

The influence of a Lesson Study cycle on a 2nd grade EFL picture book-based teaching practice lesson in Norway

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the influence of Lesson Study on the teaching of a 2nd grade English as a foreign language (EFL) picture book-based lesson conducted by a group of student teachers during teaching practice in Norway. Lesson Study is an investigative educational method originating in Japan. A group of teachers plan a research lesson which one of them teaches and the others observe, their attention focussing on a few selected pupils. The lesson is reviewed, re-planned and re-taught to a different class. The data presented here was collected through video-recordings of two lessons (a lesson taught and the same lesson re-planned and re-taught) and their corresponding pre-, mid-and post-supervision sessions. Lesson Study appeared to have had an influence on the activities, especially the type and number of questions being asked by the teacher, the timing of activities, and the use of the target language. It also appeared to have had an influence on the attitudes of both the mentors and students to using picture books with young EFL learners. Lesson Study has previously been little used and researched in foreign language teaching. This study demonstrates its potential to enhance the quality of teaching and learning.

1. Introduction and aims

This article presents research on a group of four student teachers of English and their mentor teachers during teaching practice in a primary school in Norway. During the practice period the students used a picture book with 2nd grade English as foreign language (EFL) learners within a Lesson Study methodological framework. Lesson Study (LS) is defined by Tsui and Law (2007, p.1294) as the “systematic investigation of classroom pedagogy conducted collectively by a group of teachers/students, with the aim of improving the quality of teaching and learning.” It is an established educational investigative method that originated in Japan in 1873 (Makinae, 2010), but which has later spread to other countries. Most of the research on LS disseminated in English has been based on lessons in Mathematics and Science (Stigler & Hiebert, 1999). The current research, in contrast, places LS in a foreign language learning context, one in which scholars have been striving for decades to enhance the quality of teaching by exploring different approaches.

In Japan, Lesson Study is used on a regular basis throughout the education system (Stepanek, Appel, Leong, Turner Mangan & Mitchell, 2007). It is a “highly specified form of classroom action research focusing on the development of teaching practice knowledge” (Dudley, 2014, p.1). The LS process is cyclical in nature, as shown in Figure 1 below:

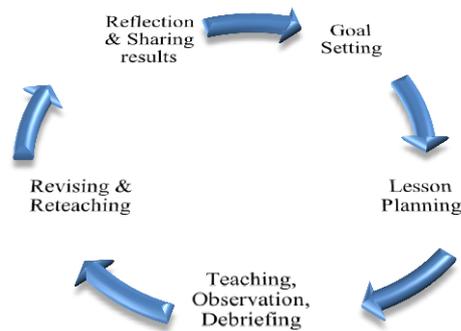


Figure 1: The cyclical process of Lesson Study

To undertake an LS project, a group of teachers cooperate on a “research lesson”. Firstly, they identify a research theme which emanates from their classroom (Tsui & Law, 2007), and agree on the learning aim which the learners will address during the LS investigation. With these two factors in mind, and having done research on the topic, the curriculum and possible methods, the group then design a research lesson and select research pupils, i.e. a number of pupils of different abilities (three in the present study). These pupils are the focus of observation during the lesson and are interviewed afterwards about their experiences of the lesson. After planning the lesson, the roles of “teacher” and “observer” are randomly assigned. After the lesson, the team regroup and discuss both the impressions and experiences of the designated teacher and the observations of pupil reactions to and possible learning outcomes from the lesson, as well as discussing data from the interviews. The team subsequently revise the research lesson, which will be taught to a different class at the same level, choose another group of research pupils, and repeat the process. Finally, the team regroup and reflect on the outcome of the second lesson before the findings are shared outside the team (Stigler & Hiebert, 1999).

Although the research lesson is an important part of LS, it is only a by-product of the reflective processes that include a deeper understanding of the lesson aim, how the pupils learn and an improved pedagogical understanding (Campbell, 2003). As Tsui and Law (2007, p.1294) stress, because the focus of the investigation is on the lesson, not the individual teacher, LS encourages a safe environment for collaboration which in turn may support self-efficacy and self-confidence. LS encourages teachers to take a research stance to their classrooms as they critically examine their practices (Stepanek et al., 2007).

The data presented here are based on a case study of the group of aforementioned student teachers (hereafter referred to as “students”) and their mentor teachers (hereafter referred to as “mentors”) during a teaching practice period. The primary material for the lesson was the picture book *Henry’s Holiday* (Shields, 2009), which was used to teach the theme of the weather. Henry’s holiday is about a small penguin who is tired of living in the cold and who decides to go on holiday to a tropical island. When he discovers that the heat and sand are not suitable for penguins, he decides to return home to his family and friends. The story was chosen because it was age-appropriate, the previous vocabulary related to the weather would be recycled, and the pictures would aid comprehension.

The study addresses the research question: How does Lesson Study influence the teaching of a 2nd grade EFL lesson where the lesson aim is for the pupils to understand a picture book story?

Since LS has had a positive influence on the teaching of subjects such as Mathematics and Science (Tsui & Law, 2007), it was expected that it would also have a positive influence on the planning and execution of teaching EFL in the present context, something which the authors have experienced with other students' LS projects in the English department.

2. The educational potential of picture books

Adults reading to children is one of the most important rituals in children's early literacy development (Barton, 1994). Picture books are frequently used during this ritual. They combine both the verbal and the visual, i.e. they contain iconotext. To be classified as a picture book, each double spread must contain at least one picture (Birketveit, 2013). Through the pictures, these books symbolically represent the world in a similar way to when adults name real objects in the child's environment (Barton, 1994, p. 145). The interaction between pictures and text is an important feature of picture books. The story is communicated both through the pictures (which show the story) and the words (which tell the story) (Birketveit, 2013; Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006). Picture books provide narrative and ideas that may otherwise be unavailable for children and enable them to transcend the here and now and enter into worlds upon which they can fantasise (Arizpe & Styles, 2004).

An adult reading to a child is a shared reading activity in which the adult can mediate between the text and the child's understanding of the text by scaffolding (Bruner 1983, 1990), namely helping the child to understand the language and content (Wells, 1985). When children listen to stories being read aloud, they experience how written language is organized and its rhythms and structures. The interaction or "talk" between the adult and child is important for the development of children's literacy (Dickinson & Beals, 1994; Mercer, 2004). Over-attention to details and form at the expense of meaning may have a negative impact on the child's reading experience (Bergin, Lancy & Draper, 1994). This point is reiterated by Wells (1985, p. 253), who argues:

If [stories] are used chiefly as the basis for display question sequences that focus on the meanings of particular words or on isolated items, such as the names of the characters or the details of particular events...they are unlikely to provide encouragement for the exploratory but controlled thinking that written language facilitates.

In foreign and second language (L2) contexts, picture books are a medium of bringing authentic literature into the young language learner classroom, a way of providing "motivating, meaningful contexts for language learning" (Ghosn, 2002, p.173). Authentic literature normally denotes literature written for first language (L1) readers, as is the case with *Henry's Holiday*. In contrast to authentic literature, both Birketveit (2013) and Ghosn (2002) question the effectiveness and motivation of typical basal readers written especially for L2 learners, with their often artificial texts, but which are nevertheless the predominant source of reading materials in most primary EFL classrooms in Norway (Charboneau, 2012). Authentic picture books can be appealing and are likely to promote language and vocabulary development, as well as initiate pupil talk. Moreover, they provide young readers with the joy and satisfaction of getting through whole books. Children connect personally to the text and images by relating them to personal experience and analogy (Arizpe & Styles, 2004).

One important issue when reading a picture book in class is the type of questions asked by the teacher. Lightbown and Spada (1999) distinguish between "display" and "genuine" questions. Display questions are those to which the teacher knows the answer, which is not the case with genuine questions. Some display questions may be more demanding of learners than others, for example if they need to make an inference.

Similarly, Fisher (2005) distinguishes between “higher-order” and “lower-level thinking” questions. Higher-order questions encourage thinking and are intellectually challenging. They arouse curiosity and interest in the learner, eliciting the learners’ opinions, feelings and experiences. Lower-level-thinking questions, in contrast, are those that check comprehension and test recall of knowledge (Fisher, 2005, p. 18). One strategy would be for teachers to move from simple to more advanced questions, from comprehension or recall questions to those that require more analytic or evaluative cognitive skills on the part of the learner. Fisher argues that it is important to ask questions that “scaffold” new learning (Bruner, 1983, 1990). However, it may be counterproductive for teachers to ask too many questions; instead, they should limit the number of questions, but ensure that they are of good quality (Fisher, 2005, p. 20).

Another important issue when reading a picture book in class is the extent of the teacher’s use of the learners’ L1. Although there may be instances when use of the L1 may enhance learning, for example in non-routine communication (Maccaro, 2009, p. 86), there is a strong case for exposing young learners to large doses of the target language in meaningful contexts (Krashen, 1982; 2004), such as reading *Henry’s Holiday* in the present context. Such a reading experience provides the learners with the opportunity to acquire language naturally with the help of the pictures in the book, and the gestures and realia (real objects) used by readers that make the learners associate the images, objects and actions they can see with the language and vocabulary they are learning (Allen, 1983).

Having provided some background on LS and picture books as an educational tool, the subjects and methods for the study will now be described.

3. Method

The case study subjects were a group of four female students taking the English 1–7 GLU (Grunnskolelærerutdanning) course in the second year of their four-year teacher education. Before teaching practice started, the university lecturers informed the students about the LS project and introduced them to the LS handbook that they would use as a guide throughout the project. The LS handbook was adapted from Dudley (2014) and is a tool for the development and refinement of teaching, and for gaining more insight into teaching practice. It leads students through the LS process in a step-by-step fashion. In addition, it contains matrixes that they can fill in (e.g. for observation) and asks critical questions, such as: How will you motivate pupils to engage with this lesson? What is the rationale for choice and order of activities? How do you imagine that the pupils’ understanding/learning will evolve throughout the lesson?

In the spring of 2013 the students were placed in a local primary school to carry out a three-week supervised teaching practice period, primarily in English, but also in other subjects. They were assigned two mentors for the English lessons: the class teacher and the English teacher, who had taken part in a training course at the university to support the students in their LS project role. All parties, i.e. the mentors, student teachers and pupils, had consented to taking part in the project. The researchers had applied to and been granted permission from the Norwegian Social Data Services (NSD) to video- and audio-record the lessons and supervision sessions.

The students interviewed their mentors before the project started to find out what English topic they would be teaching, what pre-knowledge they could expect the pupils to possess and for which learning aim they should plan. On returning to the university, they began to plan their English LS research lesson, which was to last 60-minutes in a class of 21 second graders (aged seven). With support from their lecturer, they decided to use *Henry’s Holiday* to introduce and revisit the theme of the weather. They read literature on the use of

picture books. Their planned lesson also included the use of realia and gestures, which they hoped would scaffold the children's understanding of the book. Their LS research question was: How can we use authentic English literature with 2nd grade pupils? Since the question was very broad, the students needed to narrow it down and decided on researching how they could use a picture book with 2nd grade pupils.

Once the lesson plan was approved by their mentors, one of the students was randomly picked to teach the lesson and the other group members were allocated research pupils, representing the less able, average and more able English learners. They would observe them, focussing on their reactions to the lesson, attentiveness and level of concentration, and whether they completed the assigned activities. They would also interview them afterwards about what they enjoyed most in the lesson, what they had learned, what was difficult and what could be improved.

Having taught the lesson, the students met with their mentors to reflect on the lesson, their observations and the interviews with the research pupils. On the basis of this data, they modified the lesson plan, which was subsequently taught to another second grade class of 20 pupils the following day. This was followed by a second debriefing and conclusions were drawn about the research lesson in relation to the students' research question and any other experiences they may have had. Back at the university, the students wrote their reports and individual reflections on the project. Their findings and reflections were subsequently presented to their mentors and later to their fellow students.

The data presented here are based on video- and audio-recordings of the pre-lesson supervision, the lesson taught to the first class, the mid-supervision session after the first lesson, the lesson taught to the second class, and the supervision following the second lesson. Both the supervision sessions and the lessons were fully transcribed. The supervision sessions were conducted in Norwegian and the original transcriptions have been translated into English by the authors.

Qualitative content analysis, namely analysing large amounts of text into content categories/themes (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Weber, 1990), was the primary method of analysis for both the supervision sessions and the lessons. Both authors initially studied and analysed the supervision and lesson recordings and transcriptions separately and then discussed them, agreeing on the analysis presented in the results section. The supervision sessions were analysed and categorized according to what the students or teachers focused on in the discussions, e.g. learning aims, choice and suitability of materials and pupil ability levels. The lessons were analysed and categorized according to, firstly, the activities that were in focus (e.g. pre-reading and post-reading activities), coded in thematic chunks, and secondly, the types of individual questions that the student asked in connection with reading *Henry's Holiday*. These question categories were developed inductively as:

- procedural (procedures in the classroom)
- asking for translation (normally eliciting an English translation of a Norwegian word or expression)
- recall (recall of events in the story)
- comprehension (checking the pupils' comprehension of the story)
- inference (the pupils having to make an inference)
- genuine (questions to which the teacher did not know the answer)

The majority of the question categories are "display" questions according to Lightbown and Spada's (1999) classification, with the exception of the "genuine" category. However, among the display questions, some categories may be considered more intellectually demanding than others according to Fisher's (2005) classification of higher- and

lower-level thinking questions. For example, “recall” questions are likely to be more challenging than translation, while “inference” questions are likely to be more challenging than recall. The total number of questions asked in connection with reading *Henry’s Holiday* in each of the two lessons was counted and the questions were quantified according to the above specified categories. This was done to compare the number and types of questions asked in each lesson and how these may have influenced the lessons being taught.

4. Results

The results of the analysis are presented in the chronological stages of the LS cycle and aim to portray the ongoing processes involved in the study.

4.1 Pre-supervision session

The pre-supervision session occurred the day before the first LS lesson and lasted 50 minutes. During the session, the students described the planned LS lesson in detail. Although the picture book was the focal point of the discussion for both the students and the mentors, the two parties approached the conversation from different perspectives.

Firstly, the mentors’ concerns were primarily practical in nature, relating to the way the students had planned to read the book aloud in class. They asked questions about the timing of the activity and how much of the book would be read in one lesson. They were also concerned with the “mechanics” of reading the book, for example how to read so that all the pupils could see the pictures, the reading tempo, and the intonation that the students would use in order to “bring the text alive.” Without explicitly stating so, the mentors implied that the task demand of this activity would be too difficult for some of the pupils (Cameron, 2001). They suggested that the whole book did not need to be read in one reading, that the text should be translated from English into Norwegian while reading and that key items of vocabulary should be pre-taught.

The students, for their part, were initially concerned with the choice of the picture book as a reflection of the topic (i.e. the weather), the lesson aim and their LS research question. They then directed the conversation towards the reading activity, bringing to the discussion the knowledge they had gained from their own reading on the use of authentic materials in the EFL classroom, for example “The aim of this lesson is not that the children will understand every word of the authentic book, but that we will scaffold them enough that they can understand the essence of the story.”

They considered the picture book activity as a way of recycling the previously learned vocabulary on the topic of the weather. They also believed that the pictures in the book, together with gestures and realia, would help support comprehension to such an extent that translation of the text would largely be unnecessary. They also felt that the pupils would have the potential for L1 to L2 transfer of English words such as *penguin*, *palm trees* and *coconut*, which all closely resemble their Norwegian equivalents, and thereby would be easily understandable.

While the mentors seemed to be somewhat sceptical to the students using an authentic picture book with the 2nd graders, considering it as relatively “difficult” for the children to understand and learn from, the students believed that the material was appropriate since they had planned suitable scaffolding (in the form of gestures and realia) to support the pupils’ understanding of the text.

Having completed the supervision session, the students continued to plan the lesson in detail and allocate roles among themselves.

4.2 Research lesson 1

Table 1 shows the timing of the activities in the first lesson, which lasted 68 minutes.

Table 1: The timing of activities in Lesson 1

Activity	Lesson 1 (in minutes)
Introduction of the theme and the learning aim	3
Introduction of the vocabulary using realia	11
Reading the book	33
Introducing the post-reading activity	8
Pupils work on the post-reading activity	11
Plenary discussion of the learning aim	2
Total	68

The pre-reading part of the lesson comprised 14 minutes, the actual reading of the book 33 minutes, while 19 minutes was spent on introducing and working on the post-reading activity in which the pupils were asked to place four pictures from the book in chronological order and to glue them into their English books. As they were doing the latter, the students discretely asked some of the pupils to retell the story in Norwegian to see how much they had understood and remembered. This left two minutes at the end of lesson to discuss and review the learning aim with the pupils.

The students had provided the pupils with too much scaffolding during the reading activity, e.g. by translating a large part of the text, and did not employ many of the aspects of story reading that they had argued were important in the pre-supervision session. For example, there was no attempt to explain the text or vocabulary in English. In addition, the students did not exploit the potential for transfer of similar L1 to L2 vocabulary or sufficiently exploit the pictures in the book as a medium for aiding comprehension and vocabulary learning.

Table 2 shows the number and distribution of the different types of questions asked by the student while reading the picture book.

Table 2: Distribution of categories of questions asked by the student while reading in Lesson 1

	Lesson 1
Total number of questions in Norwegian	28 (mostly recast)
Procedural questions	6
Asking for translation	37
Recall	20
Comprehension	37
Inference	16
Genuine	3
Total number of questions	119

The student asked a total of 119 questions while reading *Henry's Holiday*, an average of almost four questions a minute. Roughly half of the questions were either mostly recast

questions in Norwegian (28) or ones eliciting translation from English into Norwegian (37), as exemplified in the following typical exchange:

(ST – student, P – pupil, text in italics taken directly from the book)

ST: *Henry began to dream of sandy beaches and palm trees.* What did he dream about? Olivier?

P: Strander og palmetre (beaches and palm trees)

ST: Han drømte om strand og palmetre. *He dreamed about coconuts*

P: Kokusnøt

ST: Kokusnøtter *and pineapples...* Pineapples?

P: Ananas

ST: Ananas *and gorgeous yellow sunshine.* What does sunshine mean Olivier?

P: Sol

ST: Sol... Solskinn. *He decided to build his very own tropical island made of snow.* What is a tropical island? Alexandra?

In addition, there were 37 comprehension-check and 20 recall questions. Comprehension, recall, translation and recasts are all examples of questions which require the pupils to use lower-level thinking (Fisher, 2005). In contrast, there were only 19 questions (16 inference and three genuine) that were more cognitively challenging.

Because of the high number and types of questions asked, the reading of the book became monotonous and fragmented and took much longer to read than had been planned.

4.3 Mid-supervision

The mid-supervision session occurred later the same day and lasted 47 minutes.

Paradoxically, although the video shows that some of the children appeared to have lost concentration towards the end of the reading, the mentors generally had a favourable impression of the lesson; they liked the book and thought it was appropriate for the learning aim. They were also impressed by the amount of pupil activity and the pupils' positive reactions to the reading. They wanted the students to comment on how they felt the lesson had gone, how the lesson corresponded to the lesson aim and vocabulary to be reviewed and, finally, on the timing of the different activities. Although the mentors felt that the activities were well chosen, they questioned the timing of the lesson, which they felt was unbalanced; too much time had been spent on pre-reading and the reading itself, while there was insufficient time for the post-reading activity and review at the end.

The mentors also wanted to discuss the reactions of the three chosen "research pupils" in relation to how suitable the research lesson was for the different ability levels. The least able pupil had been positive about the lesson, saying that the story was fun and that he had learnt some vocabulary. The average-level pupil found the story fun and not difficult to understand. She had found it exciting to be read an English book. The pictures and gestures had been important aids to her comprehension. The most able pupil liked the fact that relatively much English had been used in the lesson. He had liked answering the questions, but felt that he could have been challenged more.

The impression among the mentors was that the lesson was generally more suited to the less able pupils in the class and consequently lacked challenges and learning opportunities for the more able. The students were questioned on how they would attach more weight to the

different ability levels of the pupils in Lesson 2, bearing in mind that the second class was also one of mixed ability.

The mentors agreed with a suggestion from one of the students that the book should be more dramatised than read in a traditional sense. They reiterated the need to use voice and gestures to “bring the book alive”. Greater use of gestures could both aid comprehension and include the pupils more in the story telling.

The students addressed similar topics to those of their mentors. They were also concerned about the timing of the activities, the selected pupils’ reactions and the suitability of the lesson for pupils of different abilities. They also wanted to discuss whether the activity was suited to the learning aims, the use of realia and gestures to support comprehension and, finally, the amount of English compared to Norwegian that was spoken during the book reading. They were preoccupied with the challenges of knowing how far they could “push” an unfamiliar class whose routines and vocabulary knowledge were unfamiliar to them. They acknowledged that the lesson was more suitable for the less able learners and made some practical suggestions as to how they could incorporate more challenges and learning opportunities for the more able pupils. They felt that instilling the pupils with a love of English literature and motivation to read more should be an aim in itself; they questioned the need to always focus on vocabulary learning. They were anxious about the planning and re-teaching of the lesson, but now seemed to be more aware of the skills required to read a picture book.

In general, both the mentors and the students seemed to share similar concerns. They acknowledged that reading a picture book entails skills that they were perhaps unaware of previously. The mentors now appeared less sceptical to using a picture book with 2nd graders and understood how much scaffolding is afforded by the pictures and gestures.

4.4 Research lesson 2

Lesson 2 lasted 65 minutes. Table 3 compares the timing of the activities in the two lessons.

Table 3: Comparison of timing of activities in Lesson 1 and 2

Lesson outline	Lesson 1 Total 68 minutes	Lesson 2 Total 65 minutes
Introduction of the theme and the learning aim	3	2
Introduction of the vocabulary using realia	11	8
Reading the book	33	25
Introducing the post-reading activity	8	6
Pupils work on the post-reading activity	11	17
Plenary discussion of the learning aim	2	
Plenary discussion of the learning aim and review of the post-reading activity and the book	-	7

The timing of activities in Lesson 2 differed from Lesson 1 in a number of ways. Time reductions took place in the pre-reading activity (from 14 to 10 minutes) and reading the book (from 33 to 25 minutes). In contrast, the introduction and implementation of the post-reading activity increased from 19 to 23 minutes and seven minutes were spent on a plenary discussion of the lesson aim and a discussion of the book itself compared to two minutes in Lesson 1.

In addition, Lesson 2 moved along much more smoothly than Lesson 1 and the student used much more English, translating into Norwegian only when absolutely necessary. This resulted in much less scaffolding for the less able pupils, who nevertheless seemed to understand the story.

Table 4 compares the number and distribution of the different types of questions asked in the two lessons.

Table 4: Comparison of questions asked in the two lessons

	Lesson 1	Lesson 2
Total number of questions in Norwegian	28 (mostly recast)	2 (one procedural/one recast)
Procedural questions	6	3
Asking for translation	37	11
Recall	20	10
Comprehension	37	30
Inference	16	10
Genuine	3	1
Total number of questions	119	65

The number of questions asked in Lesson 2 was almost half that in Lesson 1 (65 compared to 119). Although there was only a slight reduction in the number of comprehension questions (30 compared to 37), there was a considerable reduction in the number of questions asking for translation (from 37 to 11) and recall questions (from 20 to 10). Only two questions were asked in Norwegian compared to the 28 in Lesson 1, which inevitably moved Lesson 2 along at a faster pace.

These changes can be illustrated in the following exchange from Lesson 2:

ST: Sand. Yes, very good ... *Well he started to dream about sand and sandy beaches and palm trees ... He dreamed about coconuts and pineapples and gorgeous yellow sunshine.* Yes...so what was he doing? Does anyone know...? It's ok to speak in Norwegian...He had a dream about...beaches and palm trees and sunshine...It's warm right? *The other baby penguins had great fun playing on the snow island...* He'd made a snow island... Can you see? It's a beach with a palm tree, so he was dreaming about it. *But it was no use. Henry was still shivering with the cold... "I need a holiday", he said, "a very hot holiday".* Where does he want to go?

P: Away from the snow.

ST: Away from the snow. Yes, he wants to go somewhere where it is hot. Louisa?

P: Varmt.

ST: En plass det er varmt? mmm.. *One day a boat came in close to the ice and Henry felt he was so lucky... he was really lucky a boat came... Yes!... and he jumped on board to the boat and he said "goodbye snow"... "Good bye baby penguins ... goodbye Splash... I'm going on a holiday"...*

Here the student read much larger chunks of text at a time. She employed the technique of checking comprehension by asking a question which she answered herself by

pointing to the pictures and recasting the book text with a short sentence if none of the pupils provided a quick response, as can be seen in the above exchange. In this way, reading the book became considerably less fragmented than in Lesson 1. The student dramatised the book to a greater extent than was the case in Lesson 1. She omitted parts of the text she considered less important. She also used her voice (intonation) more, as well as more gestures to support the learners' comprehension than in Lesson 1.

Because less time was spent on reading the book and more gestures and dramatic techniques were used, the pupils seemed to be more drawn into and to be more attentive during the reading experience. However, this lesson was more challenging for the class as a whole as there was much less translation of both the text and the questions asked.

4.5 Post-lesson supervision

The post-supervision session lasted 52 minutes and took place in the afternoon of the day after Lesson 2. Everyone was present except the class teacher, the latter's absence constituting a limitation of the study. The students and the mentor largely raised the same topics. The discussion took a familiar course: first, the student who had taught the class reflected over her experiences of the lesson. The students who had observed and interviewed the research pupils subsequently reported their experiences. The least able pupil seemed to show interest in the book, but tended to lose concentration during the reading of longer chunks, an observation which was confirmed in the interview. The average-level pupil had found the lesson exciting, while at the same time challenging since much of it had been in English. Although seemingly distracted at times during the reading, this pupil was able to arrange the story pictures in the right order. The more-able pupil was very active during the lesson, joining in with the gestures and answering questions correctly. Although she had enjoyed the book reading, she claimed to have learned little new vocabulary. After reporting on the research pupils, the students checked the LS guide for any topics or questions that had been absent in the discussion, but which would nevertheless be needed for the LS report.

Reflecting on their research question, the students concluded that reading a picture book with a 2nd grade class was more complicated than they had first anticipated and that they needed to be well prepared for the activity. They acknowledged that book choice is important: the book needs to interest the learners, have an appropriate level of language and have clear pictures that will support learning, which were all the case with *Henry's Holiday*. They understood the importance of dramatising the text by using gestures and voice. Their mentor supported their reflections: "The book should be attractive and fun to read if it is to encourage them to read more themselves and a lot of practice is needed before the teacher can take it into the classroom."

The mentor seemed to have changed her attitude to the suitability of authentic picture books for the age group concerned. She no longer perceived the book as a tool primarily for learning vocabulary, but had accepted the students' premise that reading picture books can instil a love of reading in children in general and reading English literature in particular. As one of the students commented, "I am surprised how well it went. Even the weakest pupil understood a good deal and with a lot of support the children seemed to enjoy the activity."

However, in addition to previously focussing on the learners' cognitive demands (Cameron, 2001), the students now discussed the cognitive demands on themselves. They had experienced their lesson plan as overburdening: reading a picture book at the same time as using realia and gestures had been too demanding, especially since they had decided to conduct as much of the lesson as possible in the target language. They concluded that speaking English in the classroom in a manner and at a level appropriate to the learners is a skill that requires much practice.

5. Discussion

It is common in Norwegian schools for both students and teachers to re-teach a lesson to another class, although it would often happen back-to-back with little or no time for reflection, improvement and re-planning. The LS cycle in the present study involved repeating the lesson after both the students and mentors had time to reflect on the first lesson in between the two lessons, with the help of the LS guide. The parties were thereby able to take a critical stance to the lesson in the mid-supervision session. The LS cycle appeared to influence the teaching of the 2nd grade EFL lesson in two major ways: firstly, the activities in the lesson and how they were approached and timed, especially the role of questions and the amount of target language use in connection with reading the picture book; and secondly, the attitudes of the students, and especially those of the mentors, to the content and activities in the lesson.

Whereas the mentors were initially highly *instrumental* in their approach to the lesson, focussing on, for example, the need to provide the learners with considerable support to understand the picture book through translation from L2 to L1 and the pre-teaching of key items of vocabulary, the students were in contrast more *idealistic*. They believed in the educational potential of using a picture book with the 2nd grade EFL learners (cf. Birketveit 2013), whom they assumed would understand the story because of the pictures, realia and use of voice and gestures.

In Lesson 1 the students diverged in several respects from the way they had planned the lesson. They seemed to be influenced by the mentors' practical concerns, which was understandable given the power relationship between mentors and students. They scaffolded too much by asking frequent recast questions in the L1 and an excessive number of questions, which resulted in a fragmented and relatively lengthy reading experience for the pupils.

Lesson 2 was arguably superior to the first because the reading was less fragmented, i.e. there were fewer questions. There was much less use of the L1 and therefore more natural exposure to the target language (cf. Krashen, 1982; 2004). There was also a finer balance between pre-reading activities, the reading of the story itself, and post-reading activities. It seemed that Lesson 2 was taught more in line with the way Lesson 1 had been planned, but that the observations of and interviews with the research pupils had led to the realisation that the original plan was indeed on the whole better and that the so-called digressions from the plan did not contribute to more learning for the class as a whole.

The mentors had not previously used a picture book or other types of authentic literature in English with their 2nd graders, although they had done so in Norwegian. Although possessing the skills to read picture books in the L1, they had been reluctant to use them in English. However, after witnessing the two lessons, their attitude had changed. They had seen the pupils' positive reactions to both lessons. The students' knowledge of, belief in and determination to use an authentic picture book were also likely to have influenced them.

The students, in contrast, never wavered from their original plan to use a picture book. However, they realised that reading a picture book aloud in class requires certain skills that they had not been fully aware of, for example the need to dramatise more than read. They also realised that there are limitations to what a student or teacher can do or expect of themselves in one lesson; it was over-ambitious to use both realia and a picture book in the same lesson.

In short, the students and the mentors had different starting points, the former being idealistic and the latter instrumental or pragmatic. However, in the mid-supervision, the two perspectives seemed to converge; the mentors took on board the students' ideology of using authentic picture books in English, which they would now use themselves with their pupils in future. The students for their part understood the necessity of adopting a more instrumental approach to their teaching. In this way, LS became a developmental tool for both the mentors and the students.

The focus on the critical questions the students needed to address in the LS cycle, as well as the pupils' learning through the observations and interviews, seemed to elevate the discussion in the mid- and post-supervision sessions to a level beyond what one may have expected in a non-LS context. Reassessing and teaching the same lesson again is one of the defining characteristics of LS and the changes that occur in the second LS lesson compared to the first are central to its cyclical nature. It ensures that the focus is more on *learning* than teaching, but at the same time indirectly enhancing the quality of teaching (cf. Tsui and Law 2007).

6. Conclusion

This study aimed to explore the influence of LS on the teaching of a 2nd grade EFL picture book-based lesson during the teaching practice of a group of GLU students. Although the picture book was used as the primary material in each lesson, LS appeared to influence the ways its use changed in the second lesson, and the timing of activities. It also appeared to influence the attitudes of both the mentors and students to using picture books with young EFL learners. Although LS has rarely been used in foreign language teaching, this study has shown that it has the potential to have a positive influence on teaching and learning in foreign language teacher education.

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