LGBT topics in the English classroom? \*

Have there been any discussions about LGBT issues in your English classroom because of exposure to LGBT literature? If so, what was discussed? \*

What would you focus on when discussing LGBT topics in the classroom? \*

If you could recommend one book about LGBT people to your pupils, which book would it be and why? \*

Are there any other resources you recommend?