

# *MASTEROPPGAVE*

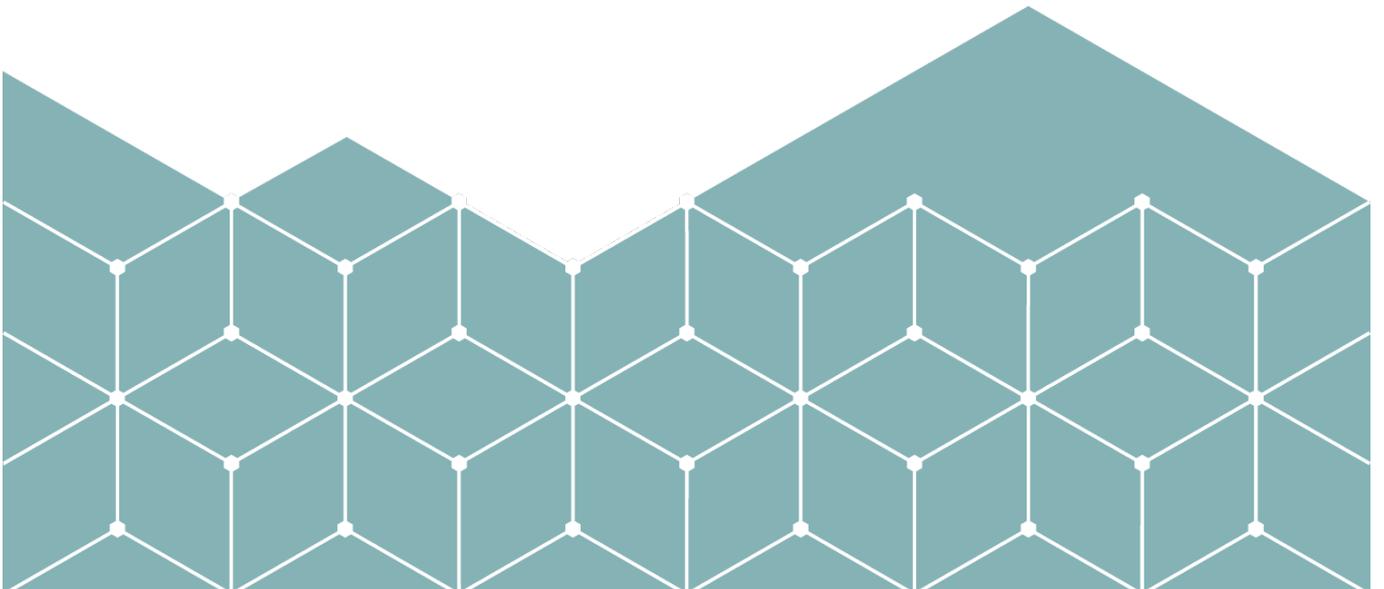
How can *the Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* and reading logs be used as teaching tools to develop and demonstrate pupils' intercultural competence?

*Andrea Olsen*

*May 2022*

*Grunnskolelærerutdanning for trinn 5-10*

*Fakultetet for lærerutdanning og språk.*



## Acknowledgements

This master's thesis is the result, and feels like the grand finale, of a five-year education to become a primary school teacher. There are therefore several people who need to be thanked because I believe this education programme would not be the same without them:

*Magne Skibsted Jensen*, who always listened to his students and kept their interest at heart.

*Virginia "Gini" Lockhart-Pedersen*, who helped me discover how fun and playful teaching can be.

*Viktoria Börjesson Behre*, for being very patient and adaptable, tolerating tons of frustrating emails, during the two years of pandemic Zoom teaching.

Secondly, I would like to thank my excellent advisor, *Melanie Ruth Duckworth*, for good guidance from the other side of earth. I have also been lucky enough to have *Michelle Ann Jewett* onboard this project. Your help and guidance through the process have been invaluable, and your positivity has been extremely motivating to drive this project forward. I have learned so much from the two of you. Introducing me to action research as a teaching tool has given me a new tool to evaluate my own teaching practice in the future.

Thirdly, I wish to thank *Elin Kaupang* and *Vibeke Reiersen Kolshus* for helping me in this process. Without you none of this would have been possible. I also wish to thank Haugeåsen Ungdomsskole, who let me borrow the books needed for the project.

Lastly, I must thank my family, friends and especially my dearest *Christer* – you have been exceptionally tolerant and supportive through this writing process!

## Abstract

This thesis discuss how Alexie Sherman's *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* and reading logs can be used teaching tools in regards of intercultural competence. The book was chosen because of specific topics related to the thesis, such as cultural identity, prejudice, stereotypes and being a teenager in general.

The study is based on reading logs written by a 10<sup>th</sup> grade class in Norway. The pupils have read the book and conducted in-class-activities throughout the project while writing the reading logs. I have analysed the pupils' reading logs from the perspective of Byram's model of intercultural competence. In addition, my didactic teaching plan is scrutinized and compared to Banks' model of how to integrate multicultural topics when teaching.

By using action research as research method, I have been allowed and able to not only address a research question important for the English language learning classroom, but at the same time analyse my own work and develop a strategy for how to conduct projects like these as a future teacher.

Keywords: reading, reading logs, intercultural competence, indigenous people, action research, Byram, Banks, Costa.

## Sammendrag

Denne masteroppgaven fokuserer på hvordan Alexie Sherman's *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* og leselogger kan brukes som undervisningsverktøy for å demonstrere og videreutvikle interkulturell kompetanse hos elever. Denne boken ble valgt grunnet spesifikke emner den tar opp som er relatert til denne oppgaven, som kulturell identitet, fordommer, stereotypier og det å være en ungdom generelt.

Studiet er basert på leselogger skrevet av en tiendeklasse i Norge. Elevene har lest boken, og gjennomført aktiviteter felles i klasserommet mens prosjektet har pågått, samtidig som de har skrevet leseloggene. Jeg har analysert elevenes leselogger ut ifra Byram's modell som handler om interkulturelle kompetanse. I tillegg er min egen didaktiske undervisningsplan plukket fra hverandre og sett opp imot Banks' modell for hvordan integrere multikulturelle temaer i undervisningen.

Ved å bruke action research som forskningsmetode, har jeg ikke bare fått mulighet til å adressere et forskingsspørsmål som er viktig som for klasserommet, men samtidig fått muligheten til å analysere eget arbeid og utvikle en strategi for hvordan et slikt prosjekt kan gjennomføres som fremtidig engelsklærer.

Nøkkelord: lesing, leselogger, interkulturell kompetanse, urfolk, action research, Byram, Banks, Costa.

# Table of contents

<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	1
<b>1.1 The focus</b> .....	1
<b>1.2 The relevance and importance of this project</b> .....	2
<b>1.3 The research question</b> .....	2
<b>1.4 Overview of the thesis</b> .....	3
<b>2. Theory and literature</b> .....	4
<b>2.1 Intercultural competence</b> .....	4
<b>2.2 Intercultural competence models</b> .....	5
<b>2.2.1 Byram`s model of IC</b> .....	6
<b>2.3 Indigenous people</b> .....	8
<b>2.4 Teaching about indigenous people</b> .....	9
<b>2.4.1 Banks` four-level model of integration of Multicultural Content</b> .....	10
<b>2.4.2 Practical approaches for developing IC and teaching about indigenous people in the EFL classroom</b> .....	12
<b>2.5 The National curriculum in English</b> .....	14
<b>2.6 Reading logs</b> .....	15
<b>2.7 Costa`s levelled questions</b> .....	16
<b>2.8 Evaluating and assessing IC</b> .....	17
<b>2.9 The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian</b> .....	19
<b>2.9.1 The format</b> .....	19
<b>2.9.2 The cartoons</b> .....	20
<b>2.10 How to use <i>The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian</i> as a teaching tool for intercultural competence</b> .....	21
<b>3. Method</b> .....	22
<b>3.1 Action research</b> .....	22
<b>3.2 The framework and process of action research</b> .....	23
<b>3.3 Text analysis</b> .....	26
<b>3.4 Case study</b> .....	27
<b>3.5 The group of pupils and data collection</b> .....	27
<b>3.6 The in-class-project</b> .....	28
<b>3.7 Ethics in action research</b> .....	30
<b>3.8 Limitations of the method and the project</b> .....	31
<b>3.9 Other methods considered</b> .....	32
<b>4. Results and analysis</b> .....	34
<b>4.1 Reading log questions made by pupils</b> .....	34

4.2 Identifying five IC encounters in the novel and the responses to the incidents .....	37
4.3 A “part-time Indian” .....	39
4.4 Pre-reading questions .....	40
4.5 Pupils` comments in the reading log.....	42
4.6 Pupils` final summary of the project .....	43
5. Discussion .....	45
5.1 The didactic teaching plan.....	45
5.2 The book .....	48
5.3 The reading logs .....	49
5.4. The reading logs: teacher or pupil controlled? .....	51
6. Conclusion .....	53
References.....	56
Appendices.....	62
Appendix 1: The didactic teaching plan.....	62

# 1. Introduction

The background for this thesis is a personal interest and engagement in the topic of intercultural competence and how to create awareness of this topic among pupils. Intercultural competence and knowledge are rapidly becoming something most people need to be conscious of, because intercultural encounters are something many of us deal with daily. This is because of globalization and the growth of communication. Considering conflicts that constantly occur between different groups of people throughout the world, creating an understanding for what needs to be in place to successfully communicate seems very important.

Acquiring intercultural competence can be a lifelong process and is a complex matter. I therefore believe it is important to trigger the awareness early. The second language classroom can therefore be the perfect place to begin this process. The teachers are, according to the Norwegian Curriculum, obliged to promote curiosity and engagement among pupils to hinder prejudice (Utdanningsforbundet, 2020). As we shall discover when reading this thesis, openness and curiosity are two of the most important attitudes Byram (1997) mentions to be able to successfully engage in intercultural encounters.

## 1.1 The focus

Intercultural competence is a massive topic to address, and to narrow it down, this thesis will therefore revolve around a classroom situation, and figuring out how one can create intercultural awareness among the pupils. The research for the project was conducted as an in-class-project, lasting seven weeks, from January till mid-February 2022. The project took place at a junior high school, with two groups of around 20 pupils participating. The pupils were given *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie to read and were instructed to write a reading log during the project.

This book is important for, and can be used to develop, intercultural understanding for several reasons. The first reason is that the author himself has grown up in an indigenous tribe in America, giving him experiential knowledge about the topic and making the book an authentic text. This is pointed out by Murray (2022) and Banks (1993) as important when working on topics like this. The second reason for choosing the book is how the author combines text and cartoons, and uses humour to underline the cultural occurrences Junior, the main character, are exposed to. The book is about a teenager that does not fit into the Indian Reservation where he is born and raised, or the high school he chooses to attend. Somehow, Junior manages to become the boyfriend of the most popular girl and gets protection from the

toughest guys. The reader follows Junior's journey to survive and do well in both worlds, and witness first-hand how he deals with the different encounters. This is important for the pupils to read, because told as a story, it can create awareness to unfamiliar situations, which again gives space for great reflections upon the incidents.

## **1.2 The relevance and importance of this project**

There are several theses and articles written about the separate topics of this thesis, intercultural competence, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* and reading logs, but there was no article or theses to be found that combines and connects the three topics in one research project. Before moving on to relevant literature, I want to start by defining important terms that will be referred to frequently throughout the thesis. The first term is intercultural competence, IC. The second is action research, AR. The third term is EFL teaching, meaning English Foreign Language teaching.

The literature relevant for this topic is, clearly, about intercultural competence, and how one can develop and demonstrate this skill among pupils. The literature search therefore starts widely, aiming to define important terms as culture and intercultural competence by using Dypedahl & Lund's (2020) definitions and Halls (1977) iceberg illustration to exemplify the complexity of the terms. Then, it moves on to Byram's model of intercultural competence from 1997, using this model as a tool to determine how successful pupils will be in intercultural encounters.

My research, and this thesis, will therefore combine the well-established intercultural competence model by Byram with Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon's (2014) action research spiral. In addition, Murrays (2022) and Banks (1993) advice and model on how to incorporate indigenous and intercultural topics to the classroom as well as Lyutaya's (2011) advice for how to successfully use reading logs as a teaching tool will be used. This will fill a research gap for two reasons. The first is that I have not, as stated above, found someone who has done this before. The second reason is that this can be used in a wider context, being adapted to many novels and topics in the EFL classroom.

## **1.3 The research question**

This thesis seeks to answer how *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* and reading logs can be used as teaching tools to develop and demonstrate pupils' intercultural competence. The reason for this question is, as mentioned in the first paragraph, that being

able to develop and demonstrate this kind of knowledge becomes increasingly important in today's multicultural society.

The research method that will be used to answer the research question is action research. The method includes a combination of text analysis and case study. The four-step-process of action research is to create a plan, act out the plan and observe, reflect on how it worked and revise the plan. This means the method can be a useful teaching tool for teachers wanting to improve their teaching methodology.

#### **1.4 Overview of the thesis**

The thesis is divided into six chapters, with several subcategories within each chapter. The next part of this thesis will present relevant theory and literature. In this chapter, intercultural competence, including an intercultural competence model, how to teach about indigenous people and the novel used will be presented. The next chapter includes an overview and discussion of research methods. I have explained in detail which methods were considered, and why they were not chosen. There will be a reasoning for choosing action research and finally a detailed presentation of the in-class-project conducted in January and February of 2022. Moving on, the results of the project will be presented. The findings are divided in relevant categories and analysed as they are presented. Then, the findings and analysis will be discussed in a separate chapter and finally there will be a chapter with concluding remarks. This final chapter works as a summary for the thesis and book project as a whole and suggests what can be done to improve learning for both pupils and teachers if one ever wants to conduct a study and project like this again.

## 2. Theory and literature

The following chapter will provide an overview, explain, and clarify key concepts one needs to consider when working with pupils to improve their intercultural knowledge and intercultural competence. Among these concepts we find Byram's model of IC and how to teach about indigenous people. In addition, a presentation of the novel *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* and how to use the book as a teaching tool will be outlined at the end of the chapter.

### 2.1 Intercultural competence

When one defines intercultural competence, an explanation of the basic term "culture" is needed first. The concept of culture has many elements. Among them are history, religion, values, social organisation, and language. Dypedahl & Lund (2020, p. 16) write that culture can be divided into two main sections: Culture with big C and culture with small c. Typical for the big C Culture is arts, history, and literature. The little c refers to a community's "way of life" (Dypedahl & Lund, 2020, p. 17). A useful model to keep in mind when discussing culture is the concept of the cultural iceberg, a model developed by Edward T. Hall (Hall, 1977). Hall saw the parallel between the iceberg and culture, because only about 10% of the iceberg is visible, and the largest part of it is hidden beneath the surface, which is quite similar to how culture can be perceived. Looking at culture as an iceberg, one often finds food, customs, language and how to dress over the surface, while beliefs, perceptions, norms, attitudes, and values are hidden below the surface.

According to Dypedahl & Lund (2020) culture has several important functions. One of the main roles is to give people a common identity within a group. This common identity includes elements of both the big C culture and the little c culture. Another important aspect is that culture in some ways explains the world and gives meaning to things. In addition, culture teaches us what one can expect in different situations and promotes a kind of individual and social survival. One more essential element of culture to keep in mind is how one communicates. Dypedahl (2020, p. 134) points out that communication patterns show differences in how one express oneself. This goes for both verbal and non-verbal ways of communicating, in addition to linear, circular, direct, and indirect way of communicating, which all connect back to previously mentioned hidden cultural beliefs, perceptions, norms, attitudes and values. Huber (2021) writes that intercultural encounters have become a part of our everyday lives because people from many different sociocultural and linguistic

background interact daily. Therefore, knowing how and what one communicates has become even more essential.

Defining intercultural competence, is a complex process (Hoff, 2020). This statement is supported by Huber (2021), who states that intercultural competence has become an extensively and debated concept. This goes especially for the field of language learning and teaching. But even though the term is widely discussed, an agreement a definition and role does not exist (Huber, 2021). According to Dypedahl & Lund (2020) the concept of intercultural competence was first emerging in the 1950s, because there was a need for a dialogue between members of different nations. Despite that, it was not before the 1980s that there was increase in the interest and intercultural issues became an area of focus (Dypedahl & Lund, 2020). One definition selected for this thesis is that intercultural communication happens when two people have distinct enough perceptions of what is communicated that the communications event is altered (Samovar & Porter, 2013). From there one must work to ensure that the rights of individuals from all cultural backgrounds are acknowledged, respected, and tolerated (Barret, Byram, Làzàr, Mompoin-Gaillard & Phillippou, 2013). Schwarzenthal et. al. (2019) points out that young adults growing up now face a mountain of lifestyles, worldviews, and different perspectives daily. According to Deardorff (2004), the skills needed to cope with all these differences are called intercultural competence.

## **2.2 Intercultural competence models**

Intercultural competence is, as mentioned in the previous section, a combination of understanding, knowledge, and attitudes. These skills are needed for several reasons. One of them is to respect and understand others who have different views from yourself. Another is for the individuals to respond appropriately and respectfully when interacting, to be able to establish a positive and working relationship with people from a culture different from their own. The final reason is to understand oneself in these meetings with the cultural differences, meaning how one reacts in a cultural context with another person coming from a different cultural viewpoint from yourself (Barrett et. al., 2013).

There are several models developed to show what set of skills one need to be successful in an intercultural encounter. The different elements of intercultural competence can be split into attitudes, knowledge and understanding, skills and actions. (Barrett et. al., 2013) The different models portray personal characteristics necessary, and how one can develop personally in different intercultural settings. Below I will present a well-established and known intercultural

competence model. There are a variety of models, but for the purpose of this thesis Byram's model is chosen because it consists of different sections that have proven to be useful when engaging in successful intercultural communication. Next, a detailed description of the sections will be outlined. Byram's model has been critiqued by Matosu, a practicing teacher, and this will be mentioned briefly towards the end of this section.

### **2.2.1 Byram's model of IC**

In his book *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence* from 1997 Byram presents a model of intercultural competence. The model consists of five different factors that Byram (1997) believes are essential for having a successful intercultural encounter. These factors are all related and connected to each other. Byram's model is based on Van Ek's work from 1986. One of the targets of the development of this model was for teachers both teaching and assessing foreign language education to have a guide to look to. The five sections will be presented over the next paragraphs.

The first factor Byram presents is attitude. By this he means the attitude regarding people who are considered culturally different concerning behaviour, beliefs, and culture. Byram states that it is important to avoid the attitudes identified as stereotyping and prejudice, which often have negative perspectives. The negative attitudes mentioned lead to unsuccessful interactions. According to Byram, positivity, curiosity, and openness are necessary for a triumphant intercultural interaction. One needs to analyse others' actions and points of view from their standpoint. This means being prepared to suspend one's personal judgement and disbelief and change it to respect for others' behaviour, meanings, and beliefs (Byram, 1997).

The second factor is knowledge. Byram dissects this into two categories: first, the knowledge about social groups in one's country and knowledge of the conversational-partner's country and second, the knowledge of the processes of interaction at individual and societal levels. According to Byram the first category is generally easy to determine while the second category is a part of the foundation for successful interaction, but is it not necessarily obtained automatically.

The third skill of the model discusses the necessity to draw upon previous knowledge. The skill Byram refers to is the one of interpretation and relating. The ability to explain and interpret documents from one country for someone from another, or to identify the relationships between documents from other countries, is highly based on existing knowledge of both one's own and the others' environment. This skill can be acquired, according to

Byram (1997), through formal education, in for instance, the foreign language classroom. This skill is different from the next skill because the timescale for the interpretation is decided by the individual and does not depend on or demand social interaction.

The fourth factor of Byram's model is the skill to discover and/or interact. By this, Byram (1997) refers to the ability to acknowledge a compelling situation or circumstance in foreign surroundings and draw out their meaning and subtext, and their connection to other phenomena. This skill is relevant when the individual has no, or restricted existing knowledge. To be able to discover, interact and understand behaviour, beliefs and meanings is essential in many situations, whether it is about interpreting documents as mentioned in the previous paragraph or physical interactions.

The fifth and final element of Byram's model (1997) is education about politics and critical cultural awareness. According to Byram (1997), one needs to be able to evaluate critically and base this evaluation on clear perspectives, practices and products in other cultures, countries and one's own.

Byram (1997) has several important points to keep in mind when presenting his model. One is that the intercultural speaker brings personal experiences from their own point of view. Another is that the ability to gain new knowledge of culture and the skill to operate this knowledge requires the individual to have attitudes which encourage sensitivity and using one's existing knowledge in a positive way. A danger is to present culture as a never changing, static thing that has a certain belief, meaning or behaviour.

Matosu is a practising teacher and has been critiquing Byram's model for two reasons (Matosu, 2012). The first reason is that a model like this is more useful for theorists, and because of a lack of coherence, it is challenging for teachers to put it to use in practical pedagogical situations. Matosu's second argument is that because Byram refuses to define culture in his model, it can be interpreted as homogenous and individual-oriented. As a teacher with experience teaching a foreign language, Matosu made a point of the gap between Byram's theory and the practical things that happen in a classroom. She suggests a dialogue-based approach when teaching in the foreign language classroom, because she believes it will benefit the pupils intercultural learning process.

Byram (1997) himself states that his model is not adequate in all situations. In language and culture education there will always be different factors that cannot be placed into a theoretical model. Byram emphasizes that the best way to judge the success of an intercultural interaction

is through the successfulness of the exchange of information. Therefore, teaching the pupils about the effect of attitude, awareness, openness, positivity, and curiosity, in addition to building on already existing knowledge will help them communicate successfully whenever they experience an intercultural encounter.

An important note for this thesis is that Byram`s model of IC is not directly linked to indigenous people but is concerning intercultural encounters in general as described and defined above. The model is still highly relevant in this case because of the attitudes, knowledge, and skills Byram regards as necessary for a successful intercultural encounter. For the pupils participating in the project, they will need to use all three skills to able to extent their intercultural competence through reading the book about a Native American teenager living in both an indigenous culture and a “white” culture. The results, analysis and discussion of this thesis are based on Byram`s model, and this will be presented in-depth in chapter 4 and 5.

### **2.3 Indigenous people**

A necessary concept to address, because of the main character and circumstances in the book the pupils have read, is indigenous people. Indigenous identity is a delicate topic (Weaver, 2001). One of the reasons for the controversy is that there is little consensus on precisely what shapes an indigenous identity and how one can measure who truly has it. Weaver (2001) also points out that there is no agreement on a suitable term. Should one use Indians, American Indians, Natives, Native Americans, Indigenous people, or First Nations people? After the initial term is settled on, there are several other things to take into consideration: race, ethnicity, cultural identity, tribal identity, multicultural identity, and other forms of identity. Discussing the topic of indigenous people can be seen like opening a Pandora`s box (Weaver, 2001). This means one can never be sure of what to expect, or how the discussions or activities will play out in a classroom setting.

According to Thornberry (2013), “Indigenous” bears a sense of *original* or first *inhabitants*. A problem that then arises is addressed by Kuper (2005), who writes that knowing whose ancestors first arrived on that region and when, is often hard to decide. The problem becomes even more urgent and pressing when it comes to dictating who should be accepted as authentic indigenous people. No matter how one chooses to define indigenous people, there is no doubt that they have a unique place within a multicultural society (Weaver, 1998). Now, more than ever, we are living in an age of diversity (Lock & Bailey, 2014). This means one

should be extra careful when discussing this topic, both in the classroom and in general. One should keep in mind that precise information on specific indigenous people can best be acquired by the groups themselves (Weaver, 1998), and never assume or make guesses about important topics like these.

In a multicultural society, identities are made up of a variety of things, such as community, family, friends, language, class, skin colour, religion, education, profession, and ancestry (Holliday, 2010). Identities are always, indigenous, or not, fragmented, crossing and constantly changing. One's identity can sometimes even be conflicted (Weaver, 2001). An important point made by Weaver (1998) is that one needs to be aware of and reflect upon your personal cultural background, values, behaviour, and bias when looking into indigenous people.

A group in the society that bears a special responsibility to expand awareness, knowledge and skills is teachers (Locke & Bailey, 2014). The next section will deal with how teachers should prepare, what they should focus on, and present a model for teaching multicultural curricula, especially when it includes indigenous people, in the EFL classroom.

## **2.4 Teaching about indigenous people**

There are several things to consider carefully and to be aware of when one teaches about indigenous people in the EFL classroom. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the topic of indigenous people can be viewed as a touchy subject to address, especially in the classroom, because of the diversity found among pupils. But even though something is difficult, it should not be avoided (Murray, 2022). An important point is that talking about things often challenges both stereotypes and outdated ideas. Teachers can also reinforce stereotypes, so it is crucial to think about not only to just talk about them, but to be aware of how we talk about the stereotypes and outworn ideas. If done thoughtfully it can help personal growth and contribute to awareness among the pupils (Murray, 2022).

It is important to keep in mind that pupils enter a classroom with a huge variation of experience, cultural background, levels of knowledge and different viewpoints. The reading logs written by the pupils for this project demonstrates this distinction, and this will be examined in chapter 4 and 5. The difference in levels means there is a challenge for the teacher to find a common starting point. The next section will present a model the teacher can use as a tool when planning lessons about indigenous people with a goal of increasing the pupils' intercultural competence.

### **2.4.1 Banks' four-level model of integration of Multicultural Content**

Banks has created a four-level model for integrating multicultural curricula in the classroom (Banks, 1993). Banks writes about the need for teachers to have in-depth knowledge about cultures and experiences to be able to integrate sufficient content and points of view into the teaching plan. Banks's model is a good teaching tool for teachers to keep in the back of their minds when planning and creating new didactic teaching plans. The model has been used for this project to ensure the activities are found at the appropriate and sufficient multicultural level. Banks presents the model as a ladder, where the lowest level (1) is at the bottom, and the highest level (4) is found at the top.

The first level is named The Contributions Approach. The focus on this step is heroes/heroines, holidays, lifestyle, and discrete cultural elements (Banks, 1993). Banks writes that this approach is the most straightforward and simple way for teachers to add multicultural content to his or her lessons. However, Level 1 has a various of limitations. One of the major ones is that pupils are not able to achieve a global view of the culture, from the narrow angle of important people and dates (Banks, 1993). Even though the pupils might remember the names, they will only obtain a restricted understanding of the hero or heroines' role and their importance to their society. Another limitation is that pupils will not be introduced to essential issues related to victimization, oppression, the struggle against racism and for being included in decisions. This level often leads to a minimization and underestimation of the culture. Summarized, the focus is often put on the exotic traits, instead of the important events that lead to the culture being where and what it is today (Banks, 1993).

The second level is called The Additive Approach. It includes content, concepts, themes, and perspective added to the curriculum without changing the structure (Banks, 1993). According to Banks, this method lets the teacher put ethnic content into the lessons without restructuring them. An example is to add a book, like *The Colour Purple* by Alice Walker, published in 1982, when the goal is to study the twentieth century in an English Class (Banks, 1993). Even though the Level 2 adds content to some degree, it shares many of the weaknesses with *The Contributions Approach*, according to Banks (1993). The most important drawback is that it often results in the pupils only viewing the issues, events and problems through mainstream writers, artists, and historians. Another disadvantage with this approach is that it malfunctions when it comes to helping students view society from a diversity of cultural and ethnic

perspectives. It also fails to guide the pupils to an understanding of how religions, racial, cultural, and ethnic groups are interrelated (Banks, 1993).

The third level is labelled The Transformation Approach. At this level, change in the curriculum is starting to happen, and this level differs fundamentally from Level 1 and Level 2. At this stage, the structure of the curriculum is changed, to enable students to view concepts, issues, events, and themes from the perspectives of diverse ethnic, and cultural groups (Banks, 1993). According to Banks (1993), the aim is not to view every problem, issue, event, or concept from the point of every racial, cultural, and ethnic group. The goal with this level is to enable the pupils to view issues and concepts from several perspectives. For instance, when studying the U.S history, language, music, and arts, there should be an emphasis on how the common U.S. culture and society has emerged from a (complex) interaction with a diversity of ethnic, racial, religious, and cultural groups. The Transformation Approach is a much more demanding level for the teachers because it requires them to change their way of educating pupils about minoritized populations or indigenous people in the classroom. To summarise, Level 3 is more complex for both teacher and pupils, because teachers need to prepare more, and the level encourages pupils to view ideas and concepts from multiple perspectives.

The final level is The Social Action Approach. At this final degree, the pupils make decisions on important social issues and take actions to help solve them. The fourth level also requires the pupils' active engagements in the topics being taught and includes all the elements of the previous approach. The major goal for this approach is to educate the pupils for social criticism and change, and to teach them skills that makes them able to come to wise decisions. The teachers must function as intermediaries who encourage social change, promote democratic values, and motivate the pupils (Banks, 1993). Murray (2022) adds that Level 4 requires the pupils to use previous knowledge and build on that knowledge to plan how they can make a difference in the society. This can, and most likely will, lead to personal development among the pupils.

Level 3, The Transformation Approach and Level 4, The Social Action Approach requires a change of teaching materials. For the teacher it means choosing materials that relate to indigenous people's way of thinking and living. The two top levels are also necessary for the teacher to aim at encouraging the development of pupils' intercultural competence. The aim for the teaching plan created for this thesis is to be located at the two top levels of Banks' model.

### **2.4.2 Practical approaches for developing IC and teaching about indigenous people in the EFL classroom**

Barret et. al. (2013) states that intercultural competence can be developed in different ways through different types of education. This can be interpreted as a statement to the fact that there is no final answer to how or what one should do when trying to develop pupils' intercultural competence and teaching about indigenous people. The following section has for the in-class-project been used as a guide of elements to think about when addressing the topics of IC and indigenous people.

The goal of developing IC in pupils is, according to Barret et. al (2013) to create a foundation for interchanges and living together in a common community. There is both informal and formal education, where the informal process is a lifelong journey, and the individual obtains skills, knowledge and attitudes from her/his own surroundings, daily experiences, and conversations with people they meet along the way and where the formal education is a structured training system that starts in the childhood and ends somewhere in the mid-teens (Barret et. Al, 2013). Even though there is a systematic difference between the formal and informal process, all types of learning involve an interaction between the learner and learners, e.g., parents and children, or teacher and pupils.

The acquisition of IC requires that learners understand that cultural identities are compounded, and that individuals have various identities depending on the setting they find themselves in (Murray, 2022). Classroom activities should be adapted to developing pupils IC through exposure to texts and activities that gives the pupils access to a broad scale of voices and experiences. Using a variety of authentic teaching materials that incorporate indigenous voices, even when the curriculum does not specify that it should be done, is a good way of giving pupils insight through variation (Murray, 2022).

Another practical approach is to look at present-day ways of living and ways of thinking, instead of repeating the historical events that has been a part of the curriculum for years. Focusing on the imbalance of power, equal rights as the majority in the society, present debates about land, taxes, and healthcare instead of the important prehistorical heroes and events, will immediately raise the level of the teaching (Murray, 2022).

An important thing to avoid when discussing minoritized populations is stereotyping. Both stereotyping and othering are common in this type of teaching. Words often used to describe the majority society are *we*, *us* and *our* (Murray, 2022). The school textbooks also tend to be stereotypical, and a one-sided representation of the minoritized populations may lead to

indigenous people being viewed as a group of exotic characters, rather than equals (Brown & Habegger-Conti, 2017).

According to Murray (2022), dialogue is essential to develop IC. This view is supported by Hoff, (2020) who writes that IC is not a skill that can be acquired by independent study. One needs to communicate with others that have different perspectives and worldviews than oneself. It is through these conversations and meetings, with possible misunderstandings, communication failures and successes that learning takes place.

A final thing to keep in mind when creating tasks for IC in the classroom is that it is important for pupils to be able to relate what they learn in the formal classroom to their own lives. The pupils must see a connection between their newly learned knowledge and the societies they live (Murray, 2022). This is again to avoid othering, the *us* and *them*, and feeling distant from the things they learn about.

When creating different tasks, teachers can and should follow common EFL didactic practises. Working with cultural topics does not change the rules, and discussions, written assignments, role-play, and other oral based activities will most likely be a success, if one keeps the things written about above in mind.

On her website, Murray (2019) suggests asking the following questions:

In your community, when someone new arrives, how are introductions done?

What should the new arrival do and say to be accepted into the community?

and

Write a guide on how to be accepted into your community for someone who has never been there before.

The aims of a task like this are to make pupils aware of and think about their cultural practice from an outside view, and to look at well-known actions with a critical stance.

As mentioned previously in this chapter, teachers have a special responsibility when it comes to raising and accepting awareness in the society. Teachers are not only sharing linguistic or mathematic knowledge to pupils, but also the skills and knowledge on how to interact successfully with people considered as from diverse cultural backgrounds (Murray, 2022). In a classroom situation, cultures and people should be addressed as both dynamic and complex. Even though pupils develop skills at different pace, they should always be encouraged to be

open when communication with people from other backgrounds. This will make acquiring intercultural competence a lifelong learning goal, which again leads to personal development. This is important for the pupils to bring into their adult life because they will continue to live in a multicultural and fast-changing world (Murray, 2022).

## **2.5 The National curriculum in English**

The National curriculum was revised and republished for the 2020/2021 school year. Even though teaching about culture has been a crucial element of English teaching for a long time, the new curriculum includes a clear focus on developing intercultural understanding in the language classroom. The very first paragraph of the “Relevance and Central Values” states that

English is an important subject when it comes to cultural understanding, communication, all-round education and identity development. The subject shall give the pupils the foundation for communicating with others, both locally and globally, regardless of cultural or linguistic background. English shall help the pupils to develop an intercultural understanding of different ways of living, ways of thinking and communication patterns. It shall prepare the pupils for an education and societal and working life that requires English-language competence in reading, writing and oral communication (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020).

According to Murray (2022), to fulfil the aim of the “Relevance and Central Values”, it will require pupils to expand their IC, because these are the knowledge and skills necessary for purposeful and successful communication with people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. IC is also a key to realizing how one’s own cultural background, as well as others’ backgrounds, affects what people say, how people say it and how the responses are interpreted.

Two of the Competence Aims after Year 10 states that the pupils shall be able to

Explore and reflect on the situation of indigenous peoples in the English-speaking world and in Norway.

Explore and describe ways of living, ways of thinking, communication patterns and diversity in the English-speaking world.

(Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020).

This means that it is expected from the pupils that after 10 years of primary school, they should have knowledge about indigenous people, and be able to reflect and discuss their living situations, ways of thinking and how they communicate. An important note here is that the curriculum does not say anything about stereotypes, prehistorical events, or people. This means the teacher has complete freedom to pick and choose how to plan and implement the teaching about indigenous people.

## **2.6 Reading logs**

A reading log looks and acts much like a journal. Lyutaya (2011) writes that reading logs are a form of written record of the pupils' opinion of the text, and therefore I decided to use them for this project. According to Lyutaya (2011), reading novels and creating a reading log as they read is a very good method for pupils to make progress and track this progress. The reading logs are a place for the pupils to reveal their attitudes towards the novel they are reading in this project, reflect on what they read, and make links between previously acquired knowledge and what they are learning now. Ochoa Delarriva & Basabe (2015) claim that reading logs are an activity suited even at an advanced level of learning, because they encourage the pupils to develop their perception of a novel to a higher level. The log is also the place to hypothesize, manifest their opinions and show their growth as independent learners and strategic readers (Lyutaya, 2011). This is supported by Khonamri & Farzanegan (2016), who write that through developing their logs, learners activate their background knowledge, which can also help the pupils to realise what they think is difficult.

Pak & Weseley (2012) report, however, that if pupils' have compulsory reading logs, they can quickly demonstrate a decreasing interest in the project. They continue to write that the reading logs are designed to encourage reading and making sure progress is happening by assigning weekly reports, but it is important to keep in mind that it can work against its purpose, and that the pupils might develop a lack of enthusiasm towards doing it. The nature of a reading log is controlling, and it is therefore important that the pupils feel autonomy to what they are writing in their paper to avoid the decreasing motivation (Pak & Weseley, 2012).

Throughout her article, Lyutaya (2011) presents several elements that could be part of a reading log. I have summarized the most important and created a list of what a good reading log should contain, according to Lyutaya:

- The pupil should make a pre-reading section of what they believe the book might be about.
- The pupils should make comments on a passages or sentences from the novel while they read.
- The pupils should make a drawing featuring one or several of the characters in the story.
- The pupils should write down questions and answers.
- The pupils should speculate about information gaps.
- The pupils should give their opinion about the story.

To summarize why reading logs are a good thing, Lyutaya (2011) states that it is a very good way to organise the pupils' thoughts as they read. The log should become a natural part of the overall reading project, and not feel forced or strained in anyway. If done right, the success (or lack of success) the pupils' experience can be revealed in their log.

## **2.7 Costa's levelled questions**

In the beginning of the project, the intend was for the pupils to answer the same questions given by me. The pupils expressed early in week 2 of the project that they found the questions given too difficult and demanding to answer. They also commented on that being given the questions after they had read was time consuming, because they felt like they constantly had to go back and search for the answers in the book. As written in the previous section, Pak & Weseley (2012) points out that obligatory tasks might lead to decreased motivation. I wanted to keep the group of pupils motivated, and therefore decided to change the use of the questions. By doing this, I was making the pupils feel heard, and I thought it would be interesting to see what would happen if they created their own questions. I still felt it was necessary to have a guide on how to develop the questions, to ensure a certain level on the questions the pupils produced. Costa's levels of questioning, cited in Brown & Bergman (2013), have been used in this project to guide the pupils when they made their own questions for the reading logs. Costa divides his questions into three categories or levels. The levels will be presented in the next paragraph.

The first level, Level 1, is about gathering and recalling information. At this stage, it is expected that the pupils use prior knowledge of concepts and information stored in their long- or short-term memory. The teacher will ask the pupils to define, identify and describe. The second level, Level 2, is about processing the information. It is here expected that the pupils make sense of the data they have gathered. They will be asked to analyse, classify,

differentiate, compare, and contrast the material. The third and final level, Level 3, is about creating new ideas through evaluating the actions in different novel situations. The pupils are at this level expected to adapt information they have gathered and developed into hypothetical situations. The teachers can ask pupils to predict, interpret, and use the knowledge acquired.

Costa and his three levels were introduced to the pupils, but they had difficulties understanding the words of defining, describing, analysing, classifying, contrasting, predicting, interpreting and how they were supposed to differentiate the levels. I therefore decided to use terms more familiar to the pupils. The terms they know from ten years at school are “Find the answer in the text” and “Think for yourself”. The “Find the answer” category is like Costas first level, where the pupils look for the answer while they read. The second category requires the pupils to think and discuss before they answer. They will not find them directly quoted in the text.

## **2.8 Evaluating and assessing IC**

In Dypedahl & Lund (2020), Byram writes that “what can be assessed and how can it be assessed?” raises many challenges for language teachers. When assessing what the pupils have learned, it can function as a tool to determine if the teaching is successful (Byram, 2020). As mentioned previously in this chapter, IC is a complicated topic, and Byram argues that it therefore is a complex topic to assess. According to Byram’s model, IC includes - among other skills - the attitudes of curiosity and openness, and knowledge of communication processes and how prejudice and stereotypes can obstruct successful correspondence.

In Byram’s opinion, formative assessment of pupils’ IC can help them identify their own strengths and weaknesses relating their attitude and knowledge regarding intercultural events, meetings, and happenings. Byram (2020) exemplifies how the different factors of his model can be assessed. This will be explained below.

The first factor, attitudes, is about curiosity and openness. One should look for pupils’ willingness to suspend his or her own scepticism about other cultures and optimism about one’s own. The pupil shows an interest in discovering other perspectives and demonstrates a desire to interpret both familiar and unfamiliar phenomena both in one’s own and other cultures and cultural practices.

The second factor regards knowledge about social groups and their products and practices in one’s own and in one’s interlocutors’ country. It also involves knowledge of the general processes of societal and individual interaction. When assessing and evaluating this point, the

assessor should look for the pupil showing knowledge of the types of cause and process of misunderstanding between interlocutors of different cultural origins. This factor is likely to be taught and assessed through examples. According to Byram, the pupils' will reveal factual knowledge about issues involved, demonstrating their capacity to draw upon general knowledge to be able to make sense of a specific example by their choice.

The third factor, the skills of interpreting and relating considers the ability to translate and convert a document or event from another culture. This interpretation is seen as necessary to compare and relate documents or events from one's own culture. This skill would most likely be used by pupils in written form and should therefore be assessed in written form as well. This factor of Byram's model is relieved of the stress a real-time interaction might cause, allowing the pupils' more time for analysis, using their prior knowledge to acquire more knowledge. The assessor will observe potential misunderstandings and reflections done in the written form, where the pupils' will have both time and space to demonstrate how much or little of the skills they want to.

The fourth factor and fifth factors can be assessed together. The fourth factor is about the skills of discovery and interaction, meaning the capacity to acquire new knowledge of a culture, its practices. The fifth factor is about how to utilize this knowledge in real-time communication and the final factor, being able to evaluate perspectives and ways of doing things in one's own country to what is done in other cultures and countries. At this stage, the pupils can be requested to reflect on their opinion(s) and findings and explain their choice of approach. Byram suggests that this skill could be gathered over time, in for instance a reading log or a portfolio. A note to the assessor about this factor is that it requires a high degree of awareness, and the pupils being able to relate certain events to general principles. When reflecting and defending their thoughts, ideas and opinions, the pupils are likely to reach what is called deep learning, meaning they get really involved and far into the situations and reach a new level of consciousness.

As stated in the first paragraph of this section, the assessment of IC can be used as a tool to determine the accomplishments of both the teacher and the pupils. The pupils' work, meaning the reading logs, will be compared to Byram's attitudes, and their success or lack of success will be determined considering what Byram sees appropriate.

## **2.9 The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian**

*The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* is a semi-autobiographical young adult novel written by Sherman Alexie illustrated by Ellen Forney. Alexie is a Native American Poet, novelist, and performer (Poetry Foundation, 2010). The author is known for his Indian descent, growing up in the Spokane Indian reservation in Wellpinit, Washington. Alexie was born to Salish Indians - a Coeur d'Alene father and a Spokane mother (Kuiper, 2021). Growing up in a Native American culture has given Alexie the basis for his stories. The author's authentic Native American background is one major reason for choosing to use this book in class, as this is mentioned by both Murray (2022) and Banks (1993) as important when choosing material. Alexie had major health issues as a child, being born hydrocephalic, meaning he had water on his brain. This resulted in multiple seizures throughout his childhood, leading him to become a fan of reading (Poetry Foundation, 2010). Alexie chose to start at Reardan High School in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, a school that is located many miles outside the reservation, a school where he was the only Indian, except for the school mascot (Poetry Foundation, 2010).

Alexie's writing addresses issues that often affect the lives of Native Americans living on reservations. Issues indigenous people often encounters are, according to Alexie, poverty, alcoholism, and the feeling of despair. Alexie also points to irony and dark sense of humour as familiar tools used to protect oneself (Poetry Foundation, 2010). On his website, Alexie describes himself as a former Rez Indian, not being an Urban Indian (FallsApart Productions, 2022). He has won major critical praise and awards, like the National Book Award for Young People's Literature (Poetry Foundation, 2010)

### **2.9.1 The format**

*The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* is written in a diary form, with a first-person narrative. The novel is about Arnold Spirit Jr. who goes by the nickname "Junior". The main character mostly tells his own stories as they occur, and sometimes he re-tells stories from others that has influenced him in some way. Junior narrates characters from an objective point of view for the most part, but also shares his opinion about other people's actions with the reader.

Like Alexie, Junior grows up in the Spokane Indian Reservation. He is a promising cartoonist, which will be discussed in a separate paragraph. Junior is not happy where he is at, or the life he is destined to live. He therefore decides to change school, from the troubled one at the Rez, and attend an all-white school some miles outside the reservation. In the first sentence on the

very first page, he introduces the reader to his condition, revealing that he was born with water on the brain, making him out to be different from his peers. Junior also struggles with stuttering and lisping, and his eyes are unusual with him being near-sighted on one eye and far-sighted on the other. Junior is pushed around by other Indians in the reservation. They use nicknames like “hydrohead” and make fun of his lisping and stuttering.

The major conflict in the book is Junior’s struggle to find his place in the world. He does not feel like he belongs in the reservation, nor at Reardan High School. The themes of the book could therefore be said to be his individual ambition of achieving something else than his parents, the poverty and alcoholism he experiences at the reservation, and the white privilege and racism he encounters at the high school

Throughout the book, Junior uses a lot of humour. He often degrades himself in the process of being funny, writing out his lisp and stuttering phonetically. The book is divided into 30 chapters. The chapters are short, and the text is often broken down because of the cartoons added, which makes it manageable for more pupils to read.

### **2.9.2 The cartoons**

The drawings play an important part of the novel, and therefore deserves to be commented on as a separate item. Junior states on page 5 that words are too unpredictable and too limited, but drawings are universal, and everybody can understand it (Alexie, 2007). Junior wants to talk to the world; he wants the world to pay attention to him and feels important with a pen in his hand. On page six, Junior reveals that he sees his drawings as the only real chance of escaping the reservation. The cartoons are Junior’s way of expressing his view of the world. They also describe how Junior views the important people in his life. As a humorous tool, the cartoons let Junior make the world aware of his hopes and dreams, while at the same time illustrate things he hates and worries about.

The cartoons in the novel are also used as a tool to portray Junior’s inner conflict of the two cultures he is moving between. Two examples are when he draws himself as a pupil at the school in the Rez and compares it to how he would look like as a white pupil, and when he draws his parents as if someone had paid attention to their dreams. These cartoons are noteworthy because they demonstrate intercultural encounters, which is what the pupils in this project are meant to look out for and notice.

## **2.10 How to use *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* as a teaching tool for intercultural competence**

In this novel, Alexie writes about many challenges that the USA's indigenous population still face today. This means the book ticks the box of being an authentic text covering real-time issues, which Murray (2022), states are important when teaching about indigenous people.

The novel portrays the life of a teenager living life on an indigenous reservation. At the same time, the novel shows the same teenager trying to leave the reservation, creating a different future for himself. This results in a huge inner conflict for Junior, who can be seen as a high school pupil searching for his identity and place in the world. The book can therefore be used as a tool to learn about indigenous people and Native America, focusing on their culture and how they deal with things. One can choose to focus on the contrast between the Rez, which is the reservation Junior grew up, and the Reardan High School he attends.

Themes to work on when using this book as a teaching tool are identity, the feeling of being isolated and how to deal with loss. All these topics can be relatable for a teenager, even if he or she is not caught directly between two cultures. Most teenagers are struggling to find and define their identity at some stage in their life. This can lead to a feeling of isolation, and not being understood by anyone. Loss is also something most teenagers experience at some point.

Differences, tolerance, and acceptance are also terms one could discuss in class when using this book. This is another major reason for choosing to work with this book in class. The book portrays many topics that most teenagers can relate to, which creates a good base for many in-class-activities, discussions in groups or plenary, or writing individual reflections.

### **3. Method**

In this chapter, the research method chosen for this thesis will be presented and discussed. A reason for choice of participants and data collection will also be given, and the in-class-project is explained in detail. The chapter will also discuss ethical aspects and limitations of the project, while other research methods considered will be mentioned briefly towards the end of the chapter with an explanation of why they were not regarded suitable in this context.

#### **3.1 Action research**

When choosing research method for a thesis and project like this, one must circle back to the main question one wants to answer. According to Kawulich (2012) a researcher must choose where to focus, and the focus is determined by the purpose of the study. In this case, the dominant question is what knowledge pupils can learn, demonstrate and develop from reading a specific book. Teachers often give pupils reading projects, without a specific goal for the project, re-using books that have been read and used for the past decade. This project aimed to read with purpose, and the goal was for the pupils to learn something or become aware of intercultural incidents and their own partaking in that.

The process of developing this project led to a need for a hands-on research method. Mills (2000) describes action research (AR) as a genuine research method that gives teachers a tool for investigating, understanding, and responding to on-going situations in their classrooms. It is a method conducted by teachers, for teachers (Donato, 2003). The method functions as a strategy for change, considering the situations examined in everyday situations. Mills' view is supported by Koshy, Koshy & Waterman (2010), who writes that AR is a research method suitable for improving one's own practice. The authors write that the method involves action, evaluation, critical reflection and changes in the practice, or teaching, based on the evidence one gathers. This is again supported by Donato (2003), who writes that AR projects seek to create knowledge, propose, and carry through with change.

According to Koshy et. al (2010), knowledge is created through action, and researching is a way of generating knowledge. Meyer (2000) points out that one of the strengths of action research is producing a form of solution to a problem. This is supported by Cilliers (2009) who highlights another important strength, which is to improve the quality of the education. A motive for using AR as method is therefore to gain both personal and professional development.

Tripp (2005) believes that a thesis, like this, cannot be based on AR alone, but needs to be completed by adding a case study of the AR performed. In reality, this means that the AR method will be used in the research field, which in this case is the English language learning classroom. The case study of the AR will be analysed and create the results part of the project, combined with an analysis of the pupils' reading logs. Therefore, as explained in detail over the next paragraphs, this thesis is based on AR, case study and text analysis combined.

Tripp (2005) continues to write that AR is primarily focused on a question. This is supported by Deemer (2009), who states that the first step of the AR process is to identify an educational issue that has been observed in the classroom. The question and educational issue create the framework for both the research and this entire thesis. The educational issue and research question are found in the table presented in the next section.

### **3.2 The framework and process of action research**

The next section of this chapter will address the original framework for AR, explain the AR spiral and describe in detail how this research project was carried out. According to Tripp (2005), the very first thing one must do in the action research cycle is to find out more about the current situation, meaning analyse the situation. This has been done over the past four years as I am studying to become a teacher. During these years there have been several occasions, both on practice placement and as a substitute teacher, where it became clear that many teachers give pupils books to read without an intention behind their choice. The situation I want to investigate more is therefore something I have examined closely and experienced over the past four years.

Kemmis and McTaggart's (1988) set out the original formulation for AR. Their first model had four steps: First to develop a plan for improvement, second to implement the plan. The third step was to observe and document the effects of the plan and the final step was to reflect on the effects and plan for a further, more informed action.

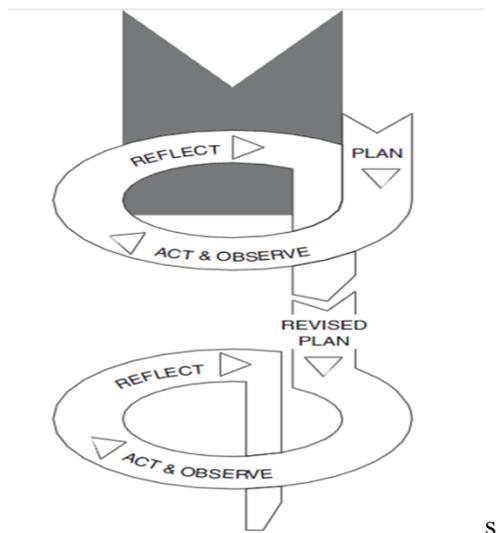
Based on the original outlines of these four steps, Mills (2003) developed another skeleton for the method. Mills' structure has more elements involved, but it makes it easier to define each step, and follow the process along the way. As the steps of Mills' AR process is presented below, I will also address how the steps related to the reading project of this thesis.

Mills' action research steps	The research project
------------------------------	----------------------

<p>Step 1: Describe the problem and focus area. Define factors involved.</p>	<p>The first problem identified is reading without purpose, which occurs at most levels throughout the Norwegian School System. The second problem identified is how the teacher can work to increase and demonstrate intercultural competence among the pupils.</p>
<p>Step 2: Develop a research question</p>	<p>The aim of the project is therefore to test, through a reading project, what intercultural knowledge or awareness pupils might gain, if they are given instructions and tasks during the project.</p> <p>The research question is therefore “How can <i>The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian</i> and reading logs function as teaching tools to develop and demonstrate pupils’ IC?”</p>
<p>Step 3: Describe the intervention or innovation to be implemented.</p>	<p>A four-week project, 3 + 4 hours pr week with the pupils in the classroom.</p> <p>The pupils write reading logs are intended to track what they read and reflect on activities we do in class. The reading logs function as homework as well.</p>
<p>Step 4: Develop a timeline.</p>	<p>The timeline for the project was originally set for one month, January 2022.</p>
<p>Step 5: Describe the membership of the action research group.</p>	<p>There are two groups of pupils involved in the project. A 10<sup>th</sup> grade class and a 9<sup>th</sup> grade class.</p>
<p>Step 6: Develop a list of resources to implement the plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The novel: <i>The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian</i>, a copy for each pupil.</li> <li>- Banks’ level 3 + 4 for the didactic teaching plan.</li> <li>- Costa’s levelled questions for pupils creating when creating their own questions.</li> <li>- Indigenous map of the world: <a href="https://native-land.ca/">https://native-land.ca/</a></li> <li>- Short film about national minorities in Norway: <a href="https://nafo.oslomet.no/ressurser/filmer/identitet-ungdommer-fra-de-nasjonale-minoritene">https://nafo.oslomet.no/ressurser/filmer/identitet-ungdommer-fra-de-nasjonale-minoritene</a></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Murray`s (2022) article about how to implement indigenous people in the classroom, e.g. comparing known elements for pupils` personal life to Junior`s the life.</li> </ul>
Step 7: Describe the data to be collected.	<p>The data to be collected is reader-response-logs from the pupils.</p> <p>There will also be added a note of observation, because there were several changes made during the project based on feedback given by the pupils.</p>
Step 8: Develop a data collection and analysis plan.	<p>The data collected for the project will be the reading logs written by the pupils during the period of the project. In addition, the didactic teaching plan will be analysed as data, because it is important for the project.</p> <p>The reading logs will be analysed according to Byram`s model of IC, using Costas levelled questions as support. The didactic teaching plan will be analysed according to Banks` four levels of integrating multicultural curricula.</p>
Step 9: Carry out the plan (implementation, data collection, data analysis)	<p>We (the teachers and I) quickly realised that four weeks would limit the project, and therefore decided to continue until the end of February, 7 weeks total.</p>
Step 10: Report the results.	<p>Will be done in the analysis and result and discussion chapter of the thesis.</p>

Circling back to the original source, Kemmis, McTaggart & Nixon (2014) have developed their own idea into what they call the action research spiral. Kemmis et. Al (2014) stick to the original four phases but have changed the name of them to reflection, planning, action, and observation. This newer model is like Mills` step. See illustration below:



Kemmis, S., McTaggart, R. & Nixon, R. (2014). *The Action Research Planner: Doing Critical Participatory Action Research*. Singapore: Springer

The AR spiral is mentioned and included because it is a good illustration of how a teacher should work to constantly improve their teaching. One always starts with a plan, and as one carries out the plan things might change. It is therefore essential to reflect upon these changes and why they happened and revise the plan for next time. If one uses this spiral as a teaching tool, one will always develop into a better teacher.

### 3.3 Text analysis

Text analysis is an important part of this thesis because the reading logs from the pupils will be analysed in written form. This is a very systematic and clear approach because the researcher can look at the material several times, and really go in-depth in the analysis. (Kuckartz, 2014). Text analysis gives the researcher the opportunity to perform a methodically controlled and understandable analysis of the material gathered. This view is supported by Belsey (2013), who writes that textual analysis involves a close encounter, meaning an examination of details. The method can also deal with a large amount of text, and analyse all the data gathered, or selected sections (Kuckartz, 2014). It is also a method that is reliable, easily understood by other researchers and straightforward to learn (Kuckartz, 2019). Even though text analysis is a method with many strengths, it does not alone provide the researcher the opportunity to talk to the pupils during the project and it does not involve their oral feedback or wishes, which is important in this setting. It was therefore necessary for me as a researcher to be present in class, as a part of the AR-process.

### **3.4 Case study**

Case study is an empirical examination that explores a phenomenon within a group (Noor, 2008). A case study focuses on a specific group that is being analysed. It investigates the contrast between what was planned, and what actually took place, meaning how and why. A deeper look into one group makes it achievable to analyse a complex, real-life activity, problem, and situation in depth. The use of case study as methodology has been disapproved of as research methodology, because it can be said that it lacks reliability, and it is not suited to generalize a problem. An option to get around this problem is to add the result of several studies to create some form of generalization (Noor, 2008). A case study is chosen for this thesis, even though it can be criticised, because it provides a unique opportunity for a thorough examination of the pupils' use of reading-logs to showcase their acquired intercultural competence.

### **3.5 The group of pupils and data collection**

After describing the framework and process of AR in detail, it feels necessary to address the participants and data collection of the project. I wanted to use a whole class or group for this project. This excluded interview as research method because it would be very time consuming to interview 45-50 individual pupils. A group interview could have been an option, but it would be challenging to find a representative group within the 50 pupils. The difficult aspect here would be to determine how the group of pupils could give a representative answer to what knowledge individuals within a class gain through reading. Another difficult aspect would be the anonymity of the pupils, which would not be possible to implement through interviews. Observation was also considered at this stage, but I felt that just observing what the pupils did in class would not give a complete picture of what kind of knowledge the pupils had gained. The main source of material in my project comes from the pupils' reading logs.

The project ended up with two groups. One class in 10<sup>th</sup> grade with 21 pupils, and one class in 9<sup>th</sup> grade with 22 pupils. The school where the project took place is a combined primary and junior high school. The school has more than 600 pupils combined and is the biggest school in the municipality. The school is characterized by the fact that there is a small number of children with minority background. This is useful to keep in mind because the result, and answers from the pupils, might be different had the project been conducted in a school located in another part of the municipality.

Every pupil in both groups was given a copy of the book *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*. It was explained to them that they were going to be a part of a research project,

and that the purpose was for the teachers and myself to see what kind of knowledge and understanding they would gain from reading the book. The pupils were asked to create a reader-response-log. The logs were used during the project as a way of tracking what we were doing in class, what the pupils read (they wrote summaries), is where they answered questions and reflected upon different actions and events in the book. Writing prompts the pupils used for response logs can be located in the Appendix.

These reading-logs will form the basis of the analysis and discussion part of this thesis. It is therefore the main data material collected for this project. As stated, several times earlier in this chapter, it was important to me that the pupils were anonymous throughout the project. The reason for this was that it is not their grammar or how cohesive they wrote that are in focus, it was the reflection, knowledge and understanding they gain along the way. The reader-response-logs were therefore anonymized before they were handed over to me. This gave the pupils the opportunity to be completely honest. Their teachers know the identity of each log, and will grade them, but that has nothing to do with this project.

### **3.6 The in-class-project**

This project started the first week of January 2022 and lasted until the middle of February. Going into this project, I was thinking about this solely as my master's project. Something that had to be done. But it ended up being a huge learning opportunity for me as a teacher, and at the same time teach the pupils something about intercultural competence. During this seven-week process, there were many changes along the way. The changes were made based on response from the pupils and their teachers. Ultimately, I think the willingness to adapt to the feedback from the participants made the outcome better, both for the pupils, myself and the ones reading this, wanting to find a way to use a book and reading logs as teaching tools.

As mentioned above, the project has changed as it went along. This means that the research question also has developed in the process. The aim of the project is to figure out how to use the Absolutely True Diary and reading logs as teaching tools to develop and demonstrate intercultural competence in middle school pupils.

For this section, there will be a more in-depth presentation of the reading project, what we did in class and the changes that had to be done during the seven weeks. Earlier in this thesis, it was stated that the project was originally set to last four weeks, meaning the duration of January 2022. This was one of the first things that needed to be changed. Already the first week, I realized that four weeks would not be nearly enough time to finish the book.

It was therefore decided, in collaboration with the teacher, that we were going to spend four school hours each week on the project. Each school hour is 45 minutes. The first two, meaning 90 minutes, the pupils were given to read. The final 90 minutes were dedicated to activities and discussions in class. The plan was originally for the pupils` to do the reading as homework, which would have given us more time in class to do activities, but the teacher felt it was too much to expect from the group. I went into every reading session to answer questions and just be present and prepared the activities for the other sessions.

As the original idea was a four-week-project, the aim was for the pupils to read ten chapters per week. I also had in mind for them to answer follow-up questions to the chapters each week. This was the second element that had to be amended. I quickly realised that the amount expected to be read was way too high, and they used the in-class-sessions to answer the reading-log-questions, instead of doing activities as I had planned. The pupils also expressed that the amount was too much because they had other subjects to focus on as well.

The second week, the expected reading was lowered to five chapters. They still had to answer seven questions, but this time they were given the questions in advance, meaning prior to reading the chapters. Even with these adaptations, the pupils expressed that it was overwhelming. They felt the weeks were going by too quickly, and they did not have time to do it properly. At this stage, I felt it would be better to lower the requirements all the way, to check if this made the project feel more bearable to the pupils.

From week three, the pupils were therefore expected to read something, but they could decide for themselves how much. They were also given the task of creating their own questions and answering them each week, based on Costa`s three levels. The third week we also started with the in-class-activities. I felt this was very late into the project but it was necessary to adapt to the pupils` reading pace and wishes to answer the two weeks` worth of questions properly. The first thing we did was to compare familiar elements from Junior`s life with the pupils` personal life. This was done on paper anonymously and collected after class. The result of the comparison will be analysed considering the level of intercultural competence shown in chapter 4.

The fourth week the focus in class was on minorities, identity, and culture. We watched videos of teenagers explaining their view on culture, identity and growing up in a minority. The pupils were asked to discuss and answer six questions in class. They were also expected to continue their reading and create five new questions for their log.

The fifth week I wanted the pupils to describe and analyse an intercultural event of their choice. In class, they were asked to choose a situation and draw a cartoon. These cartoons were inserted into their reading logs. The background for the cartoons was a wish for them to analyse an intercultural meeting, without telling them that this is what they are doing. The questions for the analysis were based on a power point presentation about Intercultural Competence in the Language Subject made by Ragnhild E. Lund, Henrik Bøhn and Magne Dypedahl, who are professors at the University of South-East Norway. The analysis was done in the reading logs. As the two previous weeks, the pupils were expected to continue reading, and create their own questions.

In the sixth and final week of in-class-activities, the pupils were asked to write a final review of the book. They were encouraged to discuss with each other if they felt it was necessary, but during these weeks, I found that most of them enjoyed working on their reading experience privately in their reading logs. The last week, I handed the class back to the teachers. The pupils spent the week revising their log, filling in missed questions and adding any final heartfelt comment, thoughts, and opinions.

The next two sections of this chapter outline ethical aspects and limitations discovered when working on this project. I consider them both important, because ethical decisions and limitations might have a massive impact of the final result if not considered properly.

### **3.7 Ethics in action research**

Ethics in research is a significant element to take into consideration. How the project has been carried out has been discussed already, but there are several key words the researcher must keep in mind when doing his or her research. Honesty is one of them; it is important to be honest with your participants about the aims and goals for the project they agree to take part in. This was presented to the pupils in a power point presentation in the first session. This is key for them to feel involved and valued. This goes hand in hand with respect, both for the project itself and for the people willing to participate. I have tried to give the pupils (the participants) autonomy during the project, because I believe it is important for them to feel like their voices and opinions are valued.

The teachers approved of the project on behalf of the pupils in their class, and because it is not possible for me to trace the reading logs back to individual pupils, it was not necessary to apply to NSD. Confidentiality and the room for privacy from my (the researcher) perspective is an important principal in this project. This is important because these 15- and 16-year-olds

are trusting me with their work, and I must respect and value the effort they put in and their work.

### **3.8 Limitations of the method and the project**

A limitation to using AR as a research method is that it is a qualitative method, meaning that it might not be suited to answering research questions seeking to generalize across a larger number of populations. If this was the intended case, one would need to carry out the project in several groups, adding the results together and create a summary of the combined results.

Initially, the intent was to use the reading logs from both the 9<sup>th</sup> grade and the 10<sup>th</sup> grade, but in the end, I chose to only include the logs from 10<sup>th</sup> grade. The reasoning behind this choice, was a difference in time spent in the two groups. In the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, I was limited to three school hours each week, due to their schedule with other subjects, and the English teacher only having them in the subject of English. This meant that the pupils spent two hours reading, because their teacher felt it was necessary for them to have that much time in school to be able to get through the book. This resulted in only having one school hour of 45 minutes for activities, exercises, and discussions. This again resulted in us never being able to finish planned activities in this groups, constantly falling behind. The pupils did not have time to summarize and reflect after each session, as planned, and the process felt rushed and not to the standard I would expect from a project like this.

When reading through and analysing the logs from the 10<sup>th</sup> grade groups, I realised that there were only 16 logs handed in. Seeing as the pupils delivered it to me anonymously, it became difficult to figure out who had not handed in their reading logs when the project was finished. The data collection is therefore based on the 16 logs handed in, and not the entire group of 21 pupils.

Another element that can be seen as a limitation to a project that is about diversity, is that because of the location of the school, there are few pupils with minority background. This is important to be aware of because the answers from the pupils might reflect and demonstrate that they are not familiar with growing up in a multicultural home.

The final limitation I found is time. Due to the nature of this thesis, I had to put a time frame on the project. When the time is limited, one must be extra careful when choosing activities and exercises for class. One must make sure they all hit the criteria, and there is little room for error. If I had more time, more things could be included, as will be discussed later when scrutinizing my didactic teaching plan for the project.

### **3.9 Other methods considered**

To finalise this chapter, I will present the other research methods considered, which was also briefly mentioned in chapter 3.5. I will highlight both the reason why they were considered and why they were not chosen.

The first method considered was interview. According to Byrne (2001), interview is one of the most common methods of collecting data. It is a helpful tool for getting the story behind a contributor's experience. Therefore, it was considered as a possible method, as the goal here is to understand what the pupils' gain from the project. But an interview is built as a professional conversation, in many ways an exchange of views between the interviewer and the interviewee (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2019). I felt at the planning stage that a conversation would be too shallow for a project like this. I needed a method that would give me more in-depth insight into the pupils' the learning process from the projects start to projects finish. And as Kvale & Brinkmann (2019) states, the point of an interview is to collect knowledge regarding certain topics or situations, which I did not feel would cover this project.

Another reason for not choosing interview is that it is a more personal method, and the idea was that the pupils might feel more open about expressing their thoughts if they know they are anonymous, and not having to share their inner thoughts and ideas within a group or directly to the interviewer. The goal was for the pupils to be able to deliver something anonymously to me, where the point is to make them feel like they could be completely honest about their thoughts on the process. This would not be possible if interview was chosen as research method.

Observation was another method considered. Kawulich (2012) writes that observation is a method suitable for collecting data about people, processes, and cultures. This is exactly why it was strongly reviewed as a possible method. But as Baker (2006) states, it is vital for the researcher to spend a substantial time in the field, in this situation the classroom, for the observation to be successful. Cowie (2009) supports this by writing that observation is an intended noticing, and a complete examination of the participants' actions and behaviour in a realistic, natural setting. Again, as written above, I wanted this to be a chance for the pupils to share their views and experience unnamed. The method was therefore considered unfit, because it would not protect the pupils' anonymity, and it would not give the in-depth-insight necessary, like text analysis are providing. It would also be difficult to observe and teach at

the same time, and the collected justifications given above led to observation being excluded as a suitable research method.

A researcher cannot choose a method because it is his or her favourite, or something that he or she has done before or is familiar with. One must make sure it is suitable for the project, as well as the research question (Byrne, 2001). As Skinner, Tagg & Hollaway (2000) point out, qualitative research focuses on people's experience, the meaning they place on processes and structure. I wanted this to be learning process for both the pupils and for myself as a future teacher. Therefore, action research combined with text analysis and case study was chosen. This was considered as the most suitable method to find an answer to how and if the novel and reading logs would function as teaching tools to develop and demonstrate pupils' IC.

## **4. Results and analysis**

In this chapter of the thesis, the results from the reading logs will be presented. In addition, the extracts will be commented on and analysed as they are presented in order to show how the novel and reading logs function as teaching tools to develop and demonstrate pupils' IC. The reading logs contain a huge amount of information. The results are therefore categorized by context. Below a selection that can be seen in the context of Byram's model of IC will be presented. The selection is from all 16 reading logs, but the amount of text from each log varies, as some reading logs contribute more information than others, and the answers have therefore been selected based on reflection level or lack of reflection level.

The instructions for the reading logs were for the pupils to work on them during the length of the project. They were told to write everything in the same document and structure it chronologically and write a summary after each session, on given topics or questions. They were told to do proper work and be honest while writing the reading log. The pupils were also instructed to write the questions each time, so it would be clearer for me what they answered when processing all the logs. The reading logs vary from 2-8 pages in length. There are massive differences in how well developed the reading logs are. Some pupils have worked a lot and thoroughly, while others have not bothered to do as much.

In Byram's intercultural competence model, the first, and maybe most crucial, factor is attitude. Positivity, curiosity, and openness are defined as key elements to achieve successful intercultural communication. The pupils' ability to demonstrate these attitudes, show their knowledge and display cultural awareness will be analysed in the next paragraphs.

### **4.1 Reading log questions made by pupils**

The pupils started making their own questions after the second week. This was a necessary adaptation as they read at different paces. This way they could connect their questions to where they were in the reading process. To motivate them to create more meaningful questions, Costas three levels were introduced. This model of questions is not directly linked to IC but has still proven helpful when categorising the questions in relation to Byram's model of IC. In the reading logs, there were a huge number of questions made by the pupils. Below is a selection, divided into two main categories by the attitude they portray.

Questions that demonstrate Byram's curiosity and openness

- Would you give Junior respect if he punched you?

- Do you think Roger would have the same reaction to Junior punching him in the face if Roger was in the same community as you are?
- If you were a part of Junior`s family, do you think you would punch someone in the face based on the “Indian Rules”?
- Why do you think Junior switches between Junior and Arnold?
- Do you think Junior want to be an Indian or a White person?
- Do you think Junior is crazy?
- What do you think of the Spirit relatives?
- What does it mean to be called an apple?
- If you didn`t know how old Junior was, how old do you think he would be, to his descriptions?
- Do you think people at the Rez get angry when white people come there? Why?
- Do you feel Junior is wrong for having prejudice against white people?
- Why was everyone laughing at grandma`s wake?
- Why was Junior laughing when his sister died?

#### Questions that do not demonstrate curiosity and openness

- What did they eat after the dance?
- Which team did Arnold play for?
- Which team won the basketball game between Reardan and Wellpinit?
- What is his bestfriends name
- What is his girlfriends name
- Is his friends nice
- What happened after the “Winter Formal”?
- What happened at Halloween?
- What did Junior`s sister like to do?
- What`s Junior`s hobby?

The questions above that show the attitudes of openness and curiosity Byram refers to, are the same questions located at Costas Level 2 and 3. This means they are analysing, comparing, predicting, interpreting, and using knowledge acquired in hypothetical situations. The questions that do not portray curiosity and openness are found at the Level 1 of Costa`s ladder. These questions are just defining and describing, without any attempt to use their knowledge to discover different sides of another culture or being open to learning something

new. Luckily, there were many more Level 2 and 3 questions than Level 1 questions, but for this context, I have reduced the amount to approximately the same, choosing the most relevant from Level 2 and 3.

It is impossible to know exactly what the pupils were thinking and reflecting on when writing the questions. This will therefore be an interpretation of how the questions can be viewed and answered.

In the first category, based on what they have read, they are asking about Junior's innermost feelings and choices regarding his personal identity. To be able to answer this, they must use their acquired knowledge, which is the second factor of Byram's IC model. The pupils must use what they have read about the Indian culture, the White culture, and most importantly, how Junior portrays them both. In addition, they need to show an openminded attitude, viewing things from different sides and being genuinely interested in why Junior seems to be split between two cultures.

The pupils ask questions about what the reaction would be if something that occurs in the book would happen to themselves. They are questioning the Indian unwritten rules of living and comparing it to the rules they live by, without showing signs of prejudice or negativity. They seem curious and put a question mark on how such action would be received in another community. They are observing that the actions are different, but they are not stating that it is a negative thing. Several pupils noticed and created questions about the participants laughing in an Indian funeral. This is something that would be considered inappropriate in a "white" society that they are living in, and it is interesting that they chose to address this. Again, they show a level of maturity by pointing out something that seems different, without showing signs of thinking this is negative or weird.

This is one of the elements Murray (2022) writes about in her article about how to integrate IC to the EFL classroom. She suggests an activity where the pupils write what needs to be done to be welcomed into a new society. By noticing and asking themselves these types of questions about how they would react to something that is obviously done in a different way than what they are used to, they are at the level Murray (2022) suggest, without us doing that specific task in class.

One pupil asks if Junior is wrong for having prejudice against white people. This is a high-quality question, because this pupil questions what Byram mentions as a factor (prejudice) that leads to less successful intercultural encounters. The pupil's answer to the question:

I kind of do, but he has experienced a lot of hate from white people, so from his perspective I can understand why, but morally it's wrong.

The pupil is stating that prejudice is wrong, but that he or she understands Junior's perspective and where it comes from. The pupil expresses an understanding that previous experiences shape who we become and how we behave, even though it makes communication with people from different backgrounds more difficult.

The second category of the pupils' questions differs from the first one, because the questions found here do not try to analyse, compare, interpret, or use knowledge at all. These are purely questions where the answers can be found by reading directly in the text. The pupils writing these seem less interested than the pupils writing Level 2 and questions. They appear indifferent and seemingly just wanting to get the questions done. They do not facilitate the use of prior knowledge and if they learn anything does not seem to matter to them. To several of the questions, a question mark has not been added. These are from the same reading log. The questions in this second category are not directly prejudicial or stereotypical, but do not seem open, positive, and curious, which Byram sets as essential terms for developing IC.

#### **4.2 Identifying five IC encounters in the novel and the responses to the incidents**

The second week, the pupils were asked to identify five examples from the text where Junior comments on cultural differences/expectations/events. At this stage, most of the pupils had read up to chapter 15 in the book. These are the episodes repeated in several of the logs:

- When Junior went to the dentist to remove his extra teeth and he only got half the amount of Novocain a white person would get, because the dentist think that Indians can tolerate more pain than white people.
- The (unspoken) fistfight rules the Indian people have.
- Mr. P talks about how the teachers back in the days were taught to teach the Indians in a way that makes them give up being and Indian. Meaning they wanted to kill the Indian culture.
- Indians are only allowed healthcare once a year.
- Indians do not deserve anything, they are destined to be poor.
- The powpow festival.
- When Junior starts Reardan High school, and the other pupils looks at him like he is BigFoot. The only other Indian was the school mascot.

The pupils were asked to write down their immediate thoughts and reflections when reading about the incidents. Not all the pupils commented on this, one responded that he or she has not found any cultural episodes, and another was interested in seeing how things would resolve. Listed below are the most reflective answers.

- I think this are racist and old fashion ways of thinking of minorities. The Indian reservation ruined their culture and pride, they don't have money and are poor.
- I found it very strange that someone could actually think that Indians only feel half the pain.
- My first thought was how aggressive they were.
- It is strange thing that they only have healthcare once a year, because here we have free healthcare, but I can understand how it works in poorer countries.
- That Indians are oppressed. And that is not a good thing. Everybody in his world should be treated the same way. Whichever you are an Indian, afro American, Australian, Asian, or European.
- I am not surprised, but somewhat disappointed. Especially when the doctor only gave him half the Novocain.
- It is sad to see how highly educated and obviously smart humans can think like this.
- I think it's stupid how people are getting treated different because of their culture and identity. What colour your skin is or what your culture is, should not matter that much of how you should be treated.

At this stage, the pupils had read a little more than 100 pages of the book. The interesting thing is that most of them identified the same cultural incidents, even though they had read approximately 1/3 of the book. This signifies that the incidents must have had an impact on them. The incident most pupils mentioned was the dentist episode, which is found very early in the book. Circling back to Byram's model, the pupils use their knowledge, either short term or long term, to conclude with this being wrong. They interpret the situation, and probably relate, getting the sense of how they would feel themselves if they were in Junior's place.

When it comes to the reactions, it feels wrong to relate them to Byram's positivity, curiosity, and openness. I believe that the pupils do show the right kind of attitudes, but under these circumstances where the pupils describe someone being mistreated, it would be incorrect to be positive. One pupil is describing the feeling of being disappointed, another expressing it is strange that one would think someone of another skin colour only feels half the pain.

Something tells the pupils that this is the wrong way to treat another human, and this means

they are using acquired knowledge, responding with empathy, and yet again relating and interpreting the situation.

### **4.3 A “part-time Indian”**

The pupils were asked in the second week what they think it means to be a “part-time Indian”. Most of the pupils answered that it means he is switching between being Indian and White, depending on if he is at the school or home in the Rez. Some pupils comment that this has something to do with how he feels, others that it is how he is. A pupil makes an interesting comment that being an Indian is like a job that doesn't pay well, another mentions that his culture is Indian, but that he is not always just Indian – sometimes he wants to be someone else. Below are the two most comprehensive answers:

I think that in the society Junior lives in, being an Indian isn't always easy. When he is constantly being exposed to a non-Indian society, it is easy to change to fit in. Maybe he feels more like a white person than and Indian when he is at school, and more like an Indian than a white person when he is at home. So, I think that he basically just changes personality according to the environment.

I think it may be that it is a different culture at home and at the school or that Junior needs to hide when he is at school. It's different rules for what are normal and don't. Suddenly when we are reading, we understand that this is still a big problem. I think that they still experience injustice and hate even if we live in 2022. Something that is horrible and tragic. And it's a big problem that we live around with, so we need to do something right now.

These reflections from two of the pupils are quite fascinating. A reason is that Junior does not say anything in the book about him thinking it is easy to change to fit it. This seems like an interpretation done by the pupil, maybe based on personal experience. This means the pupil is using Byram's third factor, the skill of relating to own experience. A typical teenage thing to do is adapting to the environment, because their identities are not set. Relating to Junior would most likely be achievable for the pupils, because in many ways, being only 15 years old, they find themselves in similar situations. They might not find themselves between two as distinct cultures as the White and Indian described by Junior in the book, but for the pupils moving between their everyday identities might feel just as brutal.

The second reflection shows Byram's skills of discovery. The pupil describes a sudden understanding of the big differences being a problem today, even though we live in a

multicultural society. The pupil comments on the differences in rules and expectations, and how this is a problem needing to be resolved. In this short six-line reflection, the pupil demonstrates Byram's attitudes, knowledge, and the skills necessary to have a successful intercultural encounter – and addresses that something needs to be done with this issue. He or she declares that someone's normal, is considered so abnormal for someone else that it becomes a problem.

#### **4.4 Pre-reading questions**

The pupils were asked if they have experienced any cultural meetings and if they could identify where one can find different cultures. They were asked to map if they are aware of different cultural encounters, and how they probably have met these many times during their life. Below is a selection of their answers.

This section can be divided in two clear categories: the ones culturally aware, and the ones that are not. A pupil stated that culture is just between countries, while a few mentioned the Norwegian indigenous population the Samis, and connected it to the Australian Indigenous people they learned about last school year. Seven answers state that they have no memory of any cultural meetings or experiences. A few draw connections to Christmas celebrations in Spain or eating with chopsticks or no cutlery at all. A pupil points out that cultural differences can be found in generations and that the older generation has a different culture than he/she has.

Seven answers showed a higher level of reflection and awareness than the rest:

You can find culture everywhere. At school, in the stores, everywhere. Different restaurants in the same streets for the different cultures. Very fascinating to me.

I think it's cool that people have different cultures. I also find it really interesting how many similarities and differences the different cultures have. So, I think it's good that we have all these cultures in the world. If we all had the same beliefs, I think that the world would be a very boring place to live.

You can find different cultures everywhere. Our society is full of different people. It doesn't take more than a touch on your phone, or a short walk to the store to meet people from a different culture.

Having different culture is just a bonus! Knowing people with a different culture makes you have more knowledge and maybe perspective and viewpoint.

We live in a multicultural society which means that probably every single one of us encounters another culture daily. But the first time I can remember realizing the contrast between me and a foreigner, was when I was a kid. When I lived in Oslo and my parents got invited to a dinner by some of their Pakistani friends. And I immediately fell in love in the Persian-carpets in the floor, and the strange but tasty food they made.

I think people from different culture is interesting. You can learn so much from them and you can understand more things from them in a different way than what is written on the internet. You can learn from their point of view and how their lives are like.

The reason why I state that these have a higher reflection is that they address culture and cultural meetings as interesting and a learning opportunity. These extracts also identify that culture can be found everywhere, a reflection that I was not sure if a group of 15-year-olds would be able to make.

When it comes to Byram`s five factors, the statements meet all of them. They portray the correct attitude, which according to the model is positivity, curiosity, and openness. This can be seen by the pupils using expressive words like “cool”, “fascinating”, “bonus”, “interesting” and commenting on how your perspective and viewpoint can be expanded by interacting and inquiring new cultural input.

They demonstrate knowledge, about social groups in one`s own country, in other cultures and the general interaction process and illustrate a critical cultural awareness, by evaluating from multiple cultural perspectives. This is seen by the comment about how the culture can have many similarities and differences at the same time. They are aware of how close other cultures are these days, both through smartphones and everyday encounters, by stating that our society is full of different people. It is also seen in the extract that talks about his or her first encounter with the Pakistani culture and how the pupil noticed the different carpets and food.

Finally, they indicate the possibility to being able to interpret symbols and events from other cultures and establish a link between one`s own culture and another. This is illustrated in the second extract where the pupil comments on beliefs, and how the world would be monotonous if we were all the same. The Pakistani carpet and food example is also a suitable example for this factor because the pupil comments that it is different, but at the same time he or she reveals an attraction to the differentness. The same goes for how Christmas is

celebrated in Spain, and the ones commenting that they have experienced eating without cutlery or chopsticks. They are not saying it is weird or dumb, just interpreting it as a contrast to what they are used to.

#### **4.5 Pupils' comments in the reading log**

These comments are from different places in the reading logs and are not related to a specific task or week. They are included because they reveal a higher level of maturity and noticing details about the main character Junior:

I like that Junior is brave enough to move to another school.

Junior's language of describing himself is kind of negative. Example because of his lack of strengths in fights, he says he has never won a fistfight in his life.

I did react a little when Junior described himself. I think that sums up everything this kid have been going through.

I think that the society Junior lives in, constantly shapes him.

The one thing that was slightly interesting was Junior. Junior's character was always unpredictable and had a weird, humoristic sense. I found his way of thinking interesting. The way he watched the world is so much different than me.

The writer addresses racism in a good way, which leaves you with an uncomfortable feeling. It is heart-breaking to read about how Junior in some way has been brainwashed and are agreeing to discrimination. It was one sentence in the book that shocked me in a negative way. When Junior said, "Indians don't deserve shit". This was when I realized some people may feel/think this way, and that sentence just stuck with me.

The observations above are saying something about how the pupils experience Junior. I think it is interesting that one pupil chose to describe him as brave. This is probably because when reading, he or she realised how much it costed Junior socially and how much he exposed himself by doing that. A few other comments were about the pessimistic language Junior uses to narrate his own character. It is a relief for a teacher-to-be to see that 15-year-olds can notice how the negative language of oneself can portray the self-image, while from an outside point of view, the same character is recognized as brave. Another important element noticed is the comment on how society forms who one becomes, and that this can explain why Junior is so negative towards himself and his character. A pupil writes how he or she finds his humour

and way of thinking intriguing, even though it is different from the pupil's own way of reacting to things.

All the components referred to above reveal knowledge about how social groups work, identifying how a culture different from your own works and how to interpret the actions from mentioned culture and finally how these actions affect people. Yet again, the pupils illustrate the ability to demonstrate the right kind of contextual attitude, even though in this setting it is more about awareness and sensitivity, than curiosity and openness. This means that the pupils are using all factors Byram sees as necessary to be able to achieve a successful intercultural encounter in their reading logs, without being told to do so by debating or considering a specific task, episode, or event from the novel.

#### **4.6 Pupils' final summary of the project**

Towards the end of the project, the pupils were given an open task to summarize the project. Some pupils chose to summarize the book, while others reflected on how they experienced the entire project. I found several of their reflections interesting, because I am impressed with their honesty and ability scrutinize their own learning process.

I didn't like all the questions, it was hard to say something different for every answer. At the same time, the reading and the questions made it easier to follow up with what had happened in the book, because I could go back to see what had happened if I forgot something. Even though it got hard to answer all the questions and write summary after every session, it has helped me with reading both faster and more fluently in my head. Not only that but it has expanded my vocabulary a bit more too. To sum it up, if something should have been different, it could have been a little bit less questions and instead we could have talked a little bit more, in class. But I did like the drawing task.

My thoughts on the project are the questions was more about my identity and not so much about the book. I am not sure what I learned. I may have upgraded my vocabulary and maybe learned something about the Indian culture.

I am very happy to be finished with this project. This project has resulted in a little sleep, but it is my fault because I have prioritized the project a little wrong. If there is one thing that I have liked is that we have been able to work independently. I also like that Junior drew several small drawings throughout the book. He often does this when he talked about culture differences- Maybe he does it to bring out the differences more,

and it worked, if you asked me. A good example is when he drew the differences between his clothes and those at school. It is also important that he brings out the differences since this is still a problem to his day and I did not know that they were still so big in these days.

I have to say this book way not my cup of tea, but I must admit it is a really, really good way to improve your vocabulary. The book picks up important and relatable themes and points it out in a way that make us questions how it must feel to be suppressed by the society.

These summaries were both captivating and merciless to read. It is not a good feeling knowing one has applied stress to a group of 15-year-olds. At the same time, the pupils are good at suggesting how it could have been less demanding for themselves, by working more evenly throughout the project. The one thing I asked for at the start of the project was for the pupils to be straightforward and direct throughout the project.

A very direct and genuine feedback is from the pupil who did not like the book, but still managed to see the value of doing a project like this anyway. It shows a great level of both sincerity and growth. Being able to not like something, but still put effort into doing your best, valuing what one can acquire from the project, is a good personal characteristic that will be very useful for the pupil on his or her way towards adulthood.

The pupils are reviewing the questions and the topics we have worked on. A comment from one of the pupils was about the topic of identity, and how he or she believes there was too many questions about one`s own identity rather than the book. This is useful feedback to bring onto the next project. At this stage I have failed to somehow connect it back to Junior and the book, making the pupil feel the project is about scrutinizing him- or herself rather than seeing the dots between one`s personal life and Junior`s life. When it comes to the number of questions, one would never be able to find a solution that would fit all pupils, all the time. Someone would always be unhappy with the amount, either too much or too little.

## **5. Discussion**

In this chapter, I will discuss important components of the thesis and their role in the project. The three main units are the didactic teaching plan created for the project, the book read in class and the reading logs written by the pupils. These sections will be dissected and inspected in detail, compared to important theoretical perspectives this thesis is anchored to. Finally, each section will be commented on, viewing what parts were considered successful and what could have been done differently for the less successful parts.

### **5.1 The didactic teaching plan**

When discussing and analysing to what extent the reading logs from the pupils demonstrate their intercultural competence, it also feels necessary to scrutinize my didactic teaching plan for the period. In many ways, the didactic teaching plan for a project like this is decisive for both the pupils and the teacher/researcher to experience success. If the exercises and activities planned for the different lessons does not meet a certain criterion, the pupils will not know what is expected of them and what to reach for. The teaching plan and project therefore aimed to be located at Level 3 or 4 on Banks' model of integrating multicultural content. Banks' model was presented in the theory chapter and the didactic teaching plan can be found in the appendix.

When discussing the AR method and presenting the in-class-project in chapter 3 I mentioned that the initial idea was to spend a huge amount of time on the project each week, meaning at least 8-10 school hours. We quickly realised that this would be too demanding for the pupils, as they also had their other subjects they needed to stay on top of, and we agreed that it would be more achievable to spend 3-4 school hours each week. This would give the pupils a few hours per week to read at school, and some time for us to do activities together for the rest of the time. What I quickly realised is that time is a massive challenge when doing projects like this and a thing I realised already in week two is that I struggled to include everything I wanted and wished for. I found it very difficult to balance the amount of time the pupils got to spend reading and the exercises and discussions we needed to have. I originally wanted to spend a lot more time on lively classroom exercises and discussions. This is something I have learned a lot from, and I will make changes the next time I do a project like this.

Already from the planning stage the project was, maybe not intentionally, at Banks' third level. The whole point from the start was to use the book as the main teaching tool and source to help the pupils discover and be aware of intercultural competence and encounters. Seeing as this was the first time I planned a project this big, it has been a great learning opportunity

for me as a future teacher as well. The teaching plan developed alongside the project because it felt necessary to make adaptations. In retrospect, and seeing the reading logs completed, the adaptations made might have affected the quality of the teaching plan in regards of Banks' model for the better. Below I will highlight the pros and cons of what was done during the project, and finally I will summarize what I would do differently next time.

According to Banks' model, Level 3 and 4 are where the change in the curriculum starts to happen. At these levels the teacher must teach and encourage the pupils to view situations, issues, and events from the perspective of other cultural and ethnic groups. The pupils are also motivated to criticise and suggest changes based on well-informed and thorough discussions. As brought up earlier, I changed approach for the questions after week 2 and feedback from the pupils. This change gave the pupils more control and freedom to work in their own reading logs. I noticed early on that the number of questions and activities I had planned was too much for the pupils and as Lyutaya (2011) points out in her article, a reading log should not feel forced, because this most likely will affect the creativity and give the pupils a negative attitude of the book.

Giving the pupils the freedom to create their own questions created more creativity in the reading logs. They were now able to pick and choose what they felt was important as they read. They were still given a minimum number of questions they had to create and answer, but they could create these questions as they read. This means that when something caught their attention, they created a question out of it, and discussed it in their log.

By choosing *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, it gave the pupils at least three perspectives of ethnic and cultural groups, showing the way indigenous people think and live. They read the book from Junior's perspective, being caught between his Indian and White identity, they read how Rowdy and Junior's community at the Rez behaved, and they got the "white" view from the Reardan high school. In addition to the three mentioned above, they have their own cultural perspective with them, even though they are not conscious about that yet, because of their maturity and age. This meets Banks' level 3, The Transformation Approach.

The cartoon exercise we did in class in week 5 of the project, where they had to choose an incident, then draw and discuss it was useful, because it revealed how difficult of a topic IC is. This is probably the exercise where the pupils struggled the most and spent the most time

getting through the questions. This exercise also meets the criteria of Level 3 and 4, because they were asked to see the situation from the different people they chose to draw.

A key element that was less focused on, which will be different for my next project, is spending more time on providing the pupils with background knowledge. Banks points out that Level 3 and 4 builds on previous knowledge and experience. I assumed that the pupils would have more background knowledge than they had, because I knew they had done work on indigenous people the year before. I was very focused on getting the pupils to do exercises regarding indigenous people, identity, and cultural encounters. These exercises would probably have worked even better if they had some introduction and background to the different components. I think some of it might be faulted to lack of time, and the feeling of pursuing what was most important to the project. The learning outcome for the pupils would likely have been better, and the answers in their logs longer, if I had spent more time on each topic in plenary explain and defining before they did the exercises.

When it came to the reflection around their personal identity, the pupils found this extremely difficult. This was an exercise we did in week 4, after discussing minorities, identity, culture, and watching a short film about national minorities in Norway. I chose to show a film about minorities in Norway, because I assumed it would feel closer and more relatable to them. The interesting thing here, is that they had a lot of good ideas and thoughts about Junior and his identity. But does not appear to be something they have thought about for themselves, what their identity is affected by and how it changes when meeting others. Who they are as individuals is at this stage in their life not a conscious decision, but something that develops without their awareness.

To summarize the investigation of my didactic teaching plan, it had both strengths and weaknesses. Two big weaknesses were lack of time, and it being the first time conducting a project this big. When planning I did not realise how quickly the weeks would fly by, and how much time the pupils would use to get through the exercises and questions. The fact that they spent time on each part, wanting to do it properly is a very good thing, and it was therefore a conscious decision to let them have the time they needed to do things properly. A strength of the teaching plan was that it met Banks' two top levels for most of the exercises. The pupils had to use prior knowledge, and knowledge acquired through reading the book to answer and discuss the different tasks. They had to use personal experience, and therefore they became actively engaged in the project.

The next time I arrange a considerable reading project like this, I would plan for more time in the beginning of the project for the pupils to get started on the reading. I think it would benefit them, and me, when they start doing exercises and answering questions. I would also introduce tasks, exercises, and discussions more thoroughly. Including more subjects, like social studies and religion would make the project interdisciplinary. This would automatically give the project more time and generate more topics to discuss and work on.

Coming up with these changes that could be done for the next project is a great example on the action research process in practise. I planned a didactic plan for the project, acted it out and observed it, reflected on what parts worked well and what did not work so well, and finally revising the plan for future projects.

## **5.2 The book**

The novel is another element necessary to discuss, because it is a crucial part of the project. When working on this project, the novel stood out early on as a potential tool to indicate what, and how much, cultural knowledge the pupils hold. The pupils' comment that the book was an easy read that made them laugh. Some also mentioned that the cartoons helped them get through the book. There were also comments that some found the book boring, and it was described by one as "not my cup of tea". It is challenging to find a book that suits everyone, but when the majority are positive, it indicates that the novel is a good pick for this age group.

As discussed in the previous section, the didactic teaching plan is a crucial part of making the pupils able to demonstrate their knowledge through the book. The book itself contains cultural encounters from the beginning to the end, and Junior uses his cartoons to underline the cultural differences he experiences. The use of cartoons as a displaying tool is also commented on by the pupils in their reading logs.

The book is written with a first-person perspective. This allows the pupils to see and experience things, from Junior's point of view. The pupils are given insight into how it is growing up and living in an indigenous culture. This is probably something that is hard to imagine if one does not have experience growing up there themselves. The pupils also follow Junior when he enters a new, different culture and the distressed feeling he gets when being caught in the middle.

When the pupils can follow Junior on his cultural journey, there are most likely several elements they can connect to. The first elements are that they are approximately the same age, which means many of the "normal" teenage experiences Junior has, are recognisable. The

second is being caught between expectations. Even though most of the pupils in the group in this study have not experienced growing up on two cultures, they can still relate to being between school, home and activities they do in their spare time.

Connecting the book to the theories presented, it facilitates intercultural encounters at level 3 of Banks' model of how to integrate multicultural content. This book allows the pupils to view concepts, events, and issues from the perspective of a teenager growing up in an indigenous culture. It can also be argued to generate encounters at level 4, which requires pupils' active engagement in topics being taught and discussed. This is automatically achieved by pupils being nearly the same age as the main character. In addition, level 4 requires pupils to build on and use previous knowledge to be able to see the concepts and issues from contrasting perspectives. This is something they are required to do when reading the book.

Murray highlights the importance of using literature and examples demonstrating how things are now, and not ancient elements from the past. This book does exactly this. Murray also points out what when designing tasks for the IC classroom, it is important that it is relatable for the pupils. This book is very much relatable, meaning exercises given in addition to reading the book will be easier, as they are able to connect what they have newly learned to previous knowledge.

The next section will discuss the reading log exercise, how the pupils solved the task and what theories it can be connected to, in order to determine if it was a successful task to demonstrate the pupils' intercultural competence.

### **5.3 The reading logs**

When the pupils write assignments in general, and in this case the reading logs, they reveal a lot about themselves. I do not think they necessarily are aware of how their choice of words, reflections and not least the effort in answering the task they are given portray their mindset.

A few people commented that they believe the project has only helped with their vocabulary, and that they are somewhat disappointed in that. I think it is exhilarating to read in the pupils' logs that they think that the pupils themselves only think they have improved their vocabulary, when the logs are full of examples demonstrating what this project was all about, meaning IC.

Even though Costa's levelled questions are not directly linked to intercultural competence, I still found some interesting pointers that the question model can be connected to IC. When

analysing the questions, the pupils created themselves, the Level 2 and 3 demonstrate more of Byram's attitude and knowledge than Level 1. The first levelled questions appear less interested or capable of showing their IC.

In general, the reading logs located at Costas' level 2 and 3 were longer, demonstrated more advanced language, and were able to express positive and negative sides of things. This means they show capability to reflect and discuss. From reading the logs, it is obvious that these pupils put more time and effort into the task. An interesting note here is that several pupils wrote that they found the project difficult, and others commented on how they did not find it interesting. But even though they, for different reasons, thought it was challenging to be motivated, they still made a very good attempt, and it shines through that they have done their best at the time, which is all one can really expect from a group of pupils.

Seeing as this thesis and project is written and conducted during a pandemic, absence among pupils must be accounted for. But the remarkable point here is the differences in how the pupils behaved in the logs regarding the tasks they for some reason did not do. The pupils who demonstrated most level 1 knowledge had shorter reading logs who seemed incomplete and left the pupils had left out many questions. On the other hand, there were a few pupils expressing level 2 and 3 awareness, that had not done tasks as well, but when they left things out, they commented on why. A few pupils wrote which week they were ill or gave other explanations to why they had not done the specific task. The explanations and reasonings created a trust between the pupils and me as a teacher and researcher. Knowing why they have not done something makes it easier to understand and accept, while not commenting on it and leaving things undone seems careless and ignorant.

A task that I realised we should have repeated one or two times throughout the project was identifying the IC encounters. I claim this because it would be a very nice starting point for classroom discussions about IC. One could ask questions about how it made them feel, why they noticed them and if they have personal experience. Seeing as we did this exercise the second week, and most pupils identified the same events, it would be interesting to observe if it continued this way or changed as they got further into the book.

Towards the end of the project, we did a cartoon exercise, where the pupils drew an incident of their choice from the book and described it in detail. I have chosen not to focus on this specific exercise, but it needs to be mentioned briefly because a pupil demonstrated a horrific attitude on this task. He or she chose to draw a cartoon of the episode where Junior's sister

dies in a fire. On the request to describe the situation, the pupil answered, “*I assume she felt warm*” and when asked to describe the actions of the people involved the pupil writes “*they could do nothing they were dead*”. In addition, the pupil describes the situation as “*pretty funny*”.

I think it is essential to mention this one drawing, because as stated in the beginning of this section, the logs reveal quite a lot about the pupil and their mindset. In this case, the pupil is demonstrating the opposite of Byram’s five factors, meaning this pupil would not succeed in an intercultural encounter with this attitude.

#### **5.4. The reading logs: teacher or pupil controlled?**

Another element necessary to examine is if the reading logs should be teacher or pupil controlled. Lyutaya (2011) writes in her article that it is important that the pupils do not feel like it is forced, because they might lose interest in doing something they are required to do. In my opinion and experience with this project, there is a fine balance one needs to be aware of.

I think one can see a change in the reading logs where I decided for the pupils to create their own questions. Even though freeing up resulted in very good, curious, and open questions, it also resulted in some pupils letting go. I therefore think not reminding the pupils to add entries to the project every week is one of my biggest mistakes throughout the project. I felt like it was not necessary to remind the pupils about the entries several times a week, because it was said in the beginning that this was expected. But while reading the logs, I became aware of the importance of keeping the reminders coming. The pupils are only 15 years old, and if they are not given reminders, some will simply forget or purposely skip whatever they were meant to do. The teacher therefore needs to make sure some progress is happening, because the level of independence and ability to drive one’s own log forward is not developed in everyone.

A solution to the issue here might be to give the pupils clear instructions on when entries to the log are expected but at the same time give them autonomy over what they add. In other words, controlling the number of entries and expected dates for them to be added, but giving the pupils options for what to add. Sometimes it might be smart to instruct them as well, for example when a certain task or activity has been done in class. It can also be a good idea to present alternatives for the entries that are not related to specific classroom related activities. This way the ones who want to can use what the teacher presents as an option if they need to,

while others who work more independently are free to interpret and enter what they see fit. This way one would get the same number of entries by everyone, but still have a diversity to the entries. If I had more time, I would also give them time in class to write their entries to the reading logs, but for this project, there was simply not enough time to spend in this. This is another note to bring into the next project I will be doing.

For the last week of the project, I gave the pupils an open ending, asking them to summarize, and by this giving them the freedom to add whatever they felt needed. By not specifying what they should summarize, I got some very good feedback. Some chose to summarise the book, and how they felt about events and people in the story, while others chose to comment in the project as a whole and their feelings towards that. Everyone solved the summarizing task equally correctly, demonstrating that Byram's model can be used and found in very different answers.

For the next, and final part, of the thesis, I will summarize the project. I will establish what this research and book project has shown and clarify to what extent the research answers the initial research questions.

## 6. Conclusion

Throughout this thesis, I have sought to find relevant theories, research methods and materials, and connect them. The aim was to find an answer to how, and if, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* and reading logs can be used as teaching tools to develop and demonstrate pupils' intercultural competence levels.

I believe that the answer to the research question in this thesis is divided in two main parts: how to develop the IC knowledge and how to demonstrate the IC knowledge. The answer to the questions is also split in two. My experience is that the book and teaching plan can function as developing tools, while the reading logs can function as a demonstrating tool. The reason why I choose to write "can function", is because there are several factors involved that need to be in place for this to be successful. The key factors will be outlined below.

Through the process, I have experienced how crucial the choice of reading material and the didactic teaching plan is. Both need to be thought through and well-established before being given out to the pupils. I still believe the book itself was an excellent choice for a project like this. Because of different life situations, it is impossible for every pupil to go into a project with the same knowledge connected to IC, but by choosing a book unfamiliar to all the pupils, everyone starts with a kind of blank sheets.

As established through this thesis, IC is a complex topic to determine, and an even more complicated topic to teach. By using an authentic indigenous text, focusing on current ways of thinking, and living, as highlighted as very important by Murray (2022), it will become more straightforward to teach about topics like IC and indigenous people. Through the book, the pupils get to know Junior. He is a character struggling to find his place of belonging both between two very different cultures and at the same time managing life as a teenager.

At some level, the pupils will recognize themselves in Junior, or feel the opposite of what he is describing. Either way, it will create a base for discussion and reflection among the pupils. The book is, if used thoughtfully and consciously, a good tool to develop pupils' intercultural competence.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the didactic teaching plan is crucial for the success of the project. It is necessary for the plan to be located at level 3 and 4 at Banks' model. I believe my plan has some elements that are found at these levels. The two tasks I consider to be the best fit with Banks' levels are where the pupils are asked to compare elements of Junior's life with their personal life and choosing and IC incident to draw and describe. These tasks also fit

with Murray's requirement of elements being recognisable for the pupils. The didactic teaching plan can therefore be summarized as being part of the development of pupils' IC because the teacher creates tasks that are intended to make the pupils reflect upon their own situation and compare to unfamiliar situations.

The reading logs, when compared to Byram's model of intercultural competence, demonstrate the pupil's knowledge. In most of the reading logs, they demonstrate the right kind of attitudes, meaning they are open, curious, and willing to discover what Junior describes. They also demonstrate their knowledge, by discussing events and comparing them to personal experiences. They are self-aware, stating if they do not have experience with the topic while commenting on what they found different from their point of view.

Lytutaya (2011) presents clear instructions about what a reading log should contain, highlighting the importance of the pupils being motivated and self-driven. I have found that her list of things to include is very useful, but that it is necessary for this group that the teacher keeps track of when the entries should be made and keep reminding the pupils to add posts to the log.

Even though Costas' levelled questions are not directly linked to intercultural competence, they have been very useful tools to categorize and analyse the reading logs to figure out what knowledge the pupils are demonstrating. The research question seeks to answer if reading logs can be used to demonstrate pupils' intercultural competence, and I would state that they absolutely can. As written when discussing the logs, they reveal a lot about the pupils. One of the many things are their attitudes, knowledge, and skills, which is exactly what Byram states as necessary factors to determine if they are capable, and willing, to experience a successful intercultural encounter. Through their writing in the reading logs, the pupils reveal their thoughts, ideas, and attitudes while they elaborate on experiences they have had. Therefore, the reading logs can demonstrate if the pupils would be successful at intercultural encounters or not.

The research method (AR) sums up everything I wanted with this thesis. I have found this to be a brilliant way to learn and develop as a future teacher. By using this method, the past and current experience will always be beneficial to the next group of pupils doing the same type of project. And as a teacher, I think one should always look for ways to improve ones teaching for the better and to always have the pupils' best interest at heart.

To finalize the conclusion and this project, I would declare that *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* and reading logs can function as very good tools to both develop and demonstrate IC among pupils. It is all about what angles the teacher chooses to present key things from, and how to manage the balance between teacher kept control, while at the same time letting the pupils feel they have power over their own work and process.

## References

- Alexie, S. (2007). *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*. London: Andersen Press.
- Baker, L. (2006). Observation: A Complex Research Method. John Hopkins University Press. Volume 55, Number 1, Summer 2006, pp. 171-189. Doi [10.1353/lib.2006.0045](https://doi.org/10.1353/lib.2006.0045)
- Banks, J. A. (1993). Approaches to multicultural curriculum reform. *Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives*, 2, 195-214.
- Barrett, M., Byram, M., Lázár, I., Mompoint-Gaillard, P., & Philippou, S. (2013). *Developing intercultural competence through education*. Strasbourg, France: Council of Europe Publishing.
- Belsey, C. (2013). Textual analysis as a research method. *Research methods for English studies*, 157-74.
- Brown, C., & Habegger-Conti, J. (2017). Visual representation of indigenous culture in Norwegian EFL textbooks. *Nordic Open Access Journal of Modern Language Methodology*, 5(1). <https://doi.org/10.46364/njmlm.v5i1.369>
- Brown, S. & Bergman J. (2013) Preservice Teachers' Understanding of Variable. *Investigations in Mathematics Learning*, 6:1, 1-17, DOI: 10.1080/24727466.2013.11790327
- Byram, M. (1997) *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Byram, M. (2020). Assessment of Intercultural Competence and Intercultural Communicative Competence. In M. Dypedahl & R. E. Lund (Eds.) *Teaching and Learning English Interculturally*. Oslo: Cappelen Damm.
- Byrne, M. (2001). Interviewing as a data collection method. *AORN Journal*, 74(2), 233. <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A77227780/AONE?u=anon~4f9e2492&sid=googleScholar&xid=b01032b1>
- Costa, A. L. (2001). Teacher behaviors that enable student thinking. In A. L. Costa (Ed.), *Developing minds: A resource book for teaching think-ing* (pp. 359-369). Arlington, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Cilliers, W. J. (2007). *An experiential learning process for the advancement of previously disadvantaged employees in an industrial context* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Pretoria).

Cowie N. (2009) Observation. In: Heigham J., Croker R.A. (eds) *Qualitative Research in Applied Linguistics*. Palgrave Macmillan, London.

[https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230239517\\_8](https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230239517_8)

Deardorff, D. K. (2004). The identification and assessment of intercultural competence as a student outcome of internationalization at institutions of higher education in the United States., (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from the North Carolina State University Library. (<http://www.lib.ncsu.edu/resolver/1840.16/5733>) North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC.

Deardorff, D. K. (2011). Assessing intercultural competence. *New Directions for Institutional Research*, **149**, 65–79. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ir.381>

Deemer, S. A. (2009). Using Action Research Methodology to Unite Theory and Practice. *Teaching educational psychology*, **3**(3), n3.

Denson, N., & Chang, M. J. (2008). Racial diversity matters: The impact of diversity-related student engagement and institutional context. *American Educational Research Journal*, **46**, 322–353. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831208323278>

Donato, R. (2003). Action Research. [https://edfutures.net/images/7/7a/Action\\_Research-RICHARD-DONATO.pdf](https://edfutures.net/images/7/7a/Action_Research-RICHARD-DONATO.pdf)

Durham University. (2021). Prof. Mike Byram. Retrieved from

<https://www.durham.ac.uk/staff/m-s-byram/>

Dypedahl, M. & Lund, R. E (2020). Intercultural Learning and Global Citizenship in the English Language Classroom. In M. Dypedahl & R. E. Lund (eds.), *Teaching and learning English Interculturally*. Oslo: Cappelen Damm AS.

Dypedahl, M. (2020). Reflection Tools for Intercultural Awareness. In M. Dypedahl & R. E. Lund (eds.), *Teaching and learning English Interculturally*. Oslo: Cappelen Damm AS.

FallsApart Productions. (2022). Absolutely True Diary of Parttime Indian.

<https://fallsapart.com/#/absolutely-true-diary-of-a-parttime-indian/>

Grove Atlantic. (?). Sherman Alexie. <https://groveatlantic.com/author/sherman-alexie/>

Hall, E. (1977). *Beyond culture*. Garden City, New York: Anchor Press.

- Hoff, H. E. (2020). Intercultural competence. In A. Fenner & A. S. Skulstad (Eds). *Teaching English in the 21<sup>st</sup> century*. (2020, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) Bergen: Fagbokforlaget.
- Holliday, A. (2010). Complexity in cultural identity, Language and Intercultural Communication, 10:2, Pages 65-177, DOI: [10.1080/14708470903267384](https://doi.org/10.1080/14708470903267384)
- Huber, L. (2021). *Intercultural Communicative Competence – a Floating Signifier: Assessing Models in the Study Abroad Context*. Oxford: Peter Lang Ltd. International Academic Publishers.
- Kawulich, B. (2012). Collecting data through observation. *Doing social research: A global context*, 6(12), 150-160.
- Kemmis, S., & McTaggart, R. (1998). *The action research planner*. Geelong, Victoria, Australia: Deakin University Press.
- Kemmis, S., McTaggart, R. & Nixon, R. (2014). *The Action Research Planner: Doing Critical Participatory Action Research*. Singapore: Springer
- Khonamri, F., & Farzanegan, M. (2016). Literature-based extensive reading accompanied by reading logs: A case for developing critical thinking skills of English literature students. *International Journal of Education*, 9(1), 59-68.
- Koshy, E., Koshy, V., & Waterman, H. (2010). *Action research in healthcare*. Sage.
- Kuckartz, U. (2014). *Qualitative text analysis: A guide to methods, practice and using software*. Sage.
- Kuckartz, U. (2019). Qualitative text analysis: A systematic approach. In *Compendium for early career researchers in mathematics education* (pp. 181-197). Springer, Cham.
- Kuiper, K. (2021). "Sherman Alexie". *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.  
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Sherman-Alexie>
- Kuper, A. (2005). Indigenous people: an unhealthy category. *Correspondence*. Volume 366, Issue 9490. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(05\)67374-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(05)67374-6)
- Kvale, S. & Brinkmann, S. (2019). *Det kvalitative forskningsintervuet (3rd ed.)*. Oslo: Gyldendal Akademisk.
- Locke, D. C. & Bailey, D. F. (2014). *Increasing Multicultural Understanding (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.)*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

Lytutaya, T. (2011). Reading Logs: Integrating Extensive Reading with Writing Tasks. In *English Teaching Forum* (Vol. 49, No. 1, pp. 26-34). US Department of State. Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Office of English Language Programs, SA-5, 2200 C Street NW 4th Floor, Washington, DC 20037.

Matosu, C. (2012). *A Critique of Michael Byram's Intercultural Communicative Competence Model from the Perspective of Model Type and Conceptualization of Culture*. 347-380.

Matsumoto, D., & Hwang, H. C. (2013). Assessing cross-cultural competence: A review of available tests. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, **44**, 849–873. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022113492891>

Meyer, J. (2000) 'Using qualitative methods in health related action research', *British Medical Journal*, 320: 178–181.

Mills, G. E. (2000). Understanding action research. In *Action research: A guide for the teacher researcher* (pp. 36-52). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Mills, G. E. (2003). *Action research: A guide for the teacher researcher*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Prentice Hall.

Moeller, A. K. & Nugent, K. (2014). Building intercultural competence in the language classroom.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=1160&context=teachlearnfacpub>

Murray, H. M. (2022). Teaching about Indigenous peoples in the EFL classroom: Practical approaches to the development of intercultural competence. *TESOL Journal*, e645.

Noor, K. B. M. (2008). Case study: A strategic research methodology. *American journal of applied sciences*, 5(11), 1602-1604.

Ochoa Delarriva, O., & Basabe, E. A. (2015). Reading logs and literature teaching models in English language teacher education. *How*, 22(2), 37-53.

Pak, S. S., & Weseley, A. J. (2012). The Effect of Mandatory Reading Logs on Children's Motivation to Read. *Journal of Research in Education*, 22(1), 251-265.

Poetry Foundation. (2010). Sherman Alexie.

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/sherman-alexie>

Schwarzenthal, M., Schachner, M., Juang, L., & Van de Vijver, F. (2020). Reaping the benefits of cultural diversity: Classroom cultural diversity climate and students' intercultural competence. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 50(2), 323-346.

Skinner, D., Tagg, C. & Holloway, J. Managers and Research: The Pros and Cons of  
Stringer, E. (1996). Action research: A handbook for practitioners. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Qualitative Approaches. *Management Learning*. 2000;31(2):163-179.  
doi:[10.1177/1350507600312002](https://doi.org/10.1177/1350507600312002)

Thornberry, P. (2013). *Indigenous peoples and human rights*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Tripp, D. (2005). Action research: a methodological introduction. *Educação e pesquisa*, 31(3), 443-466.

Utdanningsdirektoratet. (2020). Competence aims and assessment.  
<https://www.udir.no/lk20/eng01-04/kompetansemaal-og-vurdering/kv4?lang=eng>

Utdanningsdirektoratet. (2020). Relevance and central values.  
<https://www.udir.no/lk20/eng01-04/om-faget/fagets-relevans-og-verdier?lang=eng>

Walker, A. (1982). *The Colour Purple*. New York City: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Weaver, H. N. (1998). Indigenous People in a Multicultural Society: Unique Issues for Human Services. *Social Work*. Vol. 43, Issue 3. Pages 203-211 (9 pages).  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/sw/43.3.203>

Weaver, H. N. (2001). Indigenous Identity: What Is It, and Who Really Has It? *American Indian Quarterly*. Vol. 25, No. 2 (Spring, 2001), pp. 240-255 (16 pages).  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/1185952>



## Appendices

### Appendix 1: The didactic teaching plan

**WEEK 1** – Introducing the project (using a Power Point presentation)

The pupils are creating a reader-response-log. They are answering the questions below in the log:

- What do I expect to achieve from this project?  
What do I hope to learn?
- Is there anything you are worried about?
- The title of the book: **The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian.**  
what do you think it is about?
- The front cover of the book: what are you first thoughts?
  
- What do you know about culture?
- What do you think about people that has a different culture from you?
- Have you experienced any cultural meetings (where you realise someone is doing something in a different way than you are used do)?
- Where can one find different cultures? Is it just between countries (e.g. language differences)?

**WEEK 2** – Get started on the reading + reading log:

Reading till chapter 10 (Tears of a Clown)

In class + homework:

- Write a short summary of what you have read so far.  
Anything you noticed, liked, did not like?
- What kind of language is Junior using to describe himself?
- What does it mean to be a “part-time Indian?”
- Find at least five (5) examples from the text where Junior comments cultural differences/expectations/events.
  - Write down the events/episodes
  - What are your first thoughts when reading the episodes?
- When reflecting on what you have read so far, what factors shapes Junior’s identity?
- What are the expectations placed on Junior by his community?
- What factors do you think shape our identities?

**WEEK 3** – Topic: Compare elements of Junior’s life with the pupil’s personal life.

The pupils were asked to fill in their answers in the table below. Each comparison had its own table (four in total)

- How has **MONEY** affected Junior’s life and how has it affected your life?
- How has Junior’s **community (the Rez)** affected him, and how has your **community (homeplace/town)** affected you?
- How does Junior’s **physical appearance, health and ability** affect him, and how does yours affect you?
- How does Junior’s **friends and interest** affect him, and how does your friends and interest affect you?

Junior	Me

**WEEK 4** – Topic: Minorities, identity, and culture

PP: what is a minority?

Look at this map: <https://native-land.ca/>

Talk about: what do we see here? Are we surprised by something? If yes: what?

Short film about national minorities in Norway:

<https://nafo.oslomet.no/ressurser/filmer/identitet-ungdommer-fra-de-nasjonale-minoritene>

Questions for the reader-response-log after seeing the short film and talk/discuss what we saw in plenary:

- Hva er viktig for min personlige identitet?
  - Hvor viktig er språket for meg og min identitet?
  - Hvilke andre forhold er viktige for min identitet? (tradisjoner, religion, familie, slekt og venner?)

- Kan vi ha flere identiteter, eller har vi én identitet som er mangfoldig og sammensatt?
- Er det å være en del av en gruppe viktig for min identitet? (gruppeidentitet) Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke? Hvis ja: på hvilken måte?
- **Tror du det å være i minoritet påvirker et menneskes identitet på annen måte enn å være i majoritet?**
- Kan identitet forandre seg? I så fall hvordan? Og hvorfor?
- **Hva er viktig for Junior sin identitet?**

### WEEK 5 – Topic: Choosing an IC incident

Draw a cartoon in class.

Choose a situation from the book. The situation should be between Junior and another character from the book.

Make a cartoon of the situation. Use Junior's drawing style as inspiration.

In your reading log:

- Describe the situation.
- Describe what each of the persons involved says and does.
- What seem to be the expectations of the people involved in the situation?
- What seems to be the misunderstanding or tension in this situation?
- Could the reason be related to a difference in communication styles/patterns or mindsets (value differences / ways of thinking)
- How would you describe the actions of the people involved based on your own background and from your own perspective?
- Take the perspective of each of the persons involved and try to describe the situation from their point of view. How might they reason in this situation and why do you think they communicate as they do?
- Can you relate this incident to anything you have experienced yourself?
- What have you learned from this and how can you apply your understanding of this incident to other situations?

**WEEK 6** – Write a final summary of the book. Feel free to add your own thoughts and reflections.

The questions below can be used as help/guide, but feel free to write a coherent text

- What did you like/not like?
- What did you find interesting/awful??
- What do you think about the main character Junior, and decisions he made throughout the book?

Any other characters worth mentioning?

- Why do you think Junior is drawn between cultures/identities?