

CHARACTER EDUCATION THROUGH POETRY

by

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*This thesis is dedicated to my three children,  
Búi, Karin and Tristan Gjúki,  
who are my greatest teachers*

## ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the possibility of running a poetry-based project, designed to cultivate virtue, in an Icelandic upper secondary-school context, through a PhD research project undertaken at the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtue (2017-2022).

The execution of this PhD project was divided into two stages. Stage 1 consisted in a pilot project (carried out in Autumn 2018). Stage 2 was further divided into 2 sub-stages: Stage 2A and Stage 2B. Stage 2A (completed during the academic year 2018-2019) was about the defining of background knowledge, mapping of the field and preparing teachers. Stage 2B (carried out in Spring 2019) involved an intervention, its monitoring and evaluation (completed in Summer 2020). There are three main outcomes that emerge from the findings, the first two of which functioned as a backward loop at the design stage, in that a new sub-stage was added to Stage 2 once it became clear that the execution of the programme did not live up to expectations:

- The shortcomings of the execution of the pilot project
- The shortcomings of the learning material created for and used during the pilot project
- The strengths of the learning materials and the project in spite of, and in light of, its shortcomings

The outcomes that emerge from the finding can be can be categorised with respect to four overarching themes that identify the role and possibilities for utilising poetry for character education in the Icelandic school system. These four themes are Freedom, Creativity, Time, and Wonderment. In a practical sense, the Icelandic curriculum poses some obstacles, but can also be seen as offering opportunities. The conclusion is that there needs to be a more thorough explanation of the role of character education when running a poetry programme in the context of the Icelandic language subject within Icelandic schools. This finding carries general implications for the use of poetry to stimulate virtues in other countries as well, especially when this is done within subjects that are not pre-designed or designated as ‘character-educational’ historically.

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1 The Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods Design with Multiple Stages of the Present Research ..... 82

Figure 2 Mixed Methods Design Matrix ..... 93

Figure 3 Comparison Between Pilot and Exp. Group ..... 138

Figure 4 Representation of Three Levels of Coding Themes..... 142

Figure 5 Visual Map of the Thematic Analysis of the Data ..... 143

## LIST OF TABLES

<i>Table 1 The Building Blocks of Character</i> .....	39
<i>Table 2 Components of Virtue</i> .....	40
<i>Table 3 The Two Stages of the Present Research</i> .....	80
<i>Table 4 The Philosophical Underpinnings for the Present Research</i> .....	86
<i>Table 5 The Multitude Methods Used in the Present Research</i> .....	91
<i>Table 6 Design of Present Research (QUAN→QUAL → quan→QUAL→QUAL)</i> .....	94
<i>Table 7 Sequence of the Lesson Plans</i> .....	100
<i>Table 8 Sub-Stages of Stage 2</i> .....	101
<i>Table 9 The Arrangement of the Scoring Sheet</i> .....	104
<i>Table 10 The Rules of the Evaluative Factors</i> .....	105
<i>Table 11 The Coding Points for the Evaluative Factors</i> .....	106
<i>Table 12 Stage 2A Intervention Design</i> .....	109
<i>Table 13 Stage 2A Intervention Design</i> .....	114
<i>Table 14 Participants' Status &amp; Present Role</i> .....	116
<i>Table 15 Timeline of the Implementation of the Pilot</i> .....	125
<i>Table 16 Pilot Descriptive Statistics Distribution of Data</i> .....	129
<i>Table 17 Timeline for the Implementation of the Intervention</i> .....	132
<i>Table 18 Intervention Descriptive Statistics Total Scores</i> .....	135
<i>Table 19 1<sup>st</sup> Test Descriptive Statistics Distribution of Data</i> .....	136
<i>Table 20 2<sup>nd</sup> Test Descriptive Statistics Distribution of Data</i> .....	136
<i>Table 21 Description of Each Level of the Coded Themes</i> .....	143
<i>Table 22 Stage 1 Comparison of Difference in Score for the Evaluative Factors Between the Pre- and Post-Questionnaires</i> .....	183

## LIST OF DEFINITIONS/ABBREVIATIONS

ADHD	Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
DBS	Disclosure & Barring Service
FIFA	Fédération Internationale de Football Association
KIPP	Knowledge is Power Program
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PI	Philosophical Investigations (by Ludwig Wittgenstein)
PISA	Program for International Student Assessment
QUAL	Qualitative
QUAN	Quantitative
RQ	Research Question
SEL	Social and Emotional Learning
ZETTEL	A collection of fragments made by Wittgenstein, published by his literary executors under the title Zettel

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	3
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	4
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS .....	5
LIST OF TABLES .....	6
LIST OF DEFINITIONS/ABBREVIATIONS .....	7
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	8
CHAPTER 1: Introduction .....	13
CHAPTER 2: Background and Critical Literature Review .....	18
2.1 Background.....	18
2.1.1 Character Education .....	19
2.1.1.1 What is Character? .....	19
2.1.1.2 What is Virtue? .....	22
2.1.1.3 What is Character Education?.....	24
2.1.1.4 Justification for Using Poetry to Develop Virtue .....	25
2.1.1.4.1 The Nature of Poetics and Poetry .....	26
2.1.1.4.2 The Intrinsic Link Between Poetry and Virtue, Knowledge and Reasoning.....	27
2.1.1.4.3 Overview of Poetic Inquiry.....	30
2.1.1.4.3.1 What is Poetic Inquiry? .....	31
2.1.1.4.3.2 Wittgenstein’s Method and Use of Language .....	33
2.1.1.4.3.3 The Relation of Language and the Arts .....	36
2.1.1.4.3.4 The Relation of Language and Poetry .....	37
2.1.1.4.3.5 The Building Blocks of Character and Components of Virtue .....	39
2.1.1.4.3.6 Poetic inquiry as a Means of Self-cultivation .....	41
2.1.1.4.3.7 Concluding Remarks on Poetic Inquiry .....	52
2.1.1.4.4 Recent Concerns About Character and Virtue as Appropriate Content for Learning Materials .....	54
2.1.2 Thematic Theoretical Overview .....	56
2.1.2.1 Sanderse on Character Education and its Predecessors .....	56
2.1.2.2 Returning to Wittgenstein .....	62
2.1.2.3 Three Central Concepts: A Virtue and Two Emotions .....	63
2.1.3 Overview of Emotions (SEL), Virtues and Education .....	65
2.1.3.1 The Philosophy of Emotions .....	66
2.1.3.2 The Educational Cultivation of Moral Virtue, Feeling and Emotion .....	67
2.1.3.3 The Relevance of Emotions.....	69

2.1.3.4 John Macmurray .....	70
2.1.4 Scott Seider's <i>Character Compass</i> .....	
2.1.4.1 Philosophy.....	73
2.1.4.2 Approach to Theory Development.....	75
2.1.4.3 Seider's Methodological Choice.....	75
2.1.4.4 Strategy.....	76
2.1.4.5 Time Horizon.....	77
2.1.4.6 Techniques and Procedures.....	77
2.1.4.7 Bohlin's Teaching Character Education through Literature .....	78
2.1.4.8 Concluding Remarks on Seider's Character Compass .....	78
2.1.5 Main Lesson Learned from Chapter 2.....	79
CHAPTER 3: Methodology.....	80
3.1 Overview of the Research Questions.....	81
3.2 The Pilot and Main Study Stages.....	81
3.3 Philosophies and Methodological Approach.....	83
3.3.1 Philosophical Underpinnings for the Research Design.....	85
3.4 Research Design.....	88
3.4.1 The Mixed Methods of the Present Research.....	89
3.4.2 Stage 1 Methods .....	94
3.4.2.1 Stage 1 Instruments & Data Collection .....	94
Stage 1 Quantitative Measurement Tools .....	96
Stage 1 Qualitative Measurement Tools.....	97
Stage 1 Data Analysis .....	98
3.4.2.2 Stage 1 Intervention Design.....	98
3.4.2.3 Stage 1 Sampling.....	100
3.4.3 Stage 2 Methods.....	101
3.4.4 Stage 2A Methods.....	101
3.4.4.1 Stage 2A Instruments & Data Collection .....	102
Stage 2A Quantitative Measurement Tools .....	102
Stage 2A Qualitative Measurement Tools.....	106
Stage 2A Data Analysis.....	106
3.4.4.2 Stage 2A Intervention Design.....	107
3.4.4.3 Stage 2A Sampling .....	109
3.4.5 Stage 2B Methods.....	110
3.4.5.1 Stage 2B Instruments & Data Collection .....	111
Stage 2B Qualitative Measurement Tools.....	113
Stage 2B Data Analysis .....	113

3.4.5.2 Stage 2B Ethnographic Research Design.....	114
3.4.5.3 Stage 2B Sampling.....	115
3.4.6 Summary of the Methodology.....	
3.4.6.1 Stage 1 Summary.....	116
3.4.6.2 Stage 2A Summary.....	116
3.4.6.3 Stage 2B Summary.....	117
3.4.6.4 Overall Summary.....	118
3.5 Limitations.....	118
3.6 Remarks on an Alternative Methodological Option.....	120
3.7 Ethical Considerations.....	121
CHAPTER 4: Findings.....	123
4.1 Stage 1 Findings.....	123
4.1.1 Factors That Hindered the Implementation of the Pilot.....	124
4.1.2 Stage 1 Quantitative Findings.....	128
4.1.3 Stage 1 Qualitative Findings.....	129
4.2 Stage 2 Findings.....	131
4.2.1 Factors That Hindered the Implementation of the Intervention.....	131
4.2.2 Stage 2A Quantitative Findings.....	135
4.2.3 Stage 2A Qualitative Findings.....	138
4.2.4 Stage 2B Findings.....	140
4.2.4.1 Freedom.....	147
Freedom of the Teacher.....	149
Freedom of the Students.....	150
A Summary of the Overarching Theme: Freedom.....	150
4.2.4.2 Creativity.....	151
Creativity from the Students' Perspective.....	154
Creativity from the Teacher's Perspective.....	154
A summary of the Overarching Theme: Creativity.....	155
4.2.4.3 Time.....	157
Lesson.....	159
Poetry Learning Materials.....	160
Slow Learning.....	162
Icelandic Curriculum.....	163
A Summary of the Overarching Theme: Time.....	165
4.2.4.4 Wonderment.....	167
Passion for Learning.....	171
Vocation of Being a Role Model.....	172

A Summary of the Overarching Theme: Wonderment .....	174
A Summary of the Themes.....	175
4.2.5 Overall Findings from Chapter 4 .....	176
CHAPTER 5: Discussion .....	
5.1 Stage 1 Findings .....	179
5.1.1 Stage 1 Quantitative Findings .....	179
5.1.2 Stage 1 Qualitative Findings.....	181
5.2 Stage 2 Findings .....	183
5.2.2 Stage 2A Quantitative Findings .....	183
5.2.3 Stage 2A Qualitative Findings .....	185
5.2.4 Stage 2B Findings .....	185
5.2.4.1 Freedom.....	185
5.2.4.2 Creativity.....	190
5.2.4.3 Time .....	193
5.2.4.4 Wonderment .....	195
5.2.5 Conclusions.....	200
References .....	205
Appendices .....	213
Table of Contents of Appendices.....	213
A1. Questionnaire A (English) .....	215
A2. Questionnaire A (Icelandic) .....	222
B1. Questionnaire B (English) .....	228
B2. Questionnaire B (Icelandic).....	234
C1. Information Sheet for Teachers (English) .....	241
Character Education Through Poetry Overview.....	241
C2. Information Sheet for Teachers (Icelandic) .....	243
Ljóðlist og mannkostamenntun Yfirlit .....	243
D1. Information Sheet for Parents (English) .....	245
D2. Information Sheet for Parents (Icelandic) .....	248
E1. Parental Consent Opt Out Form Concerning Classroom Activities - Pilot Project (English) .....	250
E2. Parental Consent Opt Out Form Concerning Classroom Activities - Pilot Project (Icelandic).....	252
F1. Parental Consent Opt In Form Concerning Classroom Activities - Main Study (English).....	254
F2. Parental Consent Opt in Form Concerning Classroom Activities - Main Study (Icelandic) .....	256
G1. Measurement Tool (English) .....	258
G2. Measurement Tool (Icelandic).....	260
H. PhD Researcher's DBS Certificate .....	264

I1. Lesson Plans in English .....	266
Lesson Plans (1-6) .....	266
Lesson Plan #1 .....	266
Lesson Plan #2 .....	271
Lesson Plan #3 .....	
Lesson Plan #4 .....	287
Lesson Plan #5 .....	297
Lesson Plan #6 .....	300
I2. Lesson Plans in Icelandic .....	303
Kennsluáætlanir (1-6) .....	303
Kennsluáætlun #1 .....	303
Kennsluáætlun #2 .....	308
Kennsluáætlun #3 .....	314
Kennsluáætlun #4 .....	324
Kennsluáætlun #5 .....	335
Kennsluáætlun #6 .....	338
J1. Information Sheet for Teachers/Academics - Stage 2B Longitudinal Study (English) .....	341
J2. Information Sheet for Teachers/Academics - Stage 2B Longitudinal Study (Icelandic) .....	344
K1. Slides – Character Education/Poetry, Lesson #5 (English) .....	347
K2. Slides – Character Education/Poetry, Lesson #5 (Icelandic) .....	351
L1. Slides – Character Education/Poetry, Lesson #6 (English).....	355
L2. Slides – Character Education/Poetry, Lesson #6 (Icelandic).....	360

## CHAPTER 1: Introduction

*We know where the north  
is, the ice is an evening whiteness.  
We know this, we are what it leaves:  
the Pleistocene is our current scene, and  
what in sentiment we are, we  
are, the coast, a line or sequence, the  
cut back down, to the shore.*

– JH Prynne, *The White Stones* (1969)<sup>1</sup>

The object of this thesis is to develop a pedagogical strategy for teachers and parents to encourage virtuous living, through poetry. Through my experience as a teacher, I have come to the conclusion *and* the conviction that education is a matter of not only the teacher and the pupil, but that of the school, staff, parents, and of society as a whole. Nevertheless, there are horses for courses, as the proverb says, and there are certain things that teachers and parents can do without involving the whole educational system in radical curricular change. This thesis is about one such possible intervention which does not require a radical restructuring of curricular content and pedagogical focus, but simply requires doing things slightly differently.<sup>2</sup>

I have an educational background in creative writing and philosophy. I have worked as a teacher, mainly teaching philosophy, ethics, essay writing, and creative writing. My motivation for this thesis stems from my years of teaching, and the experience of sometimes ‘winning the pupils over’ and gaining their enthusiasm, witnessing them experiencing introspective moments when the topic of discussion suddenly becomes crystal clear, while sometimes getting nowhere when the pupils themselves do not understand the purpose of having to engage with an education or attend an educational institution. On the one hand, there are the students who do not feel that the idea (or purpose) of a school *ethos* speaks to their experience at all. On the other hand, students sometimes come up to you outside of class and passionately describe how you have inspired them and how well you understand young people. This is of course rewarding, but one is left with the feeling and the wish that all pupils should be given the chance to experience the passion and enthusiasm described in the latter example.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> From the poem *The Glacial Question, Unsolved* (Prynne, 1999, p. 66).

<sup>2</sup> What I want to emphasise here is that the contours of the intervention studied in this thesis could, in principle, be replicated by a teacher working within the standard curricular framework in Icelandic secondary schools. That said, as subsequent chapters in this thesis will demonstrate, my own aspirations for educational change (and those of some of my interviewees) are more radical.

<sup>3</sup> Damon (2008) and his colleagues surveyed over twelve hundred young people between the ages of 12 and 26, interviewing a quarter of them in depth. The findings (p. 60) revealed that only 20% of the interviewees were *fully purposeful*. Approximately 25% were *dreamers*, with purposeful aspirations but little effort to act upon

From the experience I have just described, in my relatively few years of teaching, I quickly changed the emphasis of my teaching, by focusing more on methods of thinking rather than on the taught subject. Perhaps reminiscent of the moral teachings of Socrates, I made a point of having the learning outcomes evolve and materialise from within the pupils' mindsets. When teaching philosophy and doing P4C (*philosophy for children*), I noticed that even when philosophising initially about metaphysical questions, once the group became comfortable with the philosophical method and way of thinking, quickly the questions at stake, which the group wanted to address, assumed an ethical nature. To put it in plain language: The path of a guided learning environment – also called the 'community of inquiry' in P4C – is apt to taking a turn towards moral engagement. Similarly, I noticed that when teaching non-philosophical topics, the same philosophical approach became an asset to the learning experience, regardless of what topic was being taught. Therefore, when teaching programming and discussing logic, the community of inquiry (which can include the teacher or moderator) benefits from putting the examples under question into a different context, for example by looking at moral dilemmas. When teaching creative writing, I found that not only were such examples beneficial, but also essential for a meaningful development of the pupils' characters and for individualised education.

It can be argued that, without realising it, I had already begun to practise the methods of character education. Therefore, when I first read about this approach, initially as a theoretical method in the writings of the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, by David Carr, Tom Harrison, and Kristján Kristjánsson, and then as a practised method by my colleague Ingimar Ó. Waage, at the lower secondary school, Garðaskóli, where I worked between 2016-2017, I finally felt I had identified my calling. It was in the same year that I began preparing my proposal for my research project in the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, at the University of Birmingham. Through practising character education in this context, I am concerned with the students, first, acquiring a knowing of what is good, and, by that, secondly, being given a means of bridging the gap between knowing the good and doing the good. I discuss this in more detail in Chapter 2 of this thesis.

Having published several books of poetry since the year 1995, in addition to selections and translations, my background in poetry provides me with a means of presenting and advocating the pedagogy of character education, and philosophical discussion, through the study and craft of poetry. By writing poetry oneself and studying other poets, one essentially learns

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them; about 30% were *dabblers*, who had tried to imbue their schoolwork and life with meaning in various ways but without ever finding their niche; and 25% were *disengaged*, showing virtually no purpose or meaning-searching aspirations.

something about oneself. If this is done within the remit of character education, the pupils arguably have at their disposal the means of acquiring practical wisdom (*phronesis*). Put in ordinary language, this means being able to make the right choices at the right time, for the right reasons, and in the appropriate proportion. To be more precise, the pupils learn through *connecting their reading, writing and contemplation of poetry with certain virtue components*<sup>4</sup> how the application, experience, and relevance of virtues motivates one to display these virtues. Moreover, virtue practice is a way of becoming who one wants to be. Here, we can speak of a progression towards such aspirations. Therein lies meaning, the pupil's life lesson, a project which might be described in terms of a searching for the truth about one's life (in the sense imparted to that notion in Damon's 2008 work on student purpose and lack thereof).

An example of this is a pupil I taught philosophy in junior college, during the spring semester of 2012. This pupil defined himself as an atheist, and we (the class) had been exploring the human need for faith, in a broad sense. When discussing the concept of faith with students, one often finds it gets confused with that of religion. The learning materials I had produced were aimed at showing that the two, although in some respects linked, are separate entities. The aforementioned student had beforehand declared that he was irreligious, and, therefore, did not have faith. After going through the distinction between the two concepts, however, he affirmed – but this time with justified conviction – that he indeed did not have faith. Although, I myself at the time took myself to having faith of an irreligious sort, I was very pleased that he was able to determine his *own* take on the matter.

A key factor here is that whatever transformation takes place should ideally be due to their own investigation, and the result of their independent and critical thinking.<sup>5</sup> Character education through poetry will, in my view, enable pupils to strengthen their empathy, creativity, curiosity, and critical thinking. Living a good life requires an individual to ask of oneself: 'Who am I?', 'What do I wish for myself and others?', 'What is my goal in life?' and 'How will I determine *the journey* towards that goal?' Poetry is particularly apt for enabling pupils to grapple with those questions and generate compelling answers to them because poetry induces the imagination which, in turn, awakens the moral imagination and fosters

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<sup>4</sup> The Jubilee Centre's Componential View of Virtue: The various virtues have been analysed in terms of seven components: virtue perception, virtue knowledge and understanding, virtue emotion, virtue identity, virtue motivation and virtue reasoning – of which virtue perception, virtue knowledge and understanding, and virtue reasoning combined constitute *virtue literacy*, which then leads to *virtue action and practice* (Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, 2017a). I will relate back to this discussion point, while elaborating further, in Sub-Section 2.1.1.4.3.5.

<sup>5</sup> Interestingly, this claim can be backed up with equal strength and fervour either by drawing on Aristotle's concept of *phronesis* or on Enlightenment accounts of the value of personal autonomy and authenticity.

ethical reflection (Guttesen, 2017). In this way, poetry provides a means of recognising, investigating, and being propelled by one's emotions. Although, having been to some extent discarded by some philosophers as an unimportant product (or trivial matter) of subjectivity, in this thesis I wish to affirm the relevant and essential act of understanding and incorporating one's *emotions* into reflection. Poetry, perhaps more than any other art form, gives a measure of achieving this objective. The method of philosophical thinking is a vital ingredient in that process.

The aim of this project is, as stated at the beginning, to investigate how character education can be advanced through poetry. The central question is that of how poetry can help to create a practical and fruitful environment for a community of inquiry, such as a class in a secondary school, to tackle moral questions and subjects, and moreover to stimulate moral discussion in a group. This has previously been done through narrative literature, i.e. stories and narratives (Carr and Harrison, 2015), but the novelty of this project lies in using poetry as its starting point, which has rarely been done in the past (although some notable exceptions will be mentioned in Chapter 2). In this respect, a further question that this project addresses is: what does poetry bring to the table that literature in the wider sense does not? The answer, to be elaborated upon in what follows, is: *it adds to the spectrum and brings a new perspective* for character education. Drawing further on that metaphor, if we take character education to be a visible colour spectrum, not only does poetry add to the spectrum, *but* it takes the learner beyond the readily observable ends *of it* – to an area of meanings that are layered, textured, or felt. I argue for this in more detail in Chapter 2.

The execution of the project was divided into two stages. Stage 1 consisted of a pilot project (carried out in Autumn 2018). Stage 2 was further divided into 2 sub-stages: Stage 2A and Stage 2B. Stage 2A (completed during the academic year 2018-2019) was about the defining of background knowledge, mapping of the field and preparing teachers. Stage 2B (carried out in Spring 2019) involved an intervention, its monitoring, and evaluation (completed in Summer 2020).

The final lines of the poem by J. H. Prynne, cited at the outset, can be *interpreted* as drawing a dividing line between the ice age and the present day. The setting is not an environment that is limited to human occupancy, yet it is an environment that provides the setting for human flourishing. The poem mediates tensions between different eras in history, as well as illustrating the fluctuation of time, both as a tangible and intangible entity. *The human condition is framed in terms of a man-made life-world vis-à-vis the appreciation of nature which, as if in reflection of its beauty, makes us more kind and generous.* We yearn for

harmony in our surroundings and in each other, not only to exist but to thrive. However, when it comes to living a good life, it seems that such an endeavour requires *a knowing*, a self-realisation and self-overcoming. This thesis provides a way of pursuing that project and, in that respect, like in Prynne's poem, we are now facing a new era: an era of character cultivation and, hopefully, a fertile and enriching one.

This thesis addresses one key research question, which is connected to two separate sub-research questions.

*Main-RQ: Is it possible to use poetry to cultivate virtue, in an Icelandic secondary-school context?*

This will be answered through the two sub-RQs.

The 1st Sub-RQ concerns the creation of the intervention:

*Can poetry be used to cultivate virtue?*

The 2nd Sub-RQ concerns the implementation of the intervention:

*What are the barriers and enablers to running a poetry programme, designed to cultivate virtue, in all (or many) secondary schools in Iceland?*

The thesis follows a standard roadmap for a research thesis of this sort. Chapter 2 explores the background and offers a critical literature review. Chapter 3 presents the methods employed and Chapter 4 the main findings. Chapter 5 offers a critical discussion of the findings, which relates back to the literature canvassed in Chapter 2, concluding with some final remarks and ideas about further studies.

The Appendices at the end of the thesis contain the teaching materials used and the pre-and-post-tests both in the Icelandic version used and in English translations. Much more so than in many standard research thesis about character education, these materials form an inseparable part of the content of my thesis.

## CHAPTER 2: Background and Critical Literature Review

### 2.1 Background

The aim of this background chapter is to set the scene for the subsequent discussion, of a poetry intervention to stimulate the cultivation of character, by offering an overview of the relevant literature. This is a tall order for at least two reasons; first, because so many literatures could be brought to bear on the topic at hand, and, second, because of the heterogeneity and conceptual disarray in the field of what could be broadly conceived of as moral education. Concerning the first reason, I have decided to ground the thesis in Aristotelian virtue theory and tailor it to the assumptions and methods of Aristotelian Character Education. My reasons for choosing the Aristotelian option will manifest themselves gradually in this background section.

That said, it would not have been unreasonable to set out to achieve the objectives of this thesis through some other moral philosophies or educational theories. However, I consider many of these approaches to suffer from fundamental limitations, the main one being that they try to accommodate their strategies too cavalierly to the modern-day educational system rather than challenging it, as I will set out to do in this project.<sup>6</sup> The objectives of this thesis could have been sought through some non-Aristotelian forms of character education, for example Confucian ones which are undergoing a revival in Asia. Although, to some extent, this would have involved posing challenges to the current educational system in the West, many non-Aristotelian forms of character education, as practised for example in Asia and the USA, have been criticised for maintaining the educational status quo through a conservative focus (Kohn, 1997).<sup>7</sup>

Seemingly, almost everything flows one way nowadays in educational discourse: namely, down an instrumentalist route where the only ‘currency’ that the school system produces is measured by test outcomes. Even some non-Aristotelian Character Educational methods, although often stating otherwise, seem to point in this very direction (Kohn, 1997; Tough, 2014; Duckworth, 2016).

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<sup>6</sup> Yet recall my caveat in Footnote 2, Chapter 1. There are two ways to interpret the curricular assumptions underpinning this study: a radical and a more modest one. I leave it to readers to decide which one they favour.

<sup>7</sup> I discuss an example of recent UK criticisms of the sort of character education practised in the Jubilee Centre as being of the conservative and naively individualist kind also (Jerome and Kisby, 2019) in Section 2.1.1.4.4, below. As shown by Kristjánsson (2020), those criticisms seem to completely elide the Aristotelian heritage of the Jubilee Centre’s version of character education. In any case, I hope readers will agree that there is no hint in the current thesis of wanting to use my poetry intervention to peddle a conservative agenda.

In this background section, I will not be reviewing the literature as a neutral observer but, on the contrary, I will be striving to make critical comments throughout, so as to make an original contribution to the theoretical literature. I will revisit some of this literature in Chapter 5, when I compare my findings to the existing body of knowledge.

### 2.1.1 Character Education

In this section I offer characterisations of some of the key background concepts that inform my study, namely by answering briefly the following questions: ‘What is Character?’, ‘What is Virtue?’, and ‘What is Character Education?’ Some of this discussion may seem fairly elementary, but it is required for readers without any ready-made neo-Aristotelian philosophy in their pockets. To conclude this section, I offer a justification of using poetry to develop virtue.

#### 2.1.1.1 What is Character?

This thesis is committed to some of the core assumptions, specifications, and strategies of neo-Aristotelian Character Education:<sup>8</sup> Rather than merely being, as all forms of character education, about education, Aristotelian Character Education is meant to represent and crystallise what an understanding of moral philosophy or the study of moral philosophy is all about (Kristjánsson, 2015, p. 32). In adopting an Aristotelian framework, I make two important choices: one has to do with prioritising it over two theoretical alternatives in classical Western philosophy, and the other with considering it preferable, for present purposes at least, to two other virtue-based approaches.

The first moral alternatives to an Aristotelian approach that are likely to spring to mind are deontology and utilitarianism. In the former, the focus of moral decision-making is on (universalisable) rules, duties, and codes. It is very much a top-down way of thinking. Because of its rigid, formalistic structure, it may create surroundings in which herd mentality and the rush to judgement are likely to thrive. If education is thought of as an attempt to prepare pupils in a sustainable way for an unknown future and roles that are yet to be determined, character traits such as critical and independent thinking are vital for preparing

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<sup>8</sup> For the sake of brevity, I refer to this approach in what follows simply as ‘Aristotelian’. To be precise, however, it is ‘neo-Aristotelian’ in the sense of having updated many of Aristotle’s own empirical assumptions with findings from contemporary psychology in line with Aristotle’s own naturalistic method, according to which all ethical inquiry is answerable to empirical findings and needs constant updating.

children for a flourishing future.<sup>9</sup> In utilitarianism, decision-making is tied to the principle of seeking to maximise general happiness. However, the principle itself is vague. Briefly contemplating it would soon reveal that it does not provide any answers at all. It only shows why certain dilemmas are dilemmas, and, as such, are hard to address. This principle certainly neither stimulates creativity, curiosity, nor independent thinking.<sup>10</sup>

The second set of alternatives to an Aristotelian approach that are likely to spring to mind as being virtue-based (and hence overcoming some of the shortcomings of deontology and utilitarianism), are Confucianism and Care Ethics. Confucianism celebrates self-realisation, self-control, and respect for tradition/ritual. In many ways, these are positive and desirable qualities. From an educational point of view, one might be inclined to suggest that they do not embrace the same sustainable critical vision as in Aristotelian Character Education. However, Confucianism has been central to Chinese self-cultivation for 2000 years and has been much more applied in that sphere than that of Aristotelian philosophy (Sigurðsson, 2015, pp. 100-118). Aristotelianism and Confucianism coincide to a large degree on various philosophical fundamentals (Yu, 2007). Yet Confucianism views righteousness, obedience, self-restraint, and loyalty as sorts of guiding virtues (Wong, 2017). Viewed through Western lenses, some of these are likely to be considered morally counter-productive, as blind respect for hierarchy is a sure way of suppressing individuality. In an environment that suppresses autonomy (which is something that has occurred throughout history), there is a risk of group mentality. Therefore, if in an educational framework, codifiable roles and ‘rituals’ are prescribed, pupils will never be allowed to flourish, as the educational institution is then merely a system that forces everyone into their mould. However, within the philosophical interpretations of Confucianism these counter-productive views have been criticised. There is an active, critical element at play in current Confucian philosophy, ascribed as a self-reflexive dimension akin to a ‘transformative self-critical attitude’ that emphasises critical thinking (Sigurðsson, 2020, p. 34) as a pedagogical process. Confucianism takes education to be a lifelong task. It ‘focuses on the development of a certain mode of living to which we should stick as we (are supposed to) continue to learn until the end of our days [and the aforementioned] ‘transformative self-critical attitude’ [...] enables us to adapt to and respond appropriately and with humility to our social and natural environment’ (Sigurðsson, 2017, p. 144). Sigurðsson’s apt remarks aside, there are clearly concepts within Confucian ethics that would resonate less

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<sup>9</sup> Needless to say, the prototypical deontological thinker, Kant, emphasised those very qualities. My above brief critical comments are not directed at him, but rather at the way deontological principles have become formalised and codified in moral education and professional ethics since Kohlbergian times.

<sup>10</sup> As with Kant (see previous footnote), this criticism may seem unfair when directed at Mill’s version of utilitarianism. Again, my objection is lodged more at the way utilitarianism has become operationalised in professional ethics and public (cost-benefit-analysis driven) decision-making.

well with Western students than some of the corresponding Aristotelian ones (compare e.g. ‘respect for rituals’ with ‘moral habituation’).

Care Ethics, just like Confucianism, has some things in common with Aristotelian Character Education, but as an educational method it resonates better with applied ethics in areas such as health-care where care and compassion constitute, for contextual reasons, clear master virtues, rather than in the field of general school-based moral education.

A standard definition of character is: ‘The subset of personality traits that are morally evaluable and educable, and are considered to provide the person with moral worth’ (Kristjánsson, 2015, p. 19). The most prominent of those are our virtues and vices. ‘Good character’ would, therefore, be an umbrella term for a person’s set of virtues. ‘Good character is about knowing the good, loving the good, and doing the good’ (Ryan and Bohlin, 1999, p. 5) and this involves developing moral feelings and emotions and being able to empathise with others (Ryan and Bohlin, 1999, p. 6).

Character is deeper than appearance and reputation and constitutes more than our personality of temperament. [... It is] something we build, something we can call our own because we are free to modify our habits and have the power to choose our attitude and dispositions. But this building project needs a guiding vision – a clear telos to orient its sound development. (Bohlin, 2005, p. 182)

To conclude this Sub-Section, first I will pose the question, regarding the definition of character, whether Bohlin is offering the same conceptualisation as Kristjánsson. The purpose of this is to discover what the concept in question means, and how it relates to this thesis. Similarly, at the close of the two subsequent Sub-Sections, I propose to conceptualise the object of each of the two Sub-Sections, and show how the concepts in question relate to the present project.

In the descriptions above, while Kristjánsson defines character as the subset of personality traits that have moral worth, Bohlin sees *character* as what makes us who we are. In other words, who we are is *shown* by our character, and at the same time, this can be *shaped*. It would appear that Bohlin is describing *character* as what makes us who we are developmentally. The purpose of Bohlin’s work is to provide learning materials and a method of teaching these to young people, and therefore the definition she gives of *character* is helpful for this purpose. By giving a definition that has a moral reference, Kristjánsson is offering a more personality-psychologically oriented view of the concept. Although, the purpose of the present project is somewhat identical to that of Bohlin’s work (namely educational), and while it *is* helpful to understand and make use of Bohlin’s application of the developmental concept of character (and, therefore, both of these definitions are useful to this

project), taking Kristjánsson's understanding on board offers more opportunities (and wider applications) for comparing the findings of this project with that of others, as most of the current characterological literature is rooted in psychological paradigms (Fowers et al., 2021). A neo-Aristotelian understanding of *character* supports the philosophical assumptions of this research and connects it to the mainstream literature outside of education. These assumptions are discussed in more detail in Section 3.3, below. Here, it suffices to state that *character* will, for present purposes, be 'understood to comprise a certain subset of more general personality traits: namely, that part of personality which is reason-responsive, morally evaluable, and educable' (Watts and Kristjánsson, 2022).

Although I believe that the final definition given by Watts and Kristjánsson (2022) would be endorsed by Bohlin also, it is important to note the different foci of Bohlin's and Kristjánsson's original definitions, as they may be seen to be representative of two strands within character development that are not always in full harmony: a personality-psychology strand, which looks at personal traits at time  $t$ , and a developmental strand which focuses on on the development of character from time  $t$  to  $t_1$ .

#### 2.1.1.2 What is Virtue?

Virtue can be described as the motor behind our actions. Let us first take into consideration the concept of flourishing, which amounts to living a good life and, thus, constitutes

an ongoing activity, and such an activity comprises, most crucially, the realisation of specifically human excellences. We call those excellences virtues, and they are typically considered necessary conditions of flourishing (Kristjánsson, 2015, p. 14).

Virtue is, therefore, a trait of excellence encompassing a 'moral quality that is considered desirable or right' (Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, 2016). The contrary trait, as found in 'bad character', is called vice. In the context of this thesis, virtues are understood in Aristotelian terms. They are 'character traits' that guide our actions in morally commendable ways. It is already clear that the definitions that have been put forth are interwoven. Virtues are part of one's character, i.e. one's character inheres in the virtues one possesses.

Virtue contributes to one's moral connoisseurship of life – living excellently. Virtues are dispositions rooted in the ability to make good choices (Aristotle, 1992, II.1 1103a25), and learning to choose well among a range of options is essential to moral growth (Bohlin, 2005, p. 180).

Some scholars distinguish between two types of virtues, intellectual and moral, placing practical wisdom in the former category and e.g. justice or fortitude in the latter (Bohlin,

2005, p 180). A recent division of the virtues distinguishes four types: civic, intellectual, performance, and moral virtues (Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, 2017a). ‘Moral virtue disposes a person to practical wisdom’ (Bohlin, 2005, p 181) and vice versa, once the person has advanced from an earlier stage of habituated virtue. The challenge of attaining moral virtue ‘lies in the habitually choosing “what is best and right”’ (Bohlin, 2005, p 181). Moral virtues ‘lie between two extremes’, those of excess and deficiency, guiding ‘our appetites and desires by directing them toward the person’s overall good’ (Bohlin, 2005, p 181).

In simple terms, Aristotle sees the proper function (gr. *ergon*) of a human being as being virtuous, in much the same way that a knife’s proper function is to cut and a church bell’s is to ring. If we picture the soul of a human being as an instrument, a virtuous person has a well-tuned soul, and, likewise, a well-tuned society is comprised of virtuous beings. However, Aristotelian Character Education does not see the virtues of an institution, such as a school, or society at large, as simply being reducible to the virtues of individuals who comprise those larger entities, as those entities also have functions of their own that can be performed well or badly. To conclude this Sub-Section I will look more closely at the concept of virtue and how it relates to my project.

Bohlin’s description of *virtue* (and *moral virtue*) is Aristotelian (Bohlin, 2005, pp. 180-181). This is the same understanding as that of the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtue, and also an understanding drawn upon in the present project:

Virtues are here taken to be settled (stable and consistent) traits of character, concerned with praiseworthy conduct in specific (significant and distinguishable) spheres of human life. (Watts and Kristjánsson, 2022)

Moral virtue ‘enables a person to act in accordance with sound judgment and fosters the desire to know what is good’ (Bohlin, 2005, p. 181). This understanding of *moral virtue* is relevant to the present project, because ‘practical wisdom’ is making the right choice, at the right moment, and for the right reason (I will elaborate further on this in Sub-Section 4.2.4.1 Freedom: A Summary of the Overarching Theme: Freedom, below). As one of the means of evaluating the impact of this project is measuring virtue literacy, it is important that ‘virtue’ in general and ‘virtue literacy’ in particular are given operationalisable definitions (to be introduced in Sub-Section 3.4.2.1 Stage 1 Instruments & Data Collection: Stage 1 Quantitative Measurement Tools and elaborated further in Sub-Section 3.4.4.1 Stage 2A Instruments & Data Collection: Stage 2A Quantitative Measurement Tools, below) for achieving this objective. Watts and Kristjánsson (2022) point out that the inability to successfully measure moral virtue has been considered a weakness in character education.

While this project attempts to make a contribution towards a solution to this problem, it also aims to analyse why this is, and may remain, a problem.

In the following Sub-Section, I will take a closer look at the concept of *character education*.

### 2.1.1.3 What is Character Education?

The ultimate aim of character education is flourishing (Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, 2017a).<sup>11</sup> The working definition of character in this thesis is taken from the ‘Framework for Character Education in Schools,’ published by the Jubilee Centre in June 2017. After having defined character as ‘a set of dispositions that produce specific moral emotions, inform motivation and guide conduct’, it ‘includes all explicit and implicit educational activities that help young people develop positive personal strengths called virtues’ (Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, 2017a).

Character education is more than just a subject. It has a place in the culture and functions of families, classrooms, schools and other institutions. Character education is about helping students grasp what is ethically important in situations and how to act for the right reasons, such that they become more autonomous and reflective in the practice of virtue [...] The ultimate aim of character education is not only to make individuals better persons but to create the social and institutional conditions within which all human beings can flourish. Social and institutional conditions of this kind require that all members of the society contribute in ways that collectively provide everyone with opportunities to live well. (Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, 2017a)

When discussing the purposes of education, Carr and Harrison distinguish between narrower and broader conceptions of the aims of schooling (Carr and Harrison, 2015, p 9). Here, the narrower conceptions touch on the formal provision of useful skills of numeracy, literacy, and traditional subject learning (Carr and Harrison, 2015, p. 9). The broader educational context refers to the prioritisation of moral education and character building above exam results (Carr and Harrison, 2015, pp. 21-22), in contrast to the carrot-and-stick method, where the student may become temporarily more obedient because they want the reward, but the attention given to the award leads to focus being taken away from the enjoyment and interest in the task at hand. Thus, the student becomes less aware of the intrinsic motivation that stems from the learning process (Moneta, 2004). Carr and Harrison argue that the best way to enforce inner motivations is through character education. As in the two preceding Sub-Sections, I will now assess what this concept means and how it relates to my project. Making a comparison with Bohlin, as was done before in the discussion of the definitions of the concepts of *character*

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<sup>11</sup> It is clear that, for Aristotle, flourishing rather than virtue as such is the ungrounded ground of all human activity, the *summum bonum*. That insight is often lost in versions of character education that are not directly inspired by Aristotle’s teachings.

and *virtue*, will help frame the use and relevance of this concept within the scope of the present project. Bohlin's work aims to 'explore moral motivations—that is, how characters' moral agency is *schooled* by their circumstances, relationships, attitudes, choices, and commitments' (Bohlin, 2005, p. 20). Throughout the book, and as mentioned in the Acknowledgments and Introduction, it is clear that she is inspired by James Arthur (Bohlin, 2005, p. vii, 1 & 2), a pioneer for character education in the UK, and Thomas Lickona (Bohlin, 2005, p. vii), who has been influential in terms of the psychological elements of this approach (although his approach to character is more conservative than that adopted by the Jubilee Centre). In terms of arriving at a definition of *character education*, essentially what Kristjánsson and Bohlin are saying is the same (which was not the case for the concept of character). In terms of execution and objectives, *character education* is an applied virtue ethics for the classroom or, in other words, the educational incarnation of virtue ethics. It is the education of virtues, and in the first instance a striving towards (the acquiring of) virtue literacy as a meaningful compass in the lives of young people.

According to virtue ethics, an action is right not because it can be universalized in light of a rationalist principle (as in Kantianism) or because it makes the greatest number of people happy (as in utilitarianism), but because it enhances virtue and contributes to a flourishing (eudaimonic) life. (Watts and Kristjánsson, 2022)

And to that effect, it is a meaningful and important task to explore its impact and possibilities within the practice of teaching poetry.

In the next Sub-Sections, I will argue for the use of poetry to cultivate value.

#### *2.1.1.4 Justification for Using Poetry to Develop Virtue*

In the following sub-sections, I provide justifications for using poetry to cultivate virtue.

Drawing specifically on Karen Bohlin and David Carr, I base this justification on arguments about the characterological value of literature that predate the work of the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtue and the *Laxdaela Saga* project in Iceland.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, I provide an insight into poetic inquiry, which is a qualitative method used for incorporating poetry with research. To conclude, I examine recent criticism of the work of the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtue, and a relevant response to this criticism.

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<sup>12</sup> As will become clear in what follows, I used precedents set by the Jubilee Centre (esp. through its *Knightly Virtues* project) and the *Laxdaela Saga* project in Iceland when designing my methodology (cf. Section 3.4.1). However, the idea was never to simply replicate these projects or necessarily take on board all their philosophical and methodological assumptions.

#### 2.1.1.4.1 The Nature of Poetics and Poetry

In his article ‘On the contribution of literature and the arts to the educational cultivation of moral virtue, feeling and emotion’, David Carr argues ‘that education is a matter of broad cultural initiation rather than narrow academic or vocational training; [...] that any education so conceived would have a key concern with the moral dimensions of personal formation; [...] that emotional growth is an important part of such moral formation; and [...] that literature and other arts have an important part to play in such emotional education’ (Carr, 2005, p. 137). In other words, all education is concerned with individual and emotional growth as part of personal formation which plays a significant part in such education. Subsequently, Carr argues that poetry is the most ideal art form for achieving this end. To that note, he suggests that poetry not only assists ‘human cognitive evaluation or appraisal of feeling and emotion, but also [shapes] the quality of experienced feeling’ (Carr, 2005, p. 149). Furthermore, Carr points out that one of the key functions of poetry, as is shown in the works of many English romantic poets, can be seen as providing a channel for individual emotional expression through poetic expression (Carr, 2005, p. 149). I will discuss this article by Carr further in Section 2.1.3.2, below.

Adding to Carr’s insights is a notion of poetry acting as the glue in the learning process, when Karen Bohlin describes how as

teachers we are familiar with the power of pivotal moments in learning — when one student becomes enamored of Shakespeare or another begins writing original poetry for publication. These turning points excite new desires and sustain interest. (Bohlin, 2005, p. 14)

The goal of Bohlin’s book, *Teaching Character Education through Literature: Awakening the moral imagination in secondary classrooms*, is to provide a means to elevate these turning points into ‘*morally* pivotal points in the lives of our students’ (Bohlin, 2005, p. 14) and she likens this process to what Dante ‘refers to as a “*conversio*” a turning around or pivoting, which gives them an ability to to see more clearly where they are headed and why’ (Bohlin, 2005, p. 49). Here, by the pronoun ‘them’, Bohlin is referring to *characters* in literature but she points out that by ‘asking students to pay attention to how these morally pivotal points are brought about, they can begin to track the factors that help or hinder moral growth over time’ (Bohlin, 2005, p. 48). This is done by focussing the

students’ attention on identifying and evaluating

- a. the evolving aspirations (*tele*) of the characters;
- b. the internal and external factors that help to shape or inform these *tele*; and
- c. the changes in moral dispositions required to achieve them.

*Morally pivotal points* are transformational episodes, events, experiences, or encounters that compel individuals to reassess or refine their life goal(s) or path(s). (Bohlin, 2005, pp. 48-49)

I will discuss Bohlin's book further in Sections 2.1.4.3.3, 2.1.4.3.4, 2.1.5.4, 2.1.5.7, and 3.4.2.1, below.

Carr further observes that

Aristotle maintains that wisdom or insight afforded by poetry 'is something more philosophic and of graver import than history', since it is addressed to matters of 'universal' rather than particular human concern. (Carr, 2007, p. 385)

To this, he adds that the universals of poetry 'assist appreciation of many of the recurring moral themes and narratives of human experience' (Carr, 2007, p. 385). And, furthermore, that MacIntyre has emphasised that

the key Aristotelian point about the value of poetry is that it shares the essentially teleological or narrative form of history and of other less 'scientific' modes of literature: on this view, the key intellectual value of such literature and arts is precisely that they assist our understanding of human motive and conduct in ways that the physicalist explanations and generalities of natural science leave largely untouched. (Carr, 2007, p. 385)

The above points are testaments to the value and nature of poetics and poetry, and their use for developing moral virtue. While some of these points could be used to support the characterological value of any form of literature (and even all art), Carr and Bohlin both bring out the unique characteristics of poetry in eliciting emotions, linking universals to particulars, and evoking epiphanic character-forming experiences. In the following, I will investigate the link between poetry and virtue, knowledge and reasoning.

#### [2.1.1.4.2 The Intrinsic Link Between Poetry and Virtue, Knowledge and Reasoning](#)

In this section I foreground two components of virtue from the Framework for Aristotelian character education. First, virtue knowledge and understanding comprises 'understanding the meaning of the virtue term and why the virtue is important, individually and as part of a well-rounded, flourishing life of overall virtue, and being able to apply the virtue to episodes of one's own and others' lives' (Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, 2017a). Virtue reasoning comprises 'discernment and deliberative action about virtues, including in situations where virtues conflict or collide' (Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, 2017a). In my view, the appeal of, the interconnectedness and transformative nature of creativity makes poetry a primus motor of judgement and discernment about moral context and friction in human experiences and communication. The emotions guide our responses in all communication, and therefore act as what I, when quoting Bohlin on the previous page, called

a ‘glue’ in forming bonds and developing our character. However, they require a lot of creative thought and a metaphorical understanding of reality to achieve their developmental potential (Snævarr, 2010). Although neither Carr nor Bohlin explore the metaphorical and ontological dimensions of literature, other authors have, especially Martha Nussbaum.

Nussbaum argues that ‘a great deal of the ethical import of literature, indeed of the value of literature as a whole, depends on the part played by emotions in our moral lives’ (Asher, 2017, p. 10). She advances a ‘view of literary characters as a warehouse of alternative lives that deepen our moral understanding when sympathetically, but not uncritically, regarded’ (Asher, 2017, p. 11). According to Asher, the:

case for literature’s irreplaceable contribution to ethical knowledge rests crucially on the cognitive role of emotions and the necessary implication of appropriate emotional response in actions that would be considered fully moral. Nussbaum follows Aristotle in claiming that emotions may recognize and respond to ethically crucial elements of a situation in a way that can escape detached deliberation. (Asher, 2017, p. 11)

Properly tutored, emotions can have a finely grained perceptiveness ‘that embody some of our most deeply rooted views of what has importance’ (Nussbaum, 1990, p. 42; here, quoted from Asher, 2017, p. 11).

According to T. S. Eliot, what ‘every good poet starts from is his own emotion’ (Eliot, 1932, p. 117; here, quoted from Asher, 2017, p. 63). For Eliot, emotion denotes the inwardly turning while feelings refer to the outwardly directed (Asher, 2017, p. 63). And, as Asher puts it, the task of the poet is to transmute emotion into feelings (2017, p. 63).

Here, we are reminded of Wittgenstein’s description of the problem concerning the relation between the ‘inner’ and ‘outer’:

The characteristic sign of the mental seems to be that one has to guess at it in someone else using external clues and is only *acquainted* with it from one’s own case.

But when close reflection causes this view to go up in smoke, then what turns out is not that the inner is something outer, but that “outer” and “inner”<sup>[13]</sup> now no longer count as properties of evidence.[...] “Inner evidence” means nothing, and therefore neither does ‘outer evidence’. [...]

But indeed there is ‘evidence for the inner’ and ‘evidence for the outer’.  
(Wittgenstein, 2004, pp. 61e-62e)

Although the inner and outer are interrelated, they do not apparently automatically shed light on each other.

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<sup>13</sup> The editors, von Wright and Nyman, point out that these concepts can be taken as referring to ‘outward’ and ‘inward’ (Wittgenstein, 2004, p. 62e n. 1).

What I want to say is surely that the inner differs from the outer in its *logic*. And that logic does indeed explain the expression “the inner”, makes it understandable. (Wittgenstein, 2004, pp. 62e)

In keeping with Eliot’s allegory, Wittgenstein is showing how emotion (inner) functionally differs from feelings (outer).

“Of course actually all I see is the outer.”

But am I not really speaking only of the outer? I say, for instance, under what circumstances people say this or that. And I always mean *outer* circumstances. Therefore it is *as if* I wanted to explain (quasi-define) the inner through the outer. And yet it isn’t so. (Wittgenstein, 2004, pp. 63e)

So, how, according to Wittgenstein, are the inner and outer interrelated? How can the outer reveal the inner? Some interpreters, especially in British ordinary-language philosophy (such as Ryle), understood Wittgenstein to be completely rejecting the existence of an ‘inner life’ and subscribing to a form of behaviourism. But as we can see from his own words, he does not reject the ‘inner’ (such as emotions); he simply thinks that we can only access it through the ‘outer’ (e.g. expressions of feelings that are not unique to the individual).

“I see the outer and imagine an inner that fits it.” [...]

When mien, gesture and circumstances are unambiguous, then the inner seems to be the outer; it is only when we cannot read the outer that an inner seems to be hidden behind it. [...]

The inner is tied up with the outer not only empirically, but also logically.

The inner is tied up with the outer logically, and not just empirically. [...]

“In investigating the laws of evidence for the mental, I am investigating the *essence* of the mental”. Is that true? [...]

Yes. The *essence* is not something that can be shown; only its features can be described. (Wittgenstein, 2004, pp. 63e-64e)

Drawing on Wittgenstein’s suggestive remarks, it might be argued that what poetry does is exactly this: It reveals the ‘inner’ essence, i.e. emotion or virtue, through a specific kind of ‘outer’ knowledge and reasoning. If this is taken to be true, then poetry can aid discernment and deliberative action about virtues, including in situations where virtues conflict or collide (virtue reasoning) and help students understand the meaning of the virtue terms and why the virtue is important, individually and as part of a well-rounded, flourishing life of overall virtue, and being able to apply the virtue to episodes of one’s own and others’ lives (virtue knowledge and understanding).<sup>14</sup> However, this is so far only a tentative suggestion that needs to be fleshed out and underpinned with a closer look at the nature and potential of poetic inquiry.

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<sup>14</sup> Here, shown within brackets, are two of the components of virtue, described on p. 40.

#### 2.1.1.4.3 Overview of Poetic Inquiry

Linda Christensen is a teacher and prolific author of learning materials, utilising poetic inquiry. Her work, thus, provides an ideal starting point for an overview of poetic inquiry, relevant to present purposes.

In her three books, *Teaching for Joy and Justice, Reading, Writing, and Rising Up – Teaching About Social Justice and the Power of the Written Word and Rhythm* and *Rhythm and Resistance - Teaching Poetry for Social Justice* (Christensen, 2009; Christensen, 2015; Christensen, 2017), Linda Christensen addresses the paradox of education (von Oettingen, 2006; Uljens, 2004; Kristjánsson, 2007; cited by Løvlie, 2016)<sup>15</sup> by suggesting a path to liberation by teaching students to illuminate intercultural issues (such as the history of the wealth gap, immigration policies, testing, school funding, unequal discipline rates based on race, and any other entrenched system issues) by using poetry in the classroom.

In this section, I will assess Christensen's poetic inquiry (Prendergast et al., 2009; Galvin and Prendergast, 2016) as a means of self-cultivation. I will compare this approach to the framework of Aristotelian Character Education (Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, 2017a). Subsequently, I will introduce samples of poetic inquiry, namely Gina Edghill's 'The Culture of My Community Revealed. Poetic and Narrative Beginnings' (Edghill, 2009) and Jackie Kidd's 'White Skin, Brown Soul. A Poetic Autoethnography' (Kidd, 2016).

Poetic inquiry is best understood as a paradigm of, or an approach to education, rather than a mere method or strategy of research or implementation. This is why I address it here, rather than in Chapter 3, although the nature of poetic inquiry will be revisited in Chapter 3 as I explain and justify my empirical methodology. I aim to show in this section that Aristotelian Character Education and poetic inquiry are interrelated as approaches in the sense that the latter can be understood as a way of pursuing the former.

More specifically, I will argue that poetic inquiry is an adequate learning tool for fostering virtue literacy, which in turn enables students to gradually understand the concept and application of practical wisdom. I will begin by saying a few words about poetic inquiry.

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<sup>15</sup> By the 'paradox of education', what is normally meant is the apparent paradox of having to precede the teaching of a critical mindset in students with the habituation of fairly uncritical habits of mind and action. More specifically here, the question is what methods serve best to bridge the gap between the uncritical and critical in late childhood and early adolescence, and the answer given in this thesis is obviously to point to the use of poetry.

#### 2.1.1.4.3.1 What is Poetic Inquiry?

Poetic inquiry is at the same time an approach to education *qua* self-cultivation and a research method in qualitative social science research. It is an umbrella term for academic studies that employ poetry as a means or the product of inquiry (or both). Examples of these are research poetry or research poems, poetic narrative, ethno-poems, interview poems, poetic portraits, autobiographical poetry, autoethnographic poetry, investigative poetry, among many more (Prendergast, 2009, pp. x-xi). ‘It is an area of growing interest to arts-based qualitative researchers’ (Prendergast, 2009, p. xi). To some, this may sound like an unusual means of inquiry, but as noted by Patricia Leavy, who in her book *Method Meets Art* does research as:

Poetry formed from respondents’ words, although perhaps not appropriate for re-presenting [*sic*] data in a scholarly report, it is nevertheless a form that may be of use in classes and training sessions. Several times I have used poetry crafted from research interviews [...], and have found that listeners and readers tend to be moved by their simplicity and power (Leavy, 2009, p. 98).

Poetic inquiry is called by a multiplicity of names in social sciences but is always interested in ‘expressing human experience, whether that of Self or Other or both’ (Prendergast, 2009, p. xxxvii). It is a means of investigation that incorporates poetry (it is, however, not art *therapy*), being employed at conferences, in peer-reviewed publications, but also sometimes published without full peer-review or selected by an editor (Prendergast, 2009, pp. xxxv, xxxvi, & xxxvii). In other words, poetic inquiry is a specific process of questioning and creating, of ‘contemplating truth-seeking followed by the creative expression of those truths discovered’ (Elliott, 2012). It seeks to discover and communicate truths, but unlike conventional philosophic and scientific inquiry, who deploy systematic and rational approaches to their projects and largely emphasise objectivity, it rather attends ‘primarily to the existential and subjective dimension of truth’ (Elliott, 2012).

The very content of poetic inquiry, that sets it aside from other approaches, is obviously its use of poetry, or *poiesis*. In this expression lies the original meaning: to make, i.e. the act of creation. So, it allows us, at the same time, to discover and create. It is, in that sense, the ideal educational tool. For the sake of simplification, it is helpful here to distinguish more clearly between poetic inquiry as an educational *approach* and an educational *method*. As an approach, poetic inquiry relies on the ontological-cum-epistemological assumption that human experience is, partly, poetically structured, and that to make sense of this experience, either using pre-existing poetry to structure experience or creating new poetry to restructure it can aid education *qua* self-cultivation. As an educational method, poetic inquiry proposes various practical uses of poetry in classroom contexts, for example in ‘creating social change, a way of processing feelings, teaching from a vulnerable space, confronting inequality, and

shifting the stories we tell to subvert dominant discourses that work to uphold oppression' (Manning, 2014). Out of these, the method that is most relevant to my present concerns, to which I will return in Chapter 3, is processing feelings.

[P]oetry invites the reader to 'step into' another person's experience. Furman [...] argues that 'the images inspired by a poem engage the reader in a creative relationship that moves beyond passivity to co-creation' [...]. When poets use words that appeal to our senses [...], the poet 'shows' us rather than simply telling us and perhaps can transport us to a place, time, and experience, which, if the image is effective, allows us to understand the emotion being conveyed in the poem' (Owton, 2017, p. 8).

In this sense, perceiving is creating. When someone learns something new (about oneself or the way something in the world relates to oneself), and when one can truly apply this experience to oneself, it becomes meaningful. In the same way that algebra requires the student to find the unknown third point from two known points, creative thinking through poetry stretches the horizon of existential and subjective truths. Poetic inquiry seeks to discover and communicate these truths, while philosophic and scientific inquiry systematically seeks to emphasise objective truths (Elliott 2012). According to Elliott, a prelude to 'poetic inquiry was suggested by Ralph Waldo Emerson, in a speech given to the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Harvard College, in 1837, under the title of 'The American Scholar' (and expanding this idea a year later in his essay 'The Poet'). Emerson warns against objectivism in education but calls, rather, for 'the endeavor of contemplative truth-seeking and creative expression' (Elliott, 2012). According to Elliott, this endeavour is largely divided into two movements: '1) Shifting into a contemplative perspective of expanded perception (i.e., "Possibility" [...]) in pursuit of extra-rational (i.e., "poetic") truth and 2) Creatively expressing truth perceived from that contemplative perspective using the resources of poetic strategy' (Elliott, 2012). In Elliott's somewhat cryptic words, poetic inquiry represents a non-analytical reading of texts in order to move into the expanded contemplative condition of 'Possibility'. Of course, poetic inquiry also involves the generation of new poetic texts – or what we've come to call 'creative writing' (Elliott, 2012).

However, Emerson's project to poeticise education can be said to have failed at the time, as the educational system, both in America and elsewhere, moved decisively towards the German instrumentalist educational model which developed after the *Bildung* approach (to which Emerson would have been sympathetic) had mostly run its course. This mode of thinking focuses on the subject topic, rather than education *qua* self-cultivation or *Bildung* (see below). Since Emerson's time, few educational thinkers have foregrounded poetry in the same way as he did. Among mainstream educationists, Bruner's (2004) well-known work on the narrative structure of (human) reality, and how this structure needs to be reflected in

education, perhaps comes closest to the insights of poetic inquiry. However, not all poetry is narratively structured and, conversely, not all narrative conceptions of human reality and experience contain a poetic dimension.

#### 2.1.1.4.3.2 Wittgenstein's Method and Use of Language

To illuminate the ontological and epistemological assumptions of poetic inquiry, it is instructive at this juncture to discuss their relationship to Wittgenstein's well-known view of language in his latter works.

In the first part of *Philosophical Investigations* (Wittgenstein, 1974; Wittgenstein, 2009)<sup>16</sup>, Wittgenstein displays his philosophical method and tries to decipher the use of language. Throughout his career, he developed a philosophical approach and a way of thinking that can also be interpreted as an educational method. By this I am referring to his way of presenting problems or exercises to the reader, but wanting the reader to grapple with them as a means of edification. This demands critical thinking, and is perhaps derived from a distinct Austrian (and, to an extent, German) tradition of education from which Wittgenstein hails.<sup>17</sup> In this tradition, and certainly in Wittgenstein's use of it, a distinction is made between *Abrichtung* and *Bildung*. The former, *Abrichtung*, can be described as the training of an animal, in such a way that a habit or a rule is being impressed upon it (Rödl, 2016). From the point of view of education, this is an 'upbuilding act' in the same way as early uncritical Aristotelian habituation, but not one of true education — at least not in the Enlightenment sense that we have inherited via Kant. The latter term, *Bildung*, signifies true education, and consists in enabling a child that you educate to think for herself or himself. To follow this trail of thought, we must make another distinction within *Bildung* or education. In the first, we are engaged with *Bildung des Verstandnis*, this is the education of the brain, and in the latter, we are engaged with *Bildung des Herzens*, which is the education of the heart. A true *Bildung* of character, which many modern educators would agree is a fundamental aim of education, must take all of these three aspects of learning into account, namely both *Abrichtung* and the two forms of *Bildung*.

Wittgenstein acknowledged, implicitly at least, that the educational system has two primary functions, education and socialisation. In the educational tradition mentioned above, socialisation does not seem to be tackled directly, but, perhaps, through the education of the

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<sup>16</sup> Hereafter referred to as *PI* followed by, for instance, *I* for *Part I*.

<sup>17</sup> In the following, I owe a great deal to Dr. Michael Nedo, director of the Wittgenstein Archive at Cambridge, whom I met and spoke extensively with, at the Archive, on 20th November 2017. I am extremely grateful to him for his valuable assistance and input into my investigation.

heart, this may take place. Formally, the function of the first kind, education, is manifested in two ways, through the *descriptive* form of science, in German: *scientologisch* (unfortunately, this term was hijacked in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by a religious cult!), and the *explanatory* form of science, in German: *szientifisch*. If we observe how Wittgenstein regards these two forms of thought, what he often refers to as ‘philosophical fog’ (see e.g. Monk, 1991, p. 328, p. 530) is the tendency of human thought to rely solely on the model of scientific explanation (Hagberg, 2014). Prior to that, however, to understand what something is (Monk, 1991, p. 530), one must see the connection between our perception and our aesthetic considerations (Hagberg, 2014). This refers to how one attributes generality, and generality’s truth, to a form of knowledge, and even laws of thought (Hollingworth, 2018). Wittgenstein exemplifies this in criticising logical propositions considered as laws of thought, namely in Russell’s *Principia Mathematica*:

The point of Russell’s sentences is that none of them gives us any information about anything. If we substitute propositions of botany for ‘*p*’ and ‘*q*’, then the whole gives us no information about botany; it ceases to be a botanical sentence. This is the point of tautology: that if any part of it gives information, the rest cancels it out.

Although Russell uses variables: ‘*p*’, ‘*q*’, etc., he could perfectly well have used ordinary sentences.—Think of demonstrations in Euclid, where nobody thinks we have proved the theorem for *this* circle. In the same way, one *can* perfectly well do algebraic proofs with numbers.—Russell’s proofs would lose nothing of their generality, because generality does not lie in what is written down here, but in the way that you apply it.

You give a proof here showing that this is a right angle. You apply it to every such angle in a circle.—So we could acknowledge any of Russell’s proofs for *any* proposition, although what was written down was some special proposition.

Now we could substitute ‘it rains’ and ‘I get wet’ in ‘*p. p ⊃ q. ∴ q*’: ‘If it rains, and it rains implies I get wet, that implies I get wet’—and we call this a *law of thought*.

But isn’t this queer? (Wittgenstein, 1989, p. XXIX)

We can call these interconnected components of human thought aesthetic experience and aesthetic contemplation (Hagberg, 2014). As Wittgenstein, throughout his career, unravels the use of language, it becomes apparent that the aim of Wittgenstein’s philosophical observations (PI) is to elevate the descriptive form of science (*scientologisch*) into the poetic form – which, according to the insights of poetic inquiry to which I subscribe, is the most powerful form of thought. Later I propose to show, more specifically, how poetry and the poetic provides important support for character education. Viewed in this way, the aim of education becomes more chiseled, and, also, we are reminded that Wittgenstein once wrote: ‘I believe I summed up where I stand in relation to philosophy when I said: really one should write philosophy only as one *writes a poem*’ (Wittgenstein, 2002, p. 28e).

Now, let us consider the question: What is a poet? The obvious answer, which is perhaps not very conclusive, is someone who writes poetry. But a poet is more than someone who writes

poetry. A poet is able to describe something to others that they recognise but might not have considered in this particular way. A poet is able to put into words feelings, emotions, and thoughts that encompass more than just what the descriptive words are saying. In the words of Robert Frost, ‘Poetry is when an emotion has found its thought and the thought has found words’. So, a helpful answer to the question, ‘what is a poet?’ might be someone who can put into words feelings, thoughts, emotions that there are not exact pre-existing words or expressions for. These new words or expressions then help to (re)structure reality. This feeling is something that is not *explained*, as Wittgenstein would have it, but *described*.

Therefore, a poet is a powerful medium for the describing form of science (*scientologisch*). If we accept this and ascribe to the poet an educational role, let us look at the following questions:

- What does poetry do?
- How does it do it?
- To what end does it do it?

In response to the first question, poetry provides the learner with a tool of understanding and engaging with a sphere of human thought that can only be attained through one’s own experience. It is concerned with the willingness and ability of a person to put themselves in someone else’s position. This does not mean that one learns only what oneself has experienced, but, rather, that one ‘reaches for’ or connects with the portrayed experience, because one accepts the possibility and impact of oneself experiencing what is being described. For Kierkegaard (Hühn and Schwab, 2015, pp. 72-73), for example, one is overwhelmed by a tragic notion, because it brings into light something that one had not considered or even imagined before as tragic. So, an answer to the first question might be: Poetry portrays a (potentially new) experience in a meaningful way. In response to the next question, it does so by alluding to one’s imagination. The final question, ‘to what end does it do it?’, is perhaps the most important one, however, for present purposes.

As mentioned before, Wittgenstein believes that the object of philosophy, which perhaps is the oldest form of education, should be to improve one’s ‘thinking about the important questions of everyday life’ (Malcolm, 2001, p. 93). If poetry, as a way of understanding the connection between our perception and our aesthetic considerations (as illustrated with the example of attributing logical propositions as laws of thought), enables us to apply discernment in our life, making associations that are meaningful to us, it is through such a discernment that we learn something about ourselves. Wittgenstein is, thus,

eager to show the significance of making connections in our perception and understanding of art works—connections between the style of a poet and that of a composer (e.g. Keller and

Brahms), between one musical theme and another, between one expressive facial depiction and another, between one period of an artist's work and another. Such connections [...] are, for Wittgenstein, at the heart of aesthetic experience and aesthetic contemplation. And they again are of the kind that reductive causal explanation would systematically miss. In attempting to describe someone's feelings, could we do better than to imitate the way the person actually said the phrase we found emotionally revelatory, Wittgenstein pointedly asks? The disorientation we would feel in trying to describe the person's feeling with subtlety and precision without any possibility of imitating his precise expressive utterance—'the way he said it' – shows how very far the dualistic or subtractive conceptual template is from our human experience, our natural history. (Hagberg, 2014)

In this way, through his philosophical method and use of language, Wittgenstein is saying that the rationality of scientific knowledge is, in effect, susceptible to misleading us in our quest for understanding ourselves and becoming more aware of how we interact with others. In the next section, I will give attention to the relation of language and the arts.

#### 2.1.1.4.3.3 The Relation of Language and the Arts

In a conversation with Norman Malcolm, on whether something such as the British 'national character' would permit an evil act that could be justified for a greater good, Wittgenstein remarked that if the study of philosophy, in and of itself, can only 'enable you to talk with some plausibility about some abstruse questions of logic, etc., [but] does not improve your thinking about the important questions of everyday life, [...] it does not make you more conscientious than any [...] journalist in the use of the DANGEROUS phrases [...] people use for their own ends' (Malcolm, 2001, p. 93).

This, I hold, suggests that while philosophy would in such a case perhaps offer a deeper understanding of 'national character', there is a deeper layer to the individual character (consisting of virtues and vices and personal states of character), and that this something can be identified as 'shown' (in Wittgensteinian terms), rather than 'said' (i.e. explained scientifically), through the display of emotions. When speaking of a deeper layer of the individual character, I am referring to the 'distinguishing qualities that make us *who we are*' (Bohlin, 2005, p. 182). Thus, the way of gaining an understanding of who we are is through observing emotions, whether we are displaying them ourselves or they are displayed by others. Communication about art offers a way to 'catch' emotions, both in the sense that you catch a freeze-frame of an emotion in order to try to understand it, and also in the sense that we literally 'catch' emotions from each other through so-called emotional contagion. In one sense, it is about understanding a feeling or making sense of it, and in the other sense, it is about feeling something as others feel it, often associated with empathy. Thus, personal character can be shown through the display of emotions and engaging with arts is a tool for

discovering them. While all the arts may arguably be helpful here, Wittgenstein's above considerations put a special premium on poetry and poetic language.

Language, then, is a medium: something we use to access and nourish ourselves, by appreciating, creating and teaching art. But it also provides a framework for this appreciation. The concept of art:

has evolved and become engrained in language as part of the cultural tradition of which we are the heirs. [...] The concept and activity have meaning only within the language, conventions, and values of a culture, in other words, within a 'form of life.' (Simpson, 1988, p. 48)

Language, therefore, conveys the spectrum of emotions. However, the more mundane language of everyday conversation lacks some of the conceptual nuances that poetic language may provide. It is important to note here that although Wittgenstein is often depicted as an 'ordinary-language philosopher', his concept of ordinary language also embraced ordinary words used in extraordinary ways to 'show' or 'hint at' things that cannot be said in mundane ways. Danish philosopher and theologian Kierkegaard holds that, at a first glance, language embraces subjectivity, and that, by breaking free from academically abstract language and embracing the language of the concrete and the aesthetic, one can become 'the subjective thinker', for whom existence – life in all its concrete subjectivity – is the most essential thing (Beaver, 2008). The subjective thinker 'adds to his equipment aesthetic and ethical passion, which gives him the necessary concreteness' (Kierkegaard, 1945, p. 313; here, quoted from Beaver, 2008). He

is not a man of science, but an artist. Existing is an art. The subjective thinker is aesthetic enough to give his life aesthetic content, ethical enough to regulate it, and dialectical enough to interpenetrate it with thought. (Kierkegaard, 1945, p. 314; here, quoted from Beaver, 2008)

In this manner, through '*showing*' rather than '*saying*' the emotions, language and the arts open up a way to subjectivity and understanding of the self. The relation of language and art gives an insight into human existence. Next, I will attend to the relation of language and poetry, and its implications for the education of personal character.

#### 2.1.1.4.3.4 The Relation of Language and Poetry

In the section on 'Wittgenstein's Method and Use of Language', above, I touched upon the question of to what end poetry portrays an experience in a meaningful way. The answer I propose is: by alluding to one's imagination. Character educationist Bohlin (quoting Percy B. Shelly) stresses that imagination is a 'great instrument for moral good' and, subsequently, that moral...

greatness requires the ability to “imagine intensely and comprehensively” because our vision of the possible worthwhile goals open to us is limited by our knowledge and experience. A person with no exposure to exemplary moral lives in either fact or fiction suffers from a serious handicap in attempting to lead a good life (Bohlin, 2005, p. 33)

Bohlin shows that imagination is a *primus motor* for character education. Moreover, she illustrates that moral imagination, which she refers to as ‘not only a storehouse but also an intelligent guide’ (Bohlin, 2005, p. 34), consists of a number of key capacities, which can be accessed through poetry and narrative literature, namely moral vision, moral rehearsal, moral identity, and moral judgement (2005, pp. 34-35). Bohlin argues that literature enables and increases a ‘[s]eeing and the “ability to see”’ which, according to her, involves ‘penetrating the surface of ordinary experience and appearances to contemplate their meaning’ (2005, p. 35). To put this into context, the moral imagination is catching emotions from the poetic or narrative literatures.

I would like to venture beyond Bohlin, however, and suggest that no literary form is better equipped to do so than poetry. The most obvious objective of this endeavour, as mentioned at the outset of this section, is character education (although other objectives, for example therapeutic ones, where needed, should not be disregarded). In terms of the spectrum of language, arts, and education, the normative or moral dimensions of educational and cultural growth are best attained through the cultivation of character or *virtue*, which in the first instance means to develop ‘virtue literacy’ among students.

The elements of poetry that are conducive to increasing virtue literacy, to name a few, are:

- it induces the imagination, which, in turn, awakens the moral imagination
- it fosters ethical reflection, helping students to develop the cognitive side of their character
- it provides the students with a tool for recognising and acknowledging their feelings and emotions
- it gives the students an effective technique in measuring the aforementioned emotions against ethical concepts, vices and virtues, etc. (Guttesen, 2017)

Although stories can trigger similar effects, poetry has a unique capacity to unify the pupils’ perspectives and experiences through symbols or language. When engaged with poetry, one enters a new region of thought and emotions, and thus, when applied to an intellectual process, in the face of whatever emotions it may stir, a poem can teach one something about oneself (Guttesen, 2017). Although the arguments that I have tried to synthesise above from Bohlin, Carr, Wittgenstein and others about the unique nature of poetry may stem from authors with very different philosophical orientations, they are consensual in foregrounding the role of poetry in shedding light, through its outward form, on the inner life of the

reader/moral agent and helping her to further sustain and develop that inner life.<sup>18</sup>

2.1.1.4.3.5 The Building Blocks of Character and Components of Virtue

## THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF CHARACTER

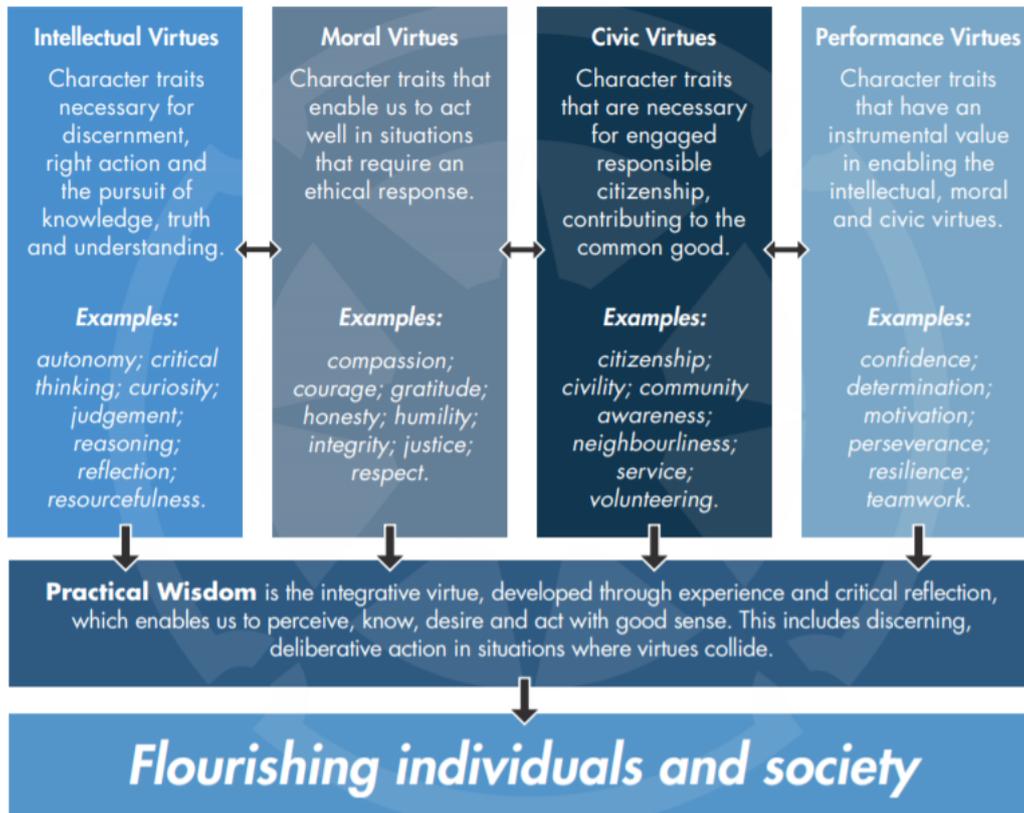


Table 1 The Building Blocks of Character

(Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, 2017a)

The framework of Aristotelian Character Education provides a roadmap to the life-long cultivation of a person, i.e. their development of character, by dividing their growth into four building blocks of character, that refer to *Intellectual*, *Moral*, *Civic*, and *Performance Virtues*, and seven components of virtue: *Virtue Perception*, *Virtue Knowledge and Understanding*, *Virtue Emotion*, *Virtue Identity*, *Virtue Motivation*, *Virtue Reasoning*, and *Virtue Action and Practice*:

<sup>18</sup> It might be objected that Wittgenstein’s arguments on the route from the ‘outer’ to the ‘inner’ life are not moralised in the same way as Carr’s and Bohlin’s views – and could be used to explain a villain’s development of her evil character. In that sense, while poetry has characterological value, that value could be about the entrenchment of bad character as well as good. This is why, in the following, I turn to the uses of poetry within programmes of character education, which is obviously meant to be about the instilment of good character.



Table 2 Components of Virtue

(Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, 2017a)

According to the framework of Aristotelian Character Education, *Virtue Literacy*, which the educational system should primarily seek to enhance, consists in components A, B, and F. I, personally, am of the opinion that *Virtue Emotion* also belongs here, because we rely on emotions when processing the experiences we have and the truths we discover. I should think that emotions are integral to perception and creation. However, in this model, the emphasis seems to be put on the feeling-part of emotions rather than their cognitive component, which might fall under B. In any case, as measurement is an important part of implementing the framework of Aristotelian Character Education, the aforementioned components, A, B, F, are the most convenient and straightforward to measure.

Character education (as it was introduced in Section 2.1.1 and the following sub-sections thereof) is based on the idea that certain qualities or character traits can, and should be, developed to a positive effect within the school system. The idea of character education is grounded in the theory that students can be assisted or guided (scaffolded) into understanding and wanting to acquire such virtues. Therefore, to compare poetic inquiry to the framework of Aristotelian Character Education, the former must be deployed in the context of education. The perfect example of that is Linda Christensen's take on poetic inquiry as an educational tool.

#### 2.1.1.4.3.6 Poetic inquiry as a Means of Self-cultivation

In this chapter I draw on an example of the employment of poetic inquiry by Linda Christensen in order to make a comparison between its benefits as a learning tool or an approach to education and that of Aristotelian Character Education.

##### *Christensen – Using Poetry in the Classroom*

At the outset, Christensen asserts that ‘anyone who has lived has a story to tell’ (Christensen, 2009, p. 1). ‘Writing and talking about’ ethical issues, she says, takes the students out of the shadow world and into the light of day, so they ‘can understand why things are fair or unfair and how to change them’ (Christensen, 2009, p. 1). The idea is to locate the curriculum in students’ lives:

Many of my students experience injustice. Sometimes this mistreatment arrives in the form of an unkind comment about a person’s weight, facial features, hair, or clothes. But often my students and their families are targeted because of their race or language or immigration status. Their families are denied housing, jobs, fair wages, health care, or access to decent education. Connecting these issues to the literature that we read, as well as writing and talking about their concerns makes them visible, not just the stuff of nightmares that haunt us throughout the day. I want students to examine why things are unfair, to analyze the systemic roots of that injustice, and to use their writing to talk back. (Christensen, 2009, p. 4)

Most people will notice how strong this statement is, which is why I insert such a long quote. Christensen warns that this is easier said than done: ‘It takes time to find the just-right reading material, to build a role play or tea party, to invent a curriculum from scratch that encompasses literature, history, and students’ lives—while teaching’ (Christensen, 2009, p. 9). As a teacher, myself, I can vouch for that.

But let us look at the arguments for using poetry in the classroom. According to Christensen, ‘[p]oetry levels the writing playing field. Students who struggle in other areas of literacy education often succeed in poetry—if it’s not taught as a memory Olympics for literary terminology: assonance, dissonance, dactyl, couplet, enjambement, hexameter, pentameter. Many of my students who wrestle with essays write amazing poetry. Poetry unleashes their verbal dexterity—it’s break dancing for the tongue’ (Christensen, 2009, p. 14). This is in line with what poet Zapruder argues can be benefitted from poetry when taught in an appropriate way:

...what is strange about poetry—its dream logic, its interest in the slipperiness and material qualities of language, associative day-dreaming movement—is not some deliberate obfuscation, or an obstacle to communication, but essential to the very way poetry makes meaning.

[...]

...poetry can move us closer to what is vital and elusive, what can never be fully

explained [...] and] the slippery, provisional nature of language itself is intimately related to the power of poetry. (Zapruder, 2017, pp. xii-xiii)

It is worth noting that the arguments that Zapruder put forth are also important for showing that poetry is highly appropriate as a spark or motivation for engaging in a Socratic dialogue about the poems the students read and write, exactly because poems never mean just one thing or have just one interpretation, and because language itself is elusive – it is never completely palpable – it demands pondering and aesthetic considerations of the students. I will return to this point shortly.

Christensen gives an example of the first poem she introduces to her students, ‘Raised by Women’ by Kelly Norman Ellis:

*I was raised by  
Chitterling eating  
Vegetarian cooking,  
Cornbread so good you want to lay  
Down and die baking  
‘Go on baby, get yo’self a plate’  
Kind of Women.<sup>19</sup>*

‘After Reading ‘Raised by Women’ twice, I asked students, ‘Who were you raised by?’ Although Ellis discusses only women, I salted the pot by generating a few: mother, father, coaches, church. I also wanted them to reach out beyond the traditional, so I encouraged them to think about neighbours, neighbourhoods, musicians, novelists, civil rights activists, the halls at Grant’ (Christensen, 2009, pp. 17-18). Students are invited to read their product of the exercise, and then the class engages in a discussion about what was read and read out.

After students shared, I handed out note cards and asked them to look back over their notes and write about what they learned about each other and poetry through our lesson [...]. [I]t was the students’ revelations about each other that made me realize this poetry assignment is a keeper. Students wrote about how much they learned about each other in a short amount of time. ‘I learned that Adiana is from Jamaica, that Bree was raised by foster parents, and that a lot of us have been let down by our fathers’. (Christensen, 2009, p. 19)

Comparing this example to the framework of Aristotelian Character Education, this is an excellent lesson in cultivating for example the intellectual virtue of *reflection*, the moral virtue of *compassion*, the civic virtues of *community awareness* and *neighbourliness*, and the performance virtue of *confidence*. This exercise creates a sense of trust within the group, and provides an ideal setting for engaging further in a Socratic dialogue.<sup>20</sup> Essentially, this is what

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<sup>19</sup> The full poem, as well as a sound clip of Ellis reading the poem, can be found at the Coal Black Voices website: <http://coalblackvoices.com/poets/kelly/index.html>

<sup>20</sup> By a Socratic dialogue in this thesis I mean a dialogue that involves a group of participants (students) led by a moderator (teacher) who, without him- or herself adding anything to the discussion, aids the participants in exchanging ideas, making themselves understandable to others, and being open to having to defend their ideas

takes place in the quotation above. As I mentioned earlier, when the students engage in a dialogue, they are able to lend the perspective of another, thus using the learning tool of putting oneself in someone's shoes. Through a moderated dialogue, each participant can extend their horizon. Through this dialogue one practices critical and independent thinking, by listening to what others have to say, and taking care that one understands what was said in the same way as the one who uttered the sentence in question. This opens up the possibility of collective thinking, which elevates the understanding of what is being discussed, in this case poetry and what the poems are mediating, to a higher and more effective level.

*Edghill's 'The Culture of My Community Revealed. Poetic and Narrative Beginnings'*

The next example I wish to take is of research conducted by Gina Edghill. In her research, Edghill was analysing the experiences of African Diaspora women within American Higher Education. This entails analysing and looking to close the distance that exists between the experience of 'self' and 'other' (Edghill, 2009, p. 288). Exploring the differences in experiences based on cultural background (i.e. African American, African, and Afro-Caribbean) supports the socio-cultural perspective; the premise being that the cultural worlds in which individuals have grown and developed are directly related to how individuals interpret who they are in relation to others, and how they learn to process, interpret and encode their world (Edghill, 2009, p. 289).

The Diaspora explored in this study, the African Diaspora, was constructed as an umbrella term to identify Africans and people of African descent. According to Gordon & Anderson [...], it was a racial identifier purported through the Pan-African ideologies of Delaney, Blyden, Garvey, Dubois, and others. The original intent of the term African Diaspora was not to identify specific locations across the globe. The term was used to describe the experiences of Blacks who were marginalized based on internationally-held racist ideologies of Black inferiority [...]. While one would hope that such marginalization does not exist in American Higher Education today women who fit into this group often describe their experiences as those of disempowerment, alienation, and discrimination. (Edghill, 2009, p. 290)

The following is an extract of Edghill's findings and analysis, I have cut it short, but decided that it is nevertheless most telling when laid out in such a long passage as the following:

*The knowing which lives in our experiences is a dictator  
in the politics of our perception of Self and Other*

*Sisters of the Diaspora*

[...]

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and point of view by offering supporting arguments thereof, and/or having the courage to change their opinion if the group finds a better assessment of the topic at hand (see e.g. Brenifier, 2015; Kennedy, 2018; NSW Government, 2014).

*Olivia*

“[...]  
I came here to master the art of hearing  
But no one listened  
To the high pitch tones of my loneliness  
Of my isolation and depression  
  
I came here to master the art of hearing  
But no one listened  
To me shiver from the coldness  
That remains throughout the seasons  
  
I came here to master the art of hearing  
But no one listened  
As I called on the strength of both my fathers  
To shelter and feed me so I could complete this journey  
  
I came here to master the art of hearing  
And now that we are all here  
I find great comfort in knowing  
That you,  
My sisters,  
Will listen”

It was now Chloe’s turn and we expected that she would have the angriest of words. Chloe had been in the Northern part of the Diaspora and we all knew her journey lasted the longest when compared to ours. We also thought her struggle to be the most strenuous. We were all surprised when Chloe said:

*Chloe*

“My sisters  
I am most me  
When I am on the inside of knowledge  
And so I purposely stand on the margin  
Of all the Isms of promise I made  
I was wise enough

To learn from my mother's example

And now

No one is allowed to call me names

[...]

My sisters

I have long since adapted

For the most part accepted

The uncertainty that is my fate

I have been on the inside

And now my decisions

Revolve around the sacrifices

That I'm willing to make

My sisters

Like you

I sift through the subtext

Of the unspoken

At times I know I'm not heard

When painted invisible

I keep adding value

I always give me, my word

My sisters

My dream is my journey

Watching you I inhale inspiration

But I know it's all relative

This status of ours

As we all stand

On the precipice of self actualization"

I thought I was next but Sarah told me that I was the storyteller and so it was my job to listen to what they said. She said 'Lily it will be your job to pass this tale on to the next generation of Diaspora.' And so I listened to Sarah said:

***Sarah***

“I am the Source  
The Source of why  
You all find yourself  
Knowing  
I stayed home  
And struggled  
With the left behind  
Of our father’s  
own fear of failure  
His need to live through  
His children  
It was not elementary for me  
[...]

I am the Source  
The Source of all fear  
Because I know you  
I chased you away  
So now I watch my sisters  
With excitement  
And pride  
Because I know  
Their struggle  
As you smile polite  
Racism glossing your lips

I am the Source  
The Source of choice  
As my sisters pull at roots  
Buried deep in  
The knowledge  
I now bring  
So that they know

We have arrived  
Far different  
From the preposition  
You injected in the middle  
Of their sentencing  
To a life of creating  
Cultures and subcultures  
International and intentional  
Beautiful still  
And rich in the Source  
Of this Afro-Diasporic sisterhood”

After listening to my sisters’ words I knew we were the same four sisters from nearly 400 years ago. We were no longer girls we had grown into beautiful women. I could feel my sisters’ realization of where we were in our journey. I could feel our sisterhood. Even though we had been separated for so many years we still described our journey in the way of our people. We expressed our journey in the blue-black rhythms of the storyteller. (Edghill, 2009, p. 292-7)

The above case exemplifies what a powerful learning tool creative writing is. When the product of a ‘lesson learned’ or the expanding of one’s horizon comes via one’s own (or one’s peers’) creative thinking, the learning process is more meaningful, it is easier to understand and can more effectively be projected to other circumstances. It is also worth noting that when it comes to poetry, and more so in a classroom where the subject matter is poetry, everyone has a voice. In other words, anyone can take part. Another argument, also put forth by Zapruder, is that it relates to our experience and enables us to see and understand things we would not otherwise come across:

Reading poetry, we need to remember that we are all experts in words; we have been for a long time. And any word we don’t know we can look up in the dictionary [...].

To learn to read poetry is first a matter of forgetting many incorrect things we have learned in school. And then of learning to accept what is right before us on the page. A big part of what the book needed to do [...] was to demonstrate ways of reading poetry that would resimplify and redirect our attention toward the purpose of poetry.

The question was not really *what* poetry is (poems can be so many things), but *why* it is written, and what it does. It seems that our inability to grasp why we are reading poetry, for reasons fundamentally different from why we read all other forms of writing, is what makes poetry so hard to understand.

To explore why we read poetry and what it does, it is necessary to talk about the experience of reading poetry. The problem is, that experience is an elusive one to try to capture in words. [...] More important, when a person truly falls in love with a poem, it is usually because it feels like a private experience. (Zapruder, 2017, p. xiv)

In the above quote, in addition to showing how poetry relates in a unique way to our experience, Zapruder also shows the necessity for engaging in a discussion (with one's peers) about poetry. This is part of the learning experience.

*Kidd's 'White Skin, Brown Soul. A Poetic Autoethnography'*

The third example drawn upon here is of research by Jacquie Kidd. Kidd's contribution to the collection *Poetic Inquiry II – Seeing, Caring, Understanding. Using Poetry as and for Inquiry* (Galvin and Prendergast, 2016) is a poetic autoethnography:

I have white skin and look like a European woman. I am of New Zealand Māori descent, which means my way of living in and explaining the world can be radically different to European ways. I am an autoethnographer and poet. These three statements coalesce in my current research into the embodied experiences of ethnicity for white skinned Māori.

### BEING WHITE

My secret life of brown-ness

(the surprise of seeing White skin in the mirror)

Torments me

Confusion

Kaleidoscopes through my life as I juggle colours

Dropping the white balls to be brown

(Not Allowed, I'm white)

Dropping the brown balls to be white

(The lies of passing

Do not let me

Sleep)

Juggle both colours

Becoming a little bit of both

Less of both

Not enough

Of either

I am not enough

Not Maori enough to be Maori

Not Pakeha enough to be Pakeha

Adrift in both worlds

...disconnected...

I am not enough

[...]

Tihei mauri ora!

I clear my mind of the

muddiness

IT IS LIFE!

The mucus of my birth

I am here

I am whole

All is well

Tihei mauri ora!

My voice rings out

With warmth

Assurance Strength

I am here

I am whole

All is well

Tihei mauri ora!

I inhale the colours of these worlds I inhabit

I exhale my personal kaleidoscope

Translucent jewels in motion

Colouring my world with the

Power

Of my Self

Tihei mauri ora!

I am here

I am whole

All is well (Kidd, 2016, pp. 135-9)

In her conclusion, Kidd elaborates on her position and choice of expression: 'I explain my position, locating myself as Other to the binaries that currently exist, but Self in ways that are inexplicable using the language of ethnicity and categorisation. Such language acts to exclude me; poetry provides a subversion, a space that allows me to re-define and re-present my struggle in ways that make my world accessible to others' (Kidd, 2016, p. 139). This gives way to the consideration whether such an inquiry and/or expression could have been possible by any other source or mediation. The arguments against that notion, simply from reading the example above, are convincing. In section 2.1.4.5, above, I listed the Components of Virtues, as defined by the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues (Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, 2017a). The specific components relevant to virtue literacy are:

- **Virtue Perception**  
Noticing situations involving or standing in need of the virtues.
- **Virtue Knowledge and Understanding**  
Understanding the meaning of the virtue term and why the virtue is important, individually and as part of a well-rounded, flourishing life of overall virtue, and being able to apply the virtue to episode's of one's own and others' life.
- **Virtue Reasoning**  
Discernment and deliberative action about virtues, including in situations where virtues conflict or collide.

It is worth noting how the specific components of virtues attributed to virtue literacy are present in the examples given in the previous sub-sections; firstly, Christensen (2.1.4.6.1) specifically addresses discernment and deliberative action about virtues, and subsequently, through use of the poem 'Raised by Women' by Kelly Norman Ellis, and through the student discussion, the conditions are made for noticing situations involving the virtue of compassion and the notion of pride, and these two components combined can awaken that of virtue knowledge and understanding; secondly, in Edghill's analysis of the experiences of African Diaspora women within American Higher Education (2.1.4.6.2), such a portrayal of marginalisation is an effective way of awakening the components of virtue literacy; thirdly, Kidd's autoethnography shows how an exploration of ethnicity and categorisation can awaken these same components.

The “Poetic state of mind” that poetry makes happen could be described as something close to dreaming while awake, a higher, more aware, more open, more sensitive condition of consciousness. The poem makes this happen for us by placing our mind as we read or listen in consonance with the associations being made by the poem: its “discoveries, connections, glimmers of expression.” (Zapruder, 2017, pp. 11-12; the inline quotations are Valéry, 1977, p. 163)

And as Kidd puts it:

As I dance my way into that space I find that my struggle has simply become my story, and as my story becomes visible I am no longer Other or Self, but I simply Am. (Kidd, 2016, p. 139)

#### *Poetry and Character Education*

At the outset of this chapter, I proposed to compare poetic inquiry to the framework of Aristotelian Character Education. For this I will turn to my current research, which is sketched out further in Chapter 3, and thematically analysed in Chapter 4, below.

Using stories and narratives as a conduit for teaching virtue literacy is not a new thing. The *Knighly Virtues* project (Arthur et al., 2014) carried out by the Jubilee Centre successfully utilised classic stories about knights and the chivalric code, in order to increase virtue literacy in 9 to 11 year olds, particularly around the virtues of gratitude, self-discipline, love, service, humility, courage, and justice. Building on this work already carried out by the Jubilee Centre, the research described in this thesis develops an intervention for schools that enables teachers to build on the qualities or virtues in question, i.e. compassion, pride, and shame, in their own teaching. The reason that I chose these concepts is that I wanted to use emotions that are familiar to young people today, so that they are both likely to appreciate the poems that are read in such a way that they can relate to them, and, in the same way, that they will be able to incorporate these emotions in the creative writing exercises that the students will be given.

I also draw on the experience of the project *Virtue, Vice and Verse* published by the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues (Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, 2017b), as far as implementation and measurement goes. Unique to this intervention is the assumption of the power of poetry to educate the emotional dimensions of virtue, to foster empathic literacy and virtuous emotion. However, while the *Virtue, Vice and Verse* publication provides teachers with a ready-made study plan for six poems focusing on five virtues and fifteen vices, the present project aims at a more open collaboration with teachers. The poems in the Student Companion to *Virtue, Vice and Verse* were selected for their ability to speak to young people in upper primary grades. They challenge young readers to press pause in the midst of their frenetic activity. The teaching resources and guided exercises are designed to help pupils read,

listen to, experience, and discover the insights each poem yields about what it means to be human, fully alive and responsive to the world around them.

In my research, a number of age-appropriate measures of participants were administered before and after an intervention to assess whether the programme had been successful in promoting compassion (empathy), pride, and shame. The experimental group (compassion and pride/shame intervention) is compared with a waiting-list control group, each from a participating Icelandic school. The intervention was based on empirical research that has previously demonstrated success in how the virtues of compassion and concepts/emotions of pride and shame (among others) can be cultivated (Harðarson et al., 2018; Jónsson et al., 2019). I will return to the intervention in Chapter 3, and its findings in Chapter 4.

From what has been said in this section, this study fitted both the criteria of poetic inquiry and character education. It is rooted in the framework of Aristotelian Character Education, and, at the same time, executed by means of poetic inquiry.

#### 2.1.1.4.3.7 Concluding Remarks on Poetic Inquiry

In this chapter, I have used Wittgenstein's argument to show that philosophy alone does not make one a better person. Likewise, Kierkegaard's example is a reminder that philosophy's (abstract) language poses a barrier to virtue perception. Too much tends to be *said* and too little tends to be *shown*. According to both Wittgenstein and Kierkegaard, the main object of philosophy is, and should be, educational. However, the restraints of academic language prevent this from being realised. The examples given by Wittgenstein illustrate a strong critique to this effect. However, being exposed to the arts in general and poetry in particular offers a means of enriching moral imagination, which is necessary for virtue perception. In turn, in order to foster ethical reflection (e.g. through virtue reasoning), what needs to be done at the outset is to help students notice that a situation calling for a virtue is at stake (virtue perception). The relation between arts and language falls within the scope of character education, as one of its key component and subject matter is the students' emotions and the enabling of their discernment of these emotions.

To put this relation into context, through the engagement with poetry, students are guided into acquiring virtue literacy. This takes place through the reading, writing, and discussing both aspects of this approach, i.e. the reading and writing of poems. Therefore, virtue literacy is acquired both via the content of the learning material, and the process of the learning. When students become accustomed with reading, writing, and discussing works of poetry, they can learn, which is to say that it can be taught, how to associate them with moral concepts.

Thereby, they learn a way of displaying and exercising their virtue literacy. This is, in turn, is a means of acquiring practical wisdom (*phronesis*).

Practical wisdom is the actualisation (discernment) of the ethical virtues (Aristotle, 2011, V.13 1144b18-45a2): knowing how, when, and appropriately to display a virtue in a situation that has ethical bearings. To understand the construct of practical wisdom, we must go back to Aristotle, and examine his account of the soul.

In his *Eudemian Ethics*, Aristotle distinguishes between cleverness and wisdom. Cleverness, he explains, is ‘the power to hit upon and perform the steps that lead to the goal we have set ourselves’ (2011, V.12 1144a24-25). Although wisdom is not the same as this, it does not exist without it. ‘It is a kind of eye of the soul [...]. [I]t does not achieve its proper condition in the absence of virtue’ (2011, V.12 1144a29-31). His reason for pointing this out, is that mere knowledge of the virtues does ‘not make us more likely to do them’ (2011, V.12 1143b26).

Furthermore, Aristotle makes an important distinction between moral virtue and intellectual virtue. Moral virtues ‘belong to the part of the soul that is non-rational but capable of desire’ (2011, II.4 1221b31-32). Their work is ‘pursuing or avoiding certain pleasures and pains’ (2011, II.4 1221b33). The intellectual virtues belong to the rational part of the soul, and include wisdom, understanding, and contemplation. Their work is truth, ‘either about the nature of a thing or about how it comes into existence’ (2011, II.4, 1221b29-31). We learn to assert these virtues, both from teachings we receive, and from experience.

As Aristotle puts it, virtues, and behaviours issuing from them, such as justice and temperance, do not qualify as fully virtuous unless the agent ‘does them knowingly’, ‘decides to do them, and decides to do them for themselves’ (Aristotle, 2002, II.4 1105a30-33; cited by Darnell et al., 2019, p. 115).

Practical wisdom is an ‘excellence in practical deliberation, that is deliberation about what to do, issuing in decisions to do it’ (Darnell et al., 2019, p. 116). Darnell et al. identify four components of *phronesis*, i.e. Constitutive function (moral perception), Integrative function (discernment of situation-specific moral dilemmas), Blueprint (moral identity), and Emotional regulation (infusion of emotion with reason) (Darnell et al., 2019, pp. 118-20). These four components ‘capture the psychological mechanisms underlying the virtue of *phronesis*’ (Darnell et al., 2019, p. 123). The virtue of *phronesis* is doing what is good *for the right reasons*, and that entails all of the ethical virtues.

Earlier, I introduced poetry as means of acquiring practical wisdom (*phronesis*). In an educational setting, this is not a given. I have argued above that poetry guides us in the right direction by catching emotions within its net. I concluded that the practice of effective character education is perhaps best elicited through the language of poetry. In other words, poetry may offer the most efficient way of discernment beyond the visible spectrum of emotions, which in the scope of the 4-component model of *phronesis* from Darnell et al. constitutes the fourth component of Emotional regulation, or that ‘which calibrates the emotion in line with the morally and rationally warranted medial state of feeling, and the subsequent harmony between the two’ (Kristjánsson, 2018, chap. 9; cited by Darnell et al., 2019, p. 120).

Character education and Poetic inquiry have similar goals, but are not harmonious as far as theory and methodology goes. Their context can be similar, however. Poetic inquiry is a looser term, and is used in a broader context, whereas character education has very specific underpinnings (at least in the present thesis), namely those of the framework of Aristotelian Character Education (Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, 2017a). It can be said that a particular kind of character education involves poetic inquiry: namely the kind I propose to focus on in what follows.

It should be noted that poetic inquiry does not necessarily require the students’ own creative writing, but it can do so and is certainly addressed like that in Christensen’s approach. However, using creative writing is, for me, an added feature, and fits nicely with my approach of Aristotelian Character Education.

It is interesting that poetic inquiry, as is the case with character education, is an effective educational tool for students of diverse age groups. Christensen employs it with students younger than are targeted in my research, and, likewise, the *Virtue, Vice and Verse* project targets a younger learning group. It clearly matters what is to be addressed, but the above shows that both poetic inquiry and character education, if used to that end, can be used as a means of ethical-cum-emotional self-cultivation. What makes both these case-specific approaches effective, and to some extent, unique, is the employment of creative writing, and encouragement of curiosity and creative thinking.

2.1.1.4.4 Recent Concerns About Character and Virtue as Appropriate Content for Learning Materials  
In their recent article, ‘Lessons in character education: incorporating neoliberal learning in classroom resources’ (Jerome and Kisby, 2020), which draws on their 2019 book *The Rise of Character Education in Britain: Heroes, Dragons and the Myths of Character* (Jerome and

Kisby, 2019), Jerome and Kisby argue that (neo-Aristotelian) character education is too reliant on individual attainment and that it focusses on ‘the development of personal character traits, which tends to promote the idea that individuals must develop the personal capability to cope with adversity’ (Jerome and Kisby, 2020, p. 2). The authors set out to show this by bringing the understanding and employment of character education in a UK context into a political context. One of their major concerns is how politicians in the UK, who support character education, are particularly focused on character traits such as ‘resilience’, ‘grit’ and ‘self-efficacy’ (Jerome and Kisby, 2020, p. 1). Here, it is important to take into account that examples of the usage of character education incorporating said character traits are not representative of character education as an approach.

Nevertheless, one example of character education they single out for criticism is the *Knighly Virtues* project, developed and promoted by the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, pointing out that some (although not all) of the virtues that the students are asked to consider in the accompanying learning materials (Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, 2016), are paternalistic, old-fashioned, anti-democratic and individualistic (Jerome and Kisby, 2020, p. 1), and to that extent promote a conservative view of the world. This same critique could potentially be offered of the *Laxdaela Saga* project which is also relevant to the present discussion, and which takes its starting point the Icelandic saga, *Laxdaela Saga*. This project, and its accompanying learning materials, also focusses to some degree on heroic and male-oriented character traits. It is, however, not the only educational aspect of these projects, as they also possess what we could call ‘heritage significance’. If one wanted to cancel the inclusion of such a world view as presented by the Icelandic sagas, then the entire collection of these sagas would need to be omitted from the (Icelandic) curriculum. It can safely be said, that this would never happen, on grounds of its heritage significance. Furthermore, it should also be noted that virtue development and emotional growth can also be taught through the representation of negative character traits and vices, as will be discussed and demonstrated throughout this thesis.

And finally, as mentioned in Footnote 7, above, Kristjánsson (2020) has shown that those criticisms seem to completely overlook the Aristotelian heritage of the Jubilee Centre’s version of character education, since the Aristotelian approach to education was very liberal by the standards of ancient Greece (e.g., the rejection of private education) and anti-individualistic, in seeing the state as teleologically prior to the individual.

Although I consider the criticisms of the two projects, which in many ways inspired my take on poetry as a method of character education, to miss their mark, the rationale for my project

was never based exclusively on the precedent set by these projects, but rather on much more general arguments about the characterological value of poetry that I have explored and synthesised above.

### 2.1.2 Thematic Theoretical Overview

The literatures on moral education, more generally, and character education, specifically, are huge and multi-faceted. It is not easy to single out discrete elements for elaboration in a background chapter such as the present one. To further my own research aims, I have chosen to focus here in this overview section on Wouter Sanderse's helpful work on current character education and its historical predecessors and on Ludwig Wittgenstein's discussion of rule-following. I have chosen these points of focus in order to motivate my interpretation of some of the shortcomings of the Western world's school systems and show why character education may be, in part at least, a suitable solution to the crisis of modern education. This also relates to the subsequent aim of showing why poetry provides an ideal vehicle for applying character education. I call the discussion about Wittgenstein and education, which will appear at the end of this chapter, a 'theoretical discussion' of the topic, while the preceding discussion is more historical. Following this discussion, I introduce three concepts, a virtue (empathy), and two emotions (pride and shame), that will be central to this study.

#### 2.1.2.1 Sanderse on Character Education and its Predecessors

At the outset of his book (2012), Sanderse poses three central questions:

1. What is a virtue, and how does it develop?
2. What can schools contribute to this development of virtue?
3. Why is an education in virtue morally desirable? (Sanderse, 2012, p. 18).

Investigating these three questions will help teachers understand what the 'education of virtues' entails (Sanderse, 2012, p. 18). In his recent article, 'The teacher is a learner: Dewey on aims in education' (Harðarson, 2017), Atli Harðarson poses the suggestion that when considering the aims of education from the point of view of the teacher, the consideration is actually that of the teacher qua learner. This is partly due to the fact that a 'successful education requires a cultural environment where learners and teachers share interests and values' (Harðarson, 2017). In other words, Dewey's philosophy presupposes that the teacher's approach to education as that of a learner. In much the same way, Sanderse, when saying that teaching morality amounts to being a moral teacher (Sanderse, 2012, p. 227), concludes that the teaching of virtues amounts to cultivating and displaying those virtues (Sanderse, 2012, p. 24 & 25). I suggest that Sanderse would concur with the claim that the (moral) teacher is

always a (moral) learner. Moral education is not something one acquires to a state of completeness, but is rather something in a state of continuous ‘growth’ (to refer again to a core Deweyan concept). It is an ongoing task. One might say it is a non-eliminable human task. The moral teacher stimulates his or her *own* growth through moral education at the same time as engaging with the learning subjects. Therefore, the teacher is as much a learner as the *student-qua-moral-learner*. I will return to this analogy during the course of this chapter, and will later on also say something more about Harðarson’s article in order to illuminate some of the questions that Sanderse poses.

Sanderse defines three distinct approaches as pertinent to contemporary moral education and considers a classical take on these approaches as well as a modern educational interpretation. The approaches under consideration are derived from the philosophical ideas of Hume, Kant, and Aristotle. Thus, Sanderse singles out Care Ethics as being indebted to ‘Hume’s sentimentalism’, Kohlberg’s cognitive developmental approach, as ‘traced to Kant’s ideas on justice and rationality’, and contemporary character education as being traced ‘to Aristotle’s virtue ethics’ (Sanderse, 2012, p. 27). These historical linkages serve as Sanderse’s bridge to a discussion of virtue ethics as moral education. According to Sanderse, in order to find out how these three approaches conceive of moral education, the following questions need to be asked:

1. What is/are the goal(s) of moral education?
2. What psychological conditions have to be met before this/these goal(s) can be achieved?
3. Which educational means should schools use to achieve this/these goal(s)? (Sanderse, 2012, p. 28)

In terms of answering the three central questions posed by Sanderse, I would argue that the best bet is for contemporary education to provide moral education in terms of Aristotelian Character Education. In my view, this point becomes particularly germane when the role of teachers and parents as role models is emphasised. This condition aligns with Sanderse’s claim that one who teaches about morality must also be a moral teacher (Sanderse, 2012, p. 227) and Harðarson’s aforementioned (Deweyan) notion that every teacher is also a learner (Harðarson, 2017). Of the three historical accounts that Sanderse considers, only the Aristotelian option does justice to the dual role of the teacher as a moral exemplar and as an agent in a state of moral growth. Sanderse’s book analyses morally justified and psychologically realistic accounts that clarify how morality can be taught in schools (Sanderse, 2012, p. 28). Sanderse considers the three following alternatives to Aristotelian Character Education:

*Values Clarification* encompasses an education policy that gained some popularity in the US during the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is based on a subjectivist, coherentist, soft sentimentalist theory of morality according to which each individual develops their own self-chosen value systems, and those can only be critiqued from the outside for being formally incoherent. Values Clarification is based on a very controversial anti-realist account of the nature of morality which, for one thing, flies in the face of much recent empirical evidence about the universality of human strengths and virtues (see e.g. McGrath, 2015). It is, however, conceivable that certain performance-based results can effectively be achieved through applying this theory. When students are asked to identify and clarify core values that they will ‘make their own’, they may well achieve some narrow goals (Carr and Harrison, 2015, pp. 9-10) as defined by their own learning objectives. From a moral point of view, a coherentist requirement also rules out justifications of random moral acts. These minimalist advantages of Values Clarification, however, do not, at least not in an educationally or socially sustainable way, enable students to grow as individuals, which most people would agree is a desirable goal of education. Growth implies the acquisition of *new* goals, not only bringing the goals that one already has into some sort of reflective equilibrium. Sanderse could have made even more of this lacuna in Values Clarification in his critique, e.g. by drawing on Dewey.

Sanderse points out that Values Clarification involves a discussion strategy much similar to the classroom strategy advocated by the P4C movement (introduced and led by Mathew Lipman), aimed at ‘comparing [one’s] ideas to those of others [which] can help to clarify personal preferences, emotions and habits’ (Sanderse, 2012, p. 38), i.e. help one understand something about oneself. However, he also notes that this strategy only plays a marginal role in Values Clarification. As Sanderse correctly points out, in P4C, the teachers’ aim is to foster a ‘community of inquiry in which pupils will not only express their preferences, but also support their beliefs with *reasons* and respond to the similarities and differences between their ideas and those of their classmates’ (Sanderse, 2012, p. 38). This is in coherence with the ideas celebrating the teacher’s task to live out his or her teaching, or what could be called to ‘be what you teach’. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter of this thesis (on methodology), the role of the community of inquiry will be emphasised, as essential to this purpose. However, in Values Clarification the task of applying reasons is constrained by the assumption that students are not required to look outside of their own repertoire of motivations and subjective reasons for moral justifications. It is simply about bringing the existing motivations and subjective reasons into internal harmony.

*Cognitive Development Theory*, which underpinned Kohlberg's famous stage theory, focuses on moral development through behavioural change, based on the (motivationally internalist) thesis that those who know the good will do the good. Initially, it was seen as an answer to the need for moral education in the aftermath of the Second World War; the assumption being that pre-WW2 moral education had failed to cultivate students as rational agents. As Sanderse explains, it was 'an approach to moral education that did not treat morality as a matter of personal preferences or conventional norms, but as a matter of absolute and universal standards' (Sanderse, 2012, p. 41). In my view, this was a fallacious inference by Kohlberg, because one might equally well be inclined to describe the pre-war circumstances from an opposite point of view, i.e. as a matter of absolute and universal standards suppressing (empathic) personal and/or conventional norms.

In any case, whatever the merits of Kohlberg's historical hypothesis about the failure of previous forms of moral education as a catalyst to war, the main concern of Cognitive Development Theory was the attempt to build moral thinking on a system of rationally universalisable ideas (on a Kantian understanding), rather than promoting moral affect and motivation, which Kohlberg considered essentially fleeting, unsystematic, and unreliable as moral guides. So much has been written about the eventual fall of the Kohlbergian paradigm, by Sanderse and others, that there is little need here to flog a dead horse. In short, Cognitive Development Theory failed at its essential task of explaining the step from knowing the good to doing it, as scant correlations were ever found between levels of moral reasoning and actual moral behaviour (Blasi, 1980). Moral emotions turned out to be something more than just agreeable add-ons or embellishments. Furthermore, the theory suffered from methodological one-sidedness, as Kohlberg initially sought to determine children's moral development only from examining the reasoning skills of boys, a consideration which proponents of Care Ethics latched onto. While Sanderse deftly analyses some of the failures of Cognitive Development Theory, he could have taken a more cautious approach in his sketching of a Neo-Aristotelian Model of Moral Development, which he attempts to describe in terms of an Aristotelian naturalism. On the grounds that 'Aristotle's own ethical work do not contain a clear-cut development model', Sanderse introduces a Model of Moral Development, aimed at the following two objectives, to show:

1. How practical reason can become an intellectual virtue and how in this process:
2. The emotions are simultaneously moralised into virtues of character (Sanderse, 2012, p. 102)

The model consists in four stages which people move through towards becoming fully virtuous (Sanderse, 2012, pp. 101-102). This model of moral progress is sketched out in terms

of Aristotelian moral concepts. Jacobs's recent essay, 'Aristotelian Ethical Virtue: Naturalism Without Measure' (Jacobs, 2017) provides convincing evidence against the perceived (but mistaken) necessity of Sanderson's task. Jacobs shows that 'Aristotle's anthropology and conception of virtue is relevant and plausible today without being assimilated into psychological and social sciences' through a stage-theory route (Jacobs, 2017, pp. 126-127; Kristjánsson, 2018, pp. 192-193) and that, although virtue 'can be understood naturalistically, as a feature of a human being's second nature (Jacobs, 2017, p. 141), which 'comprises specific ways in which capacities have come to be disposed through experience and activity' (Jacobs, 2017, pp. 129-130), this only constitutes whether we have virtues or vices (Jacobs, 2017, p. 131) but is, as such, not a measurement of virtue (Jacobs, 2017, p. 127; Kristjánsson, 2018, pp. 192-193). Moreover,

often the presence and reality of ethical virtue is best ascertained by practical wisdom—a point that is crucial to moral education. Someone could be in possession of a great deal of information about the conditions indicative of the presence of virtue and the conditions conducive to acquisition of it, but still lack practical wisdom and understanding of moral life and moral education. For that person, the information will be just that, i.e., information. (Jacobs, 2017, pp. 140-141)

It, therefore, seems that in spite of Sanderson's tasks at the outset, he will only achieve the first of his two objectives quoted above. Moreover, even if we refuse to go as far as Jacobs in his rejection of conflating Aristotle's naturalistic method with slavish adherence to the tenets of contemporary psychology, the actual developmental trajectory described by Sanderson as Aristotelian is actually not in accordance with Aristotle's own described paths to moral development, because Sanderson suggests (but Aristotle nowhere does) that all moral agents have to pass through the stages of incontinence (weakness of will) and continence (self-control) to advance to the stage of full virtue (Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, 2017a).

Care ethicists, like Gilligan and Noddings, criticised Kohlberg's theory for focusing mainly on boys and typical 'male forms' of reasoning. In their view, the experience of girls should also be taken into account. It was out of this belief that Care Ethics evolved during the 1970s and onwards. It is true that when Cognitive Development Theory is applied to e.g. genders and gender roles, it seems to assume that children assume their gender identity and then strive to maintain it, as if by a natural cause. Care ethicists point out that we cannot get a fair sample of a group by only examining one type of gender within that group. Of course there is some truth to that. However, if care ethicists criticise Cognitive Development Theory on these grounds, they miss a crucial point, namely, that the experience of girls and boys differs largely due to different socially-constructed gender identities. Rather than criticising

Kohlberg's application of his theory, they should therefore have attacked the inherent essentialism about genders in Kohlberg's position. The idea behind Care Ethics is that, rather than determining a child's moral development based on a theory of stages of moral reasoning about justice outcomes, the object of inquiry should be care and its underlying emotional components. Some of the force of this point was lost in the insistence on connecting justice conceptions to typical male forms of reasoning and care conceptions to female ones, when the focus should have been on what characterises moral development for human beings in general. Sanderse analyses some of the pros and cons of Care Ethics well, but his discussion still fails to answer the question *of* whether Care Ethics is fully compatible with (Aristotelian) Character Education or whether it offers a unique feminist perspective on moral development (see further in Curzer, 2007).

Sanderse mentions that [conventional] 'Character Education' was very influential in American history until the 1930s (Sanderse, 2012, p. 68), and, as is expected, points out, that 'of the three approaches discussed, Care Ethics is most sympathetic towards character education (Sanderse, 2012, p. 69). When considering and advocating Aristotelian Character Education and virtue ethics, Sanderse is aware of certain shortcomings:

With regard to the education of virtue in schools, Noddings & Slote [...] admit that character education is 'back in favour', but worry that the lack of empirical support for the strategies that character education promotes, such as role modelling. (Sanderse, 2012, p. 70)

As will be discussed later in this thesis, 'A Framework for Character Education in Schools' addresses this issue specifically (Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues 2017). It is, however, worth noting that in Sanderse's critique, role modelling is singled out (Sanderse, 2013; see also Sanderse, 2012, pp. 132-136). I wholeheartedly agree that empirical support for the role modelling aspect of Aristotelian Character Education is essential, insofar as it seeks to bridge the gap pointed out in Cognitive Development Theory about how moral knowledge (e.g. understood as 'virtue literacy') motivates moral behaviour.

An investigation into the nature of virtue is not something we only do for the sake of knowing what good is, but in order to become good; to acquire virtue and actually lead a meaningful life. Now, if helping people to 'become good' is the purpose of moral philosophy, our inquiries would not be complete without an account of what people go through while they try to lead good lives, and what factors can stimulate or hamper this development. Virtue ethics can stand out by providing an account of how children can become the kind of virtues adult that many contemporary ethical theories take for granted. (Sanderse, 2012, pp. 75-76)

As mentioned earlier, Harðarson proposes that teachers are learners and that some aims of education are not predefined, but discovered along the way. Successful education 'requires a cultural environment where learners and teachers share interests and values' (Harðarson,

2017). This, in my view, ties in with how the teacher ought to approach the role of role modelling. Only if the teacher is earnest in his or her craft, and displays practical wisdom, i.e. by acting morally across a variety of situations, will the goals of moral education be realised. Just stimulating reasoning skills in students or the growth of certain care-relevant moral emotions is not enough in the absence of a moral guide, i.e. parent or teacher who demonstrates how these qualities can be put into practice. Sanderse warns that ‘modelling has been taken for granted to such an extent that the question whether teachers are morally good and effective role models has hardly received serious attention’ (Sanderse, 2013). A possible response to this problem, as will be investigated further in this thesis, is to take into account the emotional components of moral education, and the potential *co-production of emotional sensitivities* in teachers and students through certain classroom interventions. As was argued in Sub-Section 2.1.1.4.3, above, working with poetry is a felicitous tool for accomplishing that goal. I will return to Sanderse’s book in Section 2.1.4, below.

#### 2.1.2.2 Returning to Wittgenstein

A certain similarity can be found between Wittgenstein’s famous remarks on rule-following and the way the Western world typically thinks and goes on about education.

In his later writings, Wittgenstein talks about the attitude through which one takes on a task (Monk, 1991, pp. 301-303). This can be anything really: interpreting dreams, philosophising, appreciating an art work, etc. In short, the observer/investigator conceptualises, first, a rule or a theory, and, second, an object. However, instead of seeing only these two things, and mistakenly looking for or placing meaning in these, Wittgenstein tells us that what really matters is the application of the rule or theory onto the object. But, importantly, the application of the rule depends on the expectation one has of the object.<sup>21</sup> What Wittgenstein essentially says is this: We are – and he blames Science and our belief in Science for this process – too taken in by rules (or theories), and by the meaning of these rules (PI I, §202), as if their structures carry a meaning themselves (Monk, 1991, p. 308).

Wittgenstein claims that rules do not mean anything in and of themselves. A useful analogy, which he mentions, is the game of chess (PI I, §33 & §205; McGinn, 1997, p. 64 & 67; Monk, 1991, p. 308 & 356; Rhees, 1984, pp. 139-140; Cole, 2007).<sup>22</sup> The rules for an individual

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<sup>21</sup> I would like to thank Dr. Michael Nedo, director of the Wittgenstein Archives in Cambridge, for bringing this to my attention during our discussion at the Archives (regarding this point, see also Monk, 1991, pp. 468-469; Van Gennip, 2014, p. 587), on 19 November 2017, and for his invaluable assistance and insight into Wittgenstein’s view on education, which I make use of in this section.

<sup>22</sup> Interestingly, Harðarson (2017) cites a somewhat identical example from Dewey.

piece on the chessboard do not mean anything (PI I, §47; Monk, 1991, p. 308), even if you study the piece and the rules for moving it until your face is blue. They only acquire meaning (serve a purpose) within the web of connections of the rules about this piece within other rules in chess (PI I, §35 & §206; McGinn, 1997, p. 68; Monk, 1991, p. 308). Wittgenstein, thus, maintains that the only meaningful thing about such an investigation or observation (i.e. studying or learning about a rule), is seeing, grasping the *connections between* rules (Monk, 1991, pp. 301-302 & 308). It is interesting to measure this process against the typical processes of education in general and moral education in particular.

Essentially, the same mistaken assumption is replicated within the school system. We are obsessed with teaching children and testing their knowledge of individual rules and theories, when, instead, what would be truly edifying and make their lives good is helping them understand the connections between these. In that sense, to return once again to Deweyan insights, all good education is *holistic* education. In the field of moral education – even within some approaches that tend to be connected to Character Education – the focus tends to be on individual virtues tied to individual situations, e.g. through a day or a week in the school curriculum devoted to the virtue of honesty. The core theoretical insight motivating the current thesis, which can be argued for both on Wittgensteinian and Deweyan grounds for those who prefer something more modern-sounding than Aristotle, is that moral education is about helping students understand the whole web of concerns and considerations relevant to moral functioning in the world. I assume here, and will argue later (in Section 2.1.3), that the connective tissue here lies in *emotional sensitivities*, and that one of the best ways to cultivate such sensitivities – in teachers and students alike – is through the medium of poetry. Hence, in order to build a bridge from the thematic overview of moral theories that has been provided in the present section to the discussion of poetic inquiry more specifically in 2.1.4, we need to delve into the philosophy of emotions and how that relates to character cultivation (in particular through the arts).

#### *2.1.2.3 Three Central Concepts: A Virtue and Two Emotions*

In the following, I will introduce three central concepts to this study, a virtue, namely *empathy*, and two emotions, *pride* and *shame*.

*Empathy* is the ability and attitude of engaging in the understanding of other people through putting oneself ‘in the shoes’ of another person (Helskog, 2020, p. 218).<sup>23</sup> This engagement is

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<sup>23</sup> Some empathy theorists understand this identification merely cognitively, i.e. *understanding* what the other person feels, but others assume that theory actually involves *feeling* the same feelings as the other person. However, this difference is not relevant for present purposes.

essential for building a community and is more likely to thrive when based on trust (Helskog, 2020, p. 121).

Empathy has been understood in various ways in the literature: as (a) an emotion, (b) as a psychological condition for certain other-regarding emotion, without itself being an emotion, or (c) a broad-based virtue. To add to the confusion, there is a common conflation between ‘empathy’ and ‘sympathy’, harking all the way back to David Hume who used the term ‘sympathy’ for what most modern scholars would call ‘empathy’ (Kristjánsson, 2018, chap. 4). When arguing for moral education through the lense of the problem of sociality, positing a conception of education that is free of indoctrination, Hand writes:

It is precisely because we are sympathetic to one another, because we are moved by others’ suffering, because we want everyone to be happy and healthy and safe, that we have good reason to subscribe (and not just feign subscription) to moral standards. (Hand, 2018, p. 119)

Keeping Hand’s observation in mind, for the purposes of the present intervention, I decided to rely on an understanding of empathy as a virtue, as this is a common understanding in the character-education literature. Empathy is there typically understood as a broad-based trait that encompasses both sympathy, compassion and pity, i.e. as a general trait of identifying with, and feeling pain at, other people’s bad fortune.

In ancient Greece, pride was regarded a virtue, but in the past 7-800 years or so, it has been converted to a Christian vice or sin (Kristjánsson, 2013, p. 26). In an individualistic sense, pride can both be perceived as a morally positive and negative emotion. But other aspects of it, such as the idea of national pride (as connected with nationalism), tend to be regarded in a negative way. While empathy, as described above, is directed at other people, pride is directed at oneself (Kristjánsson, 2018, p. 9).

Hand describes shame as a regulating factor in one’s life, as if a deliberating emotion:

The prospect of feeling guilty or ashamed for breaching a moral standard, or of being blamed or condemned for it by others, must be unpleasant enough to dissuade us from it, even when strongly tempted or sorely provoked. And guilt, shame, blame and condemnation are only unpleasant in prospect because they are unpleasant in fact. It is because we do sometimes fail to meet our moral obligations, and because we are censured and made to feel ashamed of ourselves when it happens, that we know how much we want to avoid these things. If what psychologists call the ‘self-conscious’ and ‘other-condemning’ moral emotions [...] are to be effective deterrents, we must at some point experience their ugliness in full force. (Hand, 2018, p. 114)

It is important to view shame as being potentially educationally positive, if applied in the right medial way. In an educational sense, proper shame can serve the purpose of ‘guiding moral learners in the right direction’ (Kristjánsson, 2018, p. 98).

As there are disparate and conflicting literatures on whether pride and shame should be considered virtues or vices, I simply rely in this thesis on a less loaded and controversial understanding of them as emotions – whose virtuous or non-virtuous nature then depends on the circumstances rather than the nature of the emotions as such. I here depart from Kristjánsson's (2018) more moralised understanding.

### 2.1.3 Overview of Emotions (SEL), Virtues and Education

This section offers an overview of emotions (especially as characterised by SEL), virtues and education. It dwells briefly into the role of emotion in education as portrayed by such thinkers as David Carr and John Macmurray. The aim is to underpin the role of emotions in the character-building efforts ascribed in this thesis to poetic inquiry.

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is perhaps the most influential latter-day approach to thinking about emotions within education. Its goal can be divided into 5 components: Self-awareness (recognising emotions), Self-management (understanding emotions), Social-awareness (labelling emotions), Relationship skills (expressing emotions), and Responsible decision-making (regulation emotions). It aims at 'integrating emotion with thinking and behaviour so that students become more self-aware and self-controlled, have better relationship skills, and are more likely to make responsible decisions' (Kristjánsson, 2018, p. 169). It involves 'teaching and modeling social and emotional skills, providing opportunities for students to practice and hone those skills, and giving students an opportunity to apply these skills in various situations' (Weissberg, 2016). In a recent survey of 762 educators from fifteen countries, conducted by The Economist Intelligence Unit, it was found that '80% of educators believe positive emotions are critical for academic success, and that emotional well-being is crucial for developing foundational literacies and communication skills' (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2019; here, quoted from CASEL, 2020).

Kristjánsson identifies four differential criteria to analyse the content of SEL: valence of emotions to be educated, value epistemology, general aims of emotion education, and self-related goals (Kristjánsson, 2018, p. 30). With regards to the first criterion, Kristjánsson observes that SEL focuses on the enhancement of positively valenced emotions (Goleman, 1995, p. 283; here, quoted from Kristjánsson, 2018, p. 169), and the control of negatively valenced and disruptive ones (Hoffman, 2009, pp. 542 & 546; here, quoted from Kristjánsson, 2018, p. 169). He infers that the epistemological assumptions are either soft sentimentalist or soft rationalist (Kristjánsson, 2018, p. 169). Soft sentimentalism seeks to 'preserve the Humean idea that moral values are grounded in sentiments while at the same time making

sense of the critical aspects of evaluation’ (D’Arms and Jacobsen, 2000, p. 722; here, quoted from Kristjánsson, 2018, p. 39), while soft rationalism subscribes to ‘the assumption that emotional reactions may count as virtuous’ (Kristjánsson, 2018, p. 34). The general aims of emotion education in SEL are instrumentalist: better school attainment and better prosocial integration (CASEL, 2016; here, quoted from Kristjánsson, 2018, p. 169).

For anyone vaguely familiar with Aristotelian virtue ethics and character education, this brief overview of SEL demonstrates how limited it is with regard to the goals of Aristotelian character education. First, Aristotle does not make a clear distinction between emotions with ‘negative’ and ‘positive’ valence (i.e. painful and pleasant) in the context of ideal emotion cultivation. For example, one of the emotions that should be foregrounded in Aristotelian emotion education, namely compassion (*pain* at someone’s undeserved bad fortune), has what psychologists would call ‘negative valence’. Second, Aristotle does not equate emotion education with emotional suppression but rather with the infusion of emotions with reason. Third, Aristotle sees the role of emotion education more as intrinsic than instrumentalist. Having the right emotions at the right time is constitutive of the virtuous flourishing life, rather than simply conducive to some goals above and beyond the emotions themselves (such as job success).

Having provided this backdrop for Social and Emotional Learning, I therefore need to turn my attention to Aristotle’s own philosophy of emotions.

#### *2.1.3.1 The Philosophy of Emotions*

‘According to [Aristotle], the soul [is] the unity of three parts: rational, sensual and vegetative. The rational part [presupposes] the activity of passive and active reason, and [is] responsible for rational cognition; on the other hand, the sensual part presupposed senses, emotions and imagination’ (Dabrowski, 2016, p. 9; see further in Aristotle, 1984). A basic principle of his ethics [is] that the man [seeks] for the highest purpose—happiness—with his whole soul. Emotions—as a part of it—[must] be engaged in that pursuit. However, they [belong] to the lower part of the soul, [and are therefore] subjected to the reason (Aristotle, 1984; here, quoted from Dabrowski, 2016, p. 9) in the sense of being ideally infused with it, rather than being policed by it.

Aristotle proposed that education may change the emotional dispositions so that their affective evaluations and inclinations support the quest for the good life instead of disrupting it. This was the basis of his theory of the virtues, which included the good emotional habits of the sensory soul and the good habits of the practical reason. (Knuttila, 2018)

As part of his philosophical psychology, Aristotle developed a considered theory of how the rational part may co-operate with the powers of the sensory part (Irwin, 2017, p. 35; here, quoted from Knuttila, 2018). Kristjánsson identifies two contrasting general modes of emotional theory. One can be traced to Darwin, depicting emotions as bodily feelings that stem from our nervous system. According to the other, harking back to an Aristotelian perspective, emotions are ‘viewed primarily as cognitions (of value) although feelings and other components are also involved’ (Kristjánsson, 2018, p. 5). A simplified account of this might be that the former understanding states that emotions are nerve signals, innate products of the neurological processes of the human brain, while the latter states that they are cognitive products of, and take place within, the mind. In my view, the latter account allows for an educational theory of emotions that goes beyond mere emotional conditioning, while the former is more restricted in that sense. Aristotle proposes a componential theory of emotion, where each emotion has a perceptual component, a sensory component, and a goal-directed component. However, for present purposes, the most important component is the fourth component, the cognitive one, which is constituted by *thought*. For example, compassion is basically constituted by the thought that someone has suffered undeserved bad fortune. To change emotions, therefore, we need to change thoughts – which is where education comes in. All in all, emotional dispositions can, no less than action dispositions, have an ‘intermediate and best condition [...] proper to virtue’ – a condition in which the relevant emotions are felt ‘at the right times, about the right things, towards the right people, for the right end and in the right way’ (Aristotle, 1985, II.6 1106b17–35). If a relevant emotion is ‘too intense or slack’ for its present object, we are badly off in relation to it, but if it is intermediate, we are ‘well off’ (Aristotle, 1985, II.5 1105b26–28). Persons can be fully virtuous only if they are regularly disposed to experiencing emotions in this medial way. But they can only experience emotions in such medial ways if the thoughts underlying their emotions track moral reality correctly. Just as much as it is the role of educators to help students track facts about the natural world, it is also their role to help students track emotion-relevant facts correctly. We must remember here that Aristotle was not in the thrall of Hume’s fact-value distinction, and for him values (including emotional values) describe an objective world of evaluation, rather than just subjectively evaluating a separate world of neutral description.

#### *2.1.3.2 The Educational Cultivation of Moral Virtue, Feeling and Emotion*

Aristotle’s theory of emotions, and its salience for character education, is a topic large enough for another PhD thesis or two. For reasons of space, I will now move quickly, however, into the educational application of those ideas, with special reference to the work of educational

philosopher David Carr who has written more than anyone else on the role of arts (including poetry) in promoting emotional development in a broadly Aristotelian sense.

David Carr has been focusing on and promoting arts and poetry for the education of virtuous sentiment and character for decades. He reminds us that it is ‘clear from Aristotle’s *Poetics* that such arts as drama and poetry may play a significant role in the education of virtuous reason, desire and emotion. In this respect, indeed, it is worth recalling Aristotle’s insistence in the *Poetics* that poetry – the literary form of great moral and spiritual drama’ (Carr, 2008, p. 42) – ‘is something more philosophic and of graver import than history’, since it is addressed to matters of ‘universal’ rather than particular human concern (Aristotle, 1941, 9 1451b1-4; here, quoted from Carr, 2008, p. 42; see also Carr, 2010, p. 2). Carr points out that ‘insofar as Aristotle considered proper emotional development (as distinct from mere emotional control) necessary to the growth of the practical wisdom of virtue, and also regarded (at least some) arts as conducive to such growth, he also recognized the potential significance of music and poetry for the development of virtue’ (Carr, 2010, p. 1). Thus, if ‘Sophocles draws men as they ought to be and Euripides draws them as they are’ (Aristotle, 1941, 25 1460b32-34; here, quoted from Carr, 2010, p. 1), then, ‘the exploration of moral ideals provided by the former and the knowledge of human nature offered by the latter might serve to promote healthy moral reflection and properly ordered emotion’ (Carr, 2010, pp. 1-2). In other words, for Aristotle, (great) poetry may ‘contribute to the development of moral virtue’ (Carr, 2010, p. 2).<sup>24</sup>

In his 2005 article ‘On the Contribution of Literature and the Arts to the Educational Cultivation of Moral Virtue, Feeling and Emotion’ Carr (2005) notes that emotion and affect have largely been neglected, not only in latter day theories of moral development such as Kohlberg’s theory of moral development (1984), but also notably in two of the most predominant Western theories of ethics, namely deontology and consequentialism (Carr, 2005, p. 138). Carr holds that ‘a virtue ethics in the broad tradition of Aristotle holds out the best prospect for an account of moral association, character, and education that does not appropriate justice to the moral interplay of principle and affect, or of reason and emotion’ (Carr, 2005, p. 140). Carr does give credit to the criticism directed by early character educators, such as Lickona (1992), at the cognitive development tradition, by questioning the motivational power of moral reason as this is conceived by Cognitive Development Theory

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<sup>24</sup> In many more recent contributions to the literature, Carr seems to be moving from his earlier neo-Aristotelianism towards a Platonic conception of the human good, especially as seen through the lens of Iris Murdoch. However, although Plato’s emotion theory differs substantially from that of his disciple, Aristotle, Carr still seems to think that an Aristotelian notion of emotion can nourish and underpin efforts at character development through the arts.

(Carr, 2005, p. 139). However, he also criticises early US-style character education for placing ‘greater emphasis on more practical or experiential initiation into such moral dispositions as self-control, responsibility, truthfulness and so on’ (Carr, 2005, p. 139), arguing that in the tradition of Aristotelian virtue ethics

a moral virtue just is a particular ordering of the affective springs of human action. In so far as appropriate contexts of nurture and training are presupposed to such proper ordering of appetite, inclination and passion, virtue ethics has something in common with modern character developmental approaches to moral education (which have also claimed Aristotelian ancestry). (Carr, 2005, p. 140)

At the time of advancing this observation, Aristotelian Character Education had not yet been formally defined (see e.g. Kristjánsson, 2015), but arguably Carr’s critique – when he for instance states that ‘in locating a distinctive form of practical reason at the heart of the cultivation of genuine virtue, I believe that virtue ethics provides a rather more theoretically sophisticated view of the complexities of moral life than character education’ (Carr, 2005, p. 140) – points in the direction of an educational advancement in the form of Aristotelian Character Education, as a means to appropriately cultivating emotions.

#### 2.1.3.3 *The Relevance of Emotions*

Whether stated explicitly or not, the aim of the educational system is (or should be, according to the eudaimonic view undergirding this thesis) to nurture and help grow good humans. The Aristotelian understanding of emotions support the idea that emotions guide our reflections, rather than leading such reflection astray:

Indeed, insofar as virtue ethical emotions require rational ordering, virtue ethics is undoubtedly an ethics of principled reflection, and it is so in two related, albeit distinguishable, respects. The first – rather broader – respect in which a virtue ethics involves reference to principle is that which requires any and all morally salient dispositions to be ordered as means between unacceptable extremes of affective excess and defect. To be sure, insofar as these unacceptable extremes may resist determination by the mechanical application of general rules, it is common for virtue ethics to be characterized as an ethics of judgement as opposed to more deontically ‘principled’ ethics of duty and utility – but it should all the same be clear that virtue ethical reflection is rationally principled in this broader sense. However, it should also be clear that virtue ethics is principled in the somewhat narrower sense of holding some moral conduct to be specifiable in the form of absolute prescriptions or prohibitions. (Carr, 2005, p. 140)

The key words here are ‘any and all morally salient dispositions’. Since for Carr (and Aristotle) emotional dispositions (gr. *hexeis*) fall under the umbrella of morally salient dispositions, those are also part and parcel of any ‘principled moral reflection’.<sup>25</sup> Emotions

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<sup>25</sup> Clearly, Carr does not equate ‘principled’ with ‘codifiable’, either in a Kantian or utilitarian sense. He rather means something like ‘reason-responsive’.

propel moral reflection by providing them with a motivational drive, because emotions are, by their very nature, intrinsically motivating. They aid reason and guide conduct. In that sense, they form an integral part of moral development and the lifelong project of acquiring what Aristotle referred to as practical wisdom (*phronesis*). Practical wisdom involves the proper discernment of the ethical virtues (Aristotle, 2011, V.13 1144b18-45a2; see also p. 53, above): knowing how, when, and appropriately to display a virtue in a situation that has ethical bearings.

#### 2.1.3.4 John Macmurray

One name which tends to be forgotten in the discourse about emotions and education is that of John Macmurray. His writings even predate those of David Carr by a few decades.

As early as the 1930s, John Macmurray argued for the education of emotions in articles, books, and radio presentations. His moral philosophy has been classified as *personalism*, which is a type of existentialism. Some of the main concepts of his thought are ‘action’, ‘agent’, ‘person’, and ‘friendship’. His theory of emotional rationality assumes that action precedes thought. First, ‘I act’, then, ‘I think’. This is an attempt to escape Descartes’ dualism. For instance, friendship, and, for that matter, our very existence as persons, is rooted in action, but not mere thinking (Gee, 2006). The same goes for relationship, ‘[c]reating community between persons is not just an idea to contemplate, but a central underlying task for humankind’ (Gee, 2006). For Macmurray, emotions are a form of rational activity, preceding more abstract, generalised thoughts. However, they still involve ‘thoughts’ (in the sense that any rational activity is thought-driven) that are educable. This distinction between two kinds of thoughts is not entirely Aristotelian except insofar as it possibly mirrors Aristotle’s distinction between practical and theoretical knowledge.

Macmurray admitted that the education of emotions demands discipline but made a distinction between the harsh discipline of an authority figure and the discipline that we learn from and acquire by experience (Macmurray, 2014). The aim of focusing on the latter is the cultivation of expression and the cultivation of perception: ‘The failure to develop the emotional life will [...] result in abstraction and division; in a failure to see life steadily and as a whole’ (Macmurray, 1962, p. 43). Macmurray claims emotional development can and should be acquired by encouraging and reinforcing a child’s talent for art (Macmurray, 2014). We might even claim that this is exactly what the early stages of education often do (at the preschool level), but sadly that such methods are often washed out as children progress to the latter stages of the educational system.

Through exercising the craft of poetry, children and young students are provided with tools for exploring emotions, and discerning and deliberating about virtues and moral context in the context of human experience. The reasoning behind this stimulation of creativity can be found in Aristotelian educational and emotional theory, and in modern philosophy of emotions, insofar as it addressed the question of emotion education (e.g. in the works of Macmurray and Carr). How poetic inquiry and poetic creation enters this picture will be discussed in Section 2.1.4.

#### 2.1.4 Scott Seider's *Character Compass*

So far, I have focused in this chapter on issues relating to character education that are essentially philosophical and/or related to the link that I have tried to forge between character education and poetic inquiry. Practitioners and other more practically oriented reader might complain that this review chapter has not said much about the actual school-and-classroom context of character education: issues that could be categorised as educational or even sociological rather than philosophical or psychological. It is time to make amends through a detailed exploration of a more ethnographically oriented study.

As a case in point, the subject matter of this section is the book *Character Compass: How Powerful School Culture Can Point Students Toward Success* by Scott Seider (Seider, 2015). The book discusses a mixed methods study of character education programming at the Boston Preparatory, Roxbury Preparatory, and Academy of the Pacific Rim charter schools during the 2010-2011 academic year. The purpose of the book is to explore the effectiveness of different approaches to character education in three schools with considerably different foci on the subject matter.

The model that I use for determining the philosophical underpinnings of Seider's study is derived from the book *Research Methods for Business Students* by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill; dubbed by the authors as the '*research onion*' (Saunders et al., 2016, pp. 124 & 164; Saunders et al., 2019, pp. 130 & 174). I choose this analytical model as it provides an accessible and rigorous insight into understanding research philosophy and practical approaches to theory development. The authors argue that a researcher's beliefs and assumptions affect all decisions about any given study, and, therefore, by acknowledging these choices one acquires a deeper and more meaningful understanding of one's research, methodology, and methods used (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 123; Saunders et al., 2019, p. 129). What I hope to gain by this, is that by examining Seider's methodological choices (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 167; Saunders et al., 2019, p. 176) for an inquiry into actual character

education, the findings can inform, shape, and strengthen the theoretical choices that I faced in my own study within the same field.

The term ‘research philosophy’ refers to a system of beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 124; Saunders et al., 2019, p. 130). To briefly explain, epistemological assumptions include assumptions about human knowledge, while ontological assumptions are about the nature of the ‘realities’ researchers encounter in their research (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 124; Saunders et al., 2019, p. 130).

Before attending to the philosophical assumptions of Seider’s study, it is worth mentioning that Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill identify another type of research assumption which has a bearing on a researcher’s value judgement, and is, as such, of moral significance. The authors call these axiological assumptions, defined as a ‘branch of philosophy concerned with the role of values and ethics within the research process’ (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 711). Such research assumptions bear a resemblance to a particular type of presupposition that Wittgenstein had in mind when explaining his philosophical method and ideas about education (see Section 2.1.2). My reason for highlighting this is that Seider is (as I am in my own research project) concerned with an axiological critique of the educational system. From the point of view of a research philosophy, as mentioned above, such assumptions are understood as axiological assumptions, as they represent the fundamental values that one ascribes to the nature of the subject matter: holistically (as Wittgenstein recommended) or via its individual components, understood in isolation. They refer:

to the role of values and ethics within the research process. This incorporates questions about how we, as researchers, deal with both our own values and those of our research participants. [...] The role that your own values play in all stages of the research process is of great importance if research results are to be credible. (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 128; Saunders et al., 2019, p. 134)

While epistemological and ontological assumptions are philosophically important, I want to suggest that axiological assumptions are ethically important, and, as such, should be juxtaposed with the other two kinds of presuppositions. By highlighting this, I also want to acknowledge and tease out the implications of my own critique of the same system on the philosophical assumptions inherent in my research project.

In my analysis of Seider’s *Character Compass*, however, I investigate the first two types of assumptions mentioned, i.e. the epistemological and ontological ones.

This investigation will implicitly pose questions relating to the interplay of the axiological assumptions although those will not be pursued in the following. However, I address the axiological assumptions explicitly throughout the remainder of this thesis.

First, I will determine the philosophy behind Seider's research. Second, I will discuss his approach to theory development. Third, I will assess his methodological choice. Fourth, I will discuss his strategies. Fifth, I will take a look at the time horizon of his research, and, to conclude, I will evaluate his techniques and procedures of data collection and data analysis. By doing so, I will have laid bare the philosophical underpinnings of Seider's *Character Compass*, which I then compare with Bohlin's *Teaching Character Education Through Literature: Awakening the Moral Imagination in Secondary Classrooms* (Bohlin, 2005).

#### 2.1.4.1 Philosophy

The research philosophy which Seider assumes can be explained in terms of pragmatism.

[It] asserts that concepts are only relevant where they support action [...]. Pragmatism originated in the late-nineteenth-early-twentieth-century USA in the work of philosophers Charles Peirce, William James and John Dewey. It strives to reconcile both objectivism and subjectivism, facts and values, accurate and rigorous knowledge and different contextualised experiences. (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 143; Saunders et al., 2019, p. 151)

The literature review in the first chapter of *Character Compass* provides an indication of the philosophy behind Seider's research. In short, Seider wants to explore the moral dimensions of *education practice*. Seider's research is based on an adaptation of Berkowitz's triadic character model, which portrays three character types (performance character, civic character, and moral character) which exert 'the strongest influence upon an individual's moral identity' (Seider, 2015, p. 34). Interestingly, Seider does not discuss the fourth type of character that tends to be highlighted in works on character education, namely intellectual character (as instantiated via so-called intellectual or epistemic virtues). I will get back to this 'omission', when discussing Seider's ontological assumptions below.

Each of these character types signifies an approach 'to character education with the goal of promoting reflection and discussion among educators, parents, and policy makers regarding the 'the goodness of fit' of each approach to stakeholders' own school and community contexts (Seider, 2015, p. 222). With the research, Seider wants to unveil the effects of philosophical study upon middle and secondary school students (Seider, 2015, p. 241). Although Seider does not define his own epistemology as pragmatist, his lack of interest in epistemological justifications above and beyond the 'goodness of fit' criterion, seems to place him firmly in the pragmatist camp. The pragmatists' research philosophy is aimed at contributing 'practical solutions that inform future practice' (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 143; Saunders et al., 2019, p. 151), and, as such, Seider is undertaking pragmatist research.

A pragmatist research philosophy is well-defined in terms of the researcher's ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions in their research. Pragmatism 'strives to reconcile both objectivism and subjectivism, facts and values, accurate and rigorous knowledge and different contextualised experiences. [...] Reality matters to pragmatists as practical effects of ideas, and knowledge is valued for enabling actions to be carried out successfully' (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 143; Saunders et al., 2019, p. 151).

The ontological assumptions, referring to the researcher's understanding of the nature of reality or being, are complex, rich, and external. 'Reality' is the practical consequences of ideas, and a flux of processes, experiences and practices (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 137; Saunders et al., 2019, p. 145). Earlier, I mentioned that Seider omits intellectual character, defined as the 'overarching conglomeration of habits of mind, patterns of thought, and general dispositions toward thinking that not only direct but also motivates one's thinking oriented pursuits' (Seider, 2015, p. 231), in his adaptation of Berkowitz's character model. Although, he does not discuss it within this model, he does mention it as an alternative approach to character education in singling out its implementation in Fenway High School (a pilot high school that is part of Boston Public Schools) where intellectual character is directly cultivated. Seider acknowledges that this approach falls outside the moral-performance-civic character trichotomy (Seider, 2015, p. 232) without really justifying this assumption, and I argue it is an ontological one. He simply attributes this divergence to the specific focus of that school, in the same way that 'parochial and other types of religious schools [would privilege] a *spiritual* character development, which shares some of the features of moral character development but in other ways is quite distinctive' (Seider, 2015, p. 232). I therefore suggest that Seider's ontological assumptions can be derived not from what he explicitly says about his understanding of reality, but from what he omits from his account.

The epistemological assumptions, referring to what constitutes acceptable knowledge, determine practical meaning of knowledge in specific context. 'True' theories and knowledge are those that enable successful action. There is a focus on problems, practices, and relevance, and on problem solving and informed future practice as contributing to the research environment (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 137; Saunders et al., 2019, p. 145). Seider believes that structuring character education is best achieved (here quoting Dave Levin, founder of the Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP)) through 'the practice of deliberately working explicit talk about character strengths into every lesson' (Seider, 2015, p. 233).

To put the above two in context, it is worth noting that the axiological assumptions determine value-driven research. The research is initiated and sustained by the researcher's doubts and

beliefs, and is, therefore, reflexive (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 137; Saunders et al., 2019, p. 145).

#### *2.1.4.2 Approach to Theory Development*

When discussing the pragmatist view of research knowledge, Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill suggest that it is plausible and quite typical to adopt multiple interpretations of the world, seeing as ‘no single point of view can ever give the entire picture and that there may be multiple realities’ (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 144; Saunders et al., 2019, p. 151). Seider incorporates this outlook by adopting Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences, which ‘characterizes intelligence as composed of eight sub-intelligences that people use to solve problems and create products relevant to the societies in which they live (Seider, 2015, p. 23). In addition to this claim, Seider indicates a further allegiance with the pragmatists’ research philosophy, by exploring and striving to support and influence thought and action ‘in terms of their practical consequences in specific contexts’ (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 143; Saunders et al., 2019, p. 151). Seider’s approach to character development, therefore, emphasises the development of ‘moral literacy’ (Seider, 2015, p. 23). By doing so, Seider, as Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill would confirm, is enabling credible, well-founded, reliable, and relevant data to be collected that advances the studies (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 144; Saunders et al., 2019, p. 151), which is the main objective of pragmatist research philosophy.

#### *2.1.4.3 Seider’s Methodological Choice*

In his study, Seider adopts a concurrent mixed methods research, which allows for the ‘separate use of quantitative and qualitative methods within a single stage of data collection and analysis’ (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 170; Saunders et al., 2019, p. 182). Seider explains that he took a mixed methods approach to his assessment of how three subject schools conceptualise character development in different ways (Seider, 2015, p. 242). They

took a mixed methods approach to this assessment. Specifically, the student bodies at all three schools completed quantitative surveys at the beginning and conclusion of the 2010–2011 academic year that sought to measure attitudinal shifts on a number of different character measures. We also carried out qualitative interviews with students, faculty, administrators, and parents associated with each school and conducted observations of the schools’ character education programming and practices. (Seider, 2015, p. 242)

This would be adequately described as an inductive, or bottom-up, approach to theory development, which consists in moving from data to theory (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 148; Saunders et al., 2019, p. 155). Inductive reasoning is likely to be concerned with ‘the study of a small sample of subjects’, thus allowing the researcher ‘to work with qualitative data and to

use a variety of methods to collect these data in order to establish different views of phenomena' (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 147; Saunders et al., 2019, p. 155).

Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill affirm that concurrent triangulation design allows for the use of mixed methods 'in order to combine data to ascertain if the findings from one method mutually corroborate the findings from the other method' (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 173; Saunders et al., 2019, p. 185). This is exactly what Seider has in mind when he makes 'use of the school's internal data on student achievement and conduct. Triangulation of the various data allowed for more robust conclusions about the results of our quantitative and qualitative analyses' (Seider, 2015, p. 242). If my above characterisation of Seider as a pragmatist holds good, his ultimate aim in 'theory development' is not the development of a grand-narrative theory, but simply one which explains serviceably the factors at work in a specific (school) context and how those satisfy or fail to satisfy the goodness-of-fit criterion.

#### 2.1.4.4 Strategy

In his book *Doing Research in the Real World*, David Grey notes that narrative inquiry has been criticised for leading 'to the fragmentation and decontextualization of data away from the social processes they are meant to represent' (Grey, 2004, pp. 340-341). It is, however, as Grey points out, an 'ideal way of capturing the lived experiences of participants' as it is likely to elicit 'qualitative data in the form of narratives or stories that lead to more holistic data right from the start' (Grey, 2004, p. 341). Bohlin (2005) has applied this outlook, not as a research theory, but, as a teaching method for fostering ethical reflection in the classroom, and this provides an interesting contrast to Seider's study method. This also leads back, one might argue, to the epistemological assumptions which Seider is concerned with. These are our assumptions about knowledge, what constitutes acceptable, valid and legitimate knowledge, 'and how we can communicate that knowledge to others' (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 127; Saunders et al., 2019, p. 133; see also Burrell and Morgan, 2005, pp. 1-2).

Concerning ethnography, Grey writes about certain ethics in observational studies where we find that 'researchers are unique in actually sharing the lives of those they are researching' (Grey, 2004, p. 258), and given that one aspect of the data collection of Seider's study involves participant observations (an ethnographic observation), Seider takes measures to 'ensure that there was no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, homogeneity of variances, homogeneity of regression slopes, and reliable measurement of the covariate' (Seider, 2015, pp. 247-248).

My reason for juxtaposing this evaluation of narrative method and ethnographic observations is that I believe Seider would have deepened his research by positing moral imagination and moral vision (Bohlin, 2005, pp. 33-35) as components of moral character. As Bohlin points out, when we are lacking a clear moral vision or purpose, overlooking the complexity of moral growth ‘can sometimes give rise to a character education that focuses too narrowly on stamping out problem behaviors or preparing an honest and efficient future workforce to secure a more robust economy. The reality is that many efforts to educate for character [...] are often superficial’ (Bohlin, 2005, p. 2). By this I merely want to suggest that an approach which takes into account some of Bohlin’s concerns might construe a more coherent and effective pragmatist research philosophy. I return to this issue in my methods chapter, Chapter 3.

#### *2.1.4.5 Time Horizon*

The time horizon for Seider’s studies is longitudinal. These are intended to ‘study change and development over time’ (Grey, 2004, p. 32). Seider notes that the ‘call for more longitudinal research is a familiar refrain in educational arenas, but the need for such research is particularly vital in the fields of character development and character education (Seider, 2015, p. 253). An ‘implementation of a character education program must include a pre-assessment of goals and a post-assessment of results’ (Brooks and Kann, 1993, p. 21). I do not agree with those who maintain that such ‘an assessment may be as rigorous as a full blown longitudinal study, or it can be as informal as counting disciplinary referrals or gathering anecdotal teacher impressions’ (Elkind and Sweet, 2004). I think, as Seider and most researchers are likely to concur, that the former option is the only acceptable choice.

#### *2.1.4.6 Techniques and Procedures*

In his studies, Seider collects several different types of data from the students, faculty, and parents of three participating schools: quantitative surveys, qualitative interview, participant observations, and archival achievement and behavioural data (Seider, 2015, pp. 243-244).

To analyse the quantitative survey, Seider conducts ‘a principal components analysis to form composites from the survey items completed by this study’s participants for the following constructs: daring, empathy, community connectedness, ethical identity, integrity, perseverance, and respect’ (Seider, 2015, p. 247). Seider, therefore, draws upon a variety of themes in order to measure the students’ character development over the course of the academic year, based on ‘moral and performance character strengths’ (Seider, 2015, p. 249).

#### *2.1.4.7 Bohlin's Teaching Character Education through Literature*

In the forewords to Bohlin's 2005 book, *Teaching Character Education through Literature*, Wayne C. Booth describes how in the recent past the school system has overlooked children's ability for ethical reading in favour of engaging with literature as an aesthetic matter, while professor Jon Davison iterates the importance of ethical reflection literature (Bohlin, 2005, p. x & p. xii). According to Bohlin, an 'ethical inquiry in the literature classroom can awaken and educate student's moral imaginations' (Bohlin, 2005, p. xii). This takes place when the students put themselves in the shoes of a given character or contemplate the world put before them, and thereby their own world and themselves as human beings. This aspect of character education plays on the relationship between moral character and intellectual character, but, Seider excludes the latter. Although Bohlin is not introducing a study, it is interesting to compare these two books. In Bohlin's implementation of character education, she dives into an aspect of character development that Seider chooses to overlook, but would have benefitted his studies, as I have suggested.

#### *2.1.4.8 Concluding Remarks on Seider's Character Compass*

In this concluding subsection, I will answer the questions I proposed at the outset of this section.

*What does Seider think character education is?*

There are many types of character education. Seider attributes these to which type of character strength is being developed in a school programme (Seider, 2015, p. 227). The answer for Seider would therefore depend on how it is being carried out.

*What does Seider think we can know (or not know) about character education?*

Seider maintains that character education provides knowledge about the cognitive, affective, and behavioural components of character (Seider, 2015, p. 31). This forms the basis of his model he adapts from Berkowitz to define a taxonomy of character types, namely performance character, civic character, and moral character (Seider, 2015, pp. 32-33). In this way, character education provides an understanding of a person's moral identity (Seider, 2015, p. 33).

*How does Seider study character education?*

In this chapter I have shown that he studies character education as a pragmatist researcher.

In light of these three answers, I briefly wish to address the following:

*Are the ontological and epistemological assumptions made by Seider reasonable and appropriate ones?*

They are appropriate insofar as they show us the *philosophical* bearing his assumptions have on the study. As I have pointed out, an analysis of Seider's axiological assumptions would provide a clearer understanding of his ethical approach.

Seider's philosophical assumptions are appropriate. I do, however, point out two factors that require further deliberation. As far as Seider's ontology goes, he chooses to ignore the component of intellectual character. It is clear that this component is known to him, as he mentions it in his concluding chapter, but, however, writes it off as something that depends on the character development model in question, in the same way that some schools focus on *spiritual* character development while others focus on *cultural* character development (Seider, 2015). I argue that intellectual character is an intrinsic component of character development, rather than belonging to a different sphere of character development, as Seider seems to suggest. The second factor to be taken into consideration concerns Seider's epistemology. As I previously explained, his studies would benefit from examining (and including in its analysis) moral imagination and moral vision of character development.

*Do those assumptions provide the basis for a coherent and sensible research strategy?*

Seider makes a valuable contribution to the study of character education. He is primarily focused on character education in the USA, whereas Bohlin's book discusses both the UK and US environment of character education. I therefore recommend that they would be read and studied together, as they balance each other out. For a very down-to-earth take on how to improve character ethos in a school, Seider's study is invaluable. For a deeper pondering of the intellectual aspects of character education, as pursued in the present thesis, Bohlin's work is more instructive, however.

#### 2.1.5 Main Lesson Learned from Chapter 2

To sum up, this chapter has provided a very selective overview of theories that might be relevant to the study of character education through the use of poetry. This overview has taken us from the dizzying heights of Wittgensteinian philosophy to the methodological practicalities that Scott Seider had to adjudicate upon and deal with in his school studies. In offering these snapshots of the considerations relevant to underpinning a research project on character and poetry, I hope to have shown that any successful project of this kind has to take into account a host of education-relevant considerations that are, at once, philosophical, aesthetic, linguistic, and methodological.

## CHAPTER 3: Methodology

In the first chapter, I introduced the research questions and my motivation for writing this thesis. In the second chapter, I presented a critical literature review and the background for a discussion of a poetry intervention to stimulate the cultivation of character. In this chapter, I will introduce the research strategy and the empirical techniques applied.

The study was carried out in two stages. In Stage 1, which was a pilot, I tested the programme and the measurement instruments. In Stage 2, the main study, I re-ran the pilot and did some additional mixed method evaluations, including interviews and thematic analysis. Stage 2 was further divided into 2 sub-stages: Stage 2A and Stage 2B.

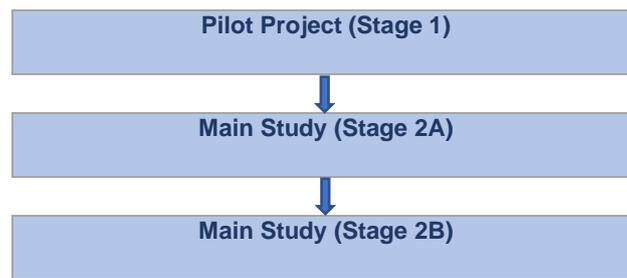


Table 3 The Two Stages of the Present Research

Stage 1 involved designing, developing, and piloting a poetry programme in an Icelandic school. The focus for this stage was an experimental study, and it was conducted as a trial with the pilot school. The aim was, on the one hand, to *find examples of poems that can be used as vehicles of character education and create guidelines for teaching poetry as a creative subject for character education to the targeted age group* (see further on pp. 82, 98 & 107), and on the other hand, to develop and assess the measurement tools to be implemented in the second stage (Main Study). More specifically, the aim was to *develop instruments to measure the impact of an intervention programme on virtue literacy and establish co-operation with a group of teachers from the participating schools* (see further, on pp. 83 & 107). This stage involved measuring the students' virtue literacy through using pre- and post-surveys, focus groups, and a standardised interview.

The second stage involved assessing the barriers and enablers to running a poetry programme, designed to cultivate virtue, in secondary schools in Iceland. Stage 2 built on Stage 1 data, after analysis. The focus for this stage was a case study, conducted as standardised interviews with teachers and/or specialists who are experienced with or have an insight into using poetry in education. The purpose of this stage was to perform a fidelity assessment of the process, in order to ascertain 'the degree to which an intervention or procedure is delivered as intended' (Breitenstein et al., 2012, p. 407; here, quoted from Haynes et al., 2016). This stage involved, on the one hand, running an intervention to measure the virtue literacy of students in two groups, a control group and an experimental group, using pre- and post-surveys, focus groups,

and a standardised interview; and, on the other hand, gaining an understanding of the impact of using the teaching material devised for this purpose, and obtaining teachers' and specialists' insights into using poetry in teaching, the phenomenon of classroom teaching, and assessment.

In this chapter, after having explained the background to the research (present Section), I present the research questions (Sub-Section 3.1), give an overview of the Pilot and Main Study stages (Sub-Section 3.2). and explore the methodological approach (Sub-Section 3.3) of the project. I discuss the research design of each stage, in Sub-Section 3.4, and the methods involved in Sub-Sections 3.4.2 and 3.4.3. To conclude, in the three remaining sections, I discuss the limitations of the methodological choices made in this project (Sub-Section 3.5), alternative methodological options (Section 3.6), and the ethical considerations for the study (Sub-Section 3.7).

### 3.1 Overview of the Research Questions

My Main-RQ, which uses a causal logic of inference, is:

Is it possible to use poetry to cultivate virtue, in an Icelandic secondary-school context?

I address this question through two sub-RQs.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Sub-RQ is:

Can poetry be used to cultivate virtue?

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Sub-RQ is:

What are the barriers and enablers to running a poetry programme, designed to cultivate virtue, in all (or many) secondary schools in Iceland?

### 3.2 The Pilot and Main Study Stages

This study design is an adaptation of Tsushima's modified MM research model (Tsushima, 2015, p. 111), based on Creswell and Plano Clark's explanatory sequential design (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007), which typically has two stages that consist in, 'at first the investigator [collecting] and [analyzing] quantitative data and, then, qualitative data are collected and analyzed to obtain explanations of the quantitative results' (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007; Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011; here, quoted from Tsushima, 2015, p. 111).

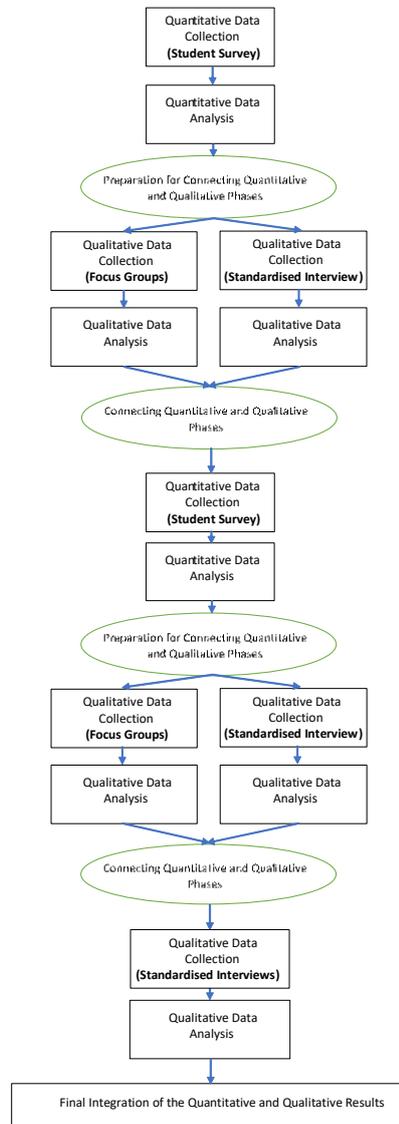


Figure 1 The Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods Design with Multiple Stages of the Present Research

My explanation of the two stages takes a similar course as Tsushima’s modified MM research model (Tsushima, 2015, p. 111). My model comprised two stages with specific goals that required seven datasets:

**Stage 1 Broader view:** A student survey was administered to obtain broader views of the issue from the target population. The researcher required the data to prepare the teaching material, along with the subsequent data collection instruments, and to decide types of schools as data collection sites. Furthermore, the two qualitative data sets, which consisted in two focus groups and one standardised interview, were included for the purpose of testing the instruments to measure the impact of an intervention programme on virtue literacy. The goal of this stage is to address Sub-RQ1.

**Stage 2A Deeper View:** A student survey was administered at two collections sites to obtain deeper views of the issue from the target population. Then, two qualitative data sets, which consisted in two focus groups and a standardised interview at the control school, were included to obtain a deeper understanding of the impact of using the teaching material devised

in Stage 1. Another goal of this Sub-Stage is to address Sub-RQ2.

**Stage 2B Specific View:** The researcher conducted standardised interviews to obtain teachers' and specialists' insights into using poetry in teaching, the phenomenon of classroom teaching for this purpose, and assessment. The interview data were analysed, compared, and integrated with the six data sets from Stage 1 and Stage 2A. The goal of this Sub-Stage is to measure Main-RQ against Sub-RQ2 with a view of the answer given to Sub-RQ1.

### 3.3 Philosophies and Methodological Approach

As mentioned in Sub-Section 2.1.4, above, the term research philosophy refers to assumptions about the development of knowledge. For instance, epistemological assumptions include assumptions about human knowledge, while ontological assumptions are about the nature of the 'realities' researchers encounter in their research (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 124; Saunders et al., 2019, p. 130). Furthermore, axiological assumptions refer to the ways and extent 'your own values influence your research process' (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 124; Saunders et al., 2019, p. 130).

The research philosophy adopted in this study can be categorised according to the stages it involves. The pilot project can be explained in terms of *positivism*. It:

relates to the philosophical stance of the natural scientist and entails working with an observable social reality to produce law-like generalisations. It promises unambiguous and accurate knowledge and originates in the works of Francis Bacon, Auguste Comte and the early twentieth-century group of philosophers and scientists known as the Vienna Circle. (Saunders et al., 2016, pp. 135-136; Saunders et al., 2019, p. 144)

In this way, positivism relies on scientific evidence. Seeing as 'human behaviour is essentially rule-governed, [...] it should be investigated by the methods of natural science' (Cohen and Manion, 1994, p. 36). Therefore, positivism depends on what can be observed. However, social research, in turn, is justified in accordance with to which extent it can be considered scientifically verifiable. While positivists hold that there are 'no fundamental differences between the study of the social and natural words, and therefore they should use the same evaluative criteria for both' (Scott, 1996a, p. 74), it is necessary through natural science criteria to evaluate what constitutes as scientific research. In this respect, the indented quotation above mentions the Vienna Circle, and one of the members associated with this group is Karl Popper. He introduced the concept of falsifiability for the purpose of showing whether a scientific theory is verifiable or not. In other words, in order for a theory to be considered scientifically sound it must include a way or a possibility of being disproven. Positivism identifies authentic knowledge as scientific knowledge, and Popper's theory of

falsification is therefore an advancement on positivism. In the pilot project, although I am not putting forth or testing a theory, a verifiable scientific research is being carried out.

Stage 2A can, however, be explained in terms of *interpretivism*. It:

emphasises that humans are different from physical phenomena because they create meanings. Interpretivists study these meanings. Interpretivism emerged in early- and mid-twentieth-century Europe, in the work of German, French and occasionally English thinkers, and is formed of several strands, most notably hermeneutics, phenomenology and symbolic interactionism. (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 140; Saunders et al., 2019, p. 148)

The position of this research method stems from the concept of *Verstehen* (i.e. *the interpretive*) in the context of German philosophy and the social sciences. Interpretivism focuses on individuals and individual differences. Interpretive researchers set out to ‘understand their interpretations of the world around them’ (Cohen and Manion, 1994, p. 37). It focuses on ‘the meanings entailed for the actors involved; it adopts an emic (actor-centered) rather than an etic (observer-centered) viewpoint’ (Collier and Elman, 2008, p. 782). Interpretivists prefer qualitative methods, as this allows for close interaction with respondents. Within one of the three approaches mentioned in the indented quotation above, phenomenology, interpretive understanding is ‘represented in analysis of language approaches that take their inspiration from Wittgenstein’s *Philosophical Investigations* [wherefrom Winch (1958)] borrowed the notion that there are many games played with language (testing hypotheses, giving orders, greeting, and so on), and he extended this idea to language games as constituted in different cultures. Each of these games has its own rules or criteria that make the game meaningful to its participants. Reasoning by analogy, we can say that human action, like speech, is an element in communication governed by rules. More simply, human action is meaningful by virtue of the system of meanings (in Wittgenstein’s terms, the “language game” to which it belongs’ (Schwandt, 2003, p. 298) [see also my discussion on rule-following, above, on p. 62]. ‘Understanding those systems of meanings (institutional and cultural norm, action-constituting rules, and so on) is the goal of *Verstehen*’ (Giddens, 1993; Habermas, 1988; Outhwaite, 1975; here, quoted from Schwandt, 2003, p. 298).

Stage 2B can be explained in terms of *postmodernism*.<sup>26</sup> It:

emphasises the role of language and of power relations, seeking to question accepted ways of thinking and give voice to alternative marginalised views [...]. It emerged in the late twentieth century and has been most closely associated with the work of French philosophers Jean-

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<sup>26</sup> Postmodernism, as well as positivism and interpretivism, are here represented as research philosophies informing different stages of my research. Using those as frameworks does not necessarily commit the researcher to their more wide-ranging philosophical assumptions (about reality and the nature of knowledge as such).

François Lyotard, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari and Jean Baudrillard. (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 141; Saunders et al., 2019pp. 149-150)

Postmodernism is an approach to get to grips with the nature of modern society and culture, while providing a way of thinking about and representing the nature of the social sciences and their claims to knowledge (Bryman, 2012, p. 382). For postmodernists, ‘there can be no sense of an objective reality out there, [... it] is always going to be accessed through narratives in the form of research report that provide representations. [... They] tend to emphasize the notion of reflexivity [...], which posits the significance of the researcher for the research process and consequently the tentativeness of any findings presented in a research report (since the researcher is always implicated in his or her findings). [... Thus, they] tend to be deeply suspicious of any view or research that implies that there are or can be accepted foundations of knowledge’ (Bryman, 2012, p. 383). This reservation, however, is a way of allowing a language-based approach to educational research to supplement other methods, as done in this study, without disrupting the collection of data.

### 3.3.1 Philosophical Underpinnings for the Research Design

In Sub-Section 2.1.4 above, I introduced a model named ‘the research onion’, for determining the philosophical underpinnings of a study, as defined by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (Saunders et al., 2016, pp. 124 & 164; Saunders et al., 2019, pp. 130 & 174). In the following, I will use this model for a discussion of the philosophical underpinnings of this research and the underlying assumptions made by these research philosophies. The reason for doing so is to pinpoint and declare the research paradigms that provide the backdrop and framework for any research (Mittwede, 2012, p. 24).

A research philosophy can be defined as the development of research assumptions (i.e. ontology, epistemology, axiology), its knowledge, and nature (Saunders et al., 2007, pp. 102 & 121; here, quoted from Žukauskas et al., 2018, p. 122).

The following table shows a comparison of the three research philosophical positions and the philosophical underpinnings to these stances (adapted from Saunders et al., 2016, pp. 136-137; Saunders et al., 2019, pp. 144-145):

Ontology	Epistemology	Axiology	Typical methods
(nature of reality or being)	(what constitutes acceptable knowledge)	(role of values)	
<b>Positivism: Pilot Project (Stage 1)</b>			
Real, external, independent One true reality	Scientific method Observable and measurable facts	Value-free research Researcher is detached, neutral and independent	Typically deductive, highly structured, large samples, measurement,

(universalism) Granular (things) Ordered	Law-like generalisations Numbers Causal explanation and prediction as contribution	of what is researched Researcher maintains objective stance	typically quantitative methods of analysis, but a range of data can be analysed
<b>Interpretivism: Main Study (Stage 2A)</b>			
Complex, rich Socially constructed through culture and language Multiple meanings, interpretations, realities Flux of processes, experiences, Practices	Theories and concepts too simplistic Focus on narratives, stories, perceptions and interpretations New understandings and worldviews as contribution	Value-bound research Researchers are part of what is researched, subjective Researcher interpretations key to contribution Researcher reflexive	Typically inductive. Small samples, in-depth investigations, qualitative methods of analysis, but a range of data can be interpreted
<b>Postmodernism: Main Study (Stage 2B)</b>			
Nominal Complex, rich Socially constructed through power relations Some meanings, interpretations, realities are dominated and silenced by others Flux of processes, experiences, Practices	What counts as ‘truth’ and ‘knowledge’ is decided by dominant ideologies Focus on absences, silences and oppressed/repressed meanings, interpretations and voices Exposure of power relations and challenge of dominant views as contribution	Value-constituted research Researcher and research embedded in power relations Some research narratives are repressed and silenced at the expense of others Researcher radically reflexive	Typically deconstructive – reading texts and realities against themselves In-depth investigations of anomalies, silences and absences Range of data types, typically qualitative methods of analysis

*Table 4 The Philosophical Underpinnings for the Present Research*

Ontology seeks to answer the question ‘what exists?’ and describe the basic categories and relationships, in order to account for the types of things there are and their functionality (Bevir, 2008, p. 60). In the context of this research, in Stage 1 (Experiment), I seek to make this assessment through quantitative and qualitative approaches that are conducted sequentially. As shown in the table above, the methods for these approaches are deductive and typically involve large data samples, although this is not indispensable. What is important is that the researcher remains detached from the topic under study and maintains an objective stance. The objective of this stage is to initiate a virtuous competency-performance test with a typical sample group of Grade 9 students, and to shape the research methods of the latter stage of the study. In Stage 2A: Main Study (Case Study), the analysis shifts towards more interpretive approaches. Here, the researcher is open to multiple meanings and interpretations. The methods for these approaches are inductive. The data analysis is typically of qualitative nature, but a range of data can be interpreted. In Stage 2B: Main Study (Ethnography), the analysis becomes entirely qualitative. The methods for these approaches are deconstructive, which involves in-depth investigations of anomalies, silences, and absences, among other things.

Epistemology ‘concerns those questions we ask about our knowledge of some phenomenon. Or, in other words, [it] is the branch of philosophy concerned with the varieties and validity of our knowledge of aspects of the world (Langdridge, 2004, p. 250). In the context of this research, in Stage 1: Pilot Project (Experiment), the knowledge in question is virtue literacy. In Stage 2A: Main Study (Case Study), the aim is to determine how this moral knowledge motivates moral behaviour. In Stage 2B: Main Study (Ethnography), I shall gain an understanding of the impact of using the teaching material in Stage 2A, and obtain teachers’ and specialists’ insights into using poetry in teaching, the phenomenon of classroom teaching, and assessment.

The epistemological position of this project is based on neo-Aristotelian Character Education, which is represented by the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues (Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, 2017a). At its core, it advances a ‘genuine interest in the holistic development of young people towards optimal human flourishing’ (Kristjánsson, 2020, p. 6). It steers away from instrumentalism, amoral individualism, behaviourism, and self-centered performance-driven view of character, towards an educational position based on ‘other-directed moral virtues and on ‘flow’ as unself-conscious pleasure taken in intrinsically-motivated, outward-looking activities’ (Kristjánsson, 2020, p. 5).

Axiology is ‘the branch of philosophy dealing with ethics, aesthetics, and religion (Lincoln and Guba, 2003, p. 265). It is the study of values (or of one’s values) (Hogue, 2015, p. 27), and as Hogue points out, one value that is guaranteed to affect how one approaches research is associated with one’s religious beliefs. It is a belief in ‘the inherent worth and dignity of every person’ (UUA, 2015; here, quoted from Hogue, 2015, p. 27). At the beginning of my PhD studies, I took myself to having faith of an unreligious sort. During the time of this research, my religious view on life has evolved due to changes in my circumstances, and I now view myself as having faith. It is a faith that is aligned with the views of a branch of Protestant Christianity, and involves acting and living in accordance with moral principles attributed to Jesus Christ. Such principles are kindness, compassion, storytelling, leading by example, discipline, generosity, love, and doing service, to name a few. I do, however, maintain that I had these very principles as guiding points before, although I had not defined them in the same way.<sup>27</sup> In the context of this research, in Stage 1: Pilot Project (Experiment), the values at stake are compassion, kindness, storytelling, and leading by example. This

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<sup>27</sup> I wish to make this clear here, as otherwise I could be accused of mixing oil (Aristotelian philosophy) and water (Christian beliefs). While acknowledging that there are conflicting axiological assumptions in those two views of the world (e.g. about humility as a virtue), I do not consider those tensions to have impacted in any way negatively upon my methodological stance in conducting this research project.

relates back to addressing Sub-RQ1. In Stage 2A: Main Study (Case Study), these values are intertwined with humility, discipline, generosity, and love. This relates back to addressing Sub-RQ2. Stage 2B: Main Study (Ethnography), involves acquiring an understanding of the impact these values have on one's life. This, in turn, relates back to measuring Main-RQ against Sub-RQ2 with a view of the answer given to Sub-RQ1.

### 3.4 Research Design

In this Section, I explain and justify the research design used for this study. It contains both a quantitative and a qualitative aspect. Qualitative research is defined as using *words* as data, whereas quantitative research 'uses *numbers* as data and analysis them using statistical techniques' (Braun and Clarke, 2014, pp. 3-4). Thus, the former seeks to 'identify relationships between variables, to explain or predict – with the aim of generalising the findings to a wider population', and, also, tends 'to be theory-testing, and deductive' (Braun and Clarke, 2014, p. 4). The latter is entered 'with some idea about what [the researchers] will do, but a detailed set of procedures is not formed prior to data collection. In addition, qualitative researchers avoid going into a study with hypotheses to test or specific questions to answer, believing that finding the questions should be one of the products of data collection rather than assumed a priori. The study itself structures the research, not preconceived ideas or any precise design' (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992, p. 58). This strategy, therefore, tends 'to be theory generating, and inductive (working *up* from the data) (Braun and Clarke, 2014, p. 4; see also Bogdan and Biklen, 1992, p. 52). A mix of the two is often used, i.e. 'the combination of different methods of data collection and/or data analysis within a single study, frequently combining qualitative and quantitative approaches' (Braun et al., 2017, p. 310; Braun and Clarke, 2014, p. 333g).

In his 2016 book, *How to do Your Case Study*, Gary Thomas identifies three forms of inquiry in social sciences: 'case study', 'experiment', and 'survey' (Thomas, 2016, p. 11).

In Sub-Sections 3.4.1 & 3.4.2-3.4.3, below, I will, according to Thomas's model, present two types of research designs (forms of inquiry), an experimental design and a case study, that deal with the following research issue:

How can poetry help to create a practical and fruitful environment for a community of inquiry, such as a class in a secondary school in Iceland, to tackle moral questions and subjects, and moreover to stimulate moral discussion in a group?

### 3.4.1 The Mixed Methods of the Present Research

One of novelties of the methodology lies in the context of Iceland. A similar project, based on the Jubilee Centre’s *Knightly Virtues* project, has been conducted the University of Iceland (hereafter, referred to as the *Laxdaela Saga* project) (Jónsson et al., 2019). My project follows the path of the *Laxdaela Saga* project, but partly because of certain shortcomings in their quantitative findings, and partly because of the scope of this project, I am interested in re-assessing this methodology within the context of my project. The methodology of the *Laxdaela Saga* project was, in turn, based on the *Knightly Virtues* programme, which was ‘inspired by the idea that stories of literary significance might be used in primary schools for teaching and learning about qualities of virtuous character’ (Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, 2015). The quantitative part of the current project is the same as those of the *Knightly Virtues* programme and the *Laxdaela Saga* project. The statistical population of the *Knightly Virtues* was 941 pupils, and the quantitative findings provided a strong framework of information upon which the variables from the qualitative data could be attached. The statistical population of the *Laxdaela Saga* project was 81 pupils. In the latter project, the quantitative findings have less proportional value compared with that of the *Knightly Virtues* programme. The researchers involved with the Icelandic project had reported to me verbally that the reason for this is that it was not possible to draw any meaningful conclusions from all the components of virtue literacy that had been tested, as clearly had been the case in the Jubilee Centre research. For the current project, it was foreseen that the statistical population would be even less than in that of the *Laxdaela Saga* project. It was therefore interesting to me to find out whether it would be even harder to rely on quantitative data in the current research, but at the same time also valuable to test this method using poetry-based educational activities to stimulate moral discussion and increase pupil awareness of moral issues.

The following is a table of the multitude methods used in the project (Table 5), an overview with a brief of each method.

Stage	Time Horizon	Method	What does that method do?
<b>STAGE 1</b>			
<u>Pilot Project</u>			
	Cross-sectional Experiment	Quantitative Method <sup>28</sup>	

<sup>28</sup> The methodological choice is ‘mono method quantitative’ (Saunders et al., 2019, pp. 130 & 174; Saunders et al., 2016, pp. 124 & 164), and the approach to theory development is that of deduction.

Trial Run	Cross-sectional Experiment	Quantitative	Trial with the pilot state. This method was found to examine potential shortcomings as could be interpreted from the quantitative section of the <i>Laxdaela Saga</i> project.
Pre- and Post Survey	Survey	Mono Method Quantitative	Collecting quantitative data on the students' understanding of moral vocabulary and their ability to use it in moral discourse.
2 Focus Groups		Mono Method Qualitative	Interview data
One Standardised Interview		Mono Method Qualitative	Here I interviewed the class teacher of the pilot project class.
<b>STAGE 2</b>			
<b><u>Main Study</u></b>			
<b>STAGE 2A</b>	Cross-sectional Case Study/ Longitudinal Ethnography	Cross-sequential (mixed method) <sup>29</sup>	
Intervention	Case Study	Multi-Method Quantitative	Trial with an experimental group and a control group.  Again, I wanted to examine the data, and assess <u>shortcomings</u> .
Pre- and Post-Survey	Survey	Mono Method Quantitative	Collecting quantitative data on the students' understanding of moral vocabulary and their ability to use it in moral discourse.
2 Focus Groups		Mono Method Qualitative	If something interesting came up, I would look for those things in the

<sup>29</sup> The methodological choice is one the hand multi-method quantitative (Saunders et al., 2019, pp. 130 & 174; Saunders et al., 2016, pp. 124 & 164), with the approach to theory development being that of abduction, and on the other hand multi-method qualitative, with the approach to theory development being that of induction.

			qualitative data, to find out how they worked.
One Standardised Interview		Mono Method Qualitative	Here, I interviewed the class teacher of the experimental group class.  She would teach all the lessons during the main study.
<b>STAGE 2B</b> <b><u>Standardised Interviews</u></b>	Ethnography	Multi-Method Qualitative	One year later, following up on interesting things (up until this point) in the qualitative data, I wanted to interview 9-10 teachers/specialists who have used poetry in teaching:  a) philosophy, b) life skills, or c) literacy  and who might have ideas about how this could best be done with the holistic moral and emotional development of students in mind: investigating the pros and cons of using poetry in education.  Furthermore, I was interested in speaking with individuals/academics who are experienced with or have  d) an insight in using poetry in education.

Table 5 The Multitude Methods Used in the Present Research

Greene et al. identify five purposes for mixed-method evaluations: ‘triangulation, complementarity, development, initiation, and expansion’ (Greene et al., 1989, pp. 255, 258 & 259).

- TRIANGULATION seeks convergence, corroboration, correspondence of results from the different methods.
- COMPLEMENTARITY seeks elaboration, enhancement, clarification of the results from one method with the results from the other method.
- DEVELOPMENT seeks to use the results from one method to help develop or inform the other method, where development is broadly construed to include sampling and implementation, as well as measurement decisions.
- INITIATION seeks the discovery of paradox and contradiction, new perspectives of frameworks, the recasting of questions or results from one method with questions or results from the other method.
- EXPANSION seeks to extend the breadth and range of inquiry by using different methods for different inquiry components. (Greene et al., 1989, p. 259)

This categorisation was later expanded by Bryman (2006), which was meant to ‘capture in finer detail the range of reasons that are given for conducting multi-strategy research’ (Bryman, 2006, p. 107). But for the purposes of this study, it suffices to say that it involves complementarity as defined by Greene, above.

In sequential mixed methods designs ‘QUAL and QUAN strands occur across chronological stages, and the procedures/questions from the later strand emerge/depend/build [on] the previous strand; the research questions are interrelated and sometimes evolve during the study’ (Schoonenboom and Johnson, 2017, p. 118). The terms ‘QUAL strand’ and ‘QUAN strand’ are defined as follows:

The major characteristic of mixed-methods research is that it combines quantitative and qualitative approaches by including both quantitative and qualitative data in a single research study [...]. Creswell and Plano Clark [...] define mixed-methods research as those studies that include at least one quantitative strand and one qualitative strand. A strand is a component of a study that encompasses the basic process of conducting quantitative or qualitative research: posing a research question, collecting and analyzing data, and interpreting the results. (Mertler, 2019, ch. 8, para. 3)

The typology of mixed methods includes nine types ‘using designs of quantitative and qualitative dichotomies. These methods are used with equal status or with one dominant approach, and quantitative and qualitative approaches can be conducted concurrently or sequentially’ (Jogulu and Pansiri, 2011, p. 690). The following matrix and notes explain the variations of these dichotomies (Jogulu and Pansiri, 2011, p. 690):

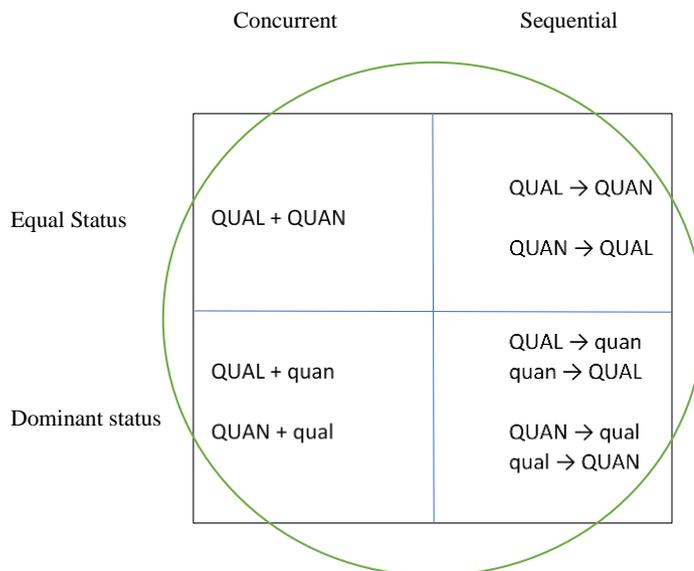


Figure 2 Mixed Methods Design Matrix

**Notes:** ‘Qual’ stands for qualitative; ‘Quan’ stands for quantitative; ‘ + ‘ stands for concurrent; ‘ → ‘ stands for sequential; capital letters – ‘QUAL’ and ‘QUAN’ denotes high priority or weight; lower case letters – ‘qual’ and ‘quan’ denotes lower priority or weight. (Creswell, 2003; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998; Pansiri, 2005, p. 202; here, quoted from Jogulu and Pansiri, 2011, p. 690)

As mentioned above (on p. 81), this study uses a sequential explanatory approach. Both stages of the present research use a sequential research design where one method leads to another. In the first stage, both are written in capital letters, QUAN→QUAL, as they both have equal importance. In the second stage (carried out in two Sub-Stages), however, with most of the tools being qualitative, the categorisation for Stage 2A is quan→QUAL, and for Stage 2B it is QUAL, thus making the categorisation for the whole of the latter stage quan→QUAL→QUAL. Looking at the entire research project, including both stages, the best categorisation would subsequently be QUAN→QUAL→quan→QUAL→QUAL, as the results of the first stage led to a research method focusing primarily on a qualitative assessment of the intervention. The chronological stages of this study were depicted on pp. 82-83, above, and the following table shows the whole research along with the timing of the stages.

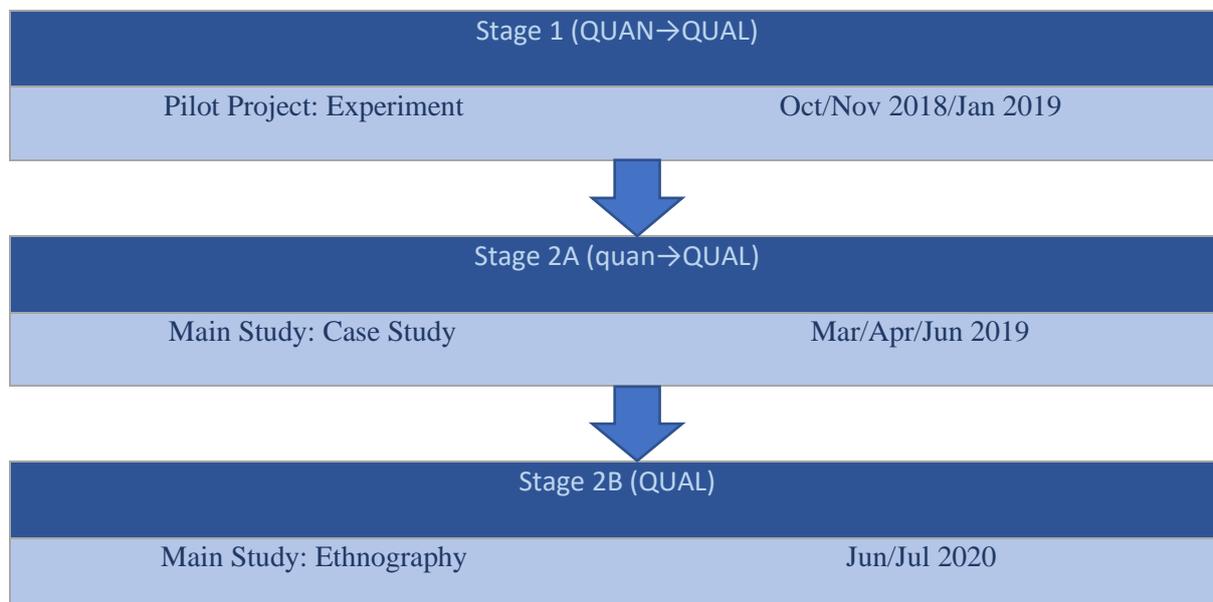


Table 6 Design of Present Research (QUAN→QUAL → quan→QUAL→QUAL)

According to the above, the methodology adapted in this study is a sequential mixed methods design. It is done in two parts, each relating to its correlating Sub-RQ. For each part, I will report on participants, analysis, ethical issues, and methodological choices. The information given in the following report (in Sub-Sections 3.4.2-3.4.4) will point back to the philosophical underpinnings of the project, which were detailed in Section 3.3, above.

### 3.4.2 Stage 1 Methods

This Sub-Section presents the methods used for Stage 1, which involved the pilot project. This is the former of two research designs presented in this project. This stage was in the form of piloting the experiment, which was intended to prepare and develop the teaching material, decide types of schools as data collection sites, and test the instruments to measure the impact of an intervention programme on virtue literacy (see further on p. 83).

#### 3.4.2.1 Stage 1 Instruments & Data Collection

This Sub-Section deals with how the measurement tools were selected for Stage 1. This stage was in the form of an experiment.

Stage 1 was sequenced as follows:

#### **The methods for Stage 1:**

- Qualitative, trial with the pilot state
- Quantitative, collecting data on the students' understanding of moral vocabulary and their ability to use it in moral discourse.
- Qualitative, focus group

- Qualitative, one standardised interview

**The instruments for Stage 1:**

- A pre- and post-questionnaire
- An identification key
- Measurement tool
- Semi-structured interview schedule

As this was a test run, the methods need to be accounted for. These methods were designed as a test-run for the pilot. Scott explains that the educational researcher ‘attempts to discover causal relationships between phenomena by intervening in the natural setting and controlling all the relevant variables’ (Scott, 1996b, p. 52). This type of positivist approach, he continues, ‘is the single-group, pre- and post-test design. If a comparison between the scores on these two tests shows a change, it is possible to conclude that the educational intervention has had an effect’ (Scott, 1996b, p. 52). This method is ‘essentially deductive’, it involves ‘the testing of hypotheses’, and therefore allows replication, ‘and ultimately the development of general propositions about educational activities’ (Scott, 1996b, p. 53). Although there is, as discussed earlier (see p. 88), a distinction between a qualitative and quantitative approach, the two ‘can sensibly be used within the same investigation (Scott, 1996b, p. 59). In accordance with this claim, the following pilot project included qualitative data acquired through focus groups interviews with students and an individual interview with the class teacher (who did not participate in delivering the teaching material but observed all lessons). The experiment took place in an upper elementary school in Reykjavik, Iceland. This stage was planned as a test run for the intervention to be delivered in two schools in the next stage. Therefore, the experiment was intended to test the implementation of the intervention, and all aspects of its data processes.

The methods of data collection adapted in the pilot project were shown in Table 5, above. They were Interviews, Focus Groups and Student Surveys. Taking note of Braun and Clarke’s definition of Design by method of data collection (Braun and Clarke, 2014, p. 49), the first two fall under the family method of interactive data collection methods, and although the authors do not mention the third one specifically, it also fits the definition.

Kristjánsson notes that in order for character education interventions to carry scientific credibility they need, thorough pre- and post-tests, to be able to measure their impact on moral virtue:

In order for such tests to have both face validity and construct validity, the measured impact also needs, notably, to impact on what character education is specifically meant to achieve,

namely to enact significant changes in the character make-up of individual students: to refine or reform their traits of character. (Kristjánsson, 2015, p. 61)

There are several approaches to measuring moral virtue. Kristjánsson lists a few of them: self-report instruments, triangulation, moral-dilemma tests, observational methods, implicit testing and biological measures, deep-qualitative interviews, dialogues using children-friendly gadgets, story-telling, and textual analysis (Kristjánsson, 2015, pp. 67-83). He argues for a triangulation or mixed-method instruments approach, ‘combining self-reports, other-reports and more objective measures – more specifically [...] dilemma tests’ (Kristjánsson, 2015, p. 84). This is the approach chosen for the Stage 1 Data Collection, and which was followed more decisively through in Stage 2 (see Sub-Sections 3.4.4.1 & 3.4.5.1, below). Furthermore, I am also keeping in mind, as was mentioned at the close of Sub-Section 2.1.4.4, above, Bohlin’s componential view of moral character (Bohlin, 2005, pp. 33-35) by positing moral imagination and moral vision as vehicles of moral development. As was pointed out in the aforementioned Sub-Section, a moral vision for character education must dig deep enough so that it brings proper moral formation to the character and autonomous being of the students, such that it leads to decision and moral action. Bohlin’s ideas of character education through literature point towards a coherent and effective research philosophy and educational approach.

#### Stage 1 Quantitative Measurement Tools

The quantitative measurement tools selected for this study are based on the *Knightly Virtues* project (Arthur et al., 2014) and the *Laxdaela Saga* project (Jónsson et al., 2019):

To minimize the risk of biased measure, we composed two similar tests which we labelled ‘Test A’ and ‘Test B’. [...] Half of the students in the participating schools and half of the students in the control group took Test A while the other half took [T]est B. After the teaching period [...] those who had taken Test A before took Test B, and vice versa. For the purpose of analysis, we only used tests from those students who completed both.

The tests consisted of (a) fill-in exercise measuring understanding of vocabulary, (b) questions about short texts [...], (c) questions about virtues important for certain professions, (d) one question about a definition of a virtue concept and (e) a question where the students were asked to mention a person who they thought was exemplary and explain why.

In the fill-in exercise, the students had to select an appropriate word from a list of words. On one of the tests the list consisted of words which might be translated into English in the following way:

benevolence, vengefulness, rage, moderation, arrogance, malice, boastfulness, stinginess, dishonesty, forgiving, grit, considerateness, wisdom, resilience, generosity.

The students were asked to select words from the list and fill in an exercise [...], where we had divided the words into two groups: virtues and vices.

The tests included short stories and two kinds of questions about them. First, students

had to say what a person had done, whether it was good or bad, and why it was either good or bad. Second, students were asked which virtues the main characters had exemplified and whether they should have done what they did. This required the students not only to understand the course of the story but also the moral context. (Jónsson et al., 2019, pp. 8-9)

As mentioned, this method of measurement is derived from the *Knightly Virtues* project, where the pre- and post-tests were designed to assess reading and writing comprehension, pupils' knowledge and understanding of virtue language, pupils' application of virtue concept in modern day stories, pupils' application of virtue concepts in historical stories, and pupils' application of virtue concepts in personal, social and cultural contexts (Arthur et al., 2014, p. 12). Where these two projects used 'stories', this study applied poems.

Carr and Harrison (2015) argue for the reliability and evidence of the abovementioned measures by referring to the *Knightly Virtues* project. The project report introduces evidence that '[v]irtue literacy, like numerical literacy, language acquisition, reading and writing literacy, requires context, instruction and practice' (Arthur et al., 2014, p. 4), therefore the above factors were important for these measures. This also provided a justification for choosing this particular case for my purposes (Main-RQ).

#### Stage 1 Qualitative Measurement Tools

The qualitative data for Stage 1 consisted in two interviews with focus groups of 4-5 students and a standardised interview with their class teacher. Thus, the qualitative methods included data collection in the form of words (Braun and Clarke, 2014, p. 3; Bogdan and Biklen, 1992, p. 30). These were semi-structured interviews. In this setting 'the researcher has a list of questions but there is scope for the participants to raise issues that the research has not anticipated' (Braun and Clarke, 2014, p. 78). Here, the same strategy was adapted as that for the *Laxdaela Saga* project, where the researchers

asked both general questions, such as whether the students were reading any literary texts and what specifically they were reading. Then we asked the students [...], whether they had learned new words and if so, which words. In the end, we asked open questions about *Laxdaela Saga* and the teaching material, teaching methods, and the space for discussion and disagreement in class. (Jónsson et al., 2019, p. 7)

The teacher interview also relied on a frame 'since there was certain information that we wanted to obtain, such as their work experience, their use of the teaching material, teaching methods, and student's participation and reception' (Jónsson et al., 2019, p. 7).

Semi-structured interviews have the advantage of keeping the core of the interviews similar from participant to participant, while still allowing some flexibility (Baxter and Babbie, 2004,

pp. 329-330; here, quoted from Braun et al., 2017, p. 243). However, as pointed out in the Research Report of the *Knightly Virtues* project, there are limitations regarding the interviews.

1. There is potential for selection bias, as the schools were selected based on established relationships with the research team, or independently expressed interest in the [programme]. Therefore, it is possible that these teachers had pre-existing favourable attitudes towards the programme and character education.
2. Whilst representative samples of pupils were requested from the participant classes, schools may have offered the more articulate or enthusiastic pupils to reflect better on themselves as institutions.
3. Evidence is self-reported, so interviewees may have exaggerated, or otherwise misrepresented, certain aspects of the [programme]. (Arthur et al., 2014, p. 9)

### Stage 1 Data Analysis

This Sub-Section discusses the data analysis performed in the Pilot Project. As shown in Table 6 on p. 94, the data was analysed quantitatively and qualitatively.

Qualitative research can involve deductive and inductive analytic approaches. The former ‘typically involve the use of a preconceived coding frame to guide a content or thematic analysis of the data (Boatzis, 1998, p. 30; Hsieh and Shannon, 2005, p. 1281; here, quoted from Braun et al., 2017, p. 293). The latter aims ‘to generate an analysis from the bottom (the data) up; analysis is not shaped by existing theory (but analysis is always shaped to some extent by the researcher’s standpoint, disciplinary knowledge and epistemology (Braun and Clarke, 2014, p. 175). This is also referred to as Inductive Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2014, p. 175).

#### 3.4.2.2 Stage 1 Intervention Design

Stage 1 of the present research project involved a poetry intervention. This experiment was expected to shape the intervention carried out in Stage 2A (and its design). This Sub-Section describes the intervention, expounding the modifications deemed necessary for the latter implementation.

The intervention was designed to cultivate virtue by use of poetry in an Icelandic school setting. The focus was centred on character education through poetry. The students were taught poetry as (A) a craft, (B) an art, and (C) as a source of moral reflection. This entailed reading and writing poetry, as well as philosophical discussion and contemplation, which was carried out according to the following pre-prepared blueprint:

1. The students are given creative writing exercises. The purpose of this is twofold. They will learn to experience the creative aspect of poetry and to trust themselves as having a poetic voice.
2. The students will learn to trust the group when they address poetry in an intersubjective environment, both by opening up themselves to others and by welcoming the poetic voice expressed by others. For instance, when a poem is read aloud, the teacher can ask each student to write down one word on a piece of paper, to express what emotion they might be feeling after hearing the poem. The teacher then writes everything on the whiteboard and, if appropriate, asks some of the students to elaborate on their chosen word. This can be a source for philosophical discussions. It is also appropriate to read song lyrics, watch music videos, anything that the students can relate with (maybe watch a film like *Dead Poets Society*, for instance, if the age group is suitable).
3. The students will engage in philosophical discussions about what they read and write. The aim of this is to understand and express the subject matter of the poem in moral or philosophical terms. This will provide the students with a tool for critical thinking.<sup>30</sup>

As stated above, the aim of the pilot state was to develop and assess the measurement tools for the coming intervention and to examine potential shortcomings of the quantitative data, and to form an idea about if and how this needed to be supplemented. Moreover, its purpose was to create and evaluate a teaching method of moral education through reading, writing, and discussing poetry within the upper elementary school environment. Therefore, this study depended both on philosophical dialogue and empirical processes. It was aimed at providing an approach to the teaching of the Icelandic language (within the Icelandic curriculum) that utilises moral education and philosophical dialogue to that effect.

The intervention included 6 lessons that were designed to support the students' moral growth through poetry lessons. Each lesson was 80 minutes. The following table shows the sequence of the lesson plans, in each case iterating the virtue/emotions in focus (as introduced on p. 52) and the relevant components of virtue being foregrounded (see p. 40).

Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3	Lesson 4	Lesson 5	Lesson 6
<b>Philosophical Dialogue</b> on the poem 'My First Ghost' by Birgitta Jónsdóttir	<b>Poetry Reading and Conceptualisation</b> based on the poems 'Empathy', 'Pride', and 'Shame' by Kristján Hreinsson	<b>Poetry Reading and Assignment</b> based on the poems 'Succour' by Þorsteinn frá Hamri, 'Experience' by Vilborg Dagbjartsdóttir, 'Journey's End' by Jónas Hallgrímsson, 'Laugavegur' by	<b>Poetry Reading and Assignment</b> based on the poems 'A Poem About #EURO2016' by Eiríkur Örn Norðdahl, 'Miniver Cheevy' by Edwin Arlington Robinson, 'Visiting Hour' by Anton Helgi	<b>Creative Writing Workshop #1:</b> Composing a poem about a role model, a free verse poem based on 3 keywords, a story in the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person, clichéd metaphors, a poem in exactly 10 words, a poem	<b>Creative Writing Workshop #2:</b> Working with 'critique for critique' friends, composing a poem according to specific instructions, reworking the national anthem, group

<sup>30</sup> The above is taken from an introductory post, I wrote for 'Virtue Insight', the Jubilee Centre blog, at the start of my PhD studies (Guttesen, 2017).

		Sigurbjörg Þrastardóttir, 'Andrea Karítas' by Sigurbjörg Sæmundsdóttir	Jónsson, 'sustainable interrogation' by Kristín Ómarsdóttir, and 'Rivertown' by Steinar Bragi	about shame, plus a homework assignment	assignment working with newspaper headlines, personal assignments: writing to oneself, an assignment about division, a poem to the sun, and re-vising one's own poem
<b>Virtue/emotions in Focus</b> Empathy	<b>Virtue/emotions in Focus</b> Empathy Pride Shame	<b>Virtue/emotions in Focus</b> Empathy Pride Shame	<b>Virtue/emotions in Focus</b> Pride Shame	<b>Virtue/emotions in Focus</b> Empathy Pride Shame	<b>Virtue/emotions in Focus</b> Empathy Pride Shame
<b>Components of Virtues in Question</b> Virtue Perception	<b>Components of Virtue in Question</b> Virtue Knowledge and Understanding	<b>Components of Virtue in Question</b> Virtue Emotion Virtue Reasoning	<b>Components of Virtue in Question</b> Virtue Knowledge and Understanding Virtue Emotion Virtue Reasoning	<b>Component of Virtues in Question</b> Virtue Perception Virtue Knowledge and Understanding Virtue Reasoning	<b>Components of Virtue in Question</b> Virtue Perception Virtue Knowledge and Understanding Virtue Reasoning

Table 7 Sequence of the Lesson Plans

The learning materials for these lesson plans can be found in Appendices I1, K1 & L1, in English, and in I2, K2 & L2, in Icelandic.

### 3.4.2.3 Stage 1 Sampling

The age group for this study was 14-15 years, or students in grade 9. The first two schools I contacted, both situated in the Reykjavik (the capital) area, agreed to participate. One of these is a lower secondary school, the other one is an elementary school. In the first instance, I visited the upper elementary school, R-school<sup>31</sup>, and presented the project to the headmaster and 5 class teachers (one of which acted as my contact with the school). Two of the class teachers agreed to participate. It was therefore decided that I could run the pilot project in cooperation with one of the class teachers at R-school, and the other one, a private school, S-school<sup>32</sup>, could later take part in the main study. (In the other school, my contact person was the headmaster, and the class teacher we approached agreed to participate in the main study.)

<sup>31</sup> The synonym chosen for the experimental school.

<sup>32</sup> The synonym chosen for the control school.

The participants consisted in 21 upper elementary school children, 9 females and 12 males. The students retained anonymity and their identities on the questionnaires were coded. The class teacher observed all lessons, and following the surveys and examination of the outcome of the data analysis it was concluded that conducting a single standard interview with the class teacher would broaden the scope of the data available.

This method of sampling is referred to as *Convenience Sampling*. It

involves choosing the nearest individuals to serve as respondents and continuing that process until the required sample size has been obtained. Captive audiences such as pupils or student teachers often serve as respondents in surveys based upon convenience sampling. (Cohen and Manion, 1994, p. 88)

As noted by Langdrige, this method is not ideal, as we have ‘little idea about whether our sample is representative of the population of interest to us in our research. However, [convenience] sampling may be the only approach possible in some circumstances and we may have to tolerate the potential biases that ensue from this strategy’ (Langdrige, 2004, p. 41). This potential risk applies to the present research, and, therefore, the same awareness is raised. As Langdrige concludes: ‘This may still be acceptable if we believe this strategy will introduce minimal (or irrelevant) bias to our findings. What we need to do if we use this approach is be sceptical of our findings and keep a careful watch on whether they seem to be valid and reliable’ (Langdrige, 2004, p. 41).

### 3.4.3 Stage 2 Methods

This Sub-Section presents the latter of two research designs presented in this project. It should be noted that the latter stage was divided further into 2 Sub-Stages, Stage 2A and Stage 2B.

The overall Stage 2 Research Design of Stage 2 is shown in the following table:

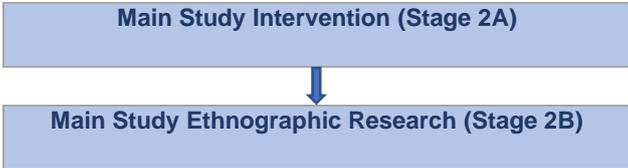


Table 8 Sub-Stages of Stage 2

In the report below, these Sub-Stages are described further.

### 3.4.4 Stage 2A Methods

The same measurement tools were applied in Stage 1 as in Stage 2A. This Sub-Section looks at how they were selected. This stage was in the form of a case study.

A case study research is a ‘qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system’ (a *case*) [...] over time, through ‘detailed, in-depth data collection involving’ multiple sources of information (e.g. observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports) (Creswell, 2013, p. 98; Flick, 2014, p. 297; Ary et al., 2006, p. 460), and reports a case description and case themes (Creswell, 2013, p. 97). In this design, subjects will be allocated to ‘one of two [...] experimental groups, each of which represents different types or levels of the independent variable. It is then possible to establish how far differences between the groups are responsible for variations in the level of the dependent variable’ (Bryman, 2008, p. 50). The purpose of Sub-RQ2 is to establish causation, i.e. does X cause Y (Thomas, 2016, p. 37)?

The experiment described in Section 3.4.2 was intended to test the implementation of the intervention, and all aspects of its data processes. In the following, the same implementation of methods was carried out.

#### *3.4.4.1 Stage 2A Instruments & Data Collection*

This Sub-Section deals with how the measurement tools were selected for Stage 2A. This stage was in the form of a case study.

Stage 2A was sequenced as follows:

##### **The methods for Stage 2A:**

- Qualitative, intervention with an experimental and a control group
- Quantitative, collecting data on the students’ understanding of moral vocabulary and their ability to use it in moral discourse.
- Qualitative, focus group
- Qualitative, one standardised interview class teacher of the experimental group
- Qualitative, standardised interviews with teachers who are experienced with or have an insight into using poetry in education

##### **The instruments for Stage 2A:**

- A pre- and post-questionnaire
- An identification key
- Measurement tool
- Semi-structured interview schedule
- Semi-structured interview schedule, with themes designed to measure Main-RQ against Sub-RQ2 with a view of the answer given to Sub-RQ1

#### *Stage 2A Quantitative Measurement Tools*

The research design for Stage 2A consisted in a revision of the research design for Stage 1.

The survey consisted in 2 questionnaires, marked A & B, that measured the subjects’

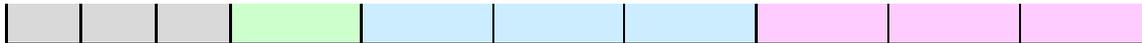
understanding of 3 pre-decided concepts of virtue/emotions (shame, pride, compassion), in poems where these concepts were present. Each questionnaire had 3 parts. In one part the questions focused on a poem from the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in the second part on a poem from the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Finally, the questionnaires contained questions of moral nature, but in an unrelated context, such as sports, social issues, health issues, etc. Before the intervention, the questionnaires were given to both the focus group and the experimental group. A teacher (someone unrelated to the researchers) in each school administered questionnaires A to half of the group, and questionnaire B to the other half. This person kept track of which student completed which questionnaire. After the intervention, the students completed whichever questionnaire they did not do before. The teacher kept track of how this was allocated. The teacher put questionnaires given before the intervention (half of them were questionnaire A, and the other half were questionnaire B), and the questionnaires given after the intervention (half of them were questionnaire B, and the other half were questionnaire A) into another pile. The teacher marked the sheets in one pile with a blue pen, and the sheets in the other pile with a red pen. The researcher could now score the sheets according to a predetermined measurement tool, but he never knew which sheets were from before or after the intervention.

When the sheets had been scored, the results that had been inserted into the measurement tool (in Excel) were given to a data analyser. The teacher told the data analyser which column represented the questionnaires from before the intervention, and which one was from after the intervention. The data analyser could then process the numbers to create the statistics. By doing the data collection in this way, the researcher was not able to affect the results of the experiment.

The arrangement of the scoring sheet was as follows:

Personal Information					
Name (First name is sufficient)	ID number	School	Class	Year	Gender

			1. part	2. part - modern poem (>1999)			3. part - poem from the past (<1999)		
Colour	A or B	Scored by	Q. 1	Q. 2	Q. 3	Q. 4	Q. 5	Q. 6	Q. 7
			10	9	3	3	9	3	3
			B(s)	C	B(b)	C	D	B(b)	D



4. part - pers. exp., contemporary relevance					Total points in each category				
Q. 8		Q. 9		Q. 10	B(s)	B(b)	C	D	E
3	6	2	3	6	12	12	12	12	12
B(b)	E	B(s)	B(b)	E					

Table 9 The Arrangement of the Scoring Sheet

This facet is intended to measure the students' virtue literacy. The scoring is done in accordance with the following rules:

**Evaluative factors:**

B(s). Understanding of vocabulary on moral virtues and vices.

B(b). Application of vocabulary on moral virtues and vices.

C. Ability to apply/use concepts of virtues and emotions from modern poems.

D. Ability to apply/use concepts of virtues and emotions from poems from the past.

E. Ability to apply/use concepts of virtues and emotions from personal experience or contemporary relevance.

Question	
1	Give 1 B(s)-point for selecting the best word and 0,5 point for selecting a positive or negative attribute where applicable.
2	In each line, 1 to 3 points. (1 for correct assessment in the middle column or acceptable reason; 2 for correct assessment, and an acceptable reason; 3 for correct assessment and corresponding argumentation.) If line 3 is almost a repetition of line, then 1 point is deducted, and if it is a complete repetition, then no point is given.
3	1 point for naming one possible option; 2 points for naming two or more possible options; 3 points for naming 2 distinctive and well-chosen options; No point is given unless a term for virtues or vices (with negation) is used. If one or more applicable terms are named, but also a non-applicable one, then 1 point is given at most.
4	1 point for sensible assessment; 2 points for sensible assessment and accompanying argumentation; 3 points for sensible assessment and good accompanying argumentation.
5	In each line, 1 to 3 points. (1 for correct assessment in the middle column or acceptable reason; 2 for correct assessment and an acceptable reason; 3 for correct assessment and corresponding argumentation.)
6	1 point for naming one possible option; 2 points for naming two or more possible options; 3 points for naming 2 distinctive and well-chosen options; No point is given unless a term for virtues or vices (with negation) is used. If one or more applicable terms are named, but also a non-applicable one, then 1 point is given at most.
7	1 point for sensible assessment; 2 points for sensible assessment and accompanying argumentation; 3 points for sensible assessment and good accompanying argumentation.

<b>8</b>	Middle Column: 1 B(b)-point in each row for naming a virtue, and 3 points if both are well chosen. No point unless a word, signifying a virtue or a vice (with a negation), is used. Last Column: 1-3 E-points for giving a sensible reason. (1 point if one reason is given; 2 points if at least one good reason is given; 3 points, if a well contemplated reason is given, and which corresponds with the character trait being described or the virtue mentioned.)
<b>9</b>	1-2 B(s)-points for clarifying the meaning of a word. 1-3 B(b)-points for giving an example. (1 point given if an example can in some cases be reduced to a concept; 2 points given for a relevant example; 3 points given for an excellent example.)
<b>10</b>	1-6 points for naming an attribute which sets a good example. (1 point given for naming an individual/a character which is known to possess a good quality; 2-4 points given for naming a distinguished good quality. 5-6 points given for naming at least two distinguished good qualities that this individual/character possesses.)
	Maximum number of points.

Table 10 The Rules of the Evaluative Factors

					Comments
B(s)	B(b)	C	D	E	
0, ½, 1, ... 10					
		0, 1, 2, ... 9			
	0, 1, 2, 3				Please note the possibility of giving one point for using a phrase that describes a virtue (such as, 'avoid lying').
		0, 1, 2, 3			
			0, 1, 2, ... 9		
	0, 1, 2, 3				Please note the possibility of giving one point for using a phrase that describes a virtue (such as, 'avoid lying').
			0, 1, 2, 3		
	0, 1, 2, 3			0, 1, 2, ... 6	
0, 1, 2	0, 1, 2, 3				

				0, 1, 2, ... 6
12	12	12	12	12

Table 11 The Coding Points for the Evaluative Factors

**General comment:** If there is an uncertainty as to whether or not a point should be given, then no point is given (this is contrary to the general rule which teachers follow when giving course assessment and feedback to students). Here, they are not given the benefit of a doubt, and, besides, they do not receive any feedback.

#### Stage 2A Qualitative Measurement Tools

Stage 2A adapts the same qualitative measurement tools as shown in Sub-Section 3.4.2.1:

#### Stage 1 Qualitative Measurement Tools.

At the end of the intervention, the researcher conducted interviews with the participants (focus group). Given the challenges of ‘measuring character’, it was considered necessary to hold more than one focus group. This would enable the researcher to provide another form of data that will help illustrate and explain the case study findings.

#### Stage 2A Data Analysis

The analysis, on one hand, consisted in thematic analysis as defined by Braun and Clarke (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Braun and Clarke, 2014; see also Braun et al., 2017), and, on the other hand, in the instruments designed and tested in Stage 1.

An essential prerequisite for evaluating qualitative research and comparing or synthesising it with other studies on the same topic is that the researcher makes clear how they go ‘about analysing their data’ and ‘what assumptions informed their analysis’ (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 80 & p. 78). For this study, these assumptions were specified in Sub-Section 3.3.1, above. This Sub-Section discusses the method of analysis.

‘Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data’ (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 79). In other words, it is a way of discerning themes in one’s data. ‘A theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set’ (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 82). Themes within data can be ‘can be identified in one of two primary ways in thematic analysis: in an inductive or ‘bottom up’ way [...] or in a theoretical or deductive or ‘top down’ way’ (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 83). In this study, an inductive approach was used. This means ‘the themes identified are strongly linked to the data themselves’ (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 83). The outcome of such an investigation cannot be

predetermined. This type of analysis is ‘a process of coding the data without trying to fit it into a pre-existing coding frame, or the researcher’s analytic preconceptions’ (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 83). This approach is contrasted with a ‘theoretical’ thematic analysis, which is ‘driven by the researcher’s theoretical or analytic interest in the area, and is thus more explicitly analyst-driven’ (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 84). These two are also distinguished by how and why one is coding the data. In using the theoretical approach, one codes ‘for a quite specific research question’, but in using the inductive approach, ‘the specific research question can evolve through the coding process’ (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 84). As described in this methodology chapter, for the present study the latter is the case.

The ‘narrow’ questions emerging from the thematic analysis are part of the ‘broader overarching research question’, and ‘the analyses they inform [...] also provide answers to the overall research question’ (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 85). As described before, in this project there is one Main Research Question and two Sub-Research Questions (see p. 81). The research questions were listed in Section 3.1, above.

#### *3.4.4.2 Stage 2A Intervention Design*

Stage 2A of the present research project involved a poetry intervention. This was a case study and had been shaped by the intervention carried out in Stage 1 (and its design). This Sub-Section describes the main study intervention.

Gorard advises that when mapping the knowledge base, to seek out both the ‘[e]xisting knowledge and the expertise of others (Gorard, 2013, p. 27). The plan of the current research design involved acquiring background knowledge, mapping of the field, thus laying the foundation for the preparation of teachers, for further research. For this purpose, before the intervention and giving the aforementioned questionnaires, the following tasks were performed:

- 1.1. Find examples of poems that can be used as vehicles of character education.
- 1.2. Create guidelines for teaching poetry as a creative subject for character education to the targeted age group.

In this research design, a number of age-appropriate measures of participants were taken before and after the intervention to assess whether the programme had been successful in promoting compassion (empathy), pride/shame. The intervention group was compared with a waiting-list control group in each participating school. A contact person in each of the schools taking part allocated the group from their school. While this introduces selection bias into the

design, it secured that the groups are comparable, i.e. both consisting of students of the same age, studying the same subject at the same time. No student took part in more than one group.

Addressing 1.1, I looked at selections of poems where special attention is paid to moral issues and then tried to adapt and apply the work to the local context. This research design took as a starting point the 3 themes or categories named on the previous page, attending to the topics of (1) compassion, (2) pride, and (3) shame. The reasons for the choice of these topics are both theoretical and practical. The theoretical reasons have to do with these topics being relevant for moral character while the practical reasons derive from the fact that they are currently relevant and are, in different context, present in the Icelandic curriculum.<sup>33</sup> What connects them is that they contain suggestions of virtuous actions and emotions.

Task 1.2 was guided educational ideas and methods deriving from three sources.

First, ideas and methods developed by the Jubilee Centre in Birmingham (Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, 2017a; Morris, 2009). Second, educational approaches which might be referred to as ‘traditional methods’ in philosophy with children (Fisher, 2014; Lipman, 1980; Matthews, 1980). Third, educational approaches based on more recent ideas developed under various headings such as ‘philosophy in the flesh’ (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999), ‘embodied critical thinking’ (Riley-Jones, 2012; Schoeller and Saller, 2016) or ‘embodied creativity’ (Stanciu, 2015). Common to these approaches is an emphasis on the interconnection between mind and body, the interaction between cognition and emotion, and the emphasis of the importance of lived experience for learning. It is not clear how novel or radical some of these ideas are or what their impact has been, as Stanciu remarks: ‘Lakoff may have simultaneously overestimated just how radical his thesis really was and underestimated its compatibility with standard computational views of the mind’ (as cited in Stanciu, 2015, p. 313). It would take me far afield here to offer a methodological justification of all those diverse methods. A rationale for P4C as a method to deliver an intervention based on poetry would, for example, require a whole PhD thesis of its own. It suffices to note here that all of these educational approaches arguably fit well with the Aristotelian concepts of character and emotion.

Stage 2A (Pre-Questionnaire)	
Experimental Group: Pre-Questionnaire (A / B)	20 March 2019
Control Group: Pre-Questionnaire (B / A)	22 March 2019

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<sup>33</sup> On the educative value of these emotions, see e.g. Kristjánsson (2018).

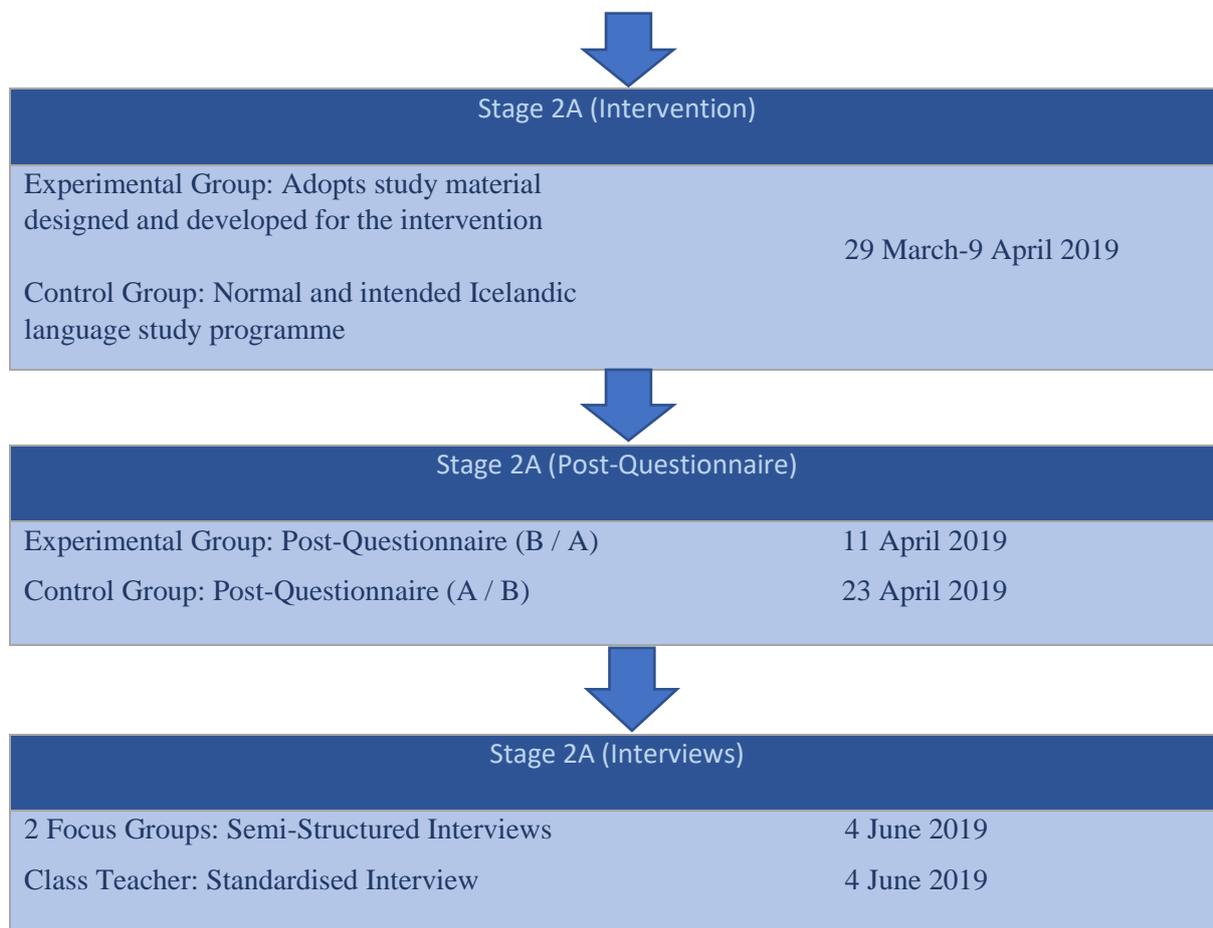


Table 12 Stage 2A Intervention Design

In between these two facets of the design, the control group pursued its normal and intended Icelandic language study programme. The remaining group acted as an experimental group. In addition to completing the pre-, and post-questionnaires, this group studied the learning materials produced by the researcher of this design, which is based on poetry, creative writing, virtue literacy, and human flourishing.

#### 3.4.4.3 Stage 2A Sampling

Stage 2A adopted the same method of sampling as Stage 1, i.e. *Convenience Sampling*. This Sub-Section describes the sampling decisions made, such as the chosen sampling technique, and elaborates on the participants.

From the moment of defining the population upon which a survey is to focus, in this case a group of grade 9 students, researchers must make ‘sampling decisions early in the overall planning of a survey’ (Cohen and Manion, 1994, pp. 86-87). A researcher can either decide first on the total population and, from there, work down to the sample in such a way that ‘the knowledge gained is representative of the total population under study’ or by working ‘from the bottom up, that is, they determine the minimum number of respondents needed to conduct a successful survey’ (Cohen and Manion, 1994, p. 87). According to Cohen and Manion

(Ibid.), the former is recommended. For this project, the total population of interest to me is the entire set of a 9-grade Icelandic language study programme in Iceland.

There are two techniques of sampling, probability sampling and non-probability sampling. In the former, 'the criteria for selecting the respondents are known' (Scott, 1996b, p. 55; Cohen and Manion, 1994, p. 87), while in the latter, 'the probability of selection is unknown' (Cohen and Manion, 1994, p. 87; Scott, 1996b, p. 55). For the present project, the method chosen was Non-Probability Purposive Sampling:

In purposive sampling, researcher handpick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgment of their typicality. In this way, they build up a sample that is satisfactory to their specific needs. (Cohen and Manion, 1994, p. 89)

The main study had 32 participants, of whom 30 took the pre-questionnaire, and 27 took the post-questionnaire. 7 boys and 23 girls took the pre-questionnaire, while 8 boys and 23 girls took the post-questionnaire. There were 9 participants in the control group, and 23 in the experimental group.

#### 3.4.5 Stage 2B Methods

This Sub-Section presents the methods used for Stage 2B of the main project. This stage was in the form of a case ethnography.

For this stage, an interview schedule was devised to investigate further what had come up in the standardised interviews conducted with students, earlier. For these interviews, conducted with teachers and specialists who are experienced with or have an insight into using poetry in education, questions were selected within 11 themes: The respondents' teaching and on teaching in general, Creativity, Education of the emotions, Quality, Intervention, Teacher Education, Moral Education in Iceland, Importance of programme, Enablers, Barriers, What Remains. To cover these themes, the questions were selected as shown below:

**The respondents' teaching and on teaching in general:**

- What is teaching poetry?
- How do you use or have you used poetry in teaching?
- Have you used poetry for moral education?
- What else do you (or can one) use poetry for?
- What else can one use for moral education?

**Creativity:**

- What is the role of creativity in teaching?
- Does poetry have a special as far as creativity is concerned?
- What else is being done (or could one do) to enhance creativity with students?
- What encourages creative thinking?

**Education of the emotions:**

- What is the value of poetry for emotional development and teaching about the nature of emotions?
- Is the uniqueness of poetry only confined to creativity?
- When it comes to moral and emotional development, does poetry have a special value in comparison with other art forms, such as for example the visual arts, music, novels?

**Quality:**

- What might it take to make this a school-wide program?
- What is the quality of this poetry program?

**Intervention:**

- Any observations about the implementation?
- Where does it fit with the Icelandic curriculum?
- Where doesn't it fit with the Icelandic curriculum?
- Is there space in the Icelandic curriculum?
- Is there space in the school curricula?

**Teacher Education:**

- Are the teachers prepared to teach it?
- Would they want it?

**Moral Education in Iceland:**

- How is moral education in Iceland conducted?
- Are students willing to do it?

**Importance:**

- Why is it important or not important?

**Enablers:**

- Enablers – what might make this happen?

**Barriers:**

- What are the barriers?
- What would stop this from happening –  
is it to do with teacher experience?  
something in the policy works?  
something in the enthusiasm in the children?

**What remains:**

- Going forward –  
What needs to be done?

#### *3.4.5.1 Stage 2B Instruments & Data Collection*

This Sub-Section deals with how the measurement tools were selected for Stage 2B. This stage was in the form of an ethnography, by use of thematic analysis.

A qualitative interview is a 'professional conversation' (Kvale, 2007, p. 14; here, quoted from Braun and Clarke, 2014, p. 77), 'with the goal of getting a participant to talk about *their* experiences and perspectives, and to capture *their* language and concepts, in relation to a topic

that *you* have determined’ (Rubin and Rubin, 1995, p. 38; here, quoted from Braun and Clarke, 2014, p. 77).

The data collection was done with audio-recording, with some minor note taking. ‘Because most qualitative researchers are interested in detail of participants’ responses, and the language and concepts they use in talking about their experiences and perspectives, it is important to have a precise record of the interview’ (Braun and Clarke, 2014, p. 92).

The instruments involved familiarisation and data coding, which was carried out in 8 stages. After the interviews had been transcribed, the analysis was carried out in a further 7 stages; Reading and familiarisation, Coding, Searching for themes, Reviewing themes, Defining and naming themes, Writing – finalising analysis, Writing up (Braun and Clarke, 2014, pp. 202-203).

According to Braun and Clarke, there is ‘not always a clean separation between data collection and analysis’ (Braun and Clarke, 2014, p. 204). But this can be an asset. The reason for there not being such a separation

can result from a drawn-out data collection period, where you begin your data coding while still collecting final data items, or from a staged data collection process, where you collect part of your data, review it with an analytic eye for possible patterns, and then refine or reorient subsequent data collection. This is one of the advantages of the flexibility of qualitative research design. (Braun and Clarke, 2014, p. 204)

This approach largely shaped the research design for Stage 2B.

Coding is ‘a process of identifying aspects of the data that relate to your research question’ (Braun and Clarke, 2014, p. 204). There are two main approaches to coding in pattern-based forms of qualitative analysis, selective coding and complete coding (Braun and Clarke, 2014, p. 204). Selective coding involves ‘identifying a corpus of ‘instances’ of the phenomenon that you’re interested in, and then selecting those out. The purpose here is one of ‘data reduction’ (Braun and Clarke, 2014, p. 206). With complete coding, ‘[i]nstead of looking for particular instances, you aim to identify *anything* and *everything* of interest or relevance to answering your research question, within your dataset. This means that rather than selecting out a particular corpus of instances which you then analyse, you code all the data that’s relevant to your research question, and it’s only later in the analytic process that you become more selective’ (Braun and Clarke, 2014, p. 206).

For this stage, the latter approach was used.

### Stage 2B Qualitative Measurement Tools

This Sub-Section presents the measurement tools implemented for Stage 2B. Following Stage 2A, the researcher would interview the teacher delivering the intervention. Finally, the researcher would conduct interviews with teachers who have not been participating in the study so far but who have used poetry in teaching

- a) philosophy,
- b) life skills, or
- c) literacy

in grade 9 (age 14-15) and who might have ideas about how this could best be done with the holistic moral and emotional development of students in mind: pros and cons of poetry.

Furthermore, it was of interest to speak with individuals/academics who are experienced with or have

- d) an insight in using poetry in education.

The reason for doing this was to enquire about the teacher's experience from teaching material:

- containing specific poems and exercises for the purpose of moral education
- focusing on moral virtues

Furthermore, interviewing teachers (and specialists) enabled the researcher to enquire whether, in the teachers' view, using poetry-based educational activities stimulates moral discussion and increases pupil awareness of moral issues.

### Stage 2B Data Analysis

As described in Sub-Section 3.4.5.1, above, for this stage the approach of complete coding was used.

This method is purely driven by the research question(s). With complete coding,

you begin with you first data item, and systematically work through the whole item, looking for chunks of data that potentially address your research question. You can code in large chunks (e.g. 20 lines of data), small chunks (e.g. a single line of data), and anything in between, as needed. Data that don't contain anything relevant to the research question don't need to be coded at all. [...] A code captures the essence of what it is about that bit of data that interests you. Codes should 'work' when separated from the data [...], because you initially develop candidate themes from your codes, and then your coded data, rather than directly from the full data items. (Braun and Clarke, 2014, pp. 210-211)

According to Braun and Clarke, the analysis of qualitative data begins 'with a process of 'immersion' in the data. The aim of this phase is to become intimately familiar with your dataset's content, and to begin to notice things that might be relevant to your research question' (Braun and Clarke, 2014, p. 204). This involves reading, and re-reading (Braun and

Clarke, 2014, p. 204). During this process, you will start to notice things of interest (Braun and Clarke, 2014, p. 204).

Immersion, also called familiarisation, is ‘not a passive process of just understanding the words (or images); it is about starting to *read data as data*. Reading data as data means not simply absorbing the surface meaning of the words (or images), as you typically absorb a crime novel or a Hollywood blockbuster, but reading the words *actively, analytically* and *critically*, starting to think about *what the data means*. This involves asking questions like:

- How does a participant make sense of their experience?
- Why might they be making sense of their experiences in *this* way (and not in another way)?
- In what *different* ways, do they make sense of the topic discussed?
- How ‘common-sense’ is their story?
- How would I feel if I was in that situation? (Is this different from or similar to how the participant feels, and why might that be?)
- What assumptions do they make in talking about the world?
- What kind of world is ‘revealed’ through their account?’ (Braun and Clarke, 2014, p. 206)

These are the techniques adopted for this stage.

#### 3.4.5.2 Stage 2B Ethnographic Research Design

Stage 2B of the present research project involved an ethnographical design. As a part of the main study, this was intended as a supplement to the poetry intervention carried out in Stage 2A (and its design). This Sub-Section describes the ethnographical design.

Stage 2B involved one step only.

Stage 2B (Interviews)	
10 teachers and/or specialists: Standardised Interviews	23 June-16 July 2020

Table 13 Stage 2A Intervention Design

All participants had a particular interest in poetry. Three were academics, the rest were teachers having to some extent used poetry in their teaching.

The themes and question used for the semi-structured interviews were shown in Sub-Section 3.4.5, above. Braun and Clarke remind us that research questions are not interview questions (Braun and Clarke, 2014, p. 84). Their advice is to ask more focused and concrete questions (Braun and Clarke, 2014, p. 84), which is deemed a

more effective way to answer the research questions. The following guidelines were used when constructing the interview:

Once you have a polished draft of your interview guide, review it by asking yourself the following questions:

- What am I trying to find out with this question? Will it generate that information? [...]
- Does this question help to answer my *research* question?
- Are there (problematic) assumptions embedded in this question?
- What would I feel like if I was asked this question?
- How are participants from different backgrounds likely to feel if asked this question?
- Is this question likely to be meaningful to my participants? [...]

If your interview questions don't stand up to this scrutiny, you'll need to rework them. (Braun and Clarke, 2014, p. 85)

This approach was instrumental in shaping the adopted semi-structured interview schedule.

### 3.4.5.3 Stage 2B Sampling

Stage 2B adopted the same method of sampling as Stage 1 and Stage 2A, i.e. *Convenience Sampling*.

The following table gives a summary of the participants and their background.

Participants' Status	Present Role
<b>STAGE 2B</b>	
<u>Interviewees</u>	
Junior College Icelandic Teacher	Retired
Junior College Icelandic Teacher	Retired
Lecturer in Education	University Employed
Elementary School Icelandic Teacher	Employed at a Waldorf School
Senior Lecturer in Education	University Employed
Junior College Icelandic Teacher	Retired
Elementary School Special Educator	Employed at a public school
Elementary School Teacher	Employed at a Waldorf School

Elementary School Danish Teacher	Employed at a Waldorf School
Elementary School Music Teacher	Employed at a public school

Table 14 Participants' Status & Present Role

The aim for this stage had been to get 8-10 participants, so when these were secured the interviews were carried out accordingly.

### 3.4.6 Summary of the Methodology

This Sub-Section presents a summary of the methodology as a whole. The methodology consists in two research design, with the latter being divided into two sub-stages.

#### 3.4.6.1 Stage 1 Summary

This Sub-Section summarises the methodology for Stage 1.

As put by Gorard, an 'intervention is a deliberate change in circumstance that could influence an outcome of interest' (Gorard, 2013, p. 124). He explains the basic cross-sectional design, as follows:

N O  
N O

... 'where two naturally occurring groups (N) are compared in terms of an observation or measure (O) (Gorard, 2013, p. 125). In this design, I propose a setup where the groups are 'intended to be homogeneous (random) (Gorard, 2013, p. 126):

R O X O  
R O O

The benefits of this research, is that 'the format of the classic pre- and post-test experiment, in which two similar randomised groups are tested for an outcome both before and after only one group has received the intervention. Here the outcome of interest would be the difference in the change between the pre- and post-tests scores for each group' (Gorard, 2013, p. 127).

#### 3.4.6.2 Stage 2A Summary

This Sub-Section summarises the methodology for Stage 2A.

According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992, p. 62), a case study is much like a funnel. It starts out wide, and then develops a focus. If it involves a comparison (in the present research, between

stages 2A and 2B), the first case will provide a ‘focus to define the parameters’ (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992, p. 69) of the other.

In Sub-Section 3.4.2, above, I have strived to cover the key features of case studies as defined by Creswell (as cited in Creswell, 2013, p. 98). Here, the *identification* of a specific case has been described within certain parameters, such as a specific place and time. The *intent* of conducting the case study is to evaluate the impact of an intervention programme after having been adapted to the use of poetry. In order to display an *in-depth* understanding of the case, it is necessary to rely on more than one source date, and for this purpose I have identified ‘observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports’ (Creswell, 2013, p. 98; Flick, 2014, p. 297; Ary et al., 2006, p. 460). In other words, as an ethnographic research, this design ‘comprises two research strategies: non-participant observation and participant observation’ (Flick, 2014, p. 297). When it comes to the selection of how to approach the *data analysis*, here, a single case is analysed for comparison with the instrumental case. The goal for this experiment was to facilitate and develop the means for carrying out the subsequent case study (Stage 2A→Stage 2B of the present research). A key to understanding the analysis involves a *description* of the case which focuses on the research issue identified at the outset of the assignment (Creswell, 2013, pp. 98-99). Such a study often ends with ‘conclusions formed by the researcher about the overall meaning derived from the case’ (Creswell 2013, p. 99). In following this tradition, this research design asserts that poetry is ideal to stimulate moral discussion and development. As a source of philosophical reflection, poetry can have ethical implications. These are evident, because this reflection involves deliberating about moral cases. Such a method represents an important education/pedagogical tool.

#### 3.4.6.3 Stage 2B Summary

This Sub-Section summarises the methodology for Stage 2B.

According to Flick, in ‘recent discussions, interest in the method of participant observation has faded into the background, while the more general strategy of ethnography, in which observation and participation are interwoven with other procedures, has attracted more attention’ (Flick, 2014, p. 319). Important features of ethnographic research are:

- A strong emphasis on exploring the nature of a particular social phenomenon, rather than setting out to test hypotheses about them.
- A tendency to work primarily with ‘understanding’ data: that is, data that have not been coded at the point of data collection in terms of a closed set of analytic categories.
- Investigation of a small number of cases, perhaps just one case, in detail.

- Analysis of data that involves explicit interpretation of the meanings and function of human actions, the product of which mainly takes the form of verbal descriptions and explanations, with quantification and statistical analysis playing a subordinate role at most. (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1998, pp. 110-111; here, quoted from Flick, 2014, p. 320)

This is the approach chosen for Stage 2B. It is also in line with the criticism I give of Seider's approach, in Sub-Section 2.1.4.4, above, in that the ethnographic approach should be used interwoven with other methods, as Kristjánsson points out (Kristjánsson, 2015, p. 84) and I refer to in in Sub-Sections 3.4.2.1 and 3.4.2.1 Stage 1 Instruments & Data Collection: Stage 1 Qualitative Measurement Tools, above, and in Sub-Section 3.4.6.3, below.

#### *3.4.6.4 Overall Summary*

At present there is no teacher resource available in Iceland for primary or secondary school educators who would like to integrate character education into the curriculum by using poetry. To this it can be added that teachers who would like to use poetry (or literature in general) for moral or character education have little or no informal local pedagogical tradition to rely on. Moreover, the ordinary class teacher cannot be expected to be able to look up materials in English on the web, such as those produced by the Jubilee Centre, and turn those into useful teaching resources in Icelandic for Icelandic students just by sleight of hand. Thus, poetry as a vehicle for character education is largely unexplored within Icelandic educational settings, both as an academic field of research and as a practical approach in education.

Of the two research designs (methods) presented, the second one is more likely to provide sound inferential interpretations. From a viewpoint of educational research, it measures the pupils' virtue literacy within an experimental group and enables a comparison with a control group. Virtue literacy is connected with character education as it consists of three inter-related components of the framework for character education. They are (i) Virtue 'Perception'; (ii) Virtue 'Knowledge & Understanding'; and (iii) Virtue 'Reasoning'.

### **3.5 Limitations**

This Sub-Section deals with the limitations of the present research.

The impact of the intervention was mostly, and almost solely, visible in the qualitative data, showing that creative aspect of running such a program is multi-layered, and relates as much to the teacher as it does to students. This relates to the smallness of the sampling, and will be explained further in CHAPTER 4: Findings.

As will be shown in Chapter 4, the quantitative findings of this research are weak due to the smallness of the dataset. So, this is a criticism that can be directed at both stages of the research project.

Another limitation of the research is the method of sampling, i.e. *Convenience Sampling*, as was touched upon in Sub-Section 3.4.4.3. It is open to bias and introduces vulnerable relations to the participants. Braun and Clarke point to certain limitations regarding qualitative interviews, insofar as they are *time consuming for researchers*, there is *lack of breadth* because of smaller sample sizes (compared to a qualitative survey study), *lack of anonymity*, they are *not necessarily* ideal for sensitive issues, *time consuming for participants*, and *not necessarily 'empowering' for participants* (Braun and Clarke, 2014, p. 80). Out of the aforementioned issues, for this research, two or three of them are non-issues or, at least, less of an issue; namely, whether they *lack anonymity*, are *not necessarily* ideal for sensitive issues, and *not necessarily 'empowering' for participants*.

Furthermore, there are limitations linking to practical restraints, methodological ones, those that relate to measurement in character, participants, and other measurement factors.

The practical restraints, outside the smallness of the dataset involve the time restraint and the limitations of running an intervention in the school environment. Giving only 6 lessons over the course of 3 weeks is likely to make much too small of an impact to become observable in the quantitative findings. The lessons should be longer, more in total, and the programme should run for the course of 1 or more semesters. This would create a truly effective and measurable impact. The limitations of running an intervention in the school environment are due to school schedules being packed. All alterations from the predefined scheduled day-to-day order of business ideally need to be agreed upon and booked at least a year in advance. Otherwise, it is virtually impossible to be given access to a class group for the purpose of something like the present research project.

The methodological restraints are perhaps the biggest factor when touching upon the topic of limitations. Quantitative research is said to allow for too much generalisation (Flick, 2014, p. 13). It 'generates 'shallow' but broad data – not a lot of complex detail obtained from each participant' (Braun and Clarke, 2014, p. 4). Typically, this is counter-acted against when 'lots of participants take part (to generate the necessary statistical power)' (Braun and Clarke, 2014, p. 4), but for this research that was not the case. When it comes to qualitative research, it tends to 'take longer to complete because it is interpretive and there is no formula' (Braun and Clarke, 2014, p. 4). Some disadvantages of longitudinal studies are that they require a great amount of time, risk gathering data that is not 100% reliable, risk experiencing panel

attrition, and require a large sample size (Miller, 2016). It should also be born in mind that the present research is in part a cross-sectional study. It

is a less effective method for the researcher who is concerned to identify individual variations in growth or to establish causal relationships between variables. Sampling in the cross-sectional study is complicated because different subjects are involved at each age level and may not be comparable. Further problems arising out of selection effects and the obscuring of irregularities in growth weaken the cross-sectional study so much that one observer dismisses the method as a highly unsatisfactory way of obtaining developmental data except for the crudest purposes. (Cohen and Manion, 1994, p. 71)

But, perhaps, the largest limitations relate to the difficulties in measuring character. As explained in Footnote 4 on p. 15, and in Sub-Section 2.1.1.4.2, it is complicated to measure the different components of virtue, and some of them are elusive. The matter of measuring character is partly subjective. And, perhaps, the very idea of treating character as something that *can* or *should* be measured is more aligned with what schools want us to do and less aligned to the philosophical mode of thinking that the present research wants to adopt.

I touched briefly on the limitations regarding participants earlier in this Sub-Section. Other limitations regarding participants relate to parent-consent and communication between teachers and parents. In this study, a part of the prospective participants in the control group for Stage 2A pulled out with short notice. When this was looked into, there seemed to have been too slow or infrequent communication between the parents and the class teacher. When the problem arose, there was not much to be done. The control phase had to continue as planned. But the effected outcome was regrettable, and might, perhaps, have been avoided with more or better preparation. These limitations will be illuminated with examples in CHAPTER 4: Findings.

It should be noted here, towards the end of this methodological chapter, that I have gone into more detail in describing my methodological approaches and decisions than is common in most PhD thesis written within the sub-areas of educational philosophy or character education. Because some of the methods chosen ran into various practical obstacles, as will be reviewed in Chapter 4, I want to highlight that the reason for those problem was not that methodological considerations had not been given sufficient attention, but rather that some of the practical issues which researchers encounter ‘on location’ are not the ones typically explored in textbooks on research methods.

### 3.6 Remarks on an Alternative Methodological Option

This Sub-Section offers some remarks on an alternative methodological option that could have been chosen for the present research.

An alternative would have been to conduct *action research*, which in an educational environment involves taking on the dual role of agent and researcher to identify problems or weaknesses and to ‘help educators develop practical solutions to address them quickly and efficiently’ (Edglossary.org, 2015). In doing so, one enters a process of action, which often is repeated over time, with the aim to identify a problem, maintain a solution, and evaluating the results, whilst also remaining on the look-out for new problems. For present purposes, this would have meant enlisting the teachers involved in the project as co-researchers, conducting research into their own teaching and its effects.

While this aim is certainly helpful in itself, and to a certain degree, the very aspiration for this project, it does not offer a suitable academic setting for applying character education in the way this project intends to. The accessibility to schools is, at least in Iceland, limited, given the tight schedule they run on. All interactions, visitations, and/or disruptions such caused by running an intervention must be planned and approved well in advance. All research taking place in schools would need to either have a practical appeal to the individual school or, in the view of the principal(s), make a contribution to the ‘greater good’ of the education community. It is my humble opinion that acquiring two schools to participate in an action-research project would have been very complicated under these circumstances. Notably, if I had been employed myself as a teacher at the time of running the project, I could have done research on the effects of my own teaching. However, that was not the case in the present context.

### 3.7 Ethical Considerations

As mentioned briefly on p. 102, above, the questionnaires were designed to measure the students’ comprehension of moral vocabulary, both in a general sense, but also more specifically, by measuring the students’ understanding of 3 pre-decided virtuous concepts (shame, pride, compassion), in poems where these concepts are present. Each questionnaire has 3 parts (see Appendices A1 & B1). In one part, the questions focus on a poem from the 20th century, in the second part on a poem from the 21st century. Finally, the questionnaires contain questions of moral nature, but in an unrelated context. The idea of this was to observe whether the students are able to use moral concepts in an unexpected context, and to transpose their meaning, so to speak.

Engaging adolescents in discourse about sensitive subjects and/or concepts such as shame, can be viewed as sensitive. It is however, also important to trust adolescents to make meaning in their own way and to help empower them when engaged in emotional growth.

As also mentioned briefly, this is the same sampling technique as adapted in other Icelandic studies, one that focused on character education through old Icelandic literature (Jónsson et al., 2019), and an ongoing PhD Study on character education and the visual arts (Waage, 2017), giving rise to future comparisons. Neither of these projects have run into any serious ethical issues according to the researchers in questions.

According to Braun and Clarke, in qualitative research it is acceptable to interview someone you know, such as a friend or a work colleague; ‘these are known as ‘acquaintance interviews’’ (Garton and Copland, 2010, p. 535; here, quoted from Braun and Clarke, 2014, p. 87), ‘but you enter into a ‘dual relationship’ with that person (e.g. they are your friend *and* a participant), which raises some additional ethical considerations’ (Braun and Clarke, 2014, p. 87). This applies to a few of the interviewees participating in Stage 2B.

This project received full ethical approval from the University of Birmingham Ethics Committee on 2 October 2018, no. ERN\_17-1447. The application for amendment, involving the follow up interviews conducted in Stage 2B, received full ethical approval from the University of Birmingham Ethics Committee on 13 July 2020, no. ERN\_17-1447A.

## CHAPTER 4: Findings

Chapter 3 examined the research strategy and the empirical methods applied. It explained how the study was divided into two stages. Stage 1 consisted of a pilot, including the design of the study programme and measuring the virtue literacy of Grade 9 students in a lower secondary school in Iceland, through pre- and post-surveys, focus groups, and a standardised interview. This was an experimental study. The second stage involved assessing the barriers and enablers to running such a poetry programme. This stage was divided into two sub-stages, (2A) a case study and (2B) an ethnography. The former consisted of a pilot and the latter involved evaluations, including interviews and thematic analysis.

This chapter presents the findings of the research project. It deals with each stage and sub-stage separately. Initially, the plan was, had Stage 1 been fully successful and conclusive, that Stage 2 would have been implemented identically but on a larger scale. However, before commencing the study, I harboured some reservations as to whether this would prove to viable.

There are three main outcomes that emerge from the findings, the first two of which functioned as a backward loop at the design stage, in that a new sub-stage was added to Stage 2 once it became clear that the execution of the programme did not live up to expectations:

- The methodological and practical shortcomings of the execution of the pilot
- The pedagogical shortcomings of the learning materials created for and used during the pilot
- The strengths of the learning materials and the project in spite of, and in retrospective light of, its shortcomings

This chapter deals only with the data from the qualitative and quantitative findings. It illustrates the trajectory of the project, from the research design to the execution. It provides a strictly descriptive account of the various processes of the two stages of the project, which were introduced in Chapter 3. However, in Section 4.1.1, I will give a brief description of the factors that hindered the implementation. A fuller discussion of the outcomes and the lessons to be learned from them, then, awaits Chapter 5.

### 4.1 Stage 1 Findings

This section describes the quantitative and qualitative findings from the pilot project. It took place in the larger one of the schools that later were the sites of the intervention for Stage 2B. Before presenting the quantitative and qualitative findings of Stage 1, I will give an account of the issues that affected the implementation of the pilot.

#### 4.1.1 Factors That Hindered the Implementation of the Pilot

In this section, I present a narrative description of the factors that hindered the implementation of the pilot. Due to the fact that these shortcomings led to changes in the research design, it is necessary to include some discussion about these factors in this Findings section.

As will be seen in Sub-Section 4.2.1, the same factors as described in the current section, proved, at least to some extent, to hinder the implementation of the intervention in the main study. As was described in the introduction to Chapter 4, above, two types of shortcomings materialised, of which the latter also points towards a strength.

On the one hand, the shortcomings concern researcher procedures, and have methodological and practical implications. This type of shortcomings pertain to the protocol (i.e. a description of what the researcher intends to do and how they will do it) intended to ensure that any issues that might occur are considered beforehand. On the other hand, the shortcomings are pedagogical in nature and refer to how the learning materials were constructed and presented.

As was also described above, the shortcomings resulted in a backward loop at the design stage, before the implementation of the intervention. This loop consisted in a sub-stage being added to Stage 2, to allow for the conduction of interviews with 10 teachers and/or specialists who are experienced with or have an insight into using poetry in education. Of course, the hope was that the changes made would eliminate these shortcomings. As will be discussed in Sub-Section 4.2.1 below, the shortcomings did not disappear altogether. However, the strengths remained as clear during the intervention as the pilot: a discussion that awaits Sub-Section 4.2.1.

Before continuing the present discussion, the following Table 15 shows the timeline of the implementation of the pilot:

# Timeline of the implementation

Timeline of the implementation of the trial run



Table 15 Timeline of the Implementation of the Pilot

For the pilot, I had been allocated 6 timeslots, each consisting of an 80 min lesson, as shown in Table 7, on p. 100 above. On the first day, 24 October 2018, my plan was to greet the students, introduce myself, and present the project which they would be participating in, and then, to administer the pre-questionnaire before proceeding to give the first of the 6 planned lessons. I had somewhat misjudged the scope of administering a questionnaire, as it turned out to take the students 70 minutes to complete the pre-questionnaire. This meant that I would need a further 7 timeslots to be able to give 6 lessons and then administer the post-questionnaire. In the context of the school environment (at least the fairly rigid Icelandic one), this is a major setback, as all changes to an operation must be planned about 9-12 months ahead of time. The reason for this is that, for each school, the school year calendar is finalised and published before the previous school year ends, and therefore all visitations are confirmed as early as possible during the previous school year (I touched upon this obstacle, briefly, in Section 3.5). Having been a department head<sup>34</sup> at a lower secondary school (during the school year of 2016-2017), I know from experience how complicated making just a slight change to the school calendar is. This mix-up could easily have been avoided, for example by asking 1-2 students informally to fill in the questionnaire prior to its administration in class.

As was acknowledged at the beginning of Sub-Section 3.4.1 and in Sub-Section 3.4.4.1 Stage 2A Instruments & Data Collection: Stage 1 Quantitative Measurement Tools, the execution of this project was to some extent based on the *Laxdaela Saga* project, thus following closely the

<sup>34</sup> The educational middle manager role I had, which is typical in the Icelandic context, principally involved the management of the communication of information to parents due to attendance registration; organisation and management of 'theme days week' and communication with teachers and parents regarding the theme days, in addition to other organisational duties.

setup of the pre- and post-questionnaires administered for that project. The *Laxdaela Saga* project was conducted in 2017 (Jónsson et al., 2019, p. 1). Later (in Chapter 5), this can provide an opportunity for a comparison between these two research projects, as well as another one presently being carried out by my former colleague, Ingimar Ó. Waage, who is doing a PhD research project on the moral and characterological value of art education. He also had developed and tested similar questionnaires in a pilot study, in January 2018. By consulting the researchers doing these projects, I could have more appropriately estimated the time needed for administering the questionnaires. Luckily, the pilot school agreed to allow for 2 extra visits so that I could give all 6 lessons, and then return to administer the post-questionnaire.

The lesson to be learned from this miscalculation is that project management plays a great role in successful implementation of an educational research project. Therefore, it is crucial to plan such a project as thoroughly as if one was applying for a grant, explaining in detail all aspects of the research plan. This includes the duration of each task, the work components (from groundwork, through data collection, data coding and discourse analysis, to producing outcomes and dissemination). Furthermore, a checklist should be created for communication with persons making contributions to, or participating in any way in, the project tasks. This task list should include what information must be conveyed, for example via a phone call or through conversation, and then to iterate important factors via email. These factors concern rules and regulations of conducting the task that the person in question is taking part in, response to unforeseen events, and when (and in what form) this person can expect communication from the researcher. For phone calls, there should be a script with a list of things to convey, and likewise, for all meetings, the researcher should bring a list of things to be covered. Every act of communication with someone facilitating a given task must be considered an important part of the overall development of the project. Therefore, the researcher must define a protocol to adhere to in these circumstances, in order to diminish the chance of unnecessary upsets. I suggest that project management be included as a larger component of preparatory modules for students embarking on postgraduate research work.

When executing the lesson plans involving the poetry learning materials created for this research project, I felt that completing all tasks allocated for each lesson was challenging – but not impossible. The change I made, accordingly, was to allocate less time for each task to such an extent that they would still meet their objectives. This is, however, a problematic last-resort factor known to all teachers, regardless of the contents of the lesson plans, the learning material, and their own good intentions. In this respect, time management challenges for teachers are also one of the issues discussed in Sub-Section 4.2.4, below.

A final way of describing the shortcomings of the implementation of the pilot – perhaps pertaining to both types of shortcomings listed at the beginning of this section – relates to the practical conditions of the teaching during the pilot. During at least the first two lessons given, I sensed a (substantive) alienation among the students with respect to the classroom activities. It is hard to tell whether this was due to a lack of knowledge or understanding of the substance of virtue literacy or an inexperience in engaging in a philosophical dialogue. In this particular school, philosophy is a mandatory subject in Grade 8, so the students should have acquired some prior training in using philosophical methods in a group discussion the year before the pilot took place, and this is indeed something I counted on beforehand. While the ideas behind virtue literacy were not completely alien to the Grade 9 students, some concepts and formulations used in the poetry learning materials (particularly concerning *empathy*) did appear foreign to the pilot students, which then affected the time scope of the execution. Another factor relating to the practical conditions of the teaching is when one enters a class as an unknown teacher. As far as the implementation of this pilot is concerned, I do not believe that this was a major issue, as the class teacher of the group sat in on all the lessons. But the short scope of the pilot was definitely a hindrance to achieving the objectives of the poetry learning materials.

The idea behind the implementation had been to deliver the lessons for 6 weeks with a one-week interval. The school requested that, instead, this would be done in 3 weeks with two lessons a week. This gave less time for the learning objectives to sink in and stick with the students. At the same time, it also became clear to me that even working through this material in 6 weeks would most likely not be enough. In order to reap the full benefits of a programme like the one being presented in this research project, it would be necessary (or at least desirable) to run it for the duration of a whole school year. This view is also expressed by the participants in Section 4.2.4, below, within the theme of *Slow Learning* represented under the overarching theme of *Time*. Trying to achieve the objectives of this poetry programme in 3-6 weeks presents an obstacle with respect to its measurability. Furthermore, delivering it in such a compact manner presents two types of complications. First, it adds a sense of questionability to the research design, as to whether it is even possible to detect a change in virtue literacy over such a short amount of time. I attempted to address this issue via a backward loop at the design stage. Second, the very ideal of character education does not correspond with trying to achieve its goals in a short amount of time. It is not a medicine, so to speak, to be given to someone for a short amount of time. While I had been stimulated by previous research findings indicating positive characterological (esp. with respect to virtue literacy) outcomes of a fairly short literature-based intervention (Arthur et al., 2014), I had not taken sufficient

account of the fact that my teaching materials were pitched at a considerably higher level of complexity and abstraction and also used a medium (poems) that require more complex and time-consuming processes of reflection and digestion than simplified literary stories, as used in the *Knightly Virtues* project, for example.

The takeaway lesson for me, as a PhD researcher in the field of character education, was that piloting an educational research project is a practically important enterprise that, in addition to the defining of background knowledge, mapping of the field and preparing teachers, is about creating a holistic model of the full-scale project proposed to be undertaken. Therefore, the results of the pilot phase carry an inferential meaning. The practical lessons are meant to refine the implementation process of the main study, and should preferably be carried out flawlessly (or as close to it as possible). If all protocols and procedures are adequately defined, you are less likely to run into obstacles at this stage, thus reducing the chance of anything unforeseen happening during the intervention at the next stage. However, as already explained, some of the expectations underlying my own pilot project turned out to have been unrealistic. This will be borne out further in subsequent sections.

#### 4.1.2 Stage 1 Quantitative Findings

This section focuses on the quantitative findings obtained in the pilot. As explained above, the quantitative measurement tools selected for this study were based on the *Knightly Virtues* project (Arthur et al., 2014) and the *Laxdaela Saga* project (Jónsson et al., 2019). At the start and end of the pilot, pre- and post-surveys were given to the students to measure their reading and writing comprehension of virtue language, their knowledge and understanding of virtue language, their application of virtue language in the context of modern poems, their application of virtue language in the context of poems from the past, and their application of virtue language in personal, social and cultural contexts. For this, as was further illustrated in Sub-Section 3.4.2.1 Stage 1 Instruments & Data Collection: Stage 2A Quantitative Measurement Tools, the following evaluative factors were used:

**Evaluative factors:**

- Understanding of vocabulary on moral virtues and vices.
- Application of vocabulary on moral virtues and vices.
- Ability to apply/use concepts of virtues and emotions from modern poems.
- Ability to apply/use concepts of virtues and emotions from poems from the past.
- Ability to apply/use concepts of virtues and emotions from personal experience or contemporary relevance.

The following table shows the distribution of data for these evaluative factors:

### Pilot Tests – Distribution of Data for Evaluative Factors

Pilot		EvFacBs	EvFacBb	EvFacC	EvFacD	EvFacE
<b>Test A</b>	<i>Mean</i>	6.50	4.29	6.53	5.53	5.06
	<i>N</i>	17	17	17	17	17
	<i>Std Deviation</i>	1.38	1.79	1.94	2.35	2.56
<b>Test B</b>	<i>Mean</i>	5.52	2.62	8.05	8.71	3.48
	<i>N</i>	21	21	21	21	21
	<i>Std Deviation</i>	1.79	1.66	2.04	2.28	2.87
<b>Total</b>	<i>Mean</i>	5.96	3.37	7.37	7.29	4.18
	<i>N</i>	38	38	38	38	38
	<i>Std Deviation</i>	1.67	1.89	2.11	2.79	2.82

Table 16 Pilot Descriptive Statistics Distribution of Data

As can be seen, there is a significant improvement for evaluative factor C (‘Ability to apply/use concepts of virtues and emotions from modern poems’) and evaluative factor D (‘Ability to apply/use concepts of virtues and emotions from poems from the past’). However, for the other evaluative factors, the scores of the students decreased, and for two of them (‘Application of vocabulary on moral virtues and vices’ & ‘Ability to apply/use concepts of virtues and emotions from personal experience or contemporary relevance’) the decrease was notable. This might indicate that the implementation of the poetry part of the learning materials was successful and that, in contrast, the more generalised cultivation of the students’ virtue literacy and their ability to apply this knowledge in another context was unsuccessful. However, due to the limits imposed by the smallness of the sampling size, the (dis)confirmation of the hypothesis of effect or no effect on the outcome of the tests, by the lessons given during the pilot, is inconclusive. Therefore, the quantitative findings alone cannot address the 1<sup>st</sup> Sub-RQ:

Can poetry be used to cultivate virtue?

The pilot does, however, indicate that running an intervention in an Icelandic school, designed to cultivate virtue, is possible, given that various contextual factors are heeded to and the methodological optimism of a novice researcher are toned down. But to further refine the implementation of such an intervention, we now need to look to the qualitative findings of the pilot project.

#### 4.1.3 Stage 1 Qualitative Findings

This section describes the qualitative findings of the pilot.

The focus groups were conducted via semi-structured interviews and modelled after the same sort of interviews conducted for the *Laxdaela Saga* project, previously mentioned. This model consists in set questions having been prepared as ‘guards’, while allowing for ad-hoc

questions and answers, when seen fit. The students were asked what they remembered from the present project's poetry learning materials; if they had studied or read poems in another setting (e.g. in other subjects or outside school); what they thought differs in the way poems were read in the poetry learning materials and in the Icelandic-language subject; if they encountered the same sort of moral exercises in other school subjects, and if so, how they were taught; if there were other forms of media – stories, songs, films, etc. – that could be used for moral learning; and also, whether they themselves were consumers of such forms of media. As mentioned above, each question could be expanded upon, and if the answers gave rise to new questions, that was accepted.

The students did not remember the poems from the materials especially well, but when given pointers, they quickly remembered, for instance, the first poem shown to them and could explain the subject matter of the poem [My (First Ghost) by Birgitta Jónsdóttir (See Appendix I1)], suggesting for example that it was about a doll, a ghost, and the deadly sins. This point indicated that at least some students had created their own interpretation of the poem in question. They were confident in explaining the meaning of the concepts *empathy* and *pride*, but as in the learning materials, the word used for shame in the Icelandic is an old-fashioned one (ice. *blygðun*); hence, not all the focus-group students were familiar with this form of the word and, thus, did not know the meaning of it. However, other members of the group could immediately explain it to their peers. An example of a poem they remembered nothing about is Miniver Cheevy by Edwin Arlington Robinson (See Appendix I1), which to a great extent deals with the concept of *shame*. One may wonder if that has something to do with difficulties in conveying the word 'shame' in 21<sup>st</sup>-century Icelandic. The students said that the main difference between studying poems in the Icelandic-language subject and in the present poetry learning materials was that in the former they almost exclusively learned about forms and rules, such as the placement of alliterates, whereas in the present project's poetry learning materials, the poems taught them the meaning and the usage of concepts.

On the whole, the feedback of the students was positive; they thought it would be a good idea to implement further the ideas and approach of the poetry learning materials. The students especially liked an exercise that involved 'drawing a poem' (See Appendix I1). Since the fairly positive focus-group findings were out of sync with quantitative findings presented earlier, worries about a social-desirability bias crept in.

The pilot project class teacher had been a passive observer of the teachings I gave during the pilot. In the interview conducted with her, I tried to tease out her experience of the learning materials and its approach of character education. She expressed great admiration for the idea

of the project and the contents of the learning materials. It was, however, not clear if she would be able to successfully incorporate everything I had used, but she would certainly be interested in trying. The feeling that I took away from the interview with the class teacher was that perhaps some methods of teaching creative writing and ideas behind character education might prove to be a challenge from the teacher's point of view.

Next, I will present the findings from Stage 2.

## 4.2 Stage 2 Findings

This section discusses the quantitative and qualitative findings from the intervention and the follow-up interviews, and to what extent, conclusions can be drawn from these findings. The intervention took place in two schools, both in the capital area of Reykjavik. One is a large school, with about 8 classes in each year. This was the experimental group. The other school is a small school, with only 1 class in each year. This was the control group. Before presenting the quantitative and qualitative findings of Stage 2, I will give an account of the issues that affected the implementation of the first of the two main Stage 2 sub-stages.

### 4.2.1 Factors That Hindered the Implementation of the Intervention

In this section, I present a narrative description of the factors that hindered the implementation of the intervention. After experiencing the shortcomings of the implementation of the pilot, changes were made accordingly via a backward loop at the design stage, as described in Sub-Section 4.1.1. However, as hinted at, also in Sub-Section 4.1.1, the issues at stake did not disappear completely. At the same time, the strengths that the latter of the two shortcomings pointed to remained as clear during the intervention as the pilot:

- The methodological and practical shortcomings of the execution of the intervention
- The pedagogical shortcomings of the learning materials created for and used during the intervention
- The strengths of the learning materials and the design in spite of, and in retrospective light of, its shortcomings

It is an asset to the qualitative findings of this project that the learning materials used should prove as inspiring as was described in Sub-Section 4.1.3<sup>35</sup>, and as will be described in the latter half of Sub-Section 4.2.2 & throughout Section 4.2.4. This section, however, focuses on

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<sup>35</sup> Remember, however, the caveat about a possible social-desirability bias, given the contrasting quantitative findings.

the shortcomings of the intervention. The following Table 17 shows the timeline of the implementation of the intervention:

## Timeline of the implementation

Timeline of the implementation of the intervention



Table 17 Timeline for the Implementation of the Intervention

Once again, time proved to be a hindering factor. Although I had described the problems I had faced during the pilot – and the changes I made to the lesson plans accordingly – to the class teacher in charge of delivering the learning materials beforehand, she informed me that it was impossible for her to fit all the exercises, contained in the learning material, into the allocated time. Therefore, she had only completed a part of the exercises from each lesson plan. This shows that even though I had taken precautions to eliminate the time factor as a design problem as seen from my own perspective as a teacher, it is also necessary to take into account the familiarity of the teachers actually implementing the intervention with the learning materials and, perhaps, also their background knowledge concerning one or more of the following: philosophy, philosophy with children, character education, moral education and/or emotional education through poetry. These aspects will be discussed further in Chapter 5. The teacher in question is quite used to teaching poetry as part of the Icelandic-language subject, and as will be shown in the latter part of Sub-Section 4.2.2, according to this teacher there were many strengths to the poetry learning materials she was given to use. Yet it seems those strengths were outweighed by the problem she encountered. As was covered in Sub-Section 4.1.3, above, she explained that on the one hand, this material provided a new way of presenting poetry to Grade 9 students, and on the other hand, that it was clearly an effective way of raising moral (and emotional) awareness through poetry and creative exercises in a way that she had not tried before.

An unforeseen factor that hindered the implementation of the intervention occurred in two ways regarding communication and cooperation with S-school. Initially, I had an informal meeting with the class teacher at S-school, on 7 November 2018, explaining to her the nature of my project and discussing the participation of her school in the main study, the following spring. She knew a little about character education and was excited about the prospect of contributing to my project. During this meeting and in subsequent communication, she assured me that getting parental consent would never be any kind of issue for this class, which was a small group of only 15 students. According to her, she almost only needed to inform the parents fleetingly of this project and that getting written consent was merely a formality. I took her word for this, and this turned out to be a mistake on my part. When time was fast approaching for the administration of the pre-questionnaire in S-school, it turned out she only had the consent of half of the parents. But she assured me she would get hold of the rest, and that there was no need for concern. Being happy with this was another mistake on my part. On the day of the pre-questionnaire, it turned out that a few parents had declined participation for their children and another few were ill on that day. There and then, it was clear that the group was too small to act as an effective control group, but the time during which something could have been done about it had passed. What I should have done was to communicate more clearly, already at the beginning, the importance of the control-school class teacher contacting me immediately if and when the parental consents were not secured by a certain date. This was an oversight on my part and simply shows my practical inexperience as a researcher.

Before the commencement of the intervention, I had a second meeting with this class teacher, on 22 February 2019. This time we were joined by the principal of the school. In this meeting they told me they had only just realised that their school would act as the control school, but not as the experimental school. They told me they were disappointed, as they foresaw that the other school would score much better on the questionnaires, as the experimental school would be given lessons from the learning materials and, therefore, their students become more competent in virtue literacy. I assured them that the actual results of the questionnaires, and any potential comparison between the experimental and the control group, was not the key element of this project, as I already knew that the total number of participants was quite small, and that the real issue was to test the methods as part of a theoretical research study. The principal then told me that if their school were to be the control school, they would have to request that their school be not named in any products of this research project. I agreed to that. When first approaching the school, I should have been clearer about the role I was requesting them to take on, and the importance of that role in an educational research aspect.

When I was picking up the post-questionnaire from the control-school class teacher in a concealed envelope, we chatted informally about the project and how she had coped with administering the questionnaires. During this discussion she revealed to me, apparently without realising the seriousness of this and without knowing how damaging this would be to the data, that she had directly assisted a student with learning disabilities in answering at least a few questions in the post-questionnaire. At that moment, it was clear that I was neither thorough enough from the start in explaining the importance of the testing conditions being identical when the questionnaires were administered – for both test sites and for both pre- *and* post- surveys – nor did I follow through with communicating that. Ding et al. warn that it is crucial that one carefully monitors and documents ‘the conditions under which tests are administered’ (Ding et al., 2008, p. 1). These conditions include timings and incentives (Ding et al., 2008, pp. 1-2 & 4-5), as well as instructions, the condition of the environment with respect to noise and perturbations, and without teacher aides. I decided not to be present at either school when the students answered the pre- and post-questionnaires. Therefore, it was essential that I explained how they should be administered, in order to secure that the conditions were both comparable and acceptable. As can be seen in Sub-Section 4.2.2, below, the control group improved significantly between the pre- and post-questionnaires, and it is highly likely that the attitude of the control school principal and class teacher, described above, had something to do with this. But even if the results from the questionnaires had been more favourable for the experimental school (R-School) and less so for the control school (S-school), the total number was still too small for a statistical comparison to be made between the groups and, therefore, the results were deemed insignificant (as will be revealed in the section below). There is, however, still a valuable lesson learned about how to conduct such an intervention. For example, it is clear to me now that a researcher needs to make sure that the people actually running an intervention understand the difference between an experimental group and a control group and know which one they are in charge of.

The obstacles that have been described in the above undermine the value of the findings presented in Section 4.2.2, making them uninterpretable. Therefore, without the expansion of this research project, which resulted in an added sub-stage, Stage 2B, there would not have been much to go by from the intervention as depicted in Stage 2A only.

Duly it has to be noted that the complications described were avoidable, and as the researcher in charge I must take responsibility for them. I could have communicated the rules of the game better, concerning the measurement methods and the role of acting as a control school. In hindsight, I must consider myself lucky not to have lost control of the outcomes of the project completely. Without trying to absolve myself of responsibility for the methodological

mistakes made, I would allow myself to observe that nitty-gritty implementation issues of this kind were not covered in the Methods modules I took as part of my doctoral studies in the School of Education, University of Birmingham. This may indicate the need to make the content of those modules even more practical and down-to-earth.

4.2.2 Stage 2A Quantitative Findings

Before and after the intervention, the students were given two surveys, or standardised tests. There was a total of 32 participants, 31 took the first test and 31 took the second test. There were 8 boys in the first and second tests, but the number of girls were 23 in the first test and 24 in the second one. There were nine students in the control group and 23 students in the experimental group. The overall number of tests conducted by the students were 64. The number of participants in both the experimental group and the control group, and the gender balance, was unequal and, therefore, statistical comparisons between these groups were deemed unacceptable.

<b>Descriptive Statistics</b>				
	Experimental_Comp	Mean	Std Deviation	N
First Standardised Test	Control Group	28.0556	13.30283	9
	Experimental Group	36.2273	10.51725	22
Total Scores	Total	33.8548	11.78289	31
Second Standardised Test	Control Group	34.6111	10.44263	9
	Experimental Group	28.4091	17.55240	22
Total Scores	Total	30.2097	15.90376	31

Table 18 Intervention Descriptive Statistics Total Scores

The indications that can be analysed for change and the impact of the intervention, depending on whether participants were taught or not between the standardised tests, are uninterpretable based on the research design, sample size, and sampling technique of the intervention. Therefore, the hypothesis of the effect or no effect on the outcome of the tests, by giving lessons during the intervention, is inconclusive.

It is not possible to state that if the experiment were to be repeated with other or more participants, the same results would be obtained. A visual comparison of descriptive statistics shows that the average total score on the test for those in the experimental group decreased by 7.8 points after the intervention, while the total score for participants in the control group increased by 6.6 points between the standardised tests.

### First Standardised Test – Distribution of Data for Evaluative Factors

First Standardised Test		EvFacBs	EvFacBb	EvFacC	EvFacD	EvFacE
<b>Control Group</b>	<i>Mean</i>	8.06	3.78	5.00	6.33	4.89
	<i>N</i>	9	9	9	9	9
	<i>Std Deviation</i>	3.22	2.11	4.06	3.54	2.85
<b>Experimental Group</b>	<i>Mean</i>	8.45	5.91	7.77	8.86	5.23
	<i>N</i>	22	22	22	22	22
	<i>Std Deviation</i>	1.68	2.56	3.18	3.21	3.54
<b>Total</b>	<i>Mean</i>	8.34	5.29	6.97	8.13	5.13
	<i>N</i>	31	31	31	31	31
	<i>Std Deviation</i>	2.18	2.60	3.62	3.45	3.31

Table 19 1<sup>st</sup> Test Descriptive Statistics Distribution of Data

### Second Standardised Test – Distribution of Data for Evaluative Factors

Second Standardised Test		EvFacBs	EvFacBb	EvFacC	EvFacD	EvFacE
<b>Control Group</b>	<i>Mean</i>	8.83	5.22	5.44	9.67	5.44
	<i>N</i>	9	9	9	9	9
	<i>Std Deviation</i>	2.33	3.23	3.05	3.28	3.54
<b>Experimental Group</b>	<i>Mean</i>	6.24	5.30	6.74	7.35	3.22
	<i>N</i>	23	23	23	23	23
	<i>Std Deviation</i>	3.73	3.89	4.22	4.41	3.23
<b>Total</b>	<i>Mean</i>	6.97	5.28	6.38	8.00	3.84
	<i>N</i>	32	32	32	32	32
	<i>Std Deviation</i>	3.56	3.67	3.92	4.20	3.42

Table 20 2<sup>nd</sup> Test Descriptive Statistics Distribution of Data

There are two factors working against each other, as far as using standardised tests goes. On the one hand, the very act of taking tests carries a negative connotation and, on the other hand, often when students are assured that what here is taking place is *not* a typical test and will *not* be graded, there is a danger of students not taking it seriously and/or wanting to get out of the test room (to do other things). In this respect, the use of incentives can be considered beneficial. In this study, all trust was placed in the parents getting behind the project and in students being happy with ‘swapping’ the activities (questionnaires included) under this project with what would otherwise have been on their schedule. The reality is that when most students are asked, or rather told, to do something that is not on their timetable, in their mind this is time that rightfully should be time off. It is a mistake to assume that students will be interested in the task of a researcher or automatically find it interesting. For this reason, offering incentives might be a good idea.

As was reported in Sub-Section 3.4.4.1, the pre- and post-questionnaires were designed to measure the students’ virtue literacy before and after the intervention. For this purpose, the tests measured the following evaluative factors:

- B(s). Understanding of vocabulary on moral virtues and vices.
- B(b). Application of vocabulary on moral virtues and vices.
- C. Ability to apply/use concepts of virtues and emotions from modern poems.

- D. Ability to apply/use concepts of virtues and emotions from poems from the past.
- E. Ability to apply/use concepts of virtues and emotions from personal experience or contemporary relevance.

As seen in Table 19 and Table 20, for the experimental group, all evaluative factors decreased to some degree. At the same time, for all evaluative factors the standard deviation increases. The standard deviation shows how spread out the data is, or how the sample mean deviates from the actual mean of a population. As far as the experimental group is concerned, for 4 out of 5 evaluative factors B(s), B(b), C & D, the standard deviation increased. For evaluative factor E the standard deviation increased, but only by 0.2. At the same time, the mean decreased significantly for all factors, but most significantly for the first and last, B(s) & E, the understanding of vocabulary on moral virtues and vices and the ability to apply/use concepts of virtues and emotions from poems from the past. In other words, as the results become poorer, the data points are spread out over a larger range of values. These swift changes indicate that the data sample was too small and/or the timeframe of the implementation was too short. The decrement of the mean, in and of itself, is not an indication of this, but had the standard deviation become lower, meaning that the data points had tended to be closer to the mean, it might have been interpreted as a consistent effect or no effect of the intervention on the outcome of the tests.

Another way of attempting to contrast the results of the experimental group with something within the present study is to compare it to the results of the pilot group from the pilot. This would only be an analogous comparison. It is necessary to assume that the experimental conditions for the pilot project and main study are different. For methodological reasons it is therefore only justifiable to compare the means and standard deviation analogously, and, subsequently, not possible to make a complete comparison between them and draw a conclusion from that comparison, as if they were derived under the same conditions – which they are not. There are several other factors than the testing conditions which could explain the difference in the means between the two groups. For instance, the composition of the pilot group vs. experimental group. As stated previously, there are too few participants to be able to conclude that incidental factors did not affect the outcome.

An analogous comparison between the descriptive statistics of the experimental group and the pilot group (from Stage 1) is shown in the following chart:

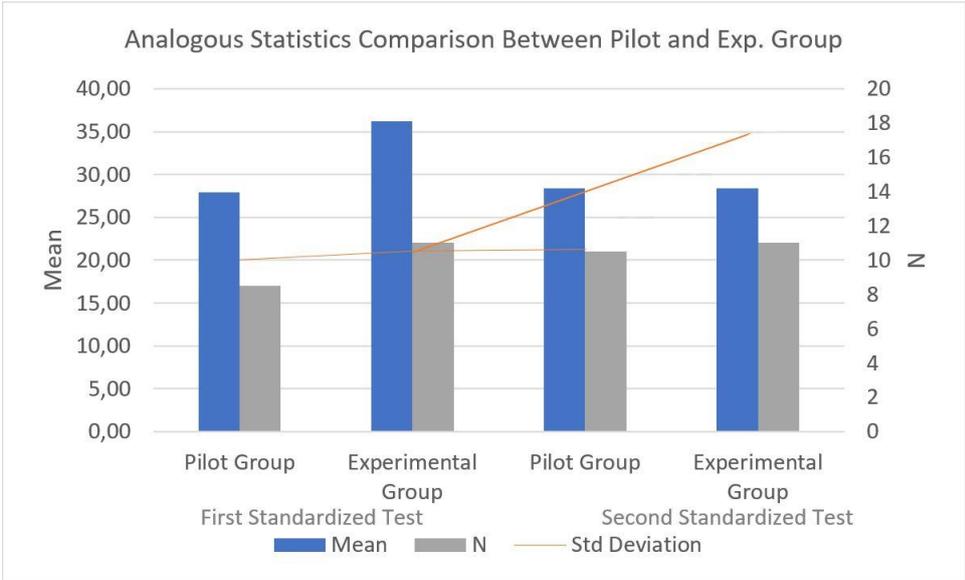


Figure 3 Comparison Between Pilot and Exp. Group

Compared with Stage 2B, the results from Stage 1 indicate more stability – less deviation or low variance – which is yet another indication of the smallness of the sampling dataset being an issue for the intervention. Although the sizes of the two datasets are similar, other factors such as the familiarity of the teachers actually implementing the intervention with the learning materials, as mentioned in Sub-Section 4.2.1, in addition to factors listed on the previous page (and more), also come into play.

Quantitative research is about using statistical data from a small dataset to make inferences about bigger entities. With the data sample from Stage 2B, that is not possible.

4.2.3 Stage 2A Qualitative Findings

In this section, I present the qualitative findings from Stage 2A.

The same model for semi-structured interviews (containing the same questions), as presented in Sub-Section 4.1.3, was used for this stage.

The students felt that the approach taken in the poetry learning materials allowed them to dive deeper into the meaning of poems compared to that of reading poems in the Icelandic-language subject. For one student, a particular poem stood out, entitled Experience by Vilborg Dagbjartsdóttir (See Appendix I1), which articulated the pain attributed to a fish when it is boiled alive. This discussion indicated that the student found poems that conveyed *empathy* meaningful. When asked to describe the lesson content of the learning materials, instead of

naming, say, virtues and vices, they claimed the materials were about ‘good’ and ‘bad attributes’ (ice. *kostir & gallar*). They explained that other subjects also had moral content, but that they mostly watched educational films, and by far the most touched upon subject, as far as moral awareness for the whole duration of Elementary School goes, was bullying prevention. They said that doing the exercises contained the poetry learning materials was good to help them ‘think outside the box’. When asked how one might improve these tasks and activities, they suggested that the exercises could have a stronger connection with the students themselves and their reality, and that the tasks should involve something that they were interested in. Initially, I misunderstood this, thinking they had something in mind regarding the content, but it turned out they were referring to the method or the implementation. What they meant, they explained, was that the lessons would be more effective if they were allowed to do the tasks in groups of twos or threes. In other words, they had enjoyed the group activities the most, which indicates the importance of the construct of social activities, as will be mentioned in Sub-Sections 4.2.4, 4.2.4.4, and 4.2.4.4 Wonderment: Vocation of Being a Role Model, below. Once again, I was struck by the discrepancy between the overall positive evaluation of the teaching materials that emanated from the student interviews and the inclusive (at best), negative (at worst) findings from the post-tests. Could it be that general test fatigue or even hostile attitude towards testing is to blame, as may have been in the case in another research project which mostly recorded negative findings (Kristjánsson et al., 2017)?

The experimental group class teacher said that it had been difficult to conduct a philosophical discussion based on poetry reading. She was unsure if this had been due to tiredness or if it had just been a ‘bad day’ for the students. She thought the lessons were way too long (80 mins) and would have preferred to shorten them. She said that after a certain time the students would lose concentration and repeatedly ask to be reminded of what was going on in the discussion. When this occurred, she added, the dynamics of the lessons were affected. She was, however, very keen on the poetry learning materials and said that something about the structure of the activities had allowed certain students to ‘just, blossom’ and get much more out of reading poems and conceptualising texts than they ever would have by just sitting and reading on their own. What they had liked about the creative writing exercises had been to be given specific instructions and criteria to create under. This indicates that the creative exercises used encourage a type of problem-solving, which will be discussed in Section 4.2.4.2 Creativity: A summary of the Overarching Theme: Creativity, below. Other students, she added, had enjoyed the most being given complete freedom in the creative tasks, which will be explored further in Section 4.2.4.1 Freedom: Freedom of the Students, below. On the

whole, the class teacher thought that poetry was a good tool for making connections and seeing things in a bigger picture. Here, it is useful to recall a reference made in Sub-Section 2.1.2.2, above, (i.e. studying or learning about a rule), about Wittgenstein's affirmation that the only meaningful thing about any activity (which, here, can be applied to classroom activities) is 'seeing, grasping the *connections between* rules [...]'. It is interesting to measure this process against the typical processes of education in general and moral education in particular. In essence, what has been said here is what the experimental group class teacher is describing. Her main criticism, however, was that it took too long to complete the exercises in the learning materials and thus that the lesson plans needed to be scaled down in quantity.

I now turn to the findings of Stage 2B.

#### 4.2.4 Stage 2B Findings

In this section, I describe the thematic analysis of the qualitative interviews with subject experts. First, I describe the themes that were addressed in the questions I posed for the standardised interview, and then, the themes that were developed through complete coding. Here, it is important to point out that, in the words of Braun and Clarke, the process of identifying themes is an active process:

It's quite common to read about 'themes emerging from the data'. We get quite – maybe even very – grumpy when we read this! Why? Because it falsely suggests analysis is a passive process where you identify something that *already* exists (Ely et al., 1997, [see e.g. pp. 20-26]). Developing themes from coded data is an *active* process: the researcher examines the codes and coded data, and starts to create potential patterns; they do not 'discover' them (Taylor and Ussher, 2001, [p. 310]). Searching for patterns is *not* akin to an archaeologist digging to find hidden treasures buried within the data, pre-existing the process of searching for them. It's more akin to the process of sculpture. Analysts, like sculptors, actively make choices about how they shape and crat their 'raw data' (e.g. their piece of marble) into an analysis (like a work of art, such as Michelangelo's *David*). Like the sculptor's block of marble, the dataset provides a material basis for the analysis; it provides some limits or boundaries on what it is possible to produce. However, it does not completely determine the shape of the analysis; it's possible to create many different analyses from qualitative data, just as it's possible to create many different sculptures from one piece of marble. (Braun and Clarke, 2014, p. 225)

With that in mind, it is duly noted that the final overarching themes reported below gradually coalesced in my mind, intuitively, whilst, simultaneously, I systematically dug them out.

Interviews were held with 10 teachers and/or specialists who are experienced with or have an insight into using poetry in education. All the recorded material was transcribed orthographically, this means that everything is copied verbatim, with all utterance and extra words. Also, all numbers were spelled out (Braun and Clarke, 2014, p. 163 & p. 165).

To recap from Chapter 3, the main purpose of the interviews was to interview teachers who have used poetry in teaching:

- a) philosophy,
- b) life skills, or
- c) literacy

and who might have ideas about how this could best be done with the holistic moral and emotional development of students in mind. In short, to investigate the pros and cons of using poetry in education. Furthermore, I was interested in speaking with individuals/academics who are experienced with or have

- d) an insight into using poetry in education more generally.

As was mentioned at the outset of Sub-Section 3.4.5, for the interview schedule, 11 initial themes were identified for the purpose of addressing the RQs. These were:

1. The Respondents' Teaching and Views on Teaching in General
2. Creativity
3. Education of the Emotions
4. Quality of the Learning Materials
5. The Execution of the Intervention
6. Teacher Education in Iceland
7. Moral Education in Iceland
8. The Importance of the Present Poetry Programme
9. Enablers
10. Barriers
11. What Remains to be Done?

For the purpose of simplification, the above can be referred to as (original) Interview Themes. In the following, I discuss the Coding Themes, listing four themes, which each include overarching themes, themes and subthemes (both shown in *italics*) from the analysis. Once I began my thematic analysis, I realised that the themes I had originally targeted in the Interview Schedule materialised very differently in what the interviewees actually said, with various connections being forged that I had not anticipated while other issues were accorded less importance than I had expected. This is what often happens in thematic analysis and what makes it different from descriptive journalism, which would simply track responses to the questions the interviewer happens to be interested in. The aim of thematic analysis is to represent a picture of what the interviewees highlight, not simply what serves the purpose of the researcher.

The Coding Themes were identified as arranging themselves around three conceptual layers, ranging from the most general (overarching themes), to the most specific (sub-themes). *Overarching themes* refer to the interviewees' ideals of how the Icelandic school system

should be designed and how it should operate. *Themes* refer, more specifically, to actual characterisations of the Icelandic school system, and finally *sub-themes* refer, even more specifically, to the actual state of play in the Icelandic school system, according to the participants. Rather than targeting the actual state of play in the Icelandic school system, this section is referring to each participant's experience from whatever particular school(s) they have worked in. The following is a representation of how the participants' responses arranged themselves along the three levels of themes during the interviews.

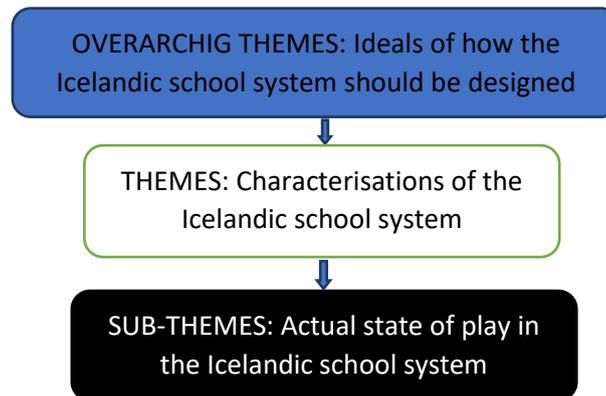


Figure 4 Representation of Three Levels of Coding Themes

The following is a visual map of the overarching themes, themes and sub-themes that were developed from the coded data. The overarching themes are represented by blue boxes, the themes are represented by white boxes, and the sub-themes are represented by black boxes.

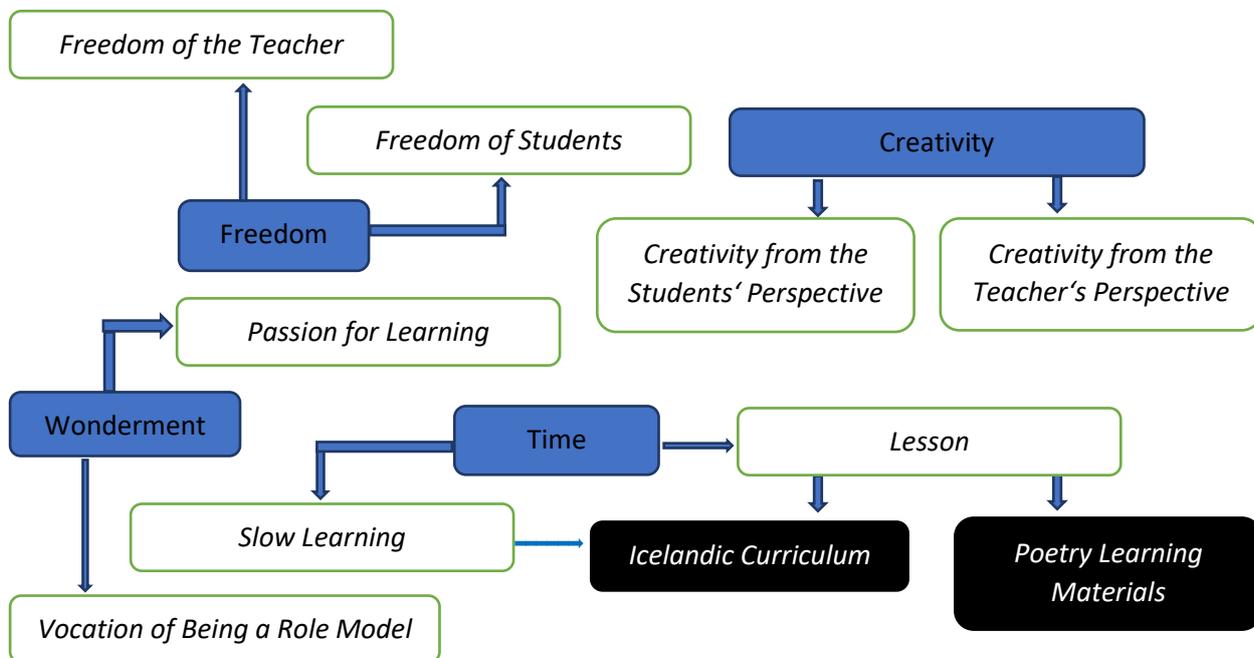


Figure 5 Visual Map of the Thematic Analysis of the Data

As can be seen from the above figure (Figure 5), the coded themes will be presented through 3 levels. The following table provides a brief definition of each level:

<b>Level 1</b>	Overarching theme containing themes. There are four of these.
<b>Level 2</b>	Themes, each including a bundle of remarks made by interviewees, containing sub-themes. Under each overarching theme, there are two themes.
<b>Level 3</b>	Sub-themes each including a bundle of remarks made by interviewees. There are only two of these.

Table 21 Description of Each Level of the Coded Themes

It should be noted at the beginning of this analysis that although the original intention of the Interview Themes was to elicit the specific view of the participants on the use of poetry in education – most importantly for characterological purposes – the interviewees had strong views about schooling in general and the Icelandic school system in particular that often came to the surface more explicitly than their views about poetry teaching as such. The general lesson that I learned from the interviews is that it is impossible to separate a method or an educational idea – such as the characterological use of poetry in classroom – from the more general contours of the relevant school system. This very general way of approaching my question is reflected in the analysis of the Coding Themes below, although I try to elicit the more specific implications – most germane to the topic of my doctoral project – where and when those emerged.

In the following, I will give an account of the four overarching themes, then I will report on the themes, and finally on the two sub-themes.

#### A. Freedom

An overarching theme that explains the idealisations of the overall school environment in Iceland. On this broad level, the interviewees extracted the enablers derived from this overarching theme. But, as will become clearer below, as the discussion went deeper, underlying themes pointed both to boundaries and enablers. Participants constructed freedom in two particular ways, both of which, when present in the school environment, were positive. The theme *Freedom of the Teacher* refers both to the selection of and approach to the teaching subject, i.e. what is taught and how it is taught. This concerns the material and the school curriculum. Furthermore, it refers to being at liberty to respond to unexpected opportunities if, as, and when they arise. Moreover, to be able to change the daily schedule at short notice, regardless of what the school curriculum says. By this, the participants did not suggest that the teacher should be like a ruler of a state within a state. Rather, there appeared to be an emerging consensus that this type of freedom is somehow hampered by bureaucracy. Some participants indicated that this type of freedom is best expressed and exercised at the pre-school stage. The theme *Freedom of the Students* describes the accessibility to things that give fulfilling pleasure. When this accessibility is restrained, students experience less enjoyment in school, or, even in some cases, no enjoyment at all. The freedom of students is integral to the ideal of education. Participants were adamant about the importance of freedom as a concept through discussion, debates and autonomy. The goal (of education and upbringing) is for the students to become autonomous individuals. The participants addressed different student age groups, and for younger age groups they considered it appropriate to include parents or guardians in their children's choices. As can be expected, these two types of freedom are mutually important.

#### B. Creativity

An overarching theme which explains the power of creativity in education, learning and development. Participants constructed creativity in two ways, that both had positive connotations. The two themes relate to *Creativity from the students' perspective* and *Creativity from the teacher's perspective*. The first theme is concerning *the learning experience*, what goes on during the lessons. One participant did, however, name this theme explicitly in the context of social

activities, deeming it to be the single most important and successful tool for learning and development of youngsters and young adults, yet taking place outside of school. However, everyone agreed that ideally, in the classroom, creativity as a learning experience is an essential component of education. Here, the focus is on creative activities in the classroom, lesson topics that embed creativity, reflection, communication, and collaboration. To name a few things, this can involve doing something artistic, making something by doing handicraft, whatever aids the students in going further than they have before, expressing themselves and using their imagination. This is the form that creativity takes in the school environment, i.e. that of artistic expression. Creativity is an activity that helps students build their self-confidence, abstract thinking, imagination, problem solving, and emotional intelligence. Sceptics may raise an issue concerning using creativity as a learning tool or as curriculum objective, suggesting perhaps that it cannot be measured (or is difficult to measure). Firstly, because of its functionality, even if assessment problems are accurately identified, the benefits of creativity as a character-building tool, by nurturing expression, authenticity, resourcefulness, and continued growth, far surpass such limitations. Secondly, however, means of measuring creative thinking are currently being developed and have successfully been implemented by the OECD's PISA project.<sup>36</sup> The second theme relates to *Creativity from the teacher's perspective*. Here, the participants had two manifestations in mind. On the one hand, they discussed the importance of the teacher creating – or at least being given an opportunity for the creation of – learning materials, and on the other hand, the role of the teacher as an artistic exemplar. Firstly, this theme concerns those teachers wanting to create their own learning material from scratch, although this does not apply to all teachers. However, according to the participants, almost every teacher prefers to ‘tweak’ learning material created by others, according to their own needs and interests. And this facet also entails creativity. The teacher’s job of sparking the curiosity of students is one of a creativity. Secondly, the participants emphasised the inspirational value of a teacher that is active in artistic expression. This is a key factor to the exploration of, and reflection on, emotions. It is also important that a teacher who encourages his or her students to be artistic can lead by example. As

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<sup>36</sup> As stated on the project website, ‘PISA 2022 will focus on mathematics, with an additional test of creative thinking. The new PISA 2022 mathematics framework was recently launched. Preparations for this test are underway with participants from 38 OECD members and likely 50+ non-members involved’ (OECD, n.d.). The author of this research project has participated in the pilot run of the conduction and coding of these tests in Iceland.

is the case with all aspects of learning, it is a shared experience. It is, however, not necessary that the teacher is a master at his or her artistry. Likewise, it is not necessary to be a grandmaster in order to teach chess, but a good coach is likely to be someone who has experience at their art.

#### C. Time

An overarching theme that explains the practical implementation of the teaching process. It can both be seen in a positive and negative light, depending on the understanding of what it implies. This contrast is represented by two themes. When participants referred to time within the limits of a *Lesson*, which is the first theme, it was taken as a negative factor. The participants made this known in two ways, which thus divides it into two sub-themes. On the one hand, discussions about the *Icelandic Curriculum* often brought this aspect into light, and, furthermore, when discussing the *Poetry Learning Materials* created for this research project, concern was on some occasions raised as to whether the time allocated for each lesson would prove to be enough. The second theme concentrated on a positive attitude towards time, in which some participants referred to *Slow Learning* as a successful method for character building and subject teaching, illustrating a way in which time can be used to a positive effect for example in teaching poetry. This theme relates back to the sub-theme of the *Icelandic Curriculum*.

#### D. Wonderment

An overarching theme which for the participants explains two positive attributes of education. *Passion for learning* is a theme that describes the common ground that everyone has, and it applies to teachers and students alike. This is the very definition of philosophy, often referred to as a thirst for knowledge. It is the very foundation of education, according to the interviewees. The second theme concerns the teacher's *Vocation of being a role model*. According to some participants this concerns the moral aspect of education and upbringing. It is also an important component of character education. Although not described explicitly in this relation by the participants, their discussion touched upon the same reasons for considering role models important in an educational context. Another aspect of being a role model, which to a certain extent relates back to the second overarching theme of *Creativity*, can be attributed to the vocation of showing initiative. Without the teacher implementing a characterological intervention (e.g.

through poetry) being already a role model, the point of the intervention may be lost.

All the overarching themes, themes and sub-themes will now be explained in more detail and illustrated with quotations from the interviews.

#### 4.2.4.1 Freedom

The list of interviewees was shown in Table 14, on p. 116. During the interviews, two concepts were used by the interviewees to express this idea. One is ‘freedom’ and the other one is ‘leeway’. Freedom refers both to students’ and the teacher’s perspective. Mostly, however, interviewees focused on the latter. The topic of teacher freedom was frequently discussed in relation to curriculum issues. When:

students graduate [from Elementary School], then one hundred and fifteen, one hundred and fifteen learning outcomes had to be registered for the student. And you can imagine all the paperwork. And now, in some schools, parents are to be sent a text message when their child has completed a learning outcome. And some learning outcomes are like ‘being self-sufficient in daily life.’ (Interviewee 1)

Many interviewees described the same experience of being swamped with bureaucracy and technicalities. In recent years, the Icelandic curriculum has undergone radical changes, which means that learning outcome and assessment criteria had to be thoroughly defined:

I think there needs to be some freedom, mind you. I think the teacher needs to be free. And..., and I think it is really important that the teacher puts..., it is he who decides the curriculum. You know, how to implement things. (Interviewee 4)

It seems the problem with the Icelandic Curriculum is that it is both strict and gives leeway, at the same time. It is a:

two-headed monster..., and as a matter of fact, so are the junior colleges, that, that, essentially, it is a two-headed monster which is..., and the heads are in total disagreement. On the one hand, the Curriculum, you know, states that..., it should, through education, serve six fundamental pillars of education, and..., and those include creativity, democracy, and..., and equality and health and a few more, you know. And...and, you know, okay. All kinds of lesson plans can, of... of course, easily be justified by referring to, erm, you know, the fact that they are carrying out what the Curriculum says schools should do. So, one voice in the syllabus just says, here..., here..., just, ‘yes, do this.’ The other voice demands that the education of the student is organised according to their personal learning outcomes, and in such a way that these outcomes can be measured in the final assessment or..., and..., and so, the syllabus lists a huge number of learning outcomes, where you have to check the boxes. ‘You have acquired the ability to understand the value of forestry and you have acquired the ability to blah blah blah blah...’ And, ‘swim eight metres underwater’ or something like that. Ha! Those two are for real, you know, they are actual examples, the ones I just mentioned. And, erm, I think that..., that, you know, then, the other voice in the syllabus says, ‘wait a minute, how are you going to verify that students have acquired the pre-defined skills that are

to be achieved with this?’ And you would have to say, ‘Wait, I..., I..., I..., I..., I..., I cannot.’ And then the first voice in the syllabus says, erm, ‘Get rid of this!’ (Interviewee 5)

It is important to keep in mind that the freedom of the students and the freedom of the teacher are intertwined:

A key factor for students to enjoy what is done in school – whatever it is – is for the teacher to enjoy it. And a teacher who suffers from the fact that, uh, as is the case in Norway, junior college teachers have to, you know, submit a syllabus for every single lesson of the semester in advance. [...] In short, the freedom of the teacher to do what he takes to be interesting is extremely important. And, unfortunately, I think that schools are headed in the opposite direction. (Interviewee 1)

Essentially, the freedom of the teacher is an issue that is, at first, more practical in nature. What is he or she allowed and able to do within the confinements of the learning environment? For the students, freedom is an inner activity. If the enthusiasm is invoked in the student, then the learning process itself embodies freedom. From the students’ point of view, the opposite to this mode of being is boredom. The freedom of the students sparks the freedom of the teacher, which, in turn, provides fertile soil for the students to envision and articulate the freedom of learning in a meaningful sense. But, as the interviewees noted, matters are not straightforward:

But I am not..., I am not recommending that the teacher embarks on some kind of an ego trip, you know, but, that he, you know, actually has leeway to do what..., to seize the opportunities that arise, and that he does so, preferably, preferably..., that is, in some sort of consultation and in agreement with..., with..., with his students, you. Erm..., that..., that, you know..., that, yes..., yeas..., yes..., that there is, you know, a kind of autonomy of the school community. (Interviewee 5)

It has been hinted at that the Icelandic curriculum (Icelandic Ministry of Education, 2014)<sup>37</sup> offers some freedom to educational leaders, teachers, and students. The concept itself, however, is not mentioned often in the curriculum document. It is mentioned 3 times, in different contexts, in the whole of the general part of The Icelandic national curriculum guide for compulsory school. These contexts are freedom of choice (of school subjects, in lower secondary school), freedom of expression and freedom of religion. Subsequently, it is mentioned 5 times in the Subjects Area Section. These contexts are in relation to the educational value and main objectives of social sciences, one of the components of the pupils’ self-image, one of the components of the pupils’ relations, and two of the competence criteria of social sciences. It is therefore not a firmly defined concept within the Icelandic educational

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<sup>37</sup> The Icelandic National Curriculum Guide for Compulsory Schools - With Subject Areas can be found in English at the Icelandic Government website: [https://www.government.is/library/01-Ministries/Ministry-of-Education/Curriculum/adalnrsk\\_greinask\\_ens\\_2014.pdf](https://www.government.is/library/01-Ministries/Ministry-of-Education/Curriculum/adalnrsk_greinask_ens_2014.pdf)

system, but according to the interviewees held in high regard when discussing the important characterisations of the school system.

In sum, then, the content of the first overarching theme, Freedom, can be summarised by saying that the interviewees believed that freedom should be an integral component of the culture of education and the key element for creating a positive learning environment.

I now turn to the themes represented under the overarching theme of *Freedom* and how those related to the use of poetry.

#### Freedom of the Teacher

From the teachers' perspective, the Icelandic National Curriculum provides tremendous freedom:

The Icelandic curriculum is one of the most open I have come across in my career. The Icelandic curriculum, it gives teachers so much leeway [...] There is no other like it. I can confirm this. [Interviewer: 'Yes'] Because, you know, I have read the Nordic languages curricula and many curricula in countries that publish them in English, or translate them into English. You probably will not find any curriculum that gives the teachers as much leeway and freedom as the Icelandic one. (Interviewee 3)

So, a certain leeway is present, and there appears to be perfect freedom, but as was noted in the discussion about the overarching theme of *Freedom*, bureaucracy sometimes gets in the way of freedom, because each teacher essentially is bound by a school curriculum guide for each subject. This, however, is more of a restraint for state schools. Some interviewees described the Waldorf school system as more of a 'free agent':

I have worked in Waldorf schools, both in Sweden and Denmark and then here, in Iceland. [...] I think that what it is..., it..., first and foremost, perhaps, is a flexibility, precisely, in that, for instance, with the school curriculum, that there is some flexibility. (Interviewee 8)

Here, the interviewees are describing, as is the case with all underlying themes in the findings, a general characterisations of the Icelandic school system, but there is always an ongoing dialogue with the school leadership which cannot be one-sided. The dialogue has to be two-sided, and teachers want to be consulted:

When the principal comes and says, 'ah, now, this winter, we are going to do this.' [Laughs] That does not work. [Laughs] (Interviewee 7)

As will be seen in the next section, the freedom of the teacher directly affects the freedom of the students. The role of the principal turns out to be crucial, because a principal in a school who had particular interest in the use of poetry, say for characterological or moral educational

purposes, could easily convey that interest to teachers and count on being taken seriously by them.

#### Freedom of the Students

One interviewee, a Waldorf school teacher, claimed that, as was discussed above, not only is the freedom of the teacher of the utmost importance, but it directly impacts upon the freedom of the students:

You know, free..., the freedom of teachers – and independent teachers, I think, – have everything to do with the fact that you also have independent students, like. (Interviewee 4)

This is a good example of how the two underlying themes of overarching theme of *Freedom* are intertwined. One encourages the growth of the other, and vice versa.

#### A Summary of the Overarching Theme: Freedom

Freedom refers to the ability to act at one's own discretion and how it attributes to the learning process, for both the teacher and the student. Furthermore, it carries connotations of greater psychological depth for the purposes of character education. As already stated, it refers to the ability to act as one wants, according to one's own choices. But furthermore, it refers to the ability to act at the right moment. Therefore, when we say that character education is about being able to make the right choices for the right reasons, in the appropriate proportion, and at the right time (see e.g. Chapter 1, above), we are putting forth a demand for freedom in an educational context, a demand for educational action, and in the form of the overarching theme, freedom, the participants are voicing this demand.

What is unique about each of the overarching theme of *Freedom* and the sub-themes is that in the first there is an account of innovation, on the one hand, and on implementation, on the other hand, and in the second there is an account of application. When the freedom of the teacher refers to the creation or creative adaptation of learning material, he or she exercises innovation. When it refers to the delivery of lesson plans, the freedom is expressed through implementation. When the students feel enjoyment towards the school and their education, then their freedom is expressed through application.

To expand briefly on what the interviewees have said, there is coherence in the bundle of remarks made by the interviewees under the overarching theme of *Freedom* and its themes, in that freedom is about having control over one's own life, and indeed, of one's own time. I will reflect further on this elaboration, in Chapter 5. Relating these general insights to the topic of teaching poetry, the implication gleaned from the interviews seems to be that poetry, being

both symbolic and allegorical, is well suited to express the contours of freedom. Teaching poetry (as, of course, learning through poetry) is a meaningful endeavour as it underpins the universal and the particular. When one comes to understand how freedom is actualised under conditions, relations, and for others, one learns something about oneself. Freedom is therefore an important tool in relation to both moral and ethical learning.<sup>38</sup> It is noteworthy to mention that within the bundle of remarks made by the interviewees under the overarching theme of *Freedom* and its themes, Interviewee 1 stood out as the critical voice. She felt that, in her experience, for certain students too much freedom, in any form, can be a disadvantage. In her view, there are students that must have a tight frame and short leeway. Everything in the environment, the setup, arrangement etc., must remain unchanged:

But, you know that, uhm..., I basically had a lot of kids who are ADHD. And some of them. I remember one. There could not be a single picture on the wall. I had to take everything down, because it disrupted everything when he entered. Before he came arrived, I had to remove everything.

This is a good reminder, that with all inferences in educational research, there will always be cases that are not necessarily represented by the majority of the participants. I had not considered previously, for example, the question of how poetry teaching relates specifically to students with ADHD, nor had I come across references to this question in the background literature.

This first theme acted as a reminder that a school intervention, like the one I had conducted, cannot be viewed in isolation but must be set in a wider pedagogical context of the freedom (or lack thereof) that can be exercised by individual teachers, and the salient role of the school principal in calibrating the limits of freedom in a school to do things ‘differently’.

#### 4.2.4.2 Creativity

As with the first overarching theme, this second overarching theme also stems from the tendency of the respondents to want to talk about the use of poetry in education in the context of the general characteristics of the Icelandic school system and, more generally even, their own views of the overarching nature and goals of education.

As with freedom, creativity was both referred to from the perspective of the student and the teacher. Regarding the former, it most often referred to the topic of poetry. But regarding the teacher, there was mention of the teacher being, more generally, either creative as an artist or as a creator of their teaching material. It was also felt that adapting learning material, such as

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<sup>38</sup> Here, *moral learning* means dealing with or addressing moral issues, while *ethical learning* refers to gaining an understanding of ethical codes, -theories, or -standards.

the one presented in the present poetry package, would involve a form of creativity. Most importantly, for the students, creativity is the key element for making learning interesting, and time spent at school joyous and rewarding. For the teacher, it ignites them to keep renewing themselves, and to be (and remain) genuinely interested in their subject – which, in turn, will inspire the students:

I have always felt that it is important to link, you know, creativity with teaching. In this way I use poems as a starting point, to get the students – as you do, for example, in your material – to go from there and, erm, just work with words. And poems are very suitable for that, because these are kind of short texts, they [the students] can do, you know, numerous things with them. (Interviewee 6)

With some reservation, creativity can be both hailed and derided for its potentialities:

One can use artistic talent and artistic creativity to expose injustice and oppression, to comfort those who are struggling, you know..., get people to unite around good values. It is also possible to use all of this to do the exact opposite. (Interviewee 5)

It is clear that art and creativity has immense, upbuilding potentials, and can be seen as a powerful learning tool. But does that not, at the same time, come with a considerable amount of responsibility?

I actually believe that it is more important for a vast majority of people – is..., is of course hard to generalize, people are of course different and so forth – for a vast majority of people, it would be more important to have more..., more opportunities and..., you know..., and..., and ..., and..., and..., and..., and..., here..., and more reason to take part in..., in communal work, for example. And..., and take responsibility for themselves, rather than taking instruction. (Interviewee 5)

This attitude suggests that art and creativity, in spite of all its advantages, do not provide a magic solution for all things gone astray in the (Icelandic) school system. But hopefully they can provide a learning platform that most students will benefit from. The more specific question at hand is to what extent poetry promotes creativity.

Poetry enables students to experience the unthinkable and the indescribable. This can also be achieved through other curriculum subjects (e.g. philosophy, literature, life skills, natural sciences) and through other forms of art (e.g. music, visual arts). In ‘eurythmy’ lessons, an art movement within the Waldorf education model that focuses on the interplay between sounds, rhythm, and images in a poem or a piece of music (Waldorf School at Moraine Farm, 2021)...

you are working with, you know, both visual-spatial intelligence. The students are, maybe, they are in a circle and are making movements, both in space, something like outwards and inside the circle, and doing some loops – and, at the same time, they are also making shapes and symbols with..., with their hands. And..., and..., erm, these movements are based on either music or poetry or history. So, there is also, well, another layer to that of..., of... [Interviewer: ‘Yes’] expressing and interpreting and working with poetry, you know. (Interviewee 8)

Creativity also sparks and nourishes the learning process:

You know, one thing that [clears his throat], erm..., this is actually another thing that I have done. And that involves having the students write poems. And this is perhaps the most enjoyable activity, because something new and unexpected always comes up. That is kind of..., it is almost always the case that the students will surprise you when they are asked to write poems. And..., and they often convey something in poems that they would never say in ordinary conversations. And then you see new sides to them. So, this is perhaps, this is actually one of the most fun activities to engage in. (Interviewee 7)

It should also be mentioned that the present coding theme of *Creativity* provides leeway for the previous coding theme of *Freedom*. This shows that they are mutually supportive of each other:

When students create poems, compose poems, something completely different happens. It is different to when you tell them to write a story. And it is quite remarkable that students have..., they fully connect with the word 'poem', if you tell them 'write a poem', then something different happens, so..., and I must point out that I have students who, that is, have learning difficulties. Who are often illiterate or have trouble reading and writing. Uhm. But, erm, this, to put forth words under the pretext that it should be poem. This, erm, creates leeway for all possibilities. They somehow sense that in the poetry everything is possible. (Interviewee 7)

As described in the above, this interviewee found that creativity is an effective learning tool for students with learning disabilities:

So, dealing with poem is, kind of, it is a bit like education..., exploring an unknown country. You know. To, erm, expand the horizon. Learn new words. Learn new ways to speak. Or at least getting to know them or, yes, to learn. I had an autistic student who preferred not to talk to anyone. And he was, like, a man of few words and..., and did not want to learn anything, and did not want to calculate and did not..., did not really want to do anything. And [laughs], and then I got him..., so it was time to write a poem. And..., and..., and I offered to write down..., – he did not want to write – and I offered to write for him if he would utter the words [laughs]. And he agreed to this. And then he said a word. And they started to emerge, a bit out of context, from various directions. And I just wrote them on the paper and made..., made them look like a poem. And then, when we were done, I saw that this was a good poem. It was a bit incomprehensible. But there was some strange mood in this text. (Interviewee 7)

In Iceland, more and more subject collaboration is taking place. In part this is an effort to save time within in the curriculum. Such points, as illustrated in the previous quote, suggest that subject collaboration can be of aid to both traditional and character education. At the same time, poetry is well-suited for such a collaboration but equally ideal for delivering character education on its own, as noted by some of the participants.

I now turn to the themes represented under the overarching theme of *Creativity*.

### Creativity from the Students' Perspective

As expressed by the following participant, in order for the student to succeed at they are doing and in order to want to keep doing it, the students have to enjoy what they are doing:

The only thing I can imagine stimulating creative thinking is that..., is that the student has fun, uh..., or enjoys doing something creative. [...] And he cannot feel that unless he is compensated and taken seriously. Perhaps, first and foremost, taken seriously. (Interviewee 4)

So, not only is creative expression important, but what the student brings to the table has to be taken seriously. In other words, they have to be shown respect. But that does not mean that it is an effortless task for the teacher: 'The school ethos matters and, uh, like, it is based on the curriculum and, uh, traditions within the school. And other teachers and..., as I have iterated quite a few times: When it comes to everything that is creative and so forth, it takes an effort to get to students to take part in it' (Interviewee 1). So, evidently creativity is not a magic solution. It is a method that can work wonders, but, if the educational environment is not forthcoming and encouraging, it will take more than just employing creativity to uphold and transmit the values that are representative of a given school. Notably, all the interviewees seemed to equate creative learning with enjoyable learning. None of them mentioned the possibility of a creative learning process that is, nonetheless, experienced as boring. It can be divined from the interviewees that they believe creativity implies enjoyment by way of psychological necessity, and, hence, that when the latter fails to materialise, one can deduce that true creativity has not taken place.

### Creativity from the Teacher's Perspective

As was mentioned (under the heading of the overarching theme of *Creativity*) in Sub-Section 4.2.4, above, creativity can be manifested in two ways in a teacher's practice, namely through creating and/or adopting learning material and through artistic expression. This refers to the action or process of innovating. On the one hand, creativity involves creating something from nothing, while the act of innovating 'relies on researching existing solutions to come up with a new hypothesis to test' (Northwest Missouri State University, 2018). Innovation in education encourages teachers (and students):

to explore, research and use all the tools to uncover something new. It involves a different way of looking at problems and solving them. The thinking process that goes into it will help students develop their creativity and their problem solving skills. (Northwest Missouri State University, 2018)

One respondent, in particular, emphasised the difference between innovating and the creative thought process:

I am working with teacher education students. It is very important that [teacher education] students get, uhm..., a chance to, erm, find a path to the goal that I had no idea about or I did not have, you know, the mindset to, uh, grasp. ... [Interviewer: 'Yes. So, you are referring to creative thinking?'] No. I am also just referring to creative ways of solving tasks. Or a creative approach towards children, so that the children... [Interviewer: 'Mhm?'] ...can grow their creativity. And in that respect, it does not matter whether this entails, you know, geography or poetry, that is, we are..., what I am trying to, uhm..., that we are helping teacher education students to adopt the same creative opportunities that we expect them to provide. (Interviewee 3)

To expand on what has been said, what this respondent is describing is called innovation in education. Rather than being the same as creative thinking, innovation reinforces creative thinking, and much in the same way that the freedom of the teacher directly affects the freedom of the students, as described at the end of Sub-Section 4.2.4.1 Freedom: Freedom of the Teacher, I will reflect further on this elaboration, in Chapter 5.

One respondent described one aspect of creativity from the teacher's perspective as having the ability and willingness to change the plan of activities if it suits the group, to be willing to:

play it by the ear... [Interviewer: 'Yes.'] and you are not set on a foregone, erm, conclusion... [Interviewer: 'Yes.'] and..., because it can turn out in any way. And that is creative teaching. (Interviewee 1)

So, there is a hint in what has been said that teachers themselves view a lot of what they do as creative. Another respondent described the same idea:

As a teacher, I think you have to be a little creative yourself. I think that if you are a very conservative teacher – and you can easily fall into it the habit of that and get stuck in some kind of spoon feeding [chuckles] – I think that they will then end up the same, you know. [Interviewer: 'Mhm.'] So, to be creative, you have to be able to..., who is [the interviewee's phone rings, she says something inaudible and shuts the phone off], I am sorry. ... you have to be flexible. So, I think you need to be able to..., sometimes I do like to have a good plan, like, when I show up. You know, I am often well prepared. But then you do not know exactly what is going to happen and how the day is going to turn out – and then sometimes you just have to be able to, like, let go. Because there might be such an opportunity there. (Interviewee 4)

Just as the two underlying themes of the overarching theme of *Freedom* are intertwined, as described at the end of Section 4.2.4.2 Creativity: Creativity from the Teacher's Perspective, above, the same applies to the two underlying themes of the overarching theme of *Creativity*, in that one encourages the growth of the other, and vice versa.

#### [A summary of the Overarching Theme: Creativity](#)

To illuminate the general contours of the second overarching theme, creativity, and its two themes, creativity from the students' perspective and creativity from the teacher's perspective, the common thread running through all of them is the emphasis on creativity being the modus

operandi in a prospering school environment. What is unique about each of the themes is that according to the first, creativity induces joy which in turn makes education (from the students' perspective, it would be more aptly put to say that enjoyment makes *school*) meaningful and in the second it represents inspiration. There is coherence in this second bundle of remarks made by the interviewees under the overarching theme of *Creativity* and its themes, in that they bring together everything that makes classroom learning meaningful from both the perspective of the students and the teacher. However, there is also some incoherence in that creativity is not necessarily palpable. Or rather, how exactly it should be implemented.

Relating these general insights to the topic of teaching poetry, the implication seems to be that poetry encapsulates everything that creativity can explore. Creativity helps to both expand one's horizon and come up with new ways of approaching a task. In other words, creativity is about awakening a resourcefulness one has not used before. It enables us to broaden our perspective through solving tasks that at first sight do not present an obvious solution. Also, in doing so, we are refining and strengthening our ability to solve unknown problems. Creativity is, therefore, ideal for problem-solving, and when giving creative writing exercises – in this case, through poetry – what is being addressed and cultivated is problem solving. This is an example of what creativity, by means of poetry, brings to the table on a practical level. There is, however, more to what poetry addresses, as such. Aside from the practical sphere, which has already been described, we are also operating on a more interpersonal level. This has to do with empathically putting ourselves into the shoes of another, broadening our view of the world, and, through assessing our position in the world, gaining a better self-understanding. We might say that creativity through poetry, although not necessarily or exclusively, can enhance self-understanding in an aesthetic context.<sup>39</sup> Through poetry, we are applying our means of problem solving to become better versions of ourselves and get in better touch with ourselves within. As far as the interviewees were concerned, this context provided a link to cultivating emotions. For example, in the words of one respondent:

I think if there is something that poetry does to you, it..., is to, you know, there are emotions, it stirs up one's emotions completely. And it can evoke in you all sorts of moods. In my view, that is. (Interviewee 4)

Poetry, they thought, is the most raw (genuine) and free (unbound) way of expressing ourselves and experiencing the feelings and personal meanings of others. Poetry in the

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<sup>39</sup> To explain further the use of this concept, as stated above, there are two aspects to the functionality of creativity in an educational environment. The practical sense enhances our task performance. The term 'self-understanding in an aesthetic context' refers to how we through artistry strengthen our emotional compass.

classroom is a powerful tool for creativity, in such a way that the creative thought process accomplishes everything that poetry is about.

Overall, then, the content of the second overarching theme, *Creativity*, can be summarised by saying that the interviewees believed that creativity plays an important role in making education meaningful. It is the key element to strengthening aspects of personal growth that are not directly affected by book learning, as interaction with others plays a part in terms of the learning occurring. When this interaction is centred around creativity, the learning process becomes meaningful. When they brought this overarching theme of *Creativity* to bear on the teaching of poetry in the classroom and the aims of my project specifically, the respondents pointed out that its main advantage lies in the openness of this art form – it represents accessibility and frankness – and its possibilities for achieving a lot within the short timeframe of one lesson plan, which also points forward to the next overarching theme under consideration, *Time*.

As I did at the end of the discussion of the overarching theme of *Freedom*, at the very end of Sub-Section 4.2.4.1 Freedom: A Summary of the Overarching Theme: Freedom, here too, I would like to bring attention to a respondent who played the role of the contrarian.

Interviewee 2 had reservations as to whether poetry is more likely to spark creativity in students compared with other subjects in arts education:

Well, you know, I do not think there is an advantage [to using poetry], somehow that does not seem to be the case, I think it is harder to get students to write poems than to get them to draw a picture, when for instance the drawing can consist in colours only, which sparks from something. Uhm. I mean, this is also done more widely. Erm. They draw characters in Laxdaela and various things than than poetry. I think poetry is perhaps the most difficult thing. And you have to somehow..., I think, to sell it so that they..., to..., to ask them to compose rap lyrics. (Interviewee 2)

This reminds us that the usability of the learning materials depends a great deal on the respective teachers, their experience and attitude to what may to them seems like uncertainty. For added information, this interviewee did, however, after having discussed the challenge of using poetry in a creative context (in the quotation above), add that ‘teaching is the most fun, when it is challenging’ (Interviewee 2).

#### 4.2.4.3 Time

As in many countries, Iceland is seeing more and more students dropping out of junior colleges and universities. To some extent, this is believed to be due to boredom in the classroom. This feeling does not come out of nowhere, infesting itself into students only once they leave elementary school. Already in upper elementary school, many students have started

to experience school boredom. A couple of interviewees pointed to the fact that the school days are simply too long, the schedule is too packed, and thus the students are bored from the get go:

I think the biggest barrier, you know, for all school stages – except for maybe pre-school, erm, so this is concerning both elementary school and junior college, here and in the neighbouring countries, you know – is actually this... this overloaded curriculum and this constant feeling of being in time pressure. (Interviewee 5)

From the students' point of view this is illustrated as follows:

During the partial lockdown, I distinctively felt how everything slowed down. And in my case this meant that my students only had three lessons a day. And there was less interaction. Less..., no sports, no..., less of everything, everything just slowed down... [Interviewer: 'Yes. Less pressure.'] Less pressure. And we felt it, those of us who are teaching together. We clearly saw how everything lightened up – and then, you know, a whole new spirit emerged in our group. And all sorts of fun things just started happening, that we had not seen before. And this was clearly noticeable, how it..., the spirit became a bit more relaxed. And they were more willing to study. [... Now] they are run..., running between [buildings]. They have social studies here. And then they have natural sciences in another block. And then they have sports, and then Icelandic. And they are just constantly running [between classes]. (Interviewee 7)

Some interviewees said that they would prefer fewer top-down curricular-prescribed competencies; this would also apply to poetry:

I find, for instance, that reading one story in a school year is quite enough. You know, one, just one Icelandic saga, is just perfect. You can just perform an endless amount of tasks just based on that. [...] I mean, there are lots of students that would, you know, you know, prefer to do it much slower. Or, maybe all of them. [...] I think it would be much better for them to do it nice and easy [...] Yes. I think so. I think if there is something that poetry does for a person, it..., it, you know, gets to the emotions, it completely stirs up one's emotions. And it can put a person in all sorts of moods. In my view, you know. (Interviewee 4)

One important asset that can be attributed to using poetry in the classroom is the flexibility it allows for, time-wise. Poems are (relatively) short. Within a limited timescale, one can still elicit rich, in-depth, contemplations:

One word can evoke so many emotions, many images, different images in..., in the mind..., the mind of each student. So, it is..., and since each lesson is not awfully long, you make good progress by, by..., by letting them analyse a poem or something like that. You know..., erm..., that requires just the right amount of time. (Interviewee 6)

On the other hand, as another interviewee pointed out, you can also return to the same poem again and again. This teacher informed us that she once, as a drama student herself, spent:

a whole year with one poem, working with it. And, you know, like, just over and over again, it was amazing how much it gave me. And, you know. like, such a poem can really go deep and change one's life. Completely, you know. (Interviewee 9)

She explained how she does the same with her students, and how it is transforming for both her and them:

It is just how you look at the world. Or at any purpose in life or whatever. And I see this as an opportunity, erm, to do that..., to give to the children, to connect with the language in this way. [Interviewer: Mmm.] To be able to perceive beauty in words. To be able to be creative with words. To..., to assert oneself in a moral way. That is basically the kind of gift that, erm, that matters the most. (Interviewee 9)

In sum, then, the content of the third overarching theme, *Time*, can be summarised by saying that the interviewees believed that in teaching, time is a factor in two senses. On the one hand, time is a frame within which teaching takes place – both in the long run and on a small scale – and on the other hand, time can give the content of a lesson value. It can, for instance, be considered a strength that it takes a short time to cover something, but it can however also be considered a strength if an approach in teaching involves taking a long time to cover something. So, in the view of the respondents, time is a measuring stick, in one sense, and an approach, in the other. What is meant by this is that time defines both the limits and (in some cases) the advantages of our resources. Everything needs to fit within a timeframe. However, when measured against the content of a lesson, time is a crucial factor. This is what we would refer to as the ‘approach’ of a lesson. When exercises are rich in content but entail a short and manageable execution, time as a less limited resource can be an asset rather than a hindrance.

I now turn to the themes and sub-themes represented under the overarching theme of *Time*.

### Lesson

According to one respondent, generally, what happens in Icelandic schools during a typical lesson is this:

I have sat in on a lot of lessons and I can tell you exactly what is going on. Especially at upper elementary level. There, books are read and at the end of each chapter, questions are answered. (Interviewee 3)

The above remark, made by a respondent who is a university lecture and who specialises in curriculum studies, indicates that there is room for change at this level. When another respondent discussed lessons in the Icelandic school system, he did not comment in particular on the content of a typical lesson. Rather, he criticised how many classes overall a student will take through the entire duration of elementary school. This point is quite crucial to get to the core of how the respondents characterise the theme *Lesson* within the Icelandic school system, and, therefore, a long quote is necessary:

Ever since..., since schools came to be as they are in the present, there has been this..., this dream about schools as..., as..., as..., erm..., something that instils in people, well, a desire to

become better people and understand the world, and, about schools where, well, there is a fulfilment of working and a sincere curiosity, and all that – this dream has existed since the days of Dewey and Guðmundur Finnbogason<sup>40</sup> and others, who were..., [laughs shortly] and yet all this time, I think that somehow, you see, schools in countries all around us have, like, shown a tendency to, somehow, become the opposite. Places where most people are bored and most people are trying to learn in order to please someone, instead of learning because they want to. And, erm..., what should be done to make the school..., this good place where people want to learn and..., and..., and..., and..., and there is a fulfilment of working, and therefore it is..., a..., a, erm..., a creative place? – I do not know. [...] As I was saying, I think that one of the things that get in the way of the school being this place – of creativity and the fulfilment of working – is that it, somehow, most of the year the day is packed for most people. It is not, like, erm..., you know..., and that is, I..., you see, one of the things I think has to happen..., in order for a lesson to be really good, is that..., that most people attending it are looking forward to it. Do you know what I mean? If most people are like, ‘oh,’ when you..., you know, if..., if..., if..., if it is not like that, then it becomes the teacher’s task to, somehow, extract from the students a minimum amount of will to get something done [laughs shortly] (Interviewee 5)

In other words, as this respondent pointed out, the Icelandic school year is too packed, and from that perspective a given student’s educational output, the total tally of lessons – which is a result of how much is to be covered – has increased notably over the years, seemingly to a point where the students cannot take it anymore. Here, it is also interesting to see how the current theme relates back to the overarching theme of *Creativity*, and already – which will become clearer as we move along – that concentrating solely on one theme will not give a holistic picture of the respondents’ views, as the themes recurrently overlap and reflect and expand on each other. But, bringing our attention back to the present theme, we see that to a certain extent, this theme represents, or frames, what in all actuality is taking place in the Icelandic school system, but, also, what is possible.

#### Poetry Learning Materials

The respondents discussed this theme both in a positive and negative light. First, I will look at the negative remarks.

Overall, when assessing the poetry material presented in this research project, the respondents thought that the best way to implement it would be for whoever is using it, to collaborate with either other teachers within the same subject (in this case, the Icelandic-language subject) or with teachers of other subjects. This can also pose an obstacle, however:

If this teacher is..., collaborating with very, erm, conservative [clears her throat] teachers or something like that. Or teachers who are trying to prepare for the national standardized test. Everything is dependent on that. Erm, then this could present an obstacle. ‘He is just

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<sup>40</sup> Guðmundur Finnbogason (1873-1944) was an Icelandic philosopher and pioneer in educational research and development in Iceland.

immersed in poetry, while everyone knows this will not be tested, you know, in the standardized test', or something like that. (Interviewee 1)

The above remark has bearing on the possibilities of running a poetry programme, designed to cultivate virtue, in secondary schools in Iceland. The task of running a programme such as the present poetry programme in an Icelandic school through collaboration with other teachers is a practical obstacle, but in a broad sense, since the solution is perhaps not immediately palpable. What is meant by this is, on the one hand, that at the end of the day, the implementation of a poetry programme would always be up to each individual school principal. Where there is a will there is a way. But it is a practical challenge, because if you give more weight to one factor in the curriculum, you have to scale down or eliminate another. If all principals were so inclined, they could easily introduce, say, skateboarding into their curriculum, but that would then come at the cost of something else. By comparison, introducing a poetry programme is in a sense elementary, and more so, because the subject already exists and is taught within the Icelandic-language subject. In that sense, it would be a steeper climb to introduce, for example, a skateboarding programme as part of the sports curriculum. The fact remains, however, that most school principals, and even most Icelandic-language subject teachers, will not so much as have given any thought to the possibility of poetry lessons supporting life-skills education; and even if they were alerted to this possibility, most of them would not consider their teacher training to have given them any expertise in conducting such an educational experiment.

Another, more narrow practical obstacle for the present theme of the *Poetry Learning Materials*, concerns the lesson planning:

These are very brief descriptions I am presented with these, you know, erm, lesson plans... [Interviewer: 'Yes'] And you have, like, an overarching goal... [Interviewer: 'Yes'] But I do not have, erm, I cannot see... [Interviewer: 'But, but...'] What *are* the children supposed to be able to do after this? [Interviewer: 'Yes'] There are no learning competencies that tell me what they are supposed to be able to do. [...] And why this method is better than another method to attain that objective. (Interviewee 3)

This remark points forward to the one of the sub-themes dealt with below, concerning how lesson plans must adhere to the conceptualisation of the Icelandic curriculum. A lesson plan should consist of three components: *competencies*, *content*, and *assessments*. The present state of the lesson plans supplementing the poetry learning materials for this project consists largely in *content*. As will be seen later in this section, this content, however, provides the strengths of the learning materials in spite of, and in retrospective light of, its shortcomings. It is worth recalling, as was stated in Section 4.1, above, that this point is one of the three main outcomes that emerged from the findings of this project.

Next, I will look at some positive remarks from the respondents, concerning the present theme of the *Poetry Learning Materials*. As was mentioned at the start of this section, a good way to implement it would be to collaborate with other teachers:

Because this, you know, erm, it entails, for instance, philosophical dialogue... Which would benefit me... [Interviewer: 'Yes. Yes, yes, yes.'] In social sciences, do you know what I mean? [...] And it is also useful for life skills. Take notice. [Interviewer: 'Yes'] So you are not just talking about Icelandic and social sciences and life skills. You could potentially use these six lessons in a collaboration of Icelandic and life skills. As an example. (Interviewee 3)

An additional remark, made by the same respondent, points back to the overarching theme of *Time*:

And I would possibly, because these are six lessons, I would possibly distribute them, you know, give three before the Christmas break, and three after Christmas. In order to have a diverse approach to social sciences in collaboration with life skills. [Interviewer: 'Mmm.'] But whether this programme requires you to give these six lessons consecutively. It is, uhm, it's, it is just a matter of implementation. Because in some lesson plans you are referring to what was done in the previous lesson. (Interviewee 3)

Another factor concerning time in an educational setting, which the respondents picked up on and is discussed in the next sub-theme, is that of *Slow Learning*.

#### Slow Learning

Some respondents expressed a preference for slow learning, which advances the idea that less is more, meaning that in the long run, the quality of what is learned has several advantages over the quantity of the learning materials. 'Slow learning' would be based on the same principles as that of the 'slow food' movement. However, as some foods (e.g. delicatessen) lends themselves better to be eaten slowly than others (e.g. hamburgers), the respondents pointed out that literature in general and poetry in particular are ideally suited for methods of slow learning:

I think, for one, much rather prefer to read one story a year. You know, one, like, Icelandic saga, is just fine. You can do countless assignments just based on that. (Interviewee 4)

And this was not just stated as an opinion, something that she based merely on her own preferences:

I mean, there is a good half of the students who, just..., just, would like to learn much slower. Or perhaps even everyone. (Interviewee 4)

She added that this might even apply equally well to the more advanced students, which according to her are more often than not females. It should be noted that according to PISA

testing results, in recent years in Iceland, girls outperform boys significantly in reading literacy:

Perhaps everyone. Also, those who are awfully..., you know, those perfectionist girls, you know, I think it would be much more beneficial for them to take it slowly. [...] Yes, you know that..., it takes time to absorb things, to think about things. It takes..., is time consuming, to think. (Interviewee 4)

One important aspect of slow learning is, perhaps, the environment or the atmosphere that the learning experience takes place in – and this, incidentally, both points forward to the fourth and last overarching theme of *Wonderment*, discussed later, whilst at the same time, it relates back to the second overarching theme of *Creativity* – which according to this respondent requires the teacher to take part, so to speak, be a fellow-student in the investigation at hand:

I taught programming for twenty years. And then, like this, at the beginning of this computer revolution in school. And this was because, at that time, this world was coming into existence and it posed countless possibilities, and one was getting acquainted with it at the same time. And, you know, the nerds were willing to, like, bank hours during the evenings and weekends to solve some programming problems, if you had just been teaching something because you yourself just knew it and it was in the textbook, erm..., I think, well, kind of, in order for the teacher to ignite the students, the teacher really needs to be a little bit, you know..., like, erm..., to..., to..., you know, to be a sort of taken aback by the material..., the material itself. And he probably will not become so unless he himself is actually..., discovering it and..., and..., like, so that..., like, I do not know if this is necessarily creativity, like, but I just think that the teacher who is not himself learning at the same time, [laughs shortly] he, you know, he..., he is much more likely to just get into some kind of recital, which..., I think..., which causes people to just go through the requirements and tick the boxes, you know. (Interviewee 5)

Needless to say, a joined teacher-and-students' discovering endeavour, as described in the previous quotation, takes time and, therefore, is more suited to the approach of slow learning.

The above are the underlying themes of the overarching theme of *Time*, and their respective sub-themes. The two themes have one sub-theme in common, which is the *Icelandic Curriculum*.

#### Icelandic Curriculum

The national curriculum is the cornerstone of the Icelandic school system. This elicited a sub-theme that was recurrent in all of the interviews conducted with teachers and specialists who are experienced with or have an insight into using poetry in education. For the most part, although not exclusively, it was discussed in a negative context:

I..., it is of course..., every, that is..., naturally schools have a curriculum and..., and the authorities, of course, demand that..., that..., that certain things be taught. Reading, arithmetic, English, science, swimming, sports. That there are, like, certain..., certain things,

that..., that so to say, erm, it should be guaranteed that..., that, you know, that all children learn. Erm, the tendency in curricula for most school levels has – except for preschool – for, say, elementary school and junior college, has been to..., in fact, increase the number of requirements that each school is expected to fulfil. And..., and they are, that is, we have such an overloaded curriculum with, like, once they were called learning objectives, now they are called competencies – and they have become enormous in amount. (Interviewee 5)

Here, we see the clear connection with the themes *Lesson* and *Slow Learning* in that when the challenges described under the theme *Lesson* and the current sub-theme are juxtaposed, and what poses as a common constraint, is the factor of time. This becomes particularly clear in the way that the theme *Slow Learning* was proposed as a possible (and feasible) response to this problem. As we saw earlier, in the discussion about the overarching theme of *Freedom*, the same respondent referred to the Icelandic curriculum as a ‘two-headed monster’ with its heads in total disagreement (Interviewee 5). What was said then was that the Icelandic curriculum is quite open for interpretation and execution, but at the same time, the schools operate under conditions such that the leeway that is given in one area comes at the expense of having imposed restrictions in another area. This was described clearly by the aforementioned respondent:

If the education authorities made requirements for a specific set of competencies, which could be met within, about, half of the amount of the overall lessons for the span of elementary school, then there would be real leeway in school curricula. As long as the competencies in the National Curriculum Guide are overwhelming [Interviewer: Mm...], there will only be leeway in school curricula to, like, to just..., you know..., find the quickest way to achieve them. Then there will be a competition..., a race to become an efficient school. And we witness this race ah..., ah..., all around us in the..., in my view, to the effect that..., that the school system fails to a greater and greater degree..., more and more to be educated, because if, if life is only about ticking the box, then no one will work hard. Then, people just become accustomed to making the minimum effort needed to tick the box. And the little effort needed to tick the box, it is so undignifying and so small that would make much more sense to just go out and play. (Interviewee 5)

In describing the overarching theme of *Time*, above, I mentioned that, in the view of the respondents, time is a measuring stick. Now, let us recall (and this will serve as a ‘common thread’ in the summary, below) that in the discussion about the theme *Lesson*, one respondent said that there were too many classes overall, that each student takes through the entire duration of elementary school. This point is illustrated further in the discussion of the current sub-theme, as is shown in the following:

Lately, I have been wondering whether it would not be best suited to..., to shorten the schooling to such an extent that most people wanted a little more. You see, if something takes so long that you want to leave before it is over, then somehow it has set the tone for everything. And, as I say, I have pondered this. You see, I went through primary and upper elementary school myself, getting about eight thousand lessons. Through compulsory education, the modern-day child gets about twelve thousand. That is a fifty percent increase.

Would it not have been better suited to have a, say, fifty percent reduction rather than a fifty percent increase? I really do not know. (Interviewee 5)

To expand further on the issue of the Icelandic curriculum, it has undergone gradual changes during the past couple of decades, which has led to main focus being on the Icelandic-language subject, math, and English. How the students do in these three subjects at the end of upper elementary school is the deciding factor as regards to what junior colleges will accept them.<sup>41</sup> The most 4-6 popular and prestigious junior colleges get to (and will) choose or accept the students with the highest average scores out of these three main subjects. There is not really a good answer to the question why these three subjects are considered the most important ones, but it may have something to do with prestige of theoretical studies, at the expense of vocational education. We therefore see that the issue of the Icelandic curriculum poses some obstacles that each relate back to other themes and sub-themes. However, in the summary below there will also be room for a contrasting voice.

#### A Summary of the Overarching Theme: Time

To illuminate the general contours of the third overarching theme, *Time*, its two themes, *Slow Learning* and *Lesson*, and the two sub-themes of *Lesson*, the *Icelandic Curriculum* and the *Poetry Learning Materials*, the common thread running through all of them is the emphasis on the delicate interplay between possibilities and restraints. Sometimes, these features coexist within the same theme or sub-theme, as was the case with the theme *Lesson* and the sub-theme *Poetry Learning Materials*.

There are some factors that are unique about each theme. For example, in the first, *Lesson*, the interviewees discussed the difference between planning and execution, and this is in fact a matter of experience as to whether the individual teacher feels that they are restrained when it comes to how they tackle a lesson. In fact, what is even more unique about the lesson, as a phenomenon, is that this may for many for many teachers well be where the magic happens, so to speak. It may represent the very reason why teachers love what they do, but at the same time, it can represent the hardship of teaching. It can even become the core of why some teachers experience occupational burn-out. Even though the respondents did not talk specifically about the concept of burn-out, as such, I can from experience, both as a teacher and a department head, recognise, in what they said, the symptoms and conditions that often lead to burn-out in teaching. Regarding poetry teaching in particular, the theme *Lesson*

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<sup>41</sup> In the Icelandic school system, between compulsory education, years 1-10, students need to complete a 3-year junior college (upper secondary) education – in colleges similar to UK sixth-form colleges – prior to entering universities.

suggested that from the teacher's point of view, if poetry is something he or she really relates to, it can be rewarding and fulfilling – in which case the way in which it is presented can win the students over if they are receptive to either poetry or the subject of the poems (and/or exercises) used. Poetry as a subject matter was described as something that taps into emotions unlike anything else, even including other forms of art. In the second theme, *Slow Learning*, what was unique was how powerful the interviewees believe this to be as a potential teaching method, not least for literature teaching. It could even be seen as a logical response to problem that has just been described. However, in order to be implemented, it must be defined and endorsed within the school curricula. What is unique about each of the sub-themes is that in the first, *Icelandic Curriculum*, there was a lot of talk of restraints but at the same time when it was mentioned in relation to other coding themes, for example as was the case with the first overarching theme of *Freedom*, it represented opportunities, and in the second, *Poetry Learning Materials*, most respondents expressed a wish to have access to my learning materials as a tool box or an activities-and tasks-database. There is coherence in the bundle of remarks made by the interviewees under the overarching theme *Time*, in that time is not something that can be miraculously adjusted. What matters most is how one associates one's doings with it. However, there was also some incoherence in that different interviewees are clearly conditioned by time in a different manner. Depending on what their experience is, and within which stage of the school system, it shows itself in completely different ways: sometimes as a natural barrier that simply has to be acknowledged; sometimes as a barrier that can actually be overcome through innovative strategies. While everyone was aware of it, it is not clear whether the way each respondent associated with this theme resonates with that of others. It seems that each person who has experience of classroom teaching has a unique relationship with the construct of time. It may therefore be difficult to draw conclusions about the theme's overall relevance for the topic of using poetry to cultivate virtuous emotions and attitudes.

Yet, trying to relate these general insights to the topic of teaching poetry, the implication seems to be that when it comes to time, there are some considerable advantages to teaching poetry as opposed to many other subjects. According to the interviewees, poetry is something that can, without posing any type of discouragement as far as the learning process is concerned, be visited even if only briefly at a time, and revisited, as often as one desires, without compromising its effectiveness as a learning tool.

As I did at the end of the discussion of the overarching theme of *Freedom*, at the close of Sub-Section 4.2.4.1 Freedom: A Summary of the Overarching Theme: Freedom, and at the end of the discussion of the overarching theme of *Creativity*, at the close of Sub-Section 4.2.4.2

Creativity: A summary of the Overarching Theme: Creativity, here too, I would like to bring attention to a respondent who was the critical voice. Interviewee 3, who is a curriculum specialist, completely disagreed with everyone else, as to whether or not the Icelandic curriculum poses any unique restraints. In fact she stated it is more flexible than any other curricula in Scandinavia or Europe:

The National Curriculum Guide as a whole. [Interviewer: Yes...] is very open. [Interviewer: Yes...] because it only specifies what students should be able to do after each school stage. And the Icelandic National Curriculum Guide defined those as at the end of fourth grade, at the end of seventh grade and then at the end of the upper elementary level. This is what the kids should be able to do. Whichever way you go about getting your students to gain this ability, is just your choice as a professional. There are no books specified. The curriculum does not state that you should use certain books. (Interviewee 3)

Furthermore, she described how, when she herself has used poetry in teaching, this related in a meaningful way to the Icelandic curriculum:

I have used, erm, poems in..., because I teach, part of what I teach is working with dilemmas and controversies. And I have used poems that bring to light the individuals' personal experience, erm, of events that they have either participated in or an incident that they have subjected to. And I have talked to students that..., this relates to the National Curriculum Guide. (Interviewee 3)

So, here it would appear that she may have been using poetry as a means of consultation or that of overcoming difficult existential experiences, and that, furthermore, she points out that this type of teaching approach and learning experience is explicitly anticipated and accounted for in the Icelandic curriculum.

I now turn to the fourth overarching theme of *Wonderment*.

#### 4.2.4.4 *Wonderment*

What emerged in the interviews is that we can speak of wonderment or enchantment on a personal level and on a practical level. The personal level refers to the individual and his or her awareness and development and path to personal growth. It is something more than a mere discrete personal character trait. It is defining way of approaching whatever is presently occupying one's mind.

Generally speaking, wonderment conveys one's joy for learning. But, at the same time, wonderment is also a mode of thinking. It shapes a person's attitude and whether or not attitude and values can be changed, how one responds to the world. To simplify, on a practical level it satiates one's thirst for knowledge and growth, while on the personal level, it taps into one's moral standards. First, we will look at the practical aspect.

On the one hand, wonderment refers to the teacher's passion for the subject, but also to their broader calling of being an inspirational role model:

For the teacher to ignite the students, the teacher sort of needs to be a bit, erm, you know, to..., to..., be a bit preoccupied with the material..., the material itself. And that will probably not be the case unless he himself is..., is actually discovering it and..., and..., you know, so that, well – I do not know if this necessarily counts as creativity, you know, – but I just think that a teacher who is not himself learning at the same time [laughs], will, erm, he will just tend go into some kind of mantra state, which..., as I was..., which causes people to just go through the requirements and check the boxes. (Interviewee 5)

The wonderment also emerges in one's dedication to one's role as teacher, as pointed out in the following:

As a person, I am standing in front of the class, where, in the younger grades, the imitator, so to speak, is so strong that it really matters how I handle things. I make sure that..., that I put things nicely away instead of throwing them away. Or just the way I sit and stand, it goes without saying, that this is all something the younger kids are absorbing. The adult is the role model, and the imitator is a bit involuntary. Yes, and also, how my interactions are with other adults – and everything there is. I have to aspire to be such a role model. [...] And..., and..., and, you know, it is important to take time, like with the..., the..., the..., the student groups, if there..., if there is a crisis. To have a meeting, either with those involved or with the whole class. And..., and..., and discuss what happened, and get their feedback. And..., and..., and this, you know, is, somehow, just, part of school life. You always have to try to keep in mind that you are contributing something..., something ethical. (Interviewee 7)

On the other hand, the wonderment is the passion of both the student and teacher for learning. As described within the coding theme of *Freedom*, where it was pointed out that *Freedom of the Teacher* encourages the growth of *Freedom of the Students* and vice versa, here we also see that students' wonderment inspires the teacher's wonderment and vice versa:

In order to teach something to, you know, fairly developed people, so that..., that the subject becomes exciting, and people want to learn it, then you really have to be discovering it yourself at the same time and, sort of, I felt this so strongly when I started to teach programming, I taught programming for twenty years. And then, sort of, at the beginning of this computer revolution in education. And that was because this world was coming into existences and it had countless possibilities, and one was getting to know it at the same time. (Interviewee 5)

This does, of course, not mean that it is necessary to be teaching a pioneering subject, or something that has not been done before. Rather, this quote illustrates the ideal attitude that, in a teacher, will spark interest with the students. And this spark stems from wonderment. It is also important that wonderment encourages the students to go further, to exceed their pre-perceived limitations:

My feeling, when teaching, was – ever since I started teaching – that almost all the people in front of me were capable of doing far, far more than they had done. These people would mere..., merely have..., almost all of them had shown only a fraction of what they were

capable of. And that as soon as..., you know, as soon as people really want to do something, almost all of these guys can do far more. And if the teacher is someone who, erm..., who just covers some rules on the whiteboard because it is mandatory, this is not a teacher who gets students to put in an effort. The one who gets students to put in an extra effort, he himself is giving it his all – and I somehow do not see that, as far as I am concerned. I would not do that with any subject other than the subject I am presently fascinated by, because I am..., I am discovering it. (Interviewee 5)

Wonderment also entails that learning is a process that takes place in an environment where new knowledge can emerge, where new connections can be discovered:

I remember when I myself was studying in, I was doing physics in junior college. And in the first..., the first,... year, you learned more or less half a book, you know, like chemistry, the atomic system and..., and..., and..., erm, and..., erm, chemical equations and so forth. [...] And all this talk did not become the least bit exciting until I discovered that no one really understood why all things had the same weight and inertia. Then, all of a sudden there was a mass..., look, it's this unknown that is completely..., it is actually, you know..., it is the magic of the unknown that I think propels students further in their studies. And if they..., if they never get to know, well, the magic of the unknown and that which no one understands, well, the real attraction of the mysterious, – then astronomy, for instance, is not very exciting, if it all comes down, you know, to just calculating, look, erm, uh..., erm, uh..., you know..., erm, some elliptical movements, but as soon as you start to talk to teenagers about black holes, astronomy becomes exciting, you know what I mean? (Interviewee 5)

As mentioned at the start of this section, wonderment taps into one's moral standards:

One of the things that young people benefit from learning to acquire, I think, – now, you know, I am just trying to express my..., my own opinion, and this is not based on any science or research. – but one of the things I think that young people benefit from learning is humility in the face of, uh, existence, as a matter of fact. You know, to realise that..., that you never know but a fraction of all the truth that matters, you never understand except a fraction of what matters to understand. And at least some poems can help people realise that..., that, erm, existence is..., is kind of something much more than just what..., what you know about, look. And..., and..., and I think this, that..., that, erm, that it might be something like that..., some fraction of what we call moral upbringing. (Interviewee 5)

In this way, wonderment attributes to moral upbringing. One of the participants, who wrote a thesis on this when they did their teacher education, agrees on this interpretation:

... what I was looking at, erm, when I was writing my dissertation, was somewhat the aspect ..., erm, that we are – this is why I said 'enjoy the poems' – we are in a..., when we are experiencing the beauty of the language and the beauty of the pictures that the poem paints..., or..., and so forth [the interviewee's child, an infant, makes a loud sound and the interviewee responds 'Yes!'], so then, erm..., then the..., the poems provide a way of [the infant makes a loud sound and the interviewee tries to calm the baby down], of..., of developing, erm, our sense of beauty. Does that make sense? [Interviewer: 'Yes'] And I think that this is the foundation on which we can later discover what is right and wrong. Or, simply, to read these poems that you, for instance, are using right now in your teaching and, somehow, relate it to and..., derive from the emotions. [Interviewer: 'Yes'] This is how I feel that I may be working in a moral sense with these younger children. (Interviewee 9)

As could be seen from the discussion on the overarching theme of *Time*, the same respondent (Interviewee 9) spoke about the importance of being ‘able to perceive beauty in words’, relating it to the *Creativity*-derived subtheme of *Creativity from the Students’ Perspective*. The interviewee described this as a gift, and that to:

be able to be creative with words. To..., to assert oneself in a moral way. That is basically the kind of gift that, erm, that matters the most. (Interviewee 9)

This suggests that the moral aspect of learning through poetry is echoed by all of the overarching themes, as the analysis of the data indicates. However, this is not surprising as, during the discussion of the same overarching theme, another interviewee had mentioned the role of creativity in the context of social activities, deeming this setting to be:

the single most important and successful tool for learning and development of youngsters and young adults. (Interviewee 5)

Let us also be reminded that, towards the end of Sub-Section 4.2.4.1 Freedom: A Summary of the Overarching Theme: Freedom, we saw the conclusion being drawn that Freedom is ‘an important tool in relation to both moral and ethical learning’. In other words, the overarching themes of Wonderment, Time, Creativity, and Freedom, all bring together something universally human across the spectrum of education. And in a sense, talking about the one overarching theme does not give a complete picture without mentioning the other ones. What is here being referred to as universally human is the strive that everyone feels towards the good. The words of the respondents often had an enchanted Platonic feel to them, rather than a more disenchanting and practical Aristotelian one: perhaps driven by the aesthetic sensibilities of the people selected for the interviews.

So, to recap, we see that Freedom, Creativity, Time, and Wonderment all potentially contribute to moral upbringing. From this we can either divine that the moral aspect of learning is represented separately within three overarching themes, or that there is a link between wonderment, creativity, and freedom. We have already seen threads that link two different themes and subthemes with the overarching theme of *Creativity*; these threads were identified as running from *Slow Learning* to *Creativity* (p. 163), and from *Lesson* to *Creativity* (p. 160). A third link of the same sort will emerge below, as running from *Vocation of being a role model* to *Creativity* (p. 172). Similarly, we saw how *Slow Learning* relates back to the *Lesson*-derived subtheme of the *Icelandic Curriculum* (p. 146). And in the same way, it is not out of place to take into account a moral link between the overarching theme of *Wonderment* and the *Creativity*-derived themes of *Perspective*. I say more about this in Chapter 5.

In sum, then, the content of the fourth overarching theme, *Wonderment*, can be summarised by saying that the interviewees believed that wonderment is what gives education meaning, and is in a certain sense the engine of the whole learning experience. Moreover, ideally, the teacher should share this experience with the students, not least when teaching pieces of great literature.

I now turn to the themes represented under the overarching theme of *Wonderment*.

#### Passion for Learning

In much the same way as was described in the above, where it was professed that the overarching theme of *Wonderment* ought to be a shared experience between both teachers and learners, this interplay emerged as even more prominent in the current sub-theme. A passion for learning is something that rubs off to another person, both among students and between students and the teacher:

In some schools, they read, for example, *The Didactic and Descriptive Verses* by Hallgrímur Pétursson. ‘Humble, tender and cheerful, / Do not play excessively; / Beware of gossip, ridicule, laughter, / The ignorant ones will boast.’ Erm, if the teacher truly finds the question interesting whether or not it is good for you to be humble and modest – or if, perhaps, it is only desirable for others to be humble and modest – if he truly finds this an insistent question and..., and..., and an important question, ‘is it good to be humble and modest or is it better to be determined and stand up for oneself?’ If he himself finds this an exciting question and he himself is not quite..., well, he himself is still..., getting to grips with the question and..., and..., and..., w..., kind of, like you know, trying to understand, ‘how am I to discuss it, how to deal with this?’ Then he is most likely sure to be getting the students onboard. But if the teacher himself does not want to know whether it is good for oneself to be humble, tender and cheerful, or if it is better to be, like..., like..., determined and set goals and strive to achieve them, and blah, blah, blah, you know. [Interviewer: Mm.] If he does not see, you know, like the logic of both extremes and he is like..., a little, you know. If he himself is not looking, erm..., will he then ever get any student to view this as something important or exciting? (Interviewer 5)

As will be seen in the next sub-theme, a passion for learning is a vocation or a calling. One respondent, a music teacher, described this explicitly whilst also linking the present sub-theme with a moral aspect of learning:

Everything I teach is called music... [Interviewer: Yes.] but we make everything possible. And what we..., we discuss, we discuss what is going on in the verse. And we talk about whether it is good or bad. [Interviewer: Mm.] And..., so basically..., what I am, like, striving for in each instance is that..., that..., you know, I use all the content of the verse. [Interviewer: Yes.] Everything as it..., everything that I, you know, actually see, like. And that can be..., that..., that..., in..., in this way. That can be moral in substance and, naturally, it often is. [Interviewer: And what else do you use or can you use poetry for?] It is just. I..., for me..., that would actually be, well, poetry books would actually be quite sufficient as study materials in Elementary School, like. In..., in..., that is, the Icelandic-language subject, and..., uhm,

you know..., and spelling and grammar, and all that. It would be quite sufficient for me to just have poetry books. I..., I think they, for example, do not learn anything by doing assignments in filling in the blanks, they do not learn anything from that, because then someone will tell them 'you did this wrong'. Unless they simply think they are always making the same mistake, like. And I know..., or I, that is, I know that..., and I know..., I may not know much about these poems... poetry books – not a lot about them – but from my point of view it would be completely sufficient. That and to read poetry. Read stories. Read books. To discuss it and..., you know, they listen. They... They love it, kids do. For the whole duration of Elementary School. (Interviewee 10)

Here, she is putting the passion for learning into a certain context, where it connects with joy, respect for the youngsters, and a mutual striving for expansion of their conversation and personal knowledge. The respondent quoted in the first citation of the present section also felt that poetry opens a door the knowledge and new experiences that we crave:

It, like..., it may..., it may well be that poetry does a lot of things for other people, you know, rather than..., to kind of, like..., erm..., somehow, like, open up for the magic of the unknown which I think is what, in a way, drives people forward in their..., it drives, like, for the knowledge-..., their thirst for knowledge, you know... (Interviewee 5)

According to this, we are drawn towards the possibility of discovering new things and expanding our horizon, which according to the cited interviewees can be attained through poetry.

I now turn to the second theme represented under the overarching theme of *Wonderment*.

#### Vocation of Being a Role Model

In a general sense, being a role model can mean to set a good example and display good character traits and decency. This is the aspect of the current theme that concerns the moral dimensions of education. The other sense which the respondents attributed to this theme concerns the fearlessness displayed by someone who is not afraid to do something that is considered extravagant. This aspect corresponds with the second overarching theme of *Creativity*. A good example of the latter sense is illustrated in the words of one respondent:

...whether it is possible to..., it is possible to get a group to, kind of, join forces in order..., to break out of, you know, certain frames and boxes. I..., well..., yes, sure, I suppose it is possible. I think..., you know..., that part of it may well come down to whether the teacher does it himself, like. And..., you know..., and..., I..., suppose, that..., that the teacher himself is a role model in this sense..., of daring perhaps to be a little different. (Interviewee 5)

However, this respondent also pointed out that the ideal setting required for this type of creativity to culminate is more likely to be found in the context of social activities, as was already mentioned in the introduction to the overarching theme of *Creativity*, in Section 4.2, on p. 143 above, rather than simply sitting in a classroom and reading a poem together. For

this discussion it is also important to look at what the interviewees had to say about the implications of the moral aspect of education, concerning the present theme. One respondent described how language and the meaning of language is always a central ingredient of her teaching. She felt that using beautiful language went hand in hand with acquiring and practising good manners and self-decency:

I, for one, do not allow any, uh, rude language in the music classroom. That is just my, as I say, as..., as far as I am concerned it is strictly forbidden it and even though..., and even though this stems from pop music, I do not want to have anything to do with it..., I do not want us to those words in class. You know, this is kind of an ethics..., morality [laughs], [Interviewer: Yes.] Moral something. And, like, I will try, in..., you are always in this parenting role as a teacher, well, at any age. I teach children from first grade to ninth grade. So almost the entire Elementary school stage is at stake. (Interviewee 10)

Elaborating further on this issue, she explained:

Now, for example, there are these rude lyrics which I just mentioned, mind you. Which, for example..., to a great extent come from rap music. Which, of course, first..., this all has its origin in the States. Where..., as I was saying..., and this has led to the type of Icelandic that has become incredibly rude. And this..., when..., they have..., trans..., translated..., when these lyrics are being cited in Icelandic the result is so..., you just never realised this..., you always keep a bit of a partition between yourself and foreign languages. They may not affect you as such, you can easily say, like, 'fuck,' you know, in English, but you would never say that so effortlessly in your own language. And I think..., that is, now that the Icelandic rappers have somewhat started to imitate this a little, you know, then we are starting to tear down this partition, this protective barrier, in fact. This emotional barrier. And..., and maybe that is destructive. Maybe not, I cannot say. I for one do not like it. (Interviewee 10)

From this, it is clear that the teachers and specialists interviewed consider the vocation of being a role model extremely important, and in the above citations we see that through both these aspects the teacher is assumed to have a positive effect on the students. This is a slightly more aesthetically inspired and 'enchanted' view of role modelling than typically seen in the academic literature on moral role models (where emulation of role models is not seen to be aesthetically driven), as I explain in Chapter 5. At the same time this sub-theme illuminated one possible reason for why the poetry intervention was not as successful as I had hoped for. I – or the other teachers involved in the research – may not have had the role-model authority instilled in us that is required to move students on the path of wonderment towards emulating virtuous ideals. It is also clear from the previous quotation, that what the respondent says about the emotional (or protective) barriers she feels that she feels have been torn down, when trying to incorporate foreign lyrics that contain swear-words into her learning materials, can also be seen in the context of educational *emotional sensitivities*, which relates back to what was said about emotional sensitivities in Sub-Section 2.1.2.2 Returning to Wittgenstein, above:

[M]oral education is about helping students understand the whole web of concerns and considerations relevant to moral functioning in the world. [...] The connective tissue here lies in emotional sensitivities, and [...] one of the best ways to cultivate such sensitivities – in teachers and students alike – is through the medium of poetry.

This idea of the connective tissues was (and also applies here) seen as the Wittgensteinian task of ‘grasping the *connections between* rules’, meaning that in Wittgensteinian terms what matters most when studying an object, idea or a phenomenon, is not the object itself, but how it connects with other phenomena. In this case – and this is the reason why I call them ‘educational emotional sensitivities’ in the above – the teacher feels she gets caught in the rabbit hole, or so to speak, when confronted with rap lyrics that are all about profanity, leaving less space for making connections with emotional issues. Therefore, she describes how barriers have been broken between a present class atmosphere and a past one wherein she had previously been able to link lyrics with emotional sensitivities and moral awareness.

#### [A Summary of the Overarching Theme: Wonderment](#)

To illuminate the general contours of the fourth overarching theme, wonderment, and its two themes, passion for learning and the vocation of being a role model, the common thread running through all of them is the emphasis on how the students can benefit from experiencing their advantages in an educational setting, but also how it is a journey that the teacher takes part in as a fellow-student. What is unique about each of the themes is that in the first the emphasis is on a certain equity in the teacher-student relationship that involves the teacher being as much of a discoverer, a receiver of knowledge, as the students, and in the second that, in a certain sense, the teachers are teaching what they themselves ‘are’. There is coherence in the bundle of remarks made by the interviewees under the overarching theme Wonderment, in that it signifies the upbuilding nature of learning. However, there is also some incoherence in that wonderment can be seen, firstly, as a philosophical term (and as such, in an educational context, it is useful to distinguish between wonderment, wonder, and awe, as I shall do in CHAPTER 5: Discussion). This view was primarily apparent in the discussion of interviewees with a philosophical background. Secondly, wonderment can be seen as a broad term useful for understanding the intrinsically motivating pedagogical outlines of learning and teaching, and of school and classroom settings. This view was more apparent in the discussion of interviewees with a background in education.

In the context of teaching poetry, in particular, the implication drawn out was that since poetry is ideal for describing and dealing with something that is intangible, it is well suited to convey the inter-subjective, recognisable, yet often unspoken segments of wonderment, and to

give students and opportunity to grow as persons through experiencing wonderment.

However, this can only happen in a context where the teacher has the acknowledged status of a role model and, so to speak, an accepted role as the deliverer of wonderment.

As I did at the end of the discussion of the overarching theme of *Freedom*, at the close of Sub-Section 4.2.4.1 Freedom: A Summary of the Overarching Theme: Freedom, and at the end of the discussion of the overarching theme of *Creativity*, at the close of Sub-Section 4.2.4.2 Creativity: A summary of the Overarching Theme: Creativity, and at the end of the discussion of the overarching theme of *Time*, at the close of Sub-Section 4.2.4.3 Time: A Summary of the Overarching Theme: Time, here too, I would like to bring attention to a respondent who acted the contrarian. Interviewee 4 recognised what a huge responsibility it is to be a role model, and even went as far as describing the thought of it as being somewhat frightening:

You do become a little bit shy about being a teacher, for instance. You know, being a role model..., it is so cluttering. (Interviewee 4)

There was some discussion of teachers' burn-out in the discussion under the overarching theme of *Time*. It is worthy of note that the type of pressure that is a result of the responsibility described in the previous citation can be overwhelming. Therefore, it is useful to consider in what ways the four overarching themes have been portrayed by the respondents as positive and/or negative.

#### *A Summary of the Themes*

Out of the four coding themes identified, *Freedom*, *Creativity* and *Wonderment* are clearly positive and point to a feasible way of using poetry for psycho-moral or characterological purposes. When freedom was mentioned, it was generally described as a positive in the sense that when it is in operation, it creates a better setting for the learning environment.

Students must have freedom to exercise autonomy and to become interested in the teaching. Teachers are dependent on freedom in order to flourish as teachers. For both teachers and students, creativity provides a way of making education meaningful. At the same time, there is an important (and meaningful) interplay between creativity and freedom.

In most aspects, when time was mentioned, on the other hand, it was in a negative sense and associated with a lack of time. However, it was also pointed out that time itself was not the problem but the speed at which we approach things. The curriculum poses some obstacles, but can also, in a certain way, be seen as offering opportunities. There was some criticism of the lesson plan of the present poetry plan by the interviewees – and here, time was a big obstacle. Some interviewees expressed a will to make use of this teaching material, as a tool box,

meaning that they would prefer to pick and choose the elements they happened to like for their lesson and adjust it to the time at their disposal.

To make such a turn feasible, i.e. treating or presenting the accompanying poetry learning materials as a ‘teacher’s tool box’ rather than a complete package, there would need to be a more thorough explanation of the role of character education within this poetry programme; otherwise the motivation behind the project would be lost (as only implicit but not made explicit). I will discuss this point further in the next chapter.

When wonderment was mentioned or described by the interviewees, it became more and more evident that much of what was going in the other overarching themes, and the themes and sub-themes thereunder, somehow culminates in the realisation of wonderment. It is therefore important, in the next chapter, to specifically dive deeper into the theoretical aspects of wonderment and investigate further how it relates to the theoretical aspects of freedom, creativity and time – and to consider further implications of all of this for characterological uses of poetry.

#### 4.2.5 Overall Findings from Chapter 4

In this chapter I have reported on the main empirical findings of my doctoral project. As I have summarised those at regular junctures throughout the chapter, I will refrain from an overall summary here, but simply reiterate and flag a few points that I consider most salient about my findings (and many of which will reappear in the following Discussion chapter).

The intervention part of my project did not go as well as I had hoped for, perhaps because my original hopes and aspirations were slightly idealistic. Nevertheless, through a baptism of fire, I learned a lot from the mistakes I made and the barriers I encountered; lessons that are typically overlooked or treated very cursorily in Methods modules for postgraduate students in education. Among the lessons I learned, the following ones stood out for me, and could serve as pieces of advice also for any future students who propose to carry out character-educational interventions based on literature in secondary schools in general and Icelandic secondary schools in particular:

When carrying out a character-educational intervention based on literature and deciding a choice of poems, stories, songs/lyrics, narratives, etc., it is vital to work with the literature that is already planned for in the school curricula and subject year plans. Trying to reinvent the wheel or sell the teachers lesson content that they are unfamiliar with will impede your project from the outset.

Reading up on and theorising about the implementation of an educational research project does not measure up against hands-on experience of conducting or being part of the actual execution of a real educational study. Be concise and precise in all communication. Keep a log of all communication. For each and every milestone of your project plan, have a contingency plan for what to do if something goes wrong. If your co-operators, such as teachers and school leads, know beforehand what to do when unexpected upsets occur, it will make life easier for everyone and increase the project's chances of success.

Unless you have access to a large number of participants, it is unlikely that quantitative findings on their own will be of substantial use to you.

Scale your lesson plans down in quantity. No teacher will be able to (and, in all likelihood, not interested in nor willing to) accomplish the same number of tasks in the short space of time that you may have needed, as you have full familiarity with your learning materials, say, in the pilot phase.

In an Icelandic context, character education is a new and relatively unexplored frontier. For most teachers and school leaders, its methods and approach still sound unfamiliar. In recent years the school curricula have undergone reforms to reflect the changes made to the Icelandic Curriculum Guide. It is therefore to be expected that implementing character education through school subjects will be met with suspicion. Moreover, the introduction of life skills into the Icelandic school system in the late '90s was expected to accomplish a lot of what character education proposes to do.

Regarding positive input and findings, the interviews that I subsequently carried out with persons with the relevant expertise in the field elicited various insights that a) helped explain what had gone wrong in my intervention, b) gave me clues about how future research in this area would have to be conducted, and c) provided independently valuable observations about poetry teaching and the nature of the (Icelandic) school system. While many of those observations resonate with findings from the background literature, as I explain in Chapter 5, others serve as novel elements of expert knowledge. I have thematised those findings above and will not repeat the themes here. Rather, I simply provide a synopsis of the lessons learned from the interviews that I found most conspicuous or surprising:

With regards to the value of my project as a character-educational intervention based on poetry, every single respondent expressed great excitement about the execution of the project, the exercises given, and the approach of using creative methods and arts practice to accomplish my goals. However, not one of them expressed a wish to use the programme as a

whole, but would rather want to use ideas and activities from it, which they would incorporate into their own materials

Poetry taps into the inter-personal experience of wonderment more strongly than any other form of art. This appears to be a bold statement, but the interviewees provided convincing arguments in support of this thesis, namely having to do with the relationship between wonderment, emotions, and learning, and how these elements are conveyed through the medium of poetry.

From the students' perspective, poetry is initially, at least for a large portion of students, one of countless subjects that have to be covered during the school year, and is therefore more often than not associated with tediousness. However, through poetry and creative expression, important connections are made between abstract thinking – i.e. for problem solving or task completion – and a sense of wonder.

Articulated explicitly by one respondent but somewhat conveyed as an underlying factor in the discussions of the other educators, which I also can relate to from experience, wonderment can be brought about when the students realise that there are things in this world, problems within the physical sciences, which among other things we study at school, that no one knows the answer to. In an educational context, this can make learning meaningful.

In an Icelandic context, if producing learning materials, they must adhere to the conceptualisation of the Icelandic Curriculum Guide. All lesson plans should consist of three components: competencies, content, and assessments. The first component defines what the student is expected to learn from the module or programme. The second component contains the subject syllabus. The third component defines how it is to be assessed whether the students learned what was identified as learning outcomes in the first component.

## CHAPTER 5: Discussion

In Chapter 4, I presented the findings of my PhD research. In this chapter, I will summarise these findings briefly, point by point, and in turn invoke a discussion of relevant background literatures. The overarching question is to what extent my findings complement, contradict, or supplement previous findings. However, as already explained, because my study of the uses of poetry for character education largely covers new ground, most of the literature that I explored in Chapter 2 is only tangentially related to my actual findings. The discussion in this chapter will, therefore, be more fragmented, exploratory, and rhapsodic than it would have been if I had been able to draw upon a large body of closely related literature with which to juxtapose my findings. To conclude this chapter, I provide a short section with overall conclusions, lessons learned, and ideas for future studies.

To recap, the overall goal of the project was to address the Main-RQ:

Is it possible to use poetry to cultivate virtue, in an Icelandic secondary-school context?

I set out to do this through two sub-RQs, each addressed in the two stages below.

### 5.1 Stage 1 Findings

The goal of Stage 1 was to address Sub-RQ1:

Can poetry be used to cultivate virtue?

The experiment followed a model developed and carried out by the Jubilee Centre, University of Birmingham (Arthur et al., 2014), and adapted later by a research team at the School of Education, University of Iceland (Jónsson et al., 2019). Both of these focus on character education and literature. Stage 1 incorporated two methods from the aforementioned projects that consisted in an experimental trial, and interviews with pupils and a class teacher. A similar project is currently being carried out by Ingimar Ó. Waage on character education and the visual arts (Waage, 2020).

#### 5.1.1 Stage 1 Quantitative Findings

At the start and end of the trial run, pre- and post-surveys were given to the students to measure their virtues literacy, with particular attention being given to the concepts of *empathy*, *pride*, and *shame*. These concepts, the first a virtue, the others emotions, were introduced and defined in Sub-Section 2.1.2.3, above.

In the context of the approach of philosophy with children, which I discussed in Sub-Sections 3.4.4.2, on p. 108, and 4.2.1, on p. 132<sup>42</sup>, we see conflicting approaches to the educational

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<sup>42</sup> See also discussions on pp. 14 & 58.

uses of shame. A soft or less confrontational version of this is the Lipman method, which involves a friendly group-conceptualisation-session where shame and shaming would be seen as aberrations. An alternative, more confrontational, way is the Brenifier method, here described through Brenifier's criticism of Lipman:

Texts [under scrutiny] are often misunderstood. We project whatever we want onto it, overlook important content, declare this or that impossible or uninteresting, and we go on with whatever we want to say, by a mere process of associative thought (...). The real struggle has not taken place with the 'other,' a real confrontation with otherness is absent. (Helskog, 2020, pp. 67-68)

In light of the previous quotation, the following observation by Helskog is helpful: 'Brenifier argues that in the case of "the community of inquiry," the students could at least be invited to mention where such a question is being raised by the text, or how the text stands on such an issue, because following a subject, concentrating on it, and making links based on it are key aspects of philosophical thinking' (Helskog, 2020, p. 68). This type of systematic collective conceptualisation, so to speak, may involve confrontations with views that the student becomes ashamed of having endorsed previously, or becoming vicariously ashamed on behalf of someone else who holds such views.<sup>43</sup> Not only does this exemplify how shame might be treated as a positive emotion; it also exemplifies how shame, pride, and empathy are linked with critical and creative thinking, which are important vehicles of character education. It should be stressed that following is my own position: There are three points that, when considered together, show how shame, pride, and empathy can be seen as important stimulators of critical and creative thinking:

- The quantitative findings of Stage 1 showed that the scores for the evaluative factors 'Ability to apply/use concepts of virtues and emotions from modern poems' and 'Ability to apply/use concepts of virtues and emotions from poems from the past' increased significantly between the two standardised tests.
- The exercises in the learning materials revolved around the concepts of shame, pride, and empathy, and those were positively evaluated by students in focus-group interviews.
- A crucial part of the learning process involves engaging in a philosophical dialogue wherein the students have an opportunity to measure the collective conceptualisation against their own understanding of these concepts.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Brenifier's method, in a sense, 'corners' the participants and forces them to recognise and (both to themselves and others) to own or admit to unclear or ill-founded positions, unclear thoughts, and errors in reasoning. It is a process or experience that aids the participants in arguing sensibly and clearly, unrestrained by their ego or pre-given ideas. It is a strong tool for 'thinking with the group' (collective thinking); therefore, getting out of one's ego is essential for helping to move the group discussion forward – regardless of whether the opinion of the group aligns with one's own opinion.

<sup>44</sup> It should be noted that the evaluative factor 'Ability to apply/use concepts of virtues and emotions from personal experience or contemporary relevance', which decreased between the two tests, was measured by use of concepts the students had not necessarily been introduced to, during the intervention. The purpose of this was to see if they would be able to transfer or apply what they had learned in another context. It is almost an

Weighing up these positions together provides indication that shame, pride, and empathy are linked with critical and creative thinking. However, I admit that the method and process of moderating a philosophical inquiry with children needs to be more thoroughly accounted for in the poetry learning materials for potential future projects. For example, it needs to be made clearer whether the method of Lipman or of Brenifier is being recommended.

All in all, as mentioned in point 1, above, the virtue literacy part of the findings indicated that the students had grown in understanding of the virtues/emotions of empathy, pride, and (proper) shame. However, whether this came about because of the use of a community-of-inquiry method of instruction is moot. Followers of Lipman might complain that my use of this method was not rigorous and systematic enough and that the whole project was not centred exclusively on this method. Followers of Brenifier might complain, on the other hand, that the method was not confrontational and challenging enough to bring out the critical engagement with the texts needed for students to be shaken out of their comfort zones and make progress.

#### 5.1.2 Stage 1 Qualitative Findings

The focus groups were conducted via semi-structured interviews and modelled after the same sort of interviews conducted for the *Laxdaela Saga* project (Jónsson et al., 2019), previously mentioned. The purpose was to investigate what the students remembered from the learning materials, what they have learned, and in what sense they might (or thought they could) pick up similar lessons (for moral learning) elsewhere, both within and outside of the school.

In the *Laxdaela Saga* project, this phase was carried out as described by Bogdan and Biklen (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003pp. 110-124). This method involves, on the one hand, collecting observation field notes and writing them out with appropriate reflections, and on the other hand, conducting, and transcribing (verbatim) interviews. The field notes themselves have not been published (I have, however, been allowed to examine them), but they play a role in the interpretation presented by the researchers. In my project, I did not include an observation session, but confined my interaction with the school to administering pre- and post-surveys, giving lessons from the learning materials, and conducting interviews.

Doing fieldwork might certainly have added to the findings, but it would at the same time have raised the level of complexity concerning the overall structure and execution of the project, with a need for gaining more access to the pilot school. As described in Section 4.1.1,

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educational platitude that students often find it difficult to transfer knowledge gained in one context to another without being given a roadmap by the teacher, which was not provided in this case.

during Stage 1, this need had increased unexpectedly, but was met by the school. I doubt that I was in a position to ask for more access to the pilot project class. Bogden and Biklen themselves are aware that, when doing educational research – as for instance when they describe means of saving time when transcribing interviews (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003, p. 124) – that sometimes it is necessary and justifiable to take shortcuts. However, I would, given proper planning, still advise future researchers to consider the full scope of the Bogden-Biklen model and even making use of other forms of documentation, such as e.g. personal documents, intimate diaries, letters, and official documents (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003, pp. 124-129).

Regarding my actual findings from the interviews at this stage and how they compare with the *Laxdaela Saga* project, what stands out is that both projects used the same measurement tools and applied the same setup for the questionnaires, as was described in Sub-Section 3.4.4.1 Stage 2A Instruments & Data Collection: Stage 2A Quantitative Measurement Tools, above. The report for the *Laxdaela Saga* project states that:

When looking at individual questions on the test, the difference between the experimental group and the control group was most prominent in the questions that concerned the understanding of vocabulary on virtues and vices (Jónsson et al., 2019, p. 9).

What they mean here, and what I have confirmed via email with one of the researchers of the *Laxdaela Saga* project, is that the prominent difference that is singled out in the previous quote refers only to question 1 and the first part of Question 9 on the standardised tests, which amounts to only one of the five evaluative factors:

- Understanding of vocabulary on moral virtues and vices.

However, when the *Laxdaela Saga* team looked at the cumulative grade for all the questions, the total and average score increased insignificantly for the control group but by half a point more for the experimental group (Jónsson et al., 2019, p. 8-9). Therefore, they conclude that the improvement is ‘mainly explained by the students’ work during the project period’ (Jónsson et al., 2019, p. 9). To make a comparison for the present stage with the *Laxdaela Saga* project findings, in the current research project the cumulative score for the evaluative factors ‘Understanding of vocabulary on moral virtues and vices’, ‘Application of vocabulary on moral virtues and vices’ and ‘Ability to apply/use concepts of virtues and emotions from personal experience or contemporary relevance’ increased, but for the other two evaluative factors the score decreased (and quite significantly so). This is, however, for only 17 students who completed both questionnaires. The change for the five evaluative factors, between the two questionnaires, was as follows:

Code	Evaluative factor	Difference in score, between pre- and post-questionnaires
B(s)	Understanding of vocabulary on moral virtues and vices	16.5
B(b)	Application of vocabulary on moral virtues and vices	27
C	Ability to apply/use concepts of virtues and emotions from modern poems	-33
D	Ability to apply/use concepts of virtues and emotions from poems from the past	-56
E	Ability to apply/use concepts of virtues and emotions from personal experience or contemporary relevance	26

Table 22 Stage 1 Comparison of Difference in Score for the Evaluative Factors Between the Pre- and Post-Questionnaires

If I, like the *Laxdaela Saga* team, were to isolate the positive evaluative factors, I could also conclude that the improvement is mainly explained by the students' work during the project period. However, when looking at the evaluative factors that did not improve, either the students' work during the project period made no difference or the time allocated for the project was too short.

## 5.2 Stage 2 Findings

The goal of Stage 2 was to address Sub-RQ2:

What are the barriers and enablers to running a poetry programme, designed to cultivate virtue, in all (or many) secondary schools in Iceland?

This stage was divided into two sub-stages, which consisted in a Cross-sectional Case Study (Stage 2A) and Ethnography (Stage 2B).

There is nothing in the literature that explicitly accounts for the delivering of a character education intervention based on poetry. Therefore, in the following, I will focus on the practical barriers encountered in Chapter 4, which also serves to answer the current RQ.

### 5.2.2 Stage 2A Quantitative Findings

As happened in Stage 1, and as has been the case with various other character education research projects, the quantitative measurements were less helpful than predicted, or at least compared to what had initially been hoped for. Examples of studies that support this claim are Gulliford and Roberts' report on the 'unity' of virtues, which describes limitations to quantitative measurement tools (Gulliford and Roberts, 2018, p. 215-216), and the *Laxdaela Saga* project (Jónsson et al., 2019) as was previously described. I want to go so far as to suggest that these examples are not exceptions. If one reads into most of the reports on

character education evaluations, one will see that most such studies produce disappointing quantitative results (see e.g. Berkowitz and Bier, 2007; Kristjánsson et al., 2017). The recent landmark book on measurements of virtue by Wright, Warren and Snow (2021) explains the complexities of such evaluations, and how rigorous, nuanced, and multi-faceted they must be for there to be any hope of registering statistically significant outcomes, positive or negative.

What is truly interesting, however, about many of those studies is the qualitative data they produce and the effect they have on classroom ethos, not to mention their contribution to the advancement of theories about character development. From the point of view of educational research (which for example is clearly shown by Gulliford and Roberts, 2018), despite the scarcity of statistically significant empirical results, good work has come out of many of those projects. Take, for instance, Gulliford and Roberts' paper, mentioned earlier, which uses a mixture of theoretical and empirical data to show how certain virtues form synergistic bundles, supporting each other in a healthy character (Gulliford and Roberts, 2018, p. 215). At the same time they acknowledge the point that I have been making that most of those studies 'face methodological limitations' (Gulliford and Roberts, 2018, p. 215) with regards to the empirical data. In short, often empirical work of this kind is not as successful as one would want. This is not confined to research in character education but generalises across education studies more broadly (Sadovnik et al., 2001, pp. 432 & 434; here, quoted from Hyslop-Margison and Naseem, 2007, p. 106). Hyslop-Margison and Naseem, who (perhaps controversially) find empirical research in education generally problematic, describe it as representing (the development of) scientism in education, where scientism stands for 'an attempt to apply scientific practices in contexts where they are methodologically inappropriate and ideologically manipulative' (Hyslop-Margison and Naseem, 2007, p. 11). Scientism, they hold, 'represents the gold standard of research methods in public funding initiatives' (Hyslop-Margison and Naseem, 2007, p. 34). However, it is a research paradigm that essentially is devised to ensure further funding within current government approved standards and, thus, encourage the same, and unchanged, standard of research (Hyslop-Margison and Naseem, 2007, p. 35), leading such research into a vicious circle. Therefore, much of educational research is recursively flawed and there is a danger that it is conducted with an aim to attract further funding rather than 'to improve teaching and learning in any significant or meaningful fashion' (Hyslop-Margison and Naseem, 2007, p. 36).

Existing sources thus show what educationalists are up against if they try to do empirical work in schools and expect to see significant quantitative results. These general limitations are, however, exacerbated in the field of character education because of the value-ladenness

and conceptual elusiveness of the subject matter (Berkowitz and Bier, 2007; Wright et al., 2021).

Similarly to my project, the quantitative analysis in the *Laxdaela Saga* project (Jónsson et al., 2019) did not unearth much by way of statistically significant findings, and the authors ended up, as I have done, relying on qualitative findings.

### 5.2.3 Stage 2A Qualitative Findings

Initially, the qualitative measurement tools in this sub-stage were intended to complement the quantitative findings discussed above and together they would provide a full picture for answering Sub-RQ2, about the enablers and barriers to running the poetry programme in Icelandic secondary schools.

Because of the limitations of the quantitative data collected, there is not much more to be said about my findings here or how they relate to previous research. It is worth mentioning, however, that similarly to the findings from the pilot stage, the quantitative data collected in the main stage of the *Laxdaela Saga* project did not allow for any significant generalisations either. Registering findings that are not only statistically insignificant but, if anything, negative, is no novelty either. For example, the same happened in a 2017 research project on gratitude and compassion interventions run by the Jubilee Centre. Explanations offered there included student lethargy, test fatigue, and particular negativity towards the whole idea of testing for character (Kristjánsson et al., 2017).

### 5.2.4 Stage 2B Findings

In this section I provide a discussion of the overarching themes, themes and sub-themes that were developed from the coded data in Sub-Section 4.2.4, above. As it turned out, this proved to be the stage of the research that yielded the most informative, nuanced, and salutary data and basically rescued the empirical part of the whole PhD project. Since the themes covered in these interviews turned out to be much more general and philosophical than originally expected, the most obvious points of contact in the background literature are more often than not from the field of educational philosophy rather than from the more specific discourses on character education or the uses of literature for such education.

#### 5.2.4.1 Freedom

To illuminate the general contours of the first overarching theme, freedom, and its two themes, freedom of the teacher and freedom of students, the common thread running through

all of them is the emphasis on *action*. It is a term used to describe how one brings a practical and positive difference to others and the learning environment as a whole (oneself included) if one is given leeway to do so. Here, I use the term in the context of educational action, but the same context can be (and has been) applied in other spheres such as that of social action (The Linking Network, 2020). To put this in the context of educational research, this notion is perhaps best elaborated upon through a comparison made by Toulmin between Dewey and Wittgenstein: ‘Toulmin recognizes that in various “areas of research...John Dewey’s insistence on the *active* character of human knowledge is now bearing fruit, and the combined heritage of Dewey and Wittgenstein is giving us a new command over psychology and social theory”’ (Toulmin, 1984, p. xiv; here, quoted from Andersson et al., 2018, p. 3). Toulmin also observes:

Whereas Dewey spoke in rather broad terms of knowledge as rooted in ‘action,’ and did not give us a technique for analyzing action in any systematic way, the ideas of the later Wittgenstein have stimulated a great deal of thought about the *taxonomy* of human actions (Toulmin, 1984, p. xiii; here, quoted from Andersson et al., 2018, p. 3).

In simple terms, this difference could be conveyed by saying that whereas Dewey idealised ‘free action’ as such in school contexts, Wittgenstein problematised the notion of action by differentiating between different action categories depending on how the action is seen by the actors (‘seeing X as a type of Y’). My interviewees did not follow Dewey in seeing freedom as an unalloyed good in school contexts, but rather seemed to come closer to Wittgenstein’s position by aligning valuable free action in school contexts with actions *seen as* the manifestation of creativity.

Thus, in the context of what the interviewees said about freedom and action, the joy of being in school – of being a learner – was expressed *in freedom through* creativity; being free to create amounted to what can be seen as the contrast to school boredom. Therefore, elements like *action* and the *active* character of human knowledge are encapsulated in the spheres of freedom and creativity.

In Section 4.2.4.1 Freedom: A Summary of the Overarching Theme: Freedom, above, I elaborated on how the interviewees conveyed freedom as having *control* over one’s own life, and indeed, of one’s own time. It is, perhaps, the harmony between such elements as *action* and *control*, within the underlying themes of the overarching theme of *Freedom*, that sparks connections with other overarching themes. Thus, the freedom of teachers to create their own learning materials connects with the overarching theme of *Creativity*, and the element of freedom of having control over one’s own time, connects with the overarching theme of *Time*. However, there is also some incoherence in that when we talk about freedom, especially

concerning two groups as different in many ways as teachers and students, it is easy to get carried away. This incoherence lies in that when we apply the operandum of different subjects' elements of freedom within a hypothetical learning environment with a view to measuring the world against our own experience, we might unknowingly apply our own interpretation of the subject matter (say, freedom of expression) to circumstances beyond our comprehension (say, drawings of the prophet Muhammad). In other words, we are overturned by our own presumptions, or in Wittgensteinian language, we commit a category mistake by seeing X as a type of Y through our own eyes only without acknowledging other taxonomic possibilities of 'seeing as'. In the instructional (or learning) context, the realm of students' development and educational pursuits is complex. In some sense, the students and teachers live on different planets, and then again, in another sense, they share a home. Therefore, this incoherence cannot be overstated and, perhaps, it cannot be eliminated. While not subscribing to the somewhat simplistic Deweyan model of freedom, my interviewees did not problematise the concept of freedom as much as one could have expected from their comments about educational 'action', through 'seeing as' in a Wittgensteinian way, but rather seemed to assume that, typically, what is seen by teachers as 'freedom for creativity' will also be seen such by students.

According to Hope, who has been a part of the Freedom to Learn Project established in 2013 and developed in the UK, Scandinavia, and the USA, the notion of freedom in education needs to be reclaimed from those who have used it 'as a tool for bringing a greater degree of competition and choice into the "educational marketplace", [in order to] reposition it as a radical and progressive notion that schools can use to inform their structures, policies, pedagogies, processes and practices' (Hope, 2019, p. xiii). Hope derives the notion of freedom from the original Free Schools in the UK,<sup>45</sup> but explains how, out of the aforementioned projects, her ideas have grown about 'developing autonomous, student-led and liberating education', and that these ideas, through the transformational nature of learning, 'were based on freedom, trust, equality and respect' (Hope, 2019, p. xi). She believes that governments have undertaken improvements of the school system in accordance with the marketisation of the education system that has been taken place:

Improving education systems and educational outcomes has been a major area of concern for numerous governments for many decades. Across the western and non-western world, political parties have been known to stand or fall depending on their record on education.

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<sup>45</sup> The 'original free schools in England and Scotland were established on democratic and egalitarian principles that explicitly attempted to challenge approaches used within conventional education. Education was seen as 'social action' [...], and the schools were described as having a long-term aim to 'refurbish the culture of the fragmented working-class community and, in effect, transform society' (Punch, 1977, p. 170)' (Hope, 2019, p. 29).

International league tables, compiled through Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) statistics, rank countries against one another and compel governments to pay attention to policies, practices and teaching standards in other countries (Hope, 2019, p. 2; see also OECD, 2013).

This dilemma ties in well with the research paradigm described in Sub-Section 5.2.2, above. The aforementioned paradigm described educational research as an enterprise that only encourages standards that maintain an unchanged system. Similarly, Hope is pointing out that the educational league tables are devised to make any potential progress in pedagogy dependent upon general policies, practices, and international standards (without local input). Here, it is worth raising the question whether I have run into a contradiction. In Sub-Section 4.2.4, on p. 145, above, I praised the methodological advantages of the PISA testing regime for its protocol efficiency, while the present example illustrates a political and pedagogical disadvantage of the same programme. My response would be to argue that, on the one hand, it is not an ‘either/or’ debate, where you must choose between either methodological or pedagogical integrity. On the other hand, I am conducting a theoretical research study to recognise both strengths and weaknesses of undertaking an intervention programme on virtue literacy – and running up against potential contradictions is part of that. Trying to make too much heavy weather of the methodological advantage/pedagogical disadvantage contradiction may also involve a slippery-slope argument. Much like if someone wanted to claim that ‘culture is an empty concept, and that there is no need for “culture”’, it would be impossible to argue against such a criticism because everyone who tries to defend it are already inside of culture. They simply cannot argue their way out. The aforementioned ‘contradiction’, as I have hitherto argued, is all-encompassing. One cannot really argue one’s way out of it. Yet, the contradiction is real, and is pressing. And, therefore, it must be recognised. Hope warns that there ‘are limits to freedom, and thus, offering absolute freedom in schools is entirely undesirable’ (Hope, 2019, p. 9). This sort of absolute freedom, being able to do anything in any circumstances, is not desirable in educational circumstances and would, at best, serve as a theoretical proposition (Hope, 2019, p. 8)<sup>46</sup>:

Freedom means doing what you like, *so long as you don’t interfere with the freedom of others*. (Neill, 1962, p. 114; here, quoted by Hope, 2019, p. 9, who also adds the emphasis)

For me, this definition of freedom in education must be combined with what I posited at the outset of Sub-Section 4.2.4.1 Freedom: A Summary of the Overarching Theme: Freedom, above. In other words, furthermore, freedom refers to:

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<sup>46</sup> Even creating a piece of poetry is not an act of complete freedom. Not every string of words can count as poetry.

The ability to act at one's own discretion and how it attributes to the learning process, for both the teacher and the student. (See p. 150, above)

While I do not hold that Hope would disagree, this combined definition tones well with what was expressed by the respondents during the interviews. To recapitulate, the respondents emphasised the importance for teachers to have the freedom to shape their own learning materials, and for the students to have the freedom to enjoy themselves and to be (or become) autonomous individuals. On the other, hand, what Hope foregrounds is that 'freedom can only be realised in practice if an individual has [... agency]' (Hope, 2019, p. 7), which was 'described by Macmurray [...] as 'the means of action' (Macmurray, 1949, p. 49; here, quoted by Hope, 2019, p. 7)', [...] a vital element for the enactment of freedom in educational settings' (Hope, 2019, p. 7). The similarities lie in how two last quotes on the previous page melt together in her reference to Macmurray, above. Freedom is defined by action, and what matters is how that action is performed. To relate this juxtaposition of views to the topic of poetry teaching and the freedom that it requires, the lesson seems to be that freedom can be explored as an action constituted by experience. Poetry can, in turn, be used to contemplate the link between action and experience. And for this purpose, poetry is free of boundaries. On the other hand, exercises in poetry can of course pose all kinds of restrictions (rules or definitions of the assignments). These types of exercises will allow the students to develop their active character within the boundaries of freedom.

Let us also be reminded that in the Findings section on *Freedom*, I contrasted the notion of *Freedom from the student's perspective* with that of school boredom. It is said to be the everlasting project of the teacher to ignite interest in students (see e.g. Etico, 2019, p. 1, point 4) and get as much response from them as possible (Calaby, 2020). We see, however, that unlimited freedom would not alleviate boredom. In light of the discussion above, students must experience the appropriate amount of freedom, not too much and not too little. This approach, or formation, fits well with the ideas of character education, but requires the teacher to have an insight into the components and practices that support the vision of character education.

All in all, what the respondents said about freedom chimes in well with various discourses about the role of freedom in the educational process. However, what struck me as novel in the way my respondents approached the issue – and which perhaps relates to the nature of the Icelandic school system – is how they focused on freedom as an individual enterprise,

designed to attain communal objectives.<sup>47</sup> Poetry presents us with a creative framework that helps us grasp the contents and links of different notions of freedom.

#### 5.2.4.2 Creativity

What is creativity and what is its connection with education? According to Cropley, in discussions about creativity and its meaning, especially in an educational (or psychological) context, there is a common core containing three elements:

1. *novelty* (a creative product, course of action or idea necessarily departs from the familiar);
2. *effectiveness* (it works, in the sense that it achieves some end – this may be aesthetic, artistic or spiritual, but may also be material such as winning or making a profit);
3. *ethicality* (the term ‘creative’ is not usually used to describe selfish or destructive behaviour, crimes, warmongering and the like) (Cropley, 2005, p. 6)

These three elements represent cause, effect and interaction. The first element indicates that what is being produced is unlikely to be produced by anyone else. The second element indicates that first the environment (or circumstances) must facilitate creative behaviour and then that as an interaction, creativity involves psychological traits. The environment:

includes the resources that it makes available (both human and material), the degree of divergence or risk taking that will be tolerated, or the kinds of rewards (or punishments) that it offers people who diverge from the unusual. (Cropley, 2005, p. 7)

The third element refers to a rule or habit of conduct with regard to right and wrong (or a body of such rules and habits). *Creativity as an interaction* is akin to a restriction of the kind that these psychological traits ‘do not express themselves in isolation but within the framework offered by the particular person’s environment (Cropley, 2005). More importantly, the ‘quality, quantity and timing of these factors affect acquisition (or not) of knowledge and skills needed for creativity, as well as of favourable (or unfavourable) attitudes’ (Cropley, 2005, p. 7). At the core of all this, Cropley holds, is the human element. Creativity is a human conduct. He proposes that, for a discussion about creativity in education and psychology, it will be most helpful to single out five of six facets in Sterberg’s (1988) person-centred approach to creativity: ‘knowledge, insightful thinking, intrinsic motivation, self-confidence and facilitatory aspects of personality such as flexibility or willingness to take risks’ (Cropley, 2005, p. 9). It would be interesting, in a character education poetry-based programme, whilst

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<sup>47</sup> It could perhaps be hypothesised that this insight (which is neither fully collectivist nor individualistic in a neoliberal sense) captures some unique features of Icelandic society, for example the historical combination of a strong focus on individual responsibility (‘hver er sinnar eigin gæfu smiður’: everyone is a master of their own destiny) with societal arrangements that, until the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, remained very much communal and family-based. However, further sociological speculations along those lines would be outside the purview of the present thesis.

accommodating certain virtues and emotions, to also focus on the three aforementioned elements and five facets in the learning materials. I would suggest that as a worthy enterprise for another research project. Some of those elements and facets can already be identified in comments made by my respondents, however, such as the following observation made by one respondent, a Waldorf school teacher, about roleplaying and playfulness in educational environments:

if you are working a lot with, you know, uh, just everything surrounding the human element – and thereby creativity – and..., and..., that is, to be able to put yourself in a role or..., or..., uh, we tend to play such games at the Waldorf School where it is preferably not about who wins, necessarily. It is more, like, about the game, to create a flow and an interaction and [Interviewer: Yes...], and..., and..., and..., like, yes, so that you, k..., kind of, it is basically very important, and we do that up until including tenth grade, you know, just playing games. (Interviewee 8)

Here, the respondent described the effectiveness of the human element and the interaction of the participants while playing and being creative. It is interesting to compare the above quotation with an online introduction by Linda Christensen to one of her books that were introduced in Chapter 2, where she addresses these same elements and facets, and even ties it in with one of the emotions under scrutiny (shame) in the present research project:

As teachers, if we're going to stay in the classroom, we have to find those moments of joy. We have to be able to work with students in such a way that we want to keep working, that we want to stay in the classroom, and so it has to be a place where we are getting something back out of it. And so that that place of joy is often helping students discover their own voices. The other piece of it is the joy for students, which is about finding their own voices, about taking the shame sometimes, taking the pain of their lives, and turning those into ... into poetry, into narrative, into essay.

What is interesting about Christensen's aspect is that importance of these facets and elements are attributed to both the teacher and the students, which is supported by much of what the respondents have said about the interview themes.

At the close of Sub-Section 4.2.4.2 Creativity: Creativity from the Teacher's Perspective, above, I elaborated on how a respondent described innovation in education, which entails that innovation reinforces creative thinking, and that the creativity of the teacher directly affects the creativity of the students. According to Žydzūnaitė and Arce:

innovativeness and creativeness are the capacities that need to be actively encouraged in all aspects of schooling in regard to a teacher's work. However, what innovation and creativity are, and how they may be promoted through formal teaching and learning approaches, remain contested. There are differences between teachers in terms of how they understand, perceive, discuss, conceptualize, and implement/apply these complex concepts in teaching and learning practices [...]. Both innovativeness and creativeness are necessary in teaching and learning, and both translate to real revenue, which makes teaching and learning practices the teacher's

professional passion. Professional passion in the literature relates to a teacher's intellectual capacities and professional identity, values and moral behaviors that characterize teaching[...]; professional development [...]; the conjunction between a moral teacher's values, intellect and professional commitment [...]; moral obligations, duties or values of good teaching [...]; being a great teacher [...]; a good teacher's moral code on classroom ethos [...]; and the conjunction between teaching practice and teaching ethics. (Žydžiūnaitė and Arce, 2021, p. 127)

In Sub-Section 4.2.4.2 Creativity: Creativity from the Students' Perspective, it was mentioned that the students have to be shown respect. This is a point that touches on the students' perceived satisfaction with their social relations and with the school ethos (Cemalcilar, 2010; here, quoted from Dimitrellou and Hurry, 2018, p. 8). This leads to a tension that links the present theme with the third overarching theme of *Time* and one of its subthemes:

There are potential tensions between the existence of a curriculum with a great deal of propositional knowledge, and the encouragement of pupil – and teacher – creativity. These are related, in part, to having the time and space to internalise propositional knowledge and to having access to what might be called possibility space, or to a kind of 'dreaming time', to take it into what may be a potential transformation, through engagement, whether that is performance (using it) or some other form of expression. There is much evidence from studies of the development of high creativity that time is a fundamental ingredient in the development of talent [...] however, the challenge for teachers and schools is to find ways of making time available in a curriculum which remains crowded. (Craft, 2006, pp. 38-39)

In other words, what we have set out to do would benefit society, but at the same time, we are restrained by a system imposed by society. This points back to a footnote discussion, on p. 30, about the 'Paradox of Education' (Peters, 1981) where the problem of having to precede the teaching of a critical mindset in students with the habituation of fairly uncritical habits of mind and action was mentioned. The question of what methods serve best to bridge the gap between the uncritical and critical in late childhood and early adolescence was asked at that juncture. The aim, here, has been to point to the use of poetry as a potential bridge-builder because poetry involves both the apparently uncritical process of reading another person's product from a piece of paper and the critical process of creatively constructing meaning from it. Here it is instructive to pinpoint a more general connection between creativity and learning:

When we learn something new (at whatever age) we are making new connections between ideas and making sense of them for ourselves. We are constructing knowledge, and in this sense we could perhaps describe what we are doing as being creative. The more we are engaged in the meaning-making, the fuller and more fully owned by ourselves is the map that we are constructing. This is perhaps the most engaged space we can be in when we are in the process of imaginative playfulness. (Craft, 2006, p. 52)

From this we see that the overarching themes must be tuned together or synchronised in an effort to support the ideals of character education, which in light of these themes can be potentially achieved through poetry.

It was sometimes difficult to keep the minds of the respondents on the specific topic at hand – namely to tease out their views on the discrete characteristics of poetry teaching in the classroom or its potential relevance for character education. However, rather than seeing that as a weakness of the interviews, I consider it a strength as it shows how the very topic of poetry teaching evoked creative stirrings in the minds of the respondents that led them to philosophise about the nature of creativity in classroom teaching in general.

#### 5.2.4.3 Time

According to Compton-Lilly, time acts as ‘a constitutive dimension of people’s experiences that significantly affects how people make sense of themselves and their worlds’ (Compton-Lilly, 2020, p. 27). Time, she holds, must be understood as *context*, but not as a backdrop to people’s moving through a linear trajectory along with which experiences are picked up.

Rather, she explores:

time as entailing multiple and overlapping dimensions that significantly affect how people make sense of themselves and their worlds. Adam (1989; 2000) situates time and space within ‘timescapes’ (2000, p. 125) in which phenomena are encountered, processes are enacted, and events are experienced [...]. As Adam notes, ‘A focus on time highlights multiple realities that all bear on social life simultaneously’ (Adam, 1989, p. 458). (Compton-Lilly, 2020, p. 29)

We can express the notion of *timescape* as we understand the word landscape, and moving through this map of our lives (drawing on Lemke’s notion of *timescales* (2000)) ‘people experience time in recursive and non-linear ways as they draw on lived events and timescales to make sense of their worlds. Individual voices are fashioned out of available social resources from across time as people appropriate various discourses to serve their own purposes’ (Compton-Lilly, 2020, p. 40). From the point of view of education, we see that time is an essential ingredient for flourishing. It is the foundation on which students can build their character and their knowledge. Aristotle even famously argued that flourishing can only be evaluated retrospectively by looking over the whole time-trajectory of a person’s life. A strong character supports the acquisition of knowledge, and likewise, a rich pool of knowledge asserts a strong character. In other words, ‘students draw upon multiple timescales to make sense of themselves and school’ (Lemke, 2000, p. 40). To that effect, Compton-Lilly draws on Bakhtin (1981; 1986) to explain:

how meanings are understood within complex social fields involving dialogic negotiations and unequal power dynamics. Bakhtin applied the construct of *chronotope*, which literally means *timespace*, to refer to the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships’ (Bakhtin, 1981). (Compton-Lilly, 2020, p. 45)

Bakhtin uses *chronotope* as a metaphor for how literary genres come to be defined. These genres are ‘by the chronotopic motifs, or narrative tropes, that authors use and readers understand. These tropes might involve characters traveling along roads or paths as they move through narratives [...] These chronotopic motifs are meaningful because of the past literate and life experiences that readers bring to the novels’ (Compton-Lilly, 2020, p. 46). In other words, motifs are created from associated meanings, as we pass ‘through the “gates of the chronotope”’ (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 258) [...] we conceptualise possible meanings from stories, by] drawing on pre-existing meanings to make sense of new experiences’ (Compton-Lilly, 2020, p. 46).

To put this into an educational context:

Chronotopic motifs also operate in schools, carry meaning, and have real life significance [...]. Promotion and retention carry meanings related to student’ abilities. Being in third grade is embedded with the temporal expectations for being eight-years-old. (Compton-Lilly, 2020, p. 47)

What has been said in the present section can be placed within the thoughts expressed the interviewees about the overarching theme of *Time*. For example, the concept of ‘chronotope’ tallies well with the following quoted by Interviewee 3, in Sub-Section 4.2.4.3 Time: Slow Learning:

I have used poems that bring to light the individuals’ personal experience, erm, of events that they have either participated in or an incident that they have subjected to. (Interviewee 3)

However, the present discussion, where I have drawn on Compton-Lilly, digs deeper and provides further support for utilising time in a positive way. The interviewees felt that time should be used right. Much of what they said, for instance about taking things more slowly in the classroom environment, supports the ideals of character education. This opinion already exists in the literature: good character is not built in a day; and character educators keep harping on how progress in this area will, by necessity, be slow and hence often difficult to measure after just a short intervention (Berkowitz and Bier, 2007; Wright et al., 2021; Kristjánsson, 2015). This is one of the reasons why a method such as poetic inquiry, which ideally proceeds in a leisurely way, may be ideally suited to the goal of gradually building up elements of character. For instance, Owton warns that:

Whilst Poetic Inquiry is calling for researchers to slow down, live in the moment and breathe—fully urging for a uniting of the heart, mind, imagination, body and spirit, which requires the perception of space in the mind, energy, positivity and connectivity; the British higher education system has been working against this ethos. (Owton, 2017, p. 132)

The similarities between the theoretical discussion in the present section and what the respondents had to say during the interviews lies in the positive potentialities of the

overarching theme of *Time*. The difference lies in that the theoretical discussion tries to explain the negative connotation of *Time* in a broader social context, rather than just pointing at the *Icelandic Curriculum*, as the respondents did during the interviews.

To relate this juxtaposition of views to the topic of poetry teaching and time, the lesson seems to be that more focus should be given to time, and this need not only be an organisational issue. If students are engaged with the time, and learn to understand how it affects the way in which they make sense out of their experiences, poetry can be a medium for understanding how time acts as ‘a constitutive dimension of people’s experiences that significantly affects how people make sense of themselves and their worlds’ (Compton-Lilly, 2020, p. 27).

Incidentally, this method or objective of making sense of one’s experiences, lies at the heart of poetic inquiry. In this context, Owton describes poetry as reflective writing:

Reflexive practice enables us to reflect on life and to find shape in meanings. Given the role of the poet in research, it is important to understand our hearts, our inner story and how we are active agents in the process. (Owton, 2017, p. 86)

In other words, poetic inquiry and expressive writing is viewed as having cathartic effects (Owton, 2017, pp. 88-89). In the discursive space of a secondary classroom, to achieve this level of insight and implementation of self-work (which in a nutshell is what character education is about), I propose that time is taken to explore these said dimensions that define us both as learners and as human beings.

#### 5.2.4.4 Wonderment

Out of the four overarching themes that were portrayed by the respondents, wonderment, tied everything together, and therefore plays an important role for understanding (and potentially answering) the main research question of this thesis: ‘Is it possible to use poetry to cultivate virtue, in an Icelandic secondary-school context?’ Wonderment has a unique position concerning poetry and art in human cultures, and therefore also directly in an educational context. According to Laura D’Olimpio:

[T]he arts are likely to give rise to a sense of wonder because artworks invite those engaging with them to view things (including objects, ideas, concepts and images) in ways that would not usually occur to us as we go about our daily lives in a pragmatic fashion. This may be the case because we are usually time poor and/or goal oriented as we go about our daily tasks. Artists often convey, transcribe, render and transform ideas they express in creative ways that present the familiar (and unfamiliar) to viewers in new forms. In this way, artworks invite and encourage viewers to adopt a certain mode of perception – a way of seeing that is open and receptive, which is likely to result in the experience of wonder. (D’Olimpio, 2020, p. 257)

It is interesting, here, that D'Olimpio emphasises the time restraints of everyday life, which we have seen in the previous section and throughout the Findings chapter, above, are also (and always) looming in the classroom. Moreover, D'Olimpio ties the experience of wonder together with creativity, which has also been stressed by the respondents. This is exemplified in a remark made by Interviewee 5 on the use of poetry in the classroom:

It is very difficult to put all poems under one hat, but ..., but if we take, if we take, you know, poems that often appeal to teenagers, for instance Steinn Steinarr<sup>48</sup> often appeals to teenagers. And then they [the poems] often leave people with questions that people can see are good questions. But are... And people often realise how extremely hard it is to come up with answers. So, they [the poems] might disturb people in a similar fashion to philosophical questions. Get people to realise that..., even though you may score high on all kinds of exams, then..., there is... [laughs], you are still just like, just like an ignorant child in the face of the mysteries of existence. (Interviewee 5)

In the following, when I use the term 'sense of wonder' I use it as *Wonderment* in the following way. As a brief point of information, there is a fine and delicate distinction between *awe* and the type of wonder that is referred to as *contemplative wonder*. *Awe* is the emotion of being momentarily captivated by the experiencing of something inspiring, as if being struck by a lightning, and through that experience one feels one's smallness in the face of the vastness of existence (Shinkel, 2021, pp. 44-45; Kristjánsson, 2018, pp. 144-151), while *contemplative wonder* refers to a philosophical attitude of a kind that is not confined to philosophers. It is aptly described as being 'on the other side' of *awe*, as it is all about experiencing the grandeur of existence and the position of Man in it – in such a way that one wants to experience more. Another kind of wonder is what is called *inquisitive wonder* (Shinkel, 2021, p. 45), which is another term for curiosity (and an important element for character education). To state my claim: In an educational context, *wonderment* combines *awe* and *contemplative wonder*.

Andrew Gilbert proposes that 'the utilisation of wonder and wonder-based pedagogical approaches is one means to connect learners to content by engaging their emotions and desires to learn' (Gilbert, 2020, p. 213). As was mentioned by some respondents, this type of education needs to be open to the possibility of some unpredicted occurrences or unexpected (but applicable) suggestions by the students, and that the teacher has the freedom to engage with such occurrences (Interviewee 5). If successful:

These aesthetic connections to content can trigger an intrinsic desire to engage with school content. This process is transactional, as it moves beyond simply trying to pour facts into children or conversely an approach that expects children to build completely on their own, but

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<sup>48</sup> Icelandic poet (1908-1958), famous for writing poems of existential depth and lyrical beauty.

rather one where the teacher designs experiences connected to beauty and emotion. (Gilbert, 2020, p. 213)

Here, it is relevant to recall what was said about the importance of aesthetic connections in Chapter 2, above. In Sub-Section 2.1.1.4.3.2, I wrote:

Wittgenstein acknowledged [...] that the educational system has two primary functions, education and socialisation. In the educational tradition [...] socialisation does not seem to be tackled directly, but, perhaps, through the education of the heart, this may take place. [...]. [H]owever, to understand what something is [...], one must see the connection between our perception and our aesthetic considerations [...]. This refers to how one attributes generality, and generality's truth, to a form of knowledge, and even laws of thought.

This passage refers to how, in Wittgensteinian terms, the teacher can build up an environment that opens up for aesthetic connections to the students. Let us also recall how, in Sub-Section 2.1.1.4.3.6: Christensen – Using Poetry in the Classroom, I drew on an example by Zapruder to illustrate how poetry evokes meaning, and

that the arguments that Zapruder put forth are also important for showing that poetry is highly appropriate as a spark or motivation for engaging in a Socratic dialogue about the poems the students read and write, exactly because poems never mean just one thing or have just one interpretation, and because language itself is elusive – it is never completely palpable – it demands pondering and aesthetic considerations of the students.

In this sense, when we consider the way poetry makes meaning, let us also be reminded of a reference made to Wayne C. Booth, in Sub-Section 2.1.4.7 Bohlin's Teaching Character Education through Literature, above, explaining 'how in the recent past the school system has overlooked children's ability for ethical reading in favour of engaging with literature as an aesthetic matter, while professor Jon Davison iterates the importance of ethical reflection literature'. What I want to propose, is that aesthetic connections aid the completion of wonderment in the classroom, as was shown when I referred to these aesthetic connections in CHAPTER 2: Background and Critical Literature Review, above. In Sub-Section 2.1.1.4.3.2, above I wrote:

We can call these interconnected components of human thought aesthetic experience and aesthetic contemplation [...]. As Wittgenstein, throughout his career, unravels the use of language, it becomes apparent that the aim of Wittgenstein's philosophical observations [...] is to elevate the descriptive form of science (*scientologisch*) into the poetic form – which, according to the insights of poetic inquiry to which I subscribe, is the most powerful form of thought.

In light of what my respondents said, this Wittgensteinian aim acquires further resonance, because it is important that, in a classroom context, we move from merely 'engaging with literature as an aesthetic matter' (as in 'art for the sake of art') to aesthetic contemplation

through ethical reading. In his *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein uses the example of a language game (PI I, §143), to elicit the complexity in teaching someone something new.

Subsequently, he asks:

What do we mean when we say “the pupil’s ability to to learn *may* come to an end here”? Do I report this from my own experience? Of course not. (Even if I had such experience.) Then what am I doing with that remark? After all, I’d like you to say: “Yes, it’s true, one could imagine that too, that might happen too!” – But was I trying to draw someone’s attention to the fact that he is able to imagine that? — I wanted to put that picture before him, and his *acceptance* of the picture consists in his now being inclined to regard a given case differently: that is, to compare it with *this* sequence of pictures. I have changed his *way of looking at things*. (Indian mathematicians: “Look at this!”) (PI I, §144)

Gerrard (Diamond and Gerrard, 1999, p. 145 n. 35) points out that Wittgenstein explains the meaning of the last remark in the previous quote is explained in *Zettel* 461:<sup>49</sup> ‘I once read somewhere that a geometrical figure, with the words ‘Look at this’, serves as a proof for certain Indian mathematicians. This looking too effects an alteration in one’s way of seeing’ (Zettel, §461). In an educational sense, this has two implications. First, when we learn a new sentence, it can be ‘in the sense in which it can be replaced by another which says the same; but also in the sense [PI I, §144] in which it cannot be replaced by any other. (Any more than one musical theme can be replaced by another.)’ (PI I, §531), and second, while scientific explanation (the explanatory form, see 2.1.1.4.3.2 Wittgenstein’s Method and Use of Language, above) excludes aesthetic considerations, the descriptive form of science (*scientologisch*) allows us to speak about the ‘experiences connected to beauty and emotion’ that Gilbert (2020, p. 213) mentions in the quote towards the top of this Sub-Section. In further support of this claim, Wittgenstein also tells us:

People nowadays think, scientists are there to instruct them, poets, musicians etc. to entertain them. *That the latter have something to teach them*; that never occurs to them. (Wittgenstein, 2002, p. 42e)

In accordance with what has already been attributed to some of the respondents (cf. Interviewee 5), Gilbert quotes renowned physicist Brian Cox to show that the ‘concept of *wonder* and the *unknown* is an integral element of scientific thinking and being – a powerful driving force leading them deeper into this exploration of the unknown [...]. Cox describes the joy involved in the learning of science where the mystery drives the thinking, knowing and learning as they move toward unanswered and vexing questions’ (Gilbert, 2020, p. 213).

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<sup>49</sup> Referred to, in the following, as *Zettel*.

The difference between the background theoretical discussion cited in the present section and what the respondents had to say during the interviews<sup>50</sup> lies in that while various respondents agree that philosophical skills and methods, creative and cumulative activities and reflection will assist students in growing as persons, on the whole, a clear view did not emerge of *how* to react to the hindering factors that educators face or how to *bring out systematic changes* that directly address issues such as those teased out by the main research question and underlying sub-RQs of this research project. Indeed, most of my respondents chose to pitch their answers to my questions at a fairly high level of abstraction rather than addressing directly the nuts and bolts of a successful poetry intervention. A solution suggested by some respondents revolved around the confinements of the overarching theme of *Time*, and how the use of poetry can mitigate those confinements. However, this solution is hindered by considerations identified in a sub-theme, namely that of the *Icelandic Curriculum*. D'Olimpio, on the other hand, offers an idea that could be seen as a clear approach to address those hindrances and thus bring about the necessary changes (although it does obviously not address the discrete hindrances posed by the *Icelandic Curriculum*). This method of teaching is called *Critical perspectivism*. It is:

an attitude of being critically and compassionately engaged with multiple perspectives. This moral attitude may be modelled, imparted and practised such that those adopting it may engage critically and ethically with, for instance, the technological tools that are ubiquitous in everyday life. To be critically perspectival is to be critically discerning of the information and narratives one is being told, whether these stories are received offline or online, while also being compassionately aware of the fact that others with whom one engages are thinking and feeling human beings much like oneself. (D'Olimpio, 2019, p. 93)

This method involves the use of the 'community of inquiry', which has been explained in previous chapters and is one of the tools used in the poetry learning materials used in the present research project. Many of the interviewees had experience in the pedagogy of a community of inquiry, but as D'Olimpio points out (at least implicitly, and as do many others) it is required that the teachers are themselves trained through pedagogical practices (D'Olimpio, 2019, p. 106) in philosophy and P4C (which I prefer to call *philosophy with children* and I would say suits D'Olimpio's formulation better than the conventional name of 'philosophy for children'):

The role for educators to help children (and adults) learn the skills of critical thinking, caring dispositions, and how to work together collaboratively is valid for as long as humans cohabit. If such skills can be developed alongside or in conjunction with multiliteracies, these people

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<sup>50</sup> Another difference is that my respondents rarely used examples from *science education*, which are common in the background literature. An obvious explanation is that none of the respondents have a background in the teaching of science and, also, that they knew they were being interviewed in the context of a project about *poetry education*.

will have the best chance of becoming critical, caring, and reasonable citizens who engage ethically with others both face-to-face and online. (D'Olimpio, 2019, p. 106-107)

D'Olimpio proposes that central to this approach would be attitude of opening up for 'educational innovations including students activities, teacher training and other forms of professional development, support and mentoring' (D'Olimpio, 2019, p. 115) that ideally lead to the nurturing and becoming of *Critically perspectival citizens*. An interesting challenge that arises from the present discussion would be to construct a discrete method of Critical Perspectivism Through Poetry, which could be delivered either offline or online.

What I said about Dewey in Sub-Section 2.1.2.2, 'to return once again to Deweyan insights, all good education is holistic education [... meaning] that moral education is about helping students understand the whole web of concerns and considerations relevant to moral functioning in the world'. is also pertinent here, because:

Growth in judgment and understanding is essentially growth in ability to form purposes and to select and arrange means for their realization. The most elementary experiences of the young are filled with cases of the means-consequences relationship. [...] The trouble with education is not the absence of situations in which the causal relation is exemplified in the relation of means and consequences. Failure to utilize the situations so as to lead the learner on to grasp the relation in given cases of experience is, however, only too common. (Dewey, 1974, p. 84; Stickney, 2017, pp. 49-50)

In any case, the views of my respondents about wonderment as a goal of education in general and poetry education in particular resonate well with the background literature, although none of the respondents offered any novel insights into why poetry should occupy a unique position as a wonderment motivator. The uniqueness of poetry as an educational subject matter was brought out more clearly in the overarching themes of Time and Creativity.

### 5.2.5 Conclusions

At the close of this long journey, some final thoughts are in order. However, as I have summarised my findings and conclusions at regular junctures throughout, I will keep those final words as brief as possible.

According to Guðmundur Heiðar Frímansson, the 'basic issue in the relation between virtues and education is how best to form young people and enabling them to live a good life suitable to a modern society' (Frímansson, 2021, p. 1). For successful education to take place, Frímansson emphasises an active contribution from the learner (Frímansson, 2021, pp. 1-2). In other words, teachers interact with (rather than simply one-sidedly mould) their students with a view to shape them morally and cognitively (Frímansson, 2021, p. 15). This is done by educating the virtues and developing the emotions, which form constituent parts of the

virtues (Frímansson, 2021, p. 8) and Frímansson argues that best models for doing so have been presented by Aristotle and Kant. I would argue that the learning materials provided with the present poetry programme, although only drawing an Aristotle rather than Kant, aim to achieve exactly the aforementioned goals of cultivating virtues through the development of the emotions. This was the point of the main research question. To answer the Main-RQ, I proposed two Sub-RQ:

The 1st Sub-RQ concerned the creation of the intervention:

Can poetry be used to cultivate virtue?

The 2nd Sub-RQ concerned the implementation of the intervention:

What are the barriers and enablers to running a poetry programme, designed to cultivate virtue, in all (or many) secondary schools in Iceland?

To address the first Sub-Research Question, it would suffice to say that some of the practical inexperience displayed by myself as a researcher illuminate certain aspects of how *not* to develop and pilot a poetry programme designed to cultivate virtue in an Icelandic secondary school. Some the issues pertaining to the feasibility of realising such a task, and which were listed in Sub-Section 4.2.5, above, are in a shortened formulation:

- When carrying out a character-educational intervention based on literature, it is vital to work with the literature that is already planned for in the school curricula and subject year plans.
- Reading up on and theorising about the implementation of an educational research project does not measure up against hands-on experience of conducting or being part of the actual execution of a real educational study.
- Unless you have access to a large number of participants, it is unlikely that quantitative findings on their own will be of substantial (statistically significant) use.
- Scale your lesson plans down in quantity.

Concerning the second Sub-Research Question, attention was given to barriers and enablers as portrayed by the respondents in Stage 2B of the Main Study. It is, however, important, to keep in mind that the need for the expansion of the Main Study phase, which led to the inclusion of the second Sub-Stage, stemmed from the unsatisfactory quantitative findings of the previous stage (which also was affirmed in Stage 2A). It is interesting to note that in the quantitative findings of the *Laxdaela Saga* project, in which the questionnaires were a product of the same design, the only evaluative factor in which the students' displayed a slight improvement, between the pre- and post-tests, was B(s) Understanding of moral vocabulary (Jónsson et al., 2019, p. 11), which (in these tests) in both projects was addressed in questions 1 and the former part of question 9.

If this were the only true benefit of such learning materials, as presented in the form of the poetry learning materials used for the present project and the learning materials used for the *Laxdaela Saga* project, that would indeed be disappointing, albeit not fully otiose. However, the *Laxdaela Saga* project team concludes, after having done some additional qualitative data analysis, that they ‘believe more can be gained through class discussion about the ethical aspects of literary texts. We find it likely that teaching through dialogues concerning moral issues may be conducive to better competence in discussing moral issues, improved emotional development, and contribute to a better school community’ (Jónsson et al., 2019, p. 11). Given the similarity of the research design and execution of the two projects, drawing the same conclusion from the present project can be considered equally valid.

In Sub-Section 4.2.1, above, I mentioned the issue of the familiarity of the teachers actually implementing the intervention with the learning materials. I returned to this issue in the previous section, reiterating the importance of teachers instigating philosophical reflection with children and using creative exercises for that purpose. The same, I would argue, applies to educating teachers in character education.

In Sub-Section 4.2.4.1 Freedom: A Summary of the Overarching Theme of Freedom, above, I discussed the fact that innovation reinforces creative thinking, much in the same way that the freedom of the teacher directly affects the freedom of the students. This claim is supported by Bzhydai and Westermann who maintain that in educational models there is a greater need for curiosity, innovation, and creativity than for knowledge reproduction, imitation, and conformity (Bazhydai and Westermann, 2020, p. 144). They maintain that ‘curiosity drives exploration of the environment to gain new knowledge, wonder pushes the boundaries of acquired knowledge, and creativity enables active manipulation of the environment to generate new knowledge and encourage new opportunities for learning’ (Bazhydai and Westermann, 2020, p. 162).

An important aspect of character education, as has been described in this thesis and was discussed particularly in Sub-Section 4.2.4.4 Wonderment: Vocation of Being a Role Model, above, is that the vocation of being a role model is important, and the teacher is assumed to have a positive emotional effect on the students. Moreover, I stated that this was a more aesthetically inspired and ‘enchanted’ view of role modelling than typically seen in the academic literature on moral role models (where emulation of role models is not seen to be aesthetically driven). Elaborating further on what was quoted from D’Olimpio, at the outset of Sub-Section 5.2.4.4, above, we find support of this view:

Art teachers are in the position to be able to educate students as to how to adopt this particular mode of perception in relation to artworks. This may occur in relation to students' own work and art making, as well as to that of others, including artworks that form the canon. Art teachers may do this by role-modelling this open and receptive mode of perception and describing and explaining what they perceive in artworks, as well as by teaching students to look for and appreciate the features by which artworks are judged. (D'Olimpio, 2020, p. 257)

It is clear from this, as D'Olimpio points out in a footnote, that '[a]ppreciation may involve valuing and valuing may involve aesthetic and/or ethical value' (D'Olimpio, 2020, p. 257 n. 4). The role model role of the art teacher, therefore, has ethical bearings on the moral development of the students, and as I claimed at the outset of Sub-Section 5.2.4.4, moral role models (and emulation of role models) *can* be aesthetically driven.

To address the second Sub-Research question, the barriers and enablers to running a poetry programme, designed to cultivate virtue in secondary schools in Iceland, have been detailed and discussed in Chapters 4 & 5. To name the most pertinent, all of which were listed in Sub-Section 4.2.5, those that stand out are in a shortened formulation:

**Barriers:**

- In an Icelandic context, character education is a new and relatively unexplored frontier. For most teachers and school leaders, its methods and approach still sound unfamiliar.
- From the students' perspective, poetry is initially, at least for a large portion of them, one of countless subjects that have to be covered during the school year, and is therefore more often than not associated with tediousness.
- In an Icelandic context, if producing learning materials, they must adhere to the conceptualisation of the Icelandic Curriculum Guide. In the present learning materials, the emphasis given to lesson planning was placed solely on the creation of subject syllabuses.

**Enablers:**

- With regards to the value of my project as a character-educational intervention based on poetry, every single respondent expressed great excitement about the execution of the project, the exercises given, and the approach of using creative methods and arts practice to accomplish my goals.
- Through poetry and creative expression, important connections are made between abstract thinking – i.e. for problem solving or task completion – and a sense of wonder.
- Freedom is an important tool in relation to both moral and ethical learning.
- Creativity plays an important role in making education meaningful, and poetry is an ideal tool for engaging with creativity in a learning context.
- Slow learning would be powerful as a potential teaching method, not least for literature teaching
- Poetry taps into the inter-personal experience of wonderment more strongly than any other form of art. Furthermore, wonderment can be brought about when the students realise that there are things in this world, among other things we study at school, that no one knows the answer to. In an educational context, this can make learning meaningful.

The answer I propose to the Main Research Question, *Is it possible to use poetry to cultivate virtue, in an Icelandic secondary-school context?*, is that not only is it possible but it would be valuable to make further comparisons with similar projects focusing on other art forms, such as visual arts, literature, and music, and, preferably, to collaborate with such projects with a view of furthering the advancements of character education within the Icelandic school system.

As a concluding remark, out of the four coding themes identified, freedom, creativity, and wonderment are positive. In most aspects, when time was mentioned it was in a negative sense and associated with a lack of time. However, it was also pointed out that time itself was not the problem but the speed at which we approach things. The curriculum poses some obstacles, but can also, in a certain way, be seen as offering opportunities. There was some criticism by the teachers of the lesson plan of the present poetry plan – and there, *time* was a big obstacle. Some interviewees expressed a will to make use of this teaching material, as a tool box, meaning that they would prefer to pick and choose items for their lesson rather than looking at this as a comprehensive off-the-shelf resource.

To make this feasible, there would need to be a more thorough exploration and elicitation of the role of character education within this poetry programme; otherwise the motivation behind the project would be lost. – and we would end up with the fragmented and unsystematic use of educational resources that we often see in the everyday cut and thrust of classroom practice.

Finally, my recommendations from the research for further research, policy, and practice would be investigate the possibilities of, on the one hand, to do character education in an online learning environment with students in the secondary-school context, and on the other hand, in this context of comparing the goals of character education with those of citizenship education. I have also mentioned the possibility of carrying out research that compares and contrasts character education delivered through different arts subjects.<sup>51</sup> In and of itself, exploring other art and literature forms can draw upon and expand the strengths identified through character education in the present project, while exploring character education in an online learning environment has potential for tackling some of the barriers and elements that lead to school boredom.

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<sup>51</sup> As meagre as the current literature on poetry and character education is, the literature on visual arts and character education is – for unknown reasons – even smaller. The lacunae in those areas contrast sharply with the abundant literature on the use of novels and films for character and moral development.

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## Appendices

### Table of Contents of Appendices

A1. Questionnaire A (English) .....	215
A2. Questionnaire A (Icelandic) .....	222
B1. Questionnaire B (English) .....	228
B2. Questionnaire B (Icelandic).....	233
C1. Information Sheet for Teachers (English) .....	241
Character Education Through Poetry Overview.....	241
C2. Information Sheet for Teachers (Icelandic) .....	243
D1. Information Sheet for Parents (English) .....	245
D2. Information Sheet for Parents (Icelandic) .....	248
E1. Parental Consent Opt Out Form Concerning Classroom Activities - Pilot Project (English) .....	250
E2. Parental Consent Opt Out Form Concerning Classroom Activities - Pilot Project (Icelandic).....	252
F1. Parental Consent Opt In Form Concerning Classroom Activities - Main Study (English).....	254
F2. Parental Consent Opt in Form Concerning Classroom Activities - Main Study (Icelandic) .....	256
G1. Measurement Tool (English) .....	258
G2. Measurement Tool (Icelandic).....	260
H. PhD Researcher's DBS Certificate .....	264
I1. Lesson Plans in English.....	265
Lesson Plans (1-6) .....	266
Lesson Plan #1 .....	266
Lesson Plan #2 .....	271
Lesson Plan #3 .....	277
Lesson Plan #4 .....	287
Lesson Plan #5 .....	297
Lesson Plan #6 .....	300
I2. Lesson Plans in Icelandic.....	303
Kennsluáætlanir (1-6) .....	303
Kennsluáætlun #1 .....	303
Kennsluáætlun #2 .....	308
Kennsluáætlun #3 .....	314
Kennsluáætlun #4 .....	324
Kennsluáætlun #5 .....	335
Kennsluáætlun #6 .....	338
J1. Information Sheet for Teachers/Academics - Stage 2B Longitudinal Study (English) .....	341
J2. Information Sheet for Teachers/Academics - Stage 2B Longitudinal Study (Icelandic) .....	344
K1. Slides – Character Education/Poetry, Lesson #5 (English) .....	347

K2. Slides – Character Education/Poetry, Lesson #5 (Icelandic) .....	351
L1. Slides – Character Education/Poetry, Lesson #6 (English).....	355
L2. Slides – Character Education/Poetry, Lesson #6 (Icelandic).....	360

Research project on poetry and  
Character Education  
*Pre-Test*

# Questionnaire A



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Comments and suggestions that you would like to submit:


Dear Student

We thank you for participating in this study.

**Please note, that you are entitled to withdraw from the study. It involves answering 2 questionnaires, at a 6-week interval. Up until 2 weeks after the second questionnaire given to you, which is when the data from all the questionnaires is being analysed, you can request to withdraw. If you wish to do so, then please notify your teacher or your headmaster who will convey the message immediately.**

As far as your participation is concerned, the following information is relevant, and we therefore ask you to read it carefully:

No one will see your answers, except for staff at the University of Birmingham & the University of Iceland who will review your submission, and it will not be possible to trace the answers to you. The reason we ask you to answer these questions is that we are pretesting these questions and want to find out if the participants understand and are able to answer them. If you would like to make comments or suggestions, you can write them on the front page.

If you wish to give longer answers than text area allows, we kindly ask you to write on the back of the papers.

In some of the questions there will be references to character or virtues. These concepts approximately have the same meaning. They refer to qualities that characterises good people. Helpfulness and honesty are examples of such qualities. **It is not impossible that in some people, such qualities manifest themselves inversely, and then they are referred to as vices, which can also be understood as negative feelings or emotions. Guilt is an example of such an emotion.**

Kristian Guttesen, Prof. Kristján Kristjánsson, Dr. Tom Harrison, Dr. Atli Harðarson and Prof Ólafur Páll Jónsson

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## Question 1

Pick some words from the glossary and fill them in the gaps. The gaps are 10 but there are 15 words available, so you will not use all of them. Try nonetheless to use as many of them as possible, rather than filling the same word in more than one gap.

You display \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ by giving your friends nice presents.

Modest individuals seldom display \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.

To steel when no one is watching is an example of \_\_\_\_\_.

Self-discipline, at least to some extent, demands \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

It can be a sign of \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ not wanting to forgive.

If people are eager to accumulate more than they need, they lack \_\_\_\_\_.

**Glossary:**

*generosity*      *temperance*      *boastfulness*      *Placability*      *wisdom*  
*vindictiveness*      *arrogance*      *stinginess*      *resilience*      *grit*  
*wrath*      *spitefulness*      *dishonesty*      *consideration*      *generosity*

**The next three questions deal with the poem *Laugavegur*. Read the poem before you answer them.**

**Question 2**

Fill in the table:

<b>What takes place</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Bad</b>	<b>Why?</b>
To be pleased with the nature of Iceland and to be able to describe it to foreign visitors			

**Question 3**

What character traits (or virtues/vices) are shown in the poem and how do they appear? (Name two things.)

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**Question 4**

Does the feeling or emotion pride appear in the poem? (If so, does it appear sincerely or ironically?) What indicates this?

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**The next three questions deal with the poem *Visiting Hour*. Read the poem before you answer them.**

**Question 5**

Fill in the table by naming 3 incidents that seem to take place in the poem, and in each case, specify whether this was good or bad, and why it was good or bad.

<b>What takes place</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Bad</b>	<b>Why?</b>
You fail to be like someone else			

### Question 6

What character traits (or virtues/vices) are shown in the poem and how do they appear? (Name two things.)

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### Question 7

How do you think it is appropriate to act, when you experience these feelings or emotions? Explain your answer by specifying why.

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**The next three questions do not deal with the poems accompanying this questionnaire, but rather with your own opinion, ideas, or attitude.**

### Question 8

In the table, three occupations are listed. The answers for the athlete have already been provided. Write the answers for the other occupations, by naming which character trait (or virtue) you reckon is the most important to do well, and specify why they are important.

Occupation	Character trait	Reason
Athlete	Self-discipline	An athlete must have self-discipline in order to exercise vigorously, even though they sometimes may want to relax.
Doctor		

Police-officer		
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**Question 9**

Explain in your own words what the word *courage* means, and give an (imaginary or real) example of courage.

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**Question 10**

Name a real person from the past, who you think set a good example, and explain what it was in this person's conduct that is admirable and sets a good example. If possible, name a person who is well known, and who can be looked up in books or on the Internet.

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This questionnaire is part of a research project entitled 'Character Education Through Poetry'. The questionnaire is to a certain degree modelled on a similar questionnaire, devised by researchers at The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, University of Birmingham, and a questionnaire devised by Dr. Atli Harðarson and Prof. Ólafur Páll Jónsson, School of Education, University of Iceland, on ethics and literature. I wish to thank them for granting me permission to use the material that they have created.

Kristian Guttesen, PhD Candidate, University of Birmingham.

# Rannsóknarverkefni um ljóðlist og mannkostamenntun

*Forpróf*

# Spurningar A



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Athugasemdir og ábendingar sem þú vilt koma á framfæri:


Til nemanda

Við þökkum þér fyrir að taka þátt í þessari könnun.

Enginn mun sjá svör þín nema fólk við Háskólann í Birmingham og Háskóla Íslands sem fer yfir forkönnunina og það verður ekki mögulegt fyrir okkur að rekja svörin til þín. Ástæða þess að við biðjum þig að svara þessum spurningum er sú að við erum að forprófa spurningarnar og þurfum vita hvort þátttakendur skilji þær og geti svarað þeim. Ef þú vilt gera athugasemdir eða koma með ábendingar þá geturðu skrifað þær á línurnar á forsíðunni.

Ef þú vilt skrifa lengri svör en komast í línurnar bendum við þér á að skrifa aftan á blöðin.

Í sumum spurningum er spurt um mannkosti eða dygðir. Þessi tvö orð merkja nokkurn veginn það sama. Þau eru notuð um eiginleika sem einkenna gott fólk. Hjálpssemi og heiðarleiki eru dæmi um slíka eiginleika. **Ekki er útilokað að dygðir birtist hjá sumum undir öfugum formerkjum og er þá talað um lesti, sem líka má skilja sem neikvæðar tilfinningar eða kenndir. Sektarkennd er dæmi um slíka tilfinningu.**

Kristian Guttesen, Kristján Kristjánsson prófessor, Tom Harrison dósent, Atli Harðarson dósent og Ólafur Páll Jónsson prófessor

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## Spurning 1

Veldu orð af orðalistanum og settu í eyðurnar. Eyðurnar eru tíu en orðin eru fimmtán svo þú notar ekki öll orðin. Reyndu samt að nota sem flest af þeim frekar en að setja sama orð í margar eyður.

Þú sýnir \_\_\_\_\_ og \_\_\_\_\_ með því að gefa vinum þínum góðar gjafir.

Hógværir menn eru sjaldan með \_\_\_\_\_ eða \_\_\_\_\_.

Að laumast til að stela þegar enginn sér til er dæmi um \_\_\_\_\_.

Sjálfsagi felur að minnsta kosti stundum í sér \_\_\_\_\_ og \_\_\_\_\_.

Það getur verið til marks um \_\_\_\_\_ eða \_\_\_\_\_ að vilja ekki fyrirgefa.

Ef fólk er of ákaft í að eignast meira en það þarf þá skortir það \_\_\_\_\_.

**Orðalisti:**

<i>gjafmildi</i>	<i>hófsemi</i>	<i>mont</i>	<i>sáttfýsi</i>	<i>visku</i>
<i>hefnigirni</i>	<i>hroka</i>	<i>nísku</i>	<i>seiglu</i>	<i>þrautseigju</i>
<i>heift</i>	<i>illgirni</i>	<i>óheiðarleika</i>	<i>tillitssemi</i>	<i>örlæti</i>

Næstu þrjár spurningar fjalla um ljóðið *Laugaveg*. Lestu ljóðið áður en þú svarar þeim.

**Spurning 2**

Fylltu út töfluna:

<b>Það sem gerist</b>	<b>Gott</b>	<b>Slæmt</b>	<b>Hvers vegna?</b>
Að vera ánægður með náttúru Íslands og geta lýst henni fyrir erlendum ferðamönnum			

**Spurning 3**

Hvaða mannkostir (eða dygðir/lestir) eru sýndir í ljóðinu og hvernig birtast þeir?  
(Nefndu tvennt.)

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#### Spurning 4

Kemur tilfinningin eða kenndin stolt fyrir í ljóðinu? (Ef svo, birtist hún einlæglega eða af kaldhæðni?) Hvað er til marks um það?

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Næstu þrjár spurningar fjalla um ljóðið *Heimsóknartímann*. Lestu ljóðið áður en þú svarar þeim.

#### Spurning 5

Fylltu út töfluna með því að nefna þrjú atriði sem sem virðast gerast í ljóðinu og tiltaka í öllum þrem línunum hvort það var gott eða slæmt og hvers vegna það var gott eða slæmt.

Það sem gerist	Gott	Slæmt	Hvers vegna?
Þér tekst ekki að vera eins og einhver annar			

## Spurning 6

Hvaða mannkostir (eða dygðir/lestir) eru sýndir í ljóðinu og hvernig birtast þeir?  
(Nefndu tvennt.)

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## Spurning 7

Hvernig finnst þér við hæfi að bregðast við þegar þú upplifir slíkar tilfinningar eða kenndir? Útskýrðu svarið með því að segja hvers vegna.

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**Næstu þrjár spurningar fjalla ekki um ljóðin sem fylgja þessari könnun heldur um þín eigin sjónarmið, hugmyndir eða viðhorf.**

## Spurning 8

Í töflunni eru talin upp þrjú störf. Það er búið að skrifa svör fyrir starf atvinnumanns í íþróttum. Skrifðu svör fyrir hin störfin og segðu hvaða mannkostir (eða dygðir) eru mikilvægastir til að vinna þau vel og hvers vegna þeir eru mikilvægir.

Starf	Mannkostir	Ástæða
Íþróttamaður	Sjálfsagi	Íþróttamaður þarf sjálfsaga vegna þess að hann þarf að æfa af kappi jafnvel þótt hann langi stundum að slaka á.
Læknir		

Lögreglu- þjónn		
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### Spurning 9

Útskýrðu með þínum eigin orðum hvað orðið *hugrekki* þýðir og nefndu (raunverulegt eða ímyndað) dæmi um hugrekki.

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### Spurning 10

Nefndu núlifandi karl eða konu sem þér þykir góð fyrirmynd og segðu hvað í fari hans eða hennar er aðdáunarvert og til eftirbreytni. Best er að nefna persónu sem er fræg og hægt er að finna upplýsingar um í bókum eða á netinu.

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Þessi könnun er hluti af doktorsrannsóknarverkefni sem nefnist „Ljóðlist og mannkostamenntun“. Könnunin er að verulegu leyti byggð á sambærilegum könnunum sem voru búnar til af sérfræðingum við The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues við Háskólann í Birmingham á Englandi og könnun Atla Harðarsonar og Ólafs Páls Jónssonar á bókmenntum og siðferði. Ég þakka þeim fyrir að leyfa mér afnot af efni sem þeir hafa unnið.

Kristian Guttesen doktorsnemi við Menntavísindasvið Háskólans í Birmingham.

Research project on poetry and  
Character Education  
*Pre-Test*

# Questionnaire B



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Comments and suggestions that you would like to submit:


Dear Student

We thank you for participating in this study.

**Please note, that you are entitled to withdraw from the study. It involves answering 2 questionnaires, at a 6-week interval. Up until 2 weeks after the second questionnaire given to you, which is when the data from all the questionnaires is being analysed, you can request to withdraw. If you wish to do so, then please notify your teacher or your headmaster who will convey the message immediately.**

As far as your participation is concerned, the following information is relevant, and we therefore ask you to read it carefully:

No one will see your answers, except for staff at the University of Birmingham & the University of Iceland who will review your submission, and it will not be possible to trace the answers to you. The reason we ask you to answer these questions is that we are pretesting these questions and want to find out if the participants understand and are able to answer them. If you would like to make comments or suggestions, you can write them on the front page.

If you wish to give longer answers than text area allows, we kindly ask you to write on the back of the papers.

In some of the questions there will be references to character or virtues. These concepts approximately have the same meaning. They refer to qualities that characterises good people. Helpfulness and honesty are examples of such qualities. **It is not impossible that in some people, such qualities manifest themselves inversely, and then they are referred to as vices, which can also be understood as negative feelings or emotions. Guilt is an example of such an emotion.**

Kristian Guttesen, Prof. Kristján Kristjánsson, Dr. Tom Harrison, Dr. Atli Harðarson and Prof Ólafur Páll Jónsson

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## Question 1

Pick some words from the glossary and fill them in the gaps. The gaps are 10 but there are 15 words available, so you will not use all of them. Try nonetheless to use as many of them as possible, rather than filling the same word in more than one gap.

Modest people are seldom \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

Someone who is not affected by prejudice or private interest when forming opinion, shows

\_\_\_\_\_.

Someone who tries to profit by deceiving their customers, shows

\_\_\_\_\_.

Humble people seldom display \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.

He or she who does not deceit, is both \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

To keep calm and do one's duty, even when danger is imminent, amounts to being \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

**Glossary:**

*humility*      *greed*      *arrogance*      *compassion*      *truthfulness*  
*avariciousness*      *honesty*      *courage*      *fairness*      *impatience*  
*boastfulness*      *helpfulness*      *rudeness*      *dishonesty*      *serenity*

**The next three questions deal with the poem *Sustainable Interrogation*. Read the poem before you answer them.**

**Question 2**

Fill in the table by naming 3 incidents that seem to take place in the poem, and in each case, specify whether this was good or bad, and why it was good or bad.

<b>What takes place</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Bad</b>	<b>Why?</b>
To enjoy experiencing pain			

**Question 3**

What character traits (or virtues/vices) are shown in the poem and how do they appear? (Name two things.)

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**Question 4**

Does the protagonist in the poem show shame? What indicates this?

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**The next three questions deal with the poem *Experience*. Read the poem before you answer them.**

**Question 5**

Fill in the table:

<b>What takes place</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Bad</b>	<b>Why? (and in which way?)</b>
To recognise or feel the pain of others			

**Question 6**

What character traits (or virtues/vices) are shown in the poem and how do they appear? (Name two things.)

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**Question 7**

Does the protagonist in the poem show compassion? What indicates this? \_\_\_\_\_

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**The next three questions do not deal with the poems accompanying this questionnaire, but rather with your own opinion, ideas, or attitude.**

**Question 8**

In the table, three occupations are listed. The answers for the athlete have already been provided. Write the answers for the other occupations, by naming which character trait (or virtue) you reckon is the most important to do well, and specify why they are important.

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Character trait</b>	<b>Reason</b>
Athlete	Self-discipline	An athlete must have self-discipline in order to exercise vigorously, even though they sometimes may want to relax.
Pilot		

Preschool-teacher		

**Question 9**

Explain in your own words what the word *temperance* means, and give an (imaginary or real) example of temperance.

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**Question 10**

Name a real person from the past, who you think set a good example, and explain what it was in this person’s conduct that is admirable and sets a good example. If possible, name a person who is well known, and who can be looked up in books or on the Internet.

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This questionnaire is part of a research project entitled ‘Character Education Through Poetry’. The questionnaire is to a certain degree modelled on a similar questionnaire, devised by researchers at The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, University of Birmingham, and a questionnaire devised by Dr. Atli Harðarson and Prof. Ólafur Páll Jónsson, School of Education, University of Iceland, on ethics and literature. I wish to thank them for granting me permission to use the material that they have created.  
 Kristian Guttesen, PhD Candidate, University of Birmingham.

# Rannsóknarverkefni um ljóðlist og mannkostamenntun

*Forpróf*

## Spurningar B



UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM

Athugasemdir og ábendingar sem þú vilt koma á framfæri:


*Til nemanda*

*Við þökkum þér fyrir að taka þátt í þessari könnun.*

*Enginn mun sjá svör þín nema fólk við Háskólann í Birmingham og Háskóla Íslands sem fer yfir forkönnunina og það verður ekki mögulegt fyrir okkur að rekja svörin til þín. Ástæða þess að við biðjum þig að svara þessum spurningum er sú að við erum að forprófa spurningarnar og þurfum vita hvort þátttakendur skilji þær og geti svarað þeim. Ef þú vilt gera athugasemdir eða koma með ábendingar þá geturðu skrifað þær á línurnar á forsíðunni.*

*Ef þú vilt skrifa lengri svör en komast í línurnar bendum við þér á að skrifa aftan á blöðin.*

*Í sumum spurningum er spurt um mannkosti eða dygðir. Þessi tvö orð merkja nokkurn veginn það sama. Þau eru notuð um eiginleika sem einkenna gott fólk. Hjálpssemi og heiðarleiki eru dæmi um slíka eiginleika. **Ekki er útilokað að dygðir birtist hjá sumum undir öfugum formerkjum og er þá talað um lesti, sem líka má skilja sem neikvæðar tilfinningar eða kenndir. Sektarkennd er dæmi um slíka tilfinningu.***

*Kristian Guttesen, Kristján Kristjánsson prófessor, Tom Harrison dósent, Atli Harðarson dósent og Ólafur Páll Jónsson prófessor*

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## **Spurning 1**

Veldu orð af orðalistanum og settu í eyðurnar. Eyðurnar eru tíu en orðin eru fimmtán svo þú notar ekki öll orðin. Reyndu samt að nota sem flest af þeim frekar en að setja sama orð í margar eyður.

Hófsamt fólk er yfirleitt laust við \_\_\_\_\_ og \_\_\_\_\_.

Sá sem lætur hvorki fordóma né sérhagsmuni ráða afstöðu sinni sýnir

\_\_\_\_\_.

Sá sem reynir að græða með því að blekkja viðskiptavini kemur fram af

\_\_\_\_\_.

Lítillátar manneskjur eru sjaldan með \_\_\_\_\_ eða

\_\_\_\_\_.

Sá sem forðast að beita blekkingum sýnir \_\_\_\_\_ og

\_\_\_\_\_.

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

Að halda ró sinni og gera það sem skyldan býður þó hættur steðji að getur verið til marks um \_\_\_\_\_ og \_\_\_\_\_.

### Orðalisti:

*auðmýkt*      *græðgi*      *hroka*      *meðaumkun*      *sannsögli*  
*ágirnd*      *heiðarleika*      *hugrekki*      *sanngirni*      *óþolinmæði*  
*grobba*      *hjálpssemi*      *ókurteisi*      *óheiðarleika*      *æðruleysi*

**Næstu þrjár spurningar fjalla um ljóðið *Sjálfbæra yfirheyrslu*. Lestu ljóðið áður en þú svarar þeim.**

### Spurning 2

Fylltu út töfluna með því að nefna þrjú atriði sem sem virðast gerast í ljóðinu og tiltaka í öllum þrem línunum hvort það var gott eða slæmt og hvers vegna það var gott eða slæmt.

Pað sem er að gerast	Gott	Slæmt	Hvers vegna?
Að njóta þess að finna til			

### Spurning 3

Hvaða mannkostir (eða dygðir/lestir) eru sýndir í ljóðinu og hvernig birtast þeir? (Nefndu tvennt.)

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### Spurning 4

Sýnir sögupersónan í ljóðinu skömm? Hvað er til marks um það?

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Næstu þrjár spurningar fjalla um ljóðið *Reynslu*. Lestu ljóðið áður en þú svarar þeim.

### Spurning 5

Fylltu út töfluna:

Það sem er að gerast	Gott	Slæmt	Hvers vegna? (og á hvaða hátt?)
Að skynja sársauka annarra			

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Kristian Guttesen

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### Spurning 6

Hvaða mannkostir (eða dygðir/lestir) eru sýndir í ljóðinu og hvernig birtast þeir?  
(Nefndu tvennt.)

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### Spurning 7

Sýnir sögupersónan í ljóðinu samkennd? Hvað er til marks um það? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Næstu þrjár spurningar fjalla ekki um ljóðin sem fylgja þessari könnun heldur um þín eigin sjónarmið, hugmyndir eða viðhorf.**

### Spurning 8

Í töflunni eru talin upp þrjú störf. Það er búið að skrifa svör fyrir starf atvinnumanns í íþróttum. Skrifaðu svör fyrir hin störfin og segðu hvaða mannkostir (eða dygðir) eru mikilvægastir til að vinna þau vel og hvers vegna þeir eru mikilvægir.

Starf	Mannkostir	Ástæða
Íþróttamaður	Sjálfsagi	

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

		Íþróttamaður þarf sjálfsaga vegna þess að hann þarf að æfa af kappi jafnvel þótt hann langi stundum að slaka á.
Flugmaður		
Leikskóla- kennari		

### Spurning 9

Útskýrðu með þínum eigin orðum hvað orðið *hófsemi* þýðir og nefndu (raunverulegt eða ímyndað) dæmi um hófsemi.

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## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

### C1. Information Sheet for Teachers (English)

#### Character Education Through Poetry

##### Overview

In this overview, I will briefly outline the structure of the teaching intervention of my PhD project, entitled ‘Character Education Through Poetry.’ The object of the study is to enhance the moral development of pupils through the teaching of poetry. It serves the purpose of creating and measuring an approach to moral education in the upper secondary school, by reading -, engaging in a dialogue on-, and writing poetry. The study, therefore, both relies on a philosophical dialogue, and on an empirical approach. The background of the project stems from the author’s own experience as philosophy- and ethics teacher, both in the upper secondary school and junior college. The author has both had the experience of teaching pupils who automatically can relate to the teaching material, immediately starting to think independently and creatively, and, also, those pupils who in no way can relate to the material or the school environment, who do not see any purpose in going to school. It is the intention of this study to offer an approach to teaching Icelandic, by use of tools of moral education and philosophical dialogue.

There are six syllabi, encapsulating 80 minutes lessons. Before starting the first lesson and after completing the last lesson, the pupils are given ,pre‘ - and ,post‘ tests. This means the pre test takes place prior to the first lesson and the after test subsequent to the last lesson. This can be in separate classes or in gaps in timetable. Here is the schedule for the lessons of the intervention, specifying their order and content.

Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3	Lesson 4	Lesson 5	Lesson 6
<b>Philosophical dialouge</b> út frá ljóðinu ,My First Ghost‘ by Birgitta Jónsdóttir	<b>Poetry reading and conceptualising</b> of poems by Kristján Hreinsson about ,Empathy‘, ,Pride‘ and ,Shame‘	<b>Poetry reading and exercises</b> on the poems ,Aid‘ by Þorsteinn frá Hamri, ,Experience‘ by Vilborg Dagbjartsdóttir, ,Journe‘ s End‘ by Jónas Hallgrímsson, ,Laugavegur‘ by Sigurbjörg Prastardóttir og ,Andrea Karítas‘ by Sigurbjörg Sæmundsdóttir	<b>Poetry reading and exercises</b> um ljóðin ,A Poem About #EURO2016 ‘ by Eiríkur Örn Norðdahl, ,Miniver Cheevy‘ by Edwin A. Robinson, ,Visiting Hour‘ by Anton Helgi Jónsson, ,sustainable interrogation‘ by Kristín Ómarsdóttir og ,Rivertown‘ by Steinar Bragi	<b>The former workshop in Creative Writing:</b> Writing according to a prototype, Free flow working with keywords, a 3rd person narrative, stereotyped metaphors, s poem in exactly 10 words, a poem about shame (accompanied by a home assignment)	<b>The latter workshop in Creative Writing:</b> Working with colleague-critics, a poem about a person with specific instructions, the National Anthem Re-created, a group exercise working with newspapers, an individual exercise: a letter to oneself, an

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

					exercise about division, a poem written to the sun, and, finally, the re-writing of one's own poem
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The pre- and post tests, **Questions A** and **Questions B**, are derived from similar surveys devised by researchers at The Jubilee Centre, University of Birmingham, and further adapted by Dr. Atli Harðarson and Prof. Ólafur Páll Jónsson at the School of Education, University of Iceland, both as part of projects that focused on character education and literature.

The syllabi largely rely on the method of philosophy for children (P4C). The teachers adopting this material are encouraged to familiarise themselves with how to moderate a philosophical dialogue, e.g. by using instructions from the following website: <https://www.thephilosophyman.com/> (Buckley, 2011)

The syllabi are accompanied with two PowerPoint slides, to be used in the creative writing workshops (syllabi 5 & 6). In these slides, I rely to a certain extent on some creative writing exercises published by the Icelandic writer Eiríkur Örn Norðdahl, on his blog (Norðdahl, 2014; the webpage is no longer accessible), on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2014. I would like to thank the author for allowing me to make use of some of the ideas that appeared in the aforementioned blog.

### References:

- Buckley, J. (2011) Embed P4C in Your School. *The Philosophy Man*. Retrieved on 8. May 2018 from <https://verkefnabanki.wordpress.com/2013/09/29/throun-samraedufelags/>
- Norðdahl, E. Ö. (2014) Ritlist – að finna sína rödd. No longer available at: <http://norddahl.org/blogg/2014/02/06/ritlist-ad-finna-sina-rodd/> (Accessed: 7.2.2014).

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

### C2. Information Sheet for Teachers (Icelandic)

#### Ljóðlist og mannkostamenntun

##### Yfirlit

Í þessu yfirliti er farið stuttlega yfir skipulag kennslu í tengslum við doktorsverkefni sem nefnist „Ljóðlist og mannkostamenntun“. Verkefnið gengur út á að efla siðferðisþroska nemenda í gegnum kennslu ljóðlistar. Tilgangur þess er að þróa og meta aðferð í siðferðilegri menntun innan unglingastigs í gegnum lestur, samræðu um og ritun ljóðlistar. Þannig styðst rannsóknin bæði við heimspekilega samræðu sem og reynsluvísindalega aðferð. Bakgrunnur verkefnisins á rætur að rekja til reynslu höfundar við kennslu í heimspeki og siðfræði bæði á unglingastigi grunnskóla og framhaldsskólastigi. Höfundur hefur bæði kynnst því að nemendur finni sig sjálfkrafa í kennsluefninu og byrja strax að hugsa sjálfstætt og skapandi og, eins, að þeir sjái engan tilgang með efninu né heldur námi yfir höfuð. Með þessu verkefni vill höfundur bjóða upp á nálgun við íslenskukennslu sem nýtir verkæri siðferðilegrar menntunar og heimspekilegrar samræðu.

Kennsluáætlanirnar eru sex talsins. Um er að ræða 80 mínútna kennslustundir. Í upphafi og lok rannsóknarinnar eru lagðar for- og eftir-kannanir fyrir nemendur.

For- og eftir-prófin eru lögð fyrir á undan fyrstu og á eftir síðustu kennslustund. Það merkir að forprófin fara fram á einhverjum tímapunkti fyrir fyrstu kennslustund og eftirprófin á einhverjum tímapunkti á eftir 6. kennslustund. Það má vera í sérkennslustundum en getur líka verið í eyðu í stundaskránni. Hér getur að líta röð kennslustundanna og stutt lýsing á innihaldi þeirra.

Kennslustund 1	Kennslustund 2	Kennslustund 3	Kennslustund 4	Kennslustund 5	Kennslustund 6
<b>Heimspekileg samræða</b> út frá ljóðinu „Fyrsti draugurinn minn“ eftir Birgittu Jónsdóttur	<b>Ljóðalestur og hugtaka-greining</b> út frá ljóðum Kristjáns Hreinssonar um „Samkennd“, „Stolt“ og „Blygðun“	<b>Ljóðalestur og verkefni</b> um ljóðin „Liðsinni“ eftir Þorstein frá Hamri, „Reynsla“ eftir Vilborgu Dagbjartsdóttur, „Ferðalok“ eftir Jónas Hallgrímsson, „Laugavegur“ eftir Sigurbjörgu Þrastardóttur og „Andrea Karítas“ eftir Sigurbjörgu Sæmundsdóttur	<b>Ljóðalestur og verkefni</b> um ljóðin „#EM2016“ eftir Eirík Örn Norðdahl, „Mangi Hró“ eftir Edwin A. Robinson, „Heimsóknartíminn“ eftir Anton Helga Jónsson, „sjálfbær yfirheyrsla“ eftir Kristínu Ómarsdóttur og „Árbærinn“ eftir Steinar Braga	<b>Fyrri vinnustofa í ritlist:</b> Að yrkja út frá fyrirmynd, Frálst form út frá stikkorðum, 3. persónu frásögn, klisjukenndar myndlíkingar, ljóð í nákvæmlega 10 orðum, ljóð um skömm (ásamt heima-verkefni)	<b>Seinni vinnustofa í ritlist</b> Unnið með ritvinum, ort um manneskju út frá fyrirmælum, Þjóðsöngurinn endurortur, hópverkefni upp úr dagblaði, einstaklingsverkefni: bréf til sjálfs þín, æfing um uppskiptingu, ort til sólarinnar, að lokum enduryrkja nemendur eigið ljóð

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

For- og eftirkannanirnar, **Spurningar A** og **Spurningar B**, eru byggðar á sambærilegum könnunum sem voru búnar til af sérfræðingum við The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues við Háskólann í Birmingham á Englandi og könnun Atla Harðarsonar og Ólafs Páls Jónssonar á bókmenntum og siðferði. Samlíðunarprófið hefur verið þýtt af Huldu Þórisdóttur.

Kennslustundirnar byggja að verulegu leyti á aðferðafræði þeirri sem nefnd er heimspeki með börnum (e. *P4C*). Kennaranum er bent efni og leiðbeiningar um samræðustjórn í verkefnabanka Félags heimspekikennara, <https://verkefnabanki.wordpress.com/>, og einkum skrif Brynhildar Sigurðardóttur um Þróun samræðufélags (2013) og ýmsar æfingar í Verkefnabanka Heimspekitorgsins um heimspekilega samræðu, sjá einkum hér: <https://verkefnabanki.wordpress.com/category/skolastig/grunnskoli-unglingastig/>

Kennsluáætlunum fylgja tveir glærupakkar sem notaðir eru í vinnustofunum í ritlist (kennsluáætlanir 5 & 6). Þar styðst ég að nokkru leyti við ritlistaræfingar sem Eiríkur Örn Norðdahl birti á bloggi sínu (<http://norddahl.org/blogg/2014/02/06/ritlist-ad-finna-sina-rodd/>; vefsíðan er ekki lengur aðgengileg) 6. febrúar 2014 og kann ég Eiríki bestu þakkir fyrir að leyfa mér að nýta nokkrar þær hugmyndir hans sem þar birtust.

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttusen

### D1. Information Sheet for Parents (English)

#### Information Sheet for Parents

#### University of Birmingham Research Project on Character Education Through Poetry

This research is taking place within the School of Education at the University of Birmingham, following guidelines and methods developed at The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, based in the School of Education is a pioneering research centre focusing on character, virtues and values in the interest of human flourishing. The Centre promotes and builds character strengths in the contexts of the family, school, community, university, professions, voluntary organisations and the wider workplace.

[Insert School Name] has agreed to take part in a study which aims to foster character strengths in the school context. Participating students will reflect on character strengths that connect us to other people and, over a 5-week period, will take part in activities to develop these strengths. The overall aim of the study is to help create responsible, caring and connected citizens.

We are interested to see if a greater sense of connection to and responsibility for other people will foster better wellbeing in those taking part, and whether the project will encourage students to connect with and help other people. We and [Insert School Name] believe young people will enjoy the activities that make up this study.

Approximately 60 secondary school students in Grade 9 (14 and 15 Years) will take part in this study across two schools in Reykjavík, Iceland.

This document provides further information about the study which you may wish to read before deciding whether you are happy for the responses your child provides over the course of the programme to be used as data in our research project.

*Further information about the conduct of the study and the use of any data collected can be found below:*

#### **What is this study about?**

This project examines whether it is possible to promote character strengths in young people aged 14–15 as a direct result of a targeted 6-week programme. The activities that make up the programme will take place in form time and in longer once-weekly lessons. We would like to know whether we can create in young people a greater sense of connection to and responsibility for other people as a result of the study. Furthermore, we are interested to see whether this might lead to better wellbeing in those taking part.

#### **Why is my child taking part in the study?**

[Insert School Name] has carefully considered working alongside the University of Birmingham in this venture. The school believes that the various activities which make up the programme are relevant to personal, health and social education and that the young people participating will find them enjoyable and rewarding.

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

### ***Does my child have to take part in the study?***

Since [Insert School Name] sees educational, social and personal merit in this project, it will form part of your child's activities within school for the duration of the study. However, as described in the attached consent form, **we are giving parents/guardians the opportunity, once fully informed about the requirements of the study, to request that their child's data is not used as part of the study. If you decide to opt-out, this will mean that your child's written responses to the classroom activities (questionnaire answers, activity sheets) will not be used as data in our research project.**

### ***What will happen?***

The project is scheduled to start on [Insert Date] and will run in [Insert School Name] for 6-weeks. Findings from the project will be shared with the participants and there will be an opportunity for parents/guardians to hear more about the results of the study. All data from the study will be made freely available in a published research report by 2017.

### ***How will this study benefit my child? How will it benefit wider society?***

This research aims to build up our common life and wellbeing by stimulating reflection and action on human strengths that connect us to other people. We hope that our research will help to create responsible, caring and connected citizens. We believe participants will find the activities within the programme enjoyable and valuable.

### ***Will the information be kept confidential?***

Yes. This study has been reviewed and approved by the Humanities & Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee of the University of Birmingham and will be conducted following ethical and legal guidelines as set out by the Committee. All data will be handled confidentially. The details are included in Parental Consent Opt-out Form (See paragraph 2: 'In order for the programme to be evaluated we will collect data (in the form of questionnaire answers and written responses to several classroom activities) from participating schools...'). The only people to see any information your child provides will be researchers at the University of Birmingham who work on the project. Prior to analysis, they will assign an ID code to the data so that your child's identity will be protected at all times. All data, in its original form, will be stored on secure University of Birmingham servers or in locked filing cabinets. This data may be stored for up to ten years, in line with University of Birmingham guidelines.

### ***With whom will my child's responses to the project activities be shared?***

Only anonymised data will be made more widely available so that your child's responses to the questionnaires and classroom activities cannot be identified. This applies to reports and publications made available by the researchers and the John Templeton Foundation (the funders of this project). The data may be archived at a Data Centre such as the UK Data Archive. This will allow other registered researchers to have access to the data in this anonymised form.

## **Character Education Through Poetry**

Kristian Guttesen

### ***How will the information my child provides be used?***

The researchers on the team will use your child's responses to a questionnaire to evaluate whether it is possible to promote other-oriented character strengths in a five-week programme. Your child's written responses to activities that are part of the programme (e.g. their responses to a comprehension exercise) might be used to illustrate publications and reports. However, confidentiality would be strictly enforced and your child's responses would not be identified as theirs.

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should contact the researchers involved. They will do their best to answer any further questions you may have (see below).

### ***What if I want to withdraw my child's data later in the study?***

Please note that you have the right to withdraw data from your child (or children) from being used in the study at any point up to the completion of the programme. If this is the case, please contact either the school or the researchers conducting the study.

### ***Who is conducting this research?***

The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues ([www.jubileecentre.ac.uk](http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk)) at the University of Birmingham is conducting this research. We are happy to talk to you more about the project or answer your questions. You can contact us by telephone or via email:

Professor Kristján Kristjánsson  
Principal Investigator

████████████████████  
████████████████

Kristian Guttesen  
PhD Candidate

████████████████████  
████████████████

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

### D2. Information Sheet for Parents (Icelandic)

Reykjavík, 16. október 2018

Kæru foreldrar/forráðamenn

Ég undirritaður, Kristian Guttesen, vinn að rannsókn á siðferðilegu gildi listgreinakennslu. Leiðbeinendur mínir eru Kristján Kristjánsson og Tom Harrison. Heiti rannsóknarinnar er Mannkostamenntun í gegnum ljóðlist.

Um nokkurra ára skeið hef ég verið að þróa og prófa námsefni og kennsluverkefni fyrir ungmenni á unglíngastigi grunnskóla og í framhaldsskóla í ljóðlist sem tengist skilningi á innihaldi ljóða. Kennsluefnið felur m.a. í sér að nemendur semja ljóð á grunni siðferðilegra hugtaka á borð við samkennd, skömm og stolt, ritun hugleiðinga um sín eigin ljóð og ljóð eftir þekkt ljóðskáld auk þátttöku í heimspekilegum samræðum um listaverk með áherslu á samspil ljóðrænnar framsetningar, innihalds, orðaforða og hugtakaskilnings. Verkefnið tekur sex vikur, tvær kennslustundir (samtals 80 mínútur) á viku í senn.

Rannsókninni sem nú stendur til að framkvæma er ætlað að kanna áhrif þessa verkefnis á siðferðilegan hugtakaskilning, dygðalæsi og ljóðlæsi. Fyrir og eftir verkefnið verður lögð skrifleg könnun fyrir valda nemendur í 9. bekk í Réttarholtsskóla þar sem spurt er um skilning á siðferðilegum hugtökum.

Nemendur í einum 9. bekk sem eru í íslensku á haustönn (en það er forprófun verkefnisins, svokölluð prufukeyrsla) og í einum 9. bekk sem eru í íslensku á vorönn 2019 (en það er aðalrannsóknin) varðveita þau ljóð sem þeir semja og þá texta sem þeir skrifa í sérstakar vinnubækur sem ég mun afrita.

Viðtakendur þessa bréfs eru einungis forráðamenn nemenda hvers þátttöku er óskað eftir fyrir forprófunina, haustið 2019. Vinnubækur sínar fá nemendur síðan afhentar eigi síðar en í febrúar 2019. Að verkefninu loknu mun ég óska eftir þátttöku nemenda í rýnihópaviðtölum til þess að heyra þeirra sjónarmið og fá innsýn í þeirra reynslu af verkefninu. Nemendur í einum 9. bekk í íslensku í Landakotsskóla munu aðeins svara skriflegu könnuninni en þeir verða í samburðarhópi.

Við úrvinnslu gagna, skrif á niðurstöðum og kynningu á ráðstefnum mun í einhverjum tilvikum vera nauðsynlegt að birta ljóð eftir nemendur og vitna til orða þeirra. Nöfn þátttakenda eða persónugreinanlegar upplýsingar munu hvergi koma fram við birtingu niðurstaðna. Athugið að í þessu rannsóknarverkefni er ekki um að ræða öflun viðkvæmra persónuupplýsinga af neinu tagi og gögnum verður eytt þegar rannsókninni lýkur og unnið hefur verið að fullu úr gögnum.

Samkvæmt persónuverndarlögum sem tóku gildi á Evrópska efnahagssvæðinu 25. maí sl. er rannsókn af þessum toga hvorki leyfis- né tilkynningaskyld en rannsóknin hefur fengið jákvæða umsögn Vísindasiðanefndar Háskólans í Birmingham. Engu að síður er þess krafist að aflað sé upplýsts samþykkis forsjáraðila þegar um er að ræða rannsóknir þar sem börn eru þátttakendur.

Þessu bréfi er ætlað að upplýsa forráðamenn um verkefnið og fá samþykki þeirra fyrir þátttöku barna þeirra í forprófuninni að því tilskildu að börnin sjálf séu reiðubúin til að taka þátt í henni. Barni ykkar er heimilt að hætta þátttöku í forkönnuninni hvenær sem er.

Meðfylgjandi seðli með upplýstu samþykki/höfnun þarf að skila til umsjónarkennara fyrir 24. október 2018 hvort sem þátttaka er samþykkt eða henni hafnað. Einnig er hægt að senda upplýst samþykki eða höfnun í tölvupósti til Margrétar Sigfúsdóttur, skólastjóra Réttarholtsskóla. Netfang hennar er:

██

Ykkur er velkomið að leita nánari upplýsinga um verkefnið hjá mér í síma ██████████ eða í tölvupósti:

██

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

Kær kveðja,  
Kristian Guttesen,  
doktorsnemi við Háskólann í Birmingham  
og aðjunkt við Háskóla Íslands



## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

### E1. Parental Consent Opt Out Form Concerning Classroom Activities - Pilot Project (English)

Dear Parent/ Guardian

[Insert Date]

#### Opt-Out Form

#### **Use of son / daughter's written responses to classroom activities in a University of Birmingham study.**

[Insert School Name] has agreed to take part in a research project being conducted by the School of Education at the University of Birmingham. Pupils will take part in classroom activities, over a 6-week period, aimed to help develop character strengths. More information about the programme and the conduct of the study can be found in the accompanying Information Sheet.

In order for the programme to be evaluated we will collect data (in the form of questionnaire answers and written responses to several classroom activities) from participating schools. All information gathered from participants will be treated **confidentially**. We will use only ID codes to identify participants once we have received data from participating schools. Any data used in publication will be reported anonymously. It will not be possible to identify individual responses from this point onwards. Compliance with the Icelandic Act on the Protection of Privacy as regards the Processing of Personal Data, No. 77<sup>52</sup> (corresponding with the UK Data Protection Act 1998 will be assured at all stages.

**If you are happy for your son or daughter's written responses to be used as data in this 6-week programme then you do NOT need to fill in the attached form.**

If, however, you do *not* give permission for your son or daughter's written responses to classroom activities to be used as data in this study, please complete, sign and return the form below. If the School does not receive a completed form within **two weeks** of the date of this letter we will presume that you are happy for your son or daughter's written responses to provide data for our research. ***Please note that you have the right to withdraw data from your child (or children) from being used in the study at any point up to the completion of the programme.***

If you have any questions about the project, you are welcome to contact the researcher involved:

Kristian Guttesen: [redacted] or on [redacted].

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

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<sup>52</sup> See: <https://www.personuvernd.is/information-in-english/greinar/nr/438>

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

Kristian Guttesen PhD Candidate,  
Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues,  
University of Birmingham

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If you are happy for your son or daughter's written responses to classroom activities to be used as data in our research then you *do not need to fill in the form*. **Only fill this form in if you DO NOT want your son or daughter's written responses to classroom activities to be used as data in a research project about developing human strengths.**

**I DO NOT** want my son or daughter's response sheet to be used as data in a research project about developing human strengths

Your Name ..... Signed:

.....

Date: .....

Your Son/ Daughter's Name .....

Class .....

Please return this form to [Name of teacher] at [Insert School Name].

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

### E2. Parental Consent Opt Out Form Concerning Classroom Activities - Pilot Project (Icelandic)

Reykjavík, 16. október 2018

#### Kæru foreldrar/forráðamenn

Ég undirritaður Kristian Guttesen, doktorsnemi í menntavísindum við Menntavísindasvið Háskólans í Birmingham, vinn að rannsókn á siðferðilegu gildi listgreinakennslu. Leiðbeinendur mínir eru Kristján Kristjánsson og Tom Harrison. Rannsóknin er unnin í samstarfi við Menntavísindasvið Háskóla Íslands og tengiliður verkefnisins við Háskóla Íslands er Ólafur Páll Jónsson.

Hluti af rannsókn minni felst í að prófa aðferðir við kennslu ljóðlistar og leggja spurningalista fyrir nemendur bæði fyrir og eftir. Miklar kröfur eru gerðar til réttmætis og áreiðanleika slíkra spurningalista og til þess að leggja mat á gæði spurningalistanna eru þeir forprófaðir. Til stendur að nemendur í 9. bekk í Réttarholtsskóla taki þátt í þessari forprófun. Eftir að nemendur hafa svarað spurningalistunum er fyrirhugað að eiga rýnihópvíðtal við þátttakendur til þess að þeir fái tækifæri til að koma á framfæri við mig skoðunum sínum um innihald og framsetningu efnisins. Forkönnunin mun fara fram mánudaginn 24. október n.k. Í kjölfarið mun ég kenna nemendum sex sinnum 80 mínútur í senn, fram í janúar 2019. En þá verður eftirkönnun (sams konar og forkönnunin) lögð fyrir nemendurnar. Eftirkönnunin mun fara fram í janúar 2019. Þegar niðurstöður seinna prófsins liggja fyrir verður nöfnum nemendanna eytt svo gögnin verða ekki persónugreinanleg.

#### **Athugið að ekki er um að ræða öflun persónuupplýsinga né heldur er verið að leggja mat á þátttakendur í forprófuninni.**

Þessu bréfi er ætlað að upplýsa forráðamenn um verkefnið og fá samþykki þeirra fyrir þátttöku barna þeirra í forprófuninni að því tilskildu að börnin sjálf séu reiðubúin til að taka þátt í henni. Barni ykkar er heimilt að hætta þátttöku í þessari forprófun hvenær sem er.

Ef þið kjósið að barnið þitt taki ekki prófin sem eru hluti af þessari forprófun, sem innifelur forkönnun, kennslu í ljóðlist og eftirkönnun, vinsamlegast fyllið út meðfylgjandi seðil og skilið til skólustjóra Réttarholtsskóla, Margræti Sigfúsdóttur, fyrir 24. október 2018. Einnig er hægt að fylla blaðið út rafrænt og senda það í tölvupósti á netfangið kxg750 [REDACTED], eða [REDACTED].

Ykkur er velkomið að leita nánari upplýsinga um verkefnið hjá mér í síma [REDACTED] eða í tölvupósti:

[REDACTED].

Kær kveðja,  
Kristian Guttesen,  
doktorsemi við Háskólann í Birmingham  
og aðjunkt við Háskóla Íslands

[REDACTED]

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

Reykjavík, október 2018

Ég vinsamlegast afþakka þátttöku \_\_\_\_\_ (nafn  
nemenda)  
í ofangreindri forkönnun.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(undirritun foreldris/forráðamanns)

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

### F1. Parental Consent Opt In Form Concerning Classroom Activities - Main Study (English)

[Insert Date]

Dear Parent/ Guardian

**Permission for son / daughter's written responses to classroom activities to be used in a University of Birmingham research project. Please note, the student must also sign, there by giving their consent.**

[Insert School Name] has agreed to take part in a research project being developed and conducted by the School of Education at the University of Birmingham. The pupils who take part in this study will be encouraged to think about important values and character strengths. In particular, they will reflect on character strengths that connect us to other people and, over a 6-week period, they will take part in activities to develop these strengths.

The overall aim of the project is to help create responsible, caring and connected citizens. We will examine whether a greater sense of connection to and responsibility for others will foster better mental health and wellbeing in those taking part, and whether the project will encourage participants to think of new ways of connecting with and helping other people. The programme [Insert School Name] has agreed to participate in involves various activities which we believe young people will find enjoyable and rewarding.

In order for the programme to be evaluated we will collect data (in the form of questionnaire answers and written responses to several classroom activities) from participating schools, therefore we are asking you to sign the attached consent form on behalf of your child. All information gathered from participants will be treated **confidentially** and will be **anonymised**. This means that we will use only ID codes to identify participants once we have received data from participating schools. It will not be possible to identify individual responses from this point onwards. Compliance with the Icelandic Act on the Protection of Privacy as regards the Processing of Personal Data, No. 77<sup>53</sup> (corresponding with the UK Data Protection Act 1998 will be assured at all stages.

Please note that if you give consent you have the right to withdraw data from your child (or children) from being used in the study *at any point up to* the completion of the programme.

If you have any questions about the project, you are welcome to contact the researcher involved:

Kristian Guttesen: [redacted] or on [redacted].

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

Kristian Guttesen PhD Candidate,  
Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues,  
University of Birmingham

Please read, and indicate your acceptance of (by ticking the box) the following statements:

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<sup>53</sup> See: <https://www.personuvernd.is/information-in-english/greinar/nr/438>

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the attached information sheet and I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about it.
2. I understand that I voluntarily give consent to my child's written responses being used as data and that I am free to withdraw this consent at any point during the duration of the project without having to give a reason.
3. I understand that data collected during the study may be looked at by all members of the research team. I give permission for these individuals to have access to these data.
4. I understand that my child's name will not be included in any material for publication.
5. I agree to my child taking part in the study described.

---

*Name of participant*

---

*Date*

---

*Signature*

---

*Name of person taking consent*

---

*Date*

---

*Signature*



## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

Kær kveðja,  
Kristian Guttesen,  
doktorsnemi við Háskólann í Birmingham  
og aðjunkt við Háskóla Íslands



Reykjavík, \_\_\_\_\_ 2019

Ég, undirrituð/-aður forráðamaður:

\_\_\_\_\_ í 9. \_\_\_\_\_

(nafn nemenda og bekkur)

hef lesið kynningarbréf um rannsóknarverkefnið *Lljóðlist, mannkostir og dygðir* sem fer fram  
9. bekk í Réttarholtsskóla í mars til apríl 2019.

Ég samþykki \_\_\_\_\_ þátttöku barns míns í rannsóknarverkefninu.

Ég samþykki ekki \_\_\_\_\_ þátttöku barns míns í rannsóknarverkefninu.

\_\_\_\_\_

(undirskrift forsjáraðila)

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

### G1. Measurement Tool (English)

The scoring is done in accordance with the following rules:

**Evaluative factors:**

B(s). Understanding of vocabulary on moral virtues and vices.

B(b). Application of vocabulary on moral virtues and vices.

C. Ability to apply/use concepts of virtues and emotions from modern poems.

D. Ability to apply/use concepts of virtues and emotions from poems from the past.

E. Ability to apply/use concepts of virtues and emotions from personal experience or contemporary relevance.

Question	
1	Give 1 B(s)-point for selecting the best word and 0,5 point for selecting a positive or negative attribute where applicable.
2	In each line, 1 to 3 points. (1 for correct assessment in the middle column or acceptable reason; 2 for correct assessment, and an acceptable reason; 3 for correct assessment and corresponding argumentation.) If line 3 is almost a repetition of line, then 1 point is deducted, and if it is a complete repetition, then no point is given.
3	1 point for naming one possible option; 2 points for naming two or more possible options; 3 points for naming 2 distinctive and well-chosen options; No point is given unless a term for virtues or vices (with negation) is used. If one or more applicable terms are named, but also a non-applicable one, then 1 point is given at most.
4	1 point for sensible assessment; 2 points for sensible assessment and accompanying argumentation; 3 points for sensible assessment and good accompanying argumentation.
5	In each line, 1 to 3 points. (1 for correct assessment in the middle column or acceptable reason; 2 for correct assessment and an acceptable reason; 3 for correct assessment and corresponding argumentation.)
6	1 point for naming one possible option; 2 points for naming two or more possible options; 3 points for naming 2 distinctive and well-chosen options; No point is given unless a term for virtues or vices (with negation) is used. If one or more applicable terms are named, but also a non-applicable one, then 1 point is given at most.
7	1 point for sensible assessment; 2 points for sensible assessment and accompanying argumentation; 3 points for sensible assessment and good accompanying argumentation.
8	Middle Column: 1 B(b)-point in each row for naming a virtue, and 3 points if both are well chosen. No point unless a word, signifying a virtue or a vice (with a negation), is used. Last Column: 1-3 E-points for giving a sensible reason. (1 point if one reason is given; 2 points if at least one good reason is given; 3 points, if a well contemplated reasons is given, and which corresponds with the character trait being described or the virtue mentioned.
9	1-2 B(s)-points for clarifying the meaning of a word. 1-3 B(b)-points for giving an example. (1 point given if an example can in some cases be reduced to a concept; 2 points given for a relevant example; 3 points given for an excellent example.)

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

<b>10</b>	1-6 points for naming an attribute which sets a good example. (1 point given for naming an individual/a character which is known to possess a good quality; 2-4 points given for naming a distinguished good quality. 5-6 points given for naming at least two distinguished good qualities that this individual/character possesses.)
	Maximum number of points.

### Comments

<b>B(s)</b>	<b>B(b)</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	
0, ½, 1, ... 10					
		0, 1, 2, ... 9			
	0, 1, 2, 3				Please note the possibility of giving one point for using a phrase that describes a virtue (such as, 'avoid lying').
		0, 1, 2, 3			
			0, 1, 2, ... 9		
	0, 1, 2, 3				Please note the possibility of giving one point for using a phrase that describes a virtue (such as, 'avoid lying').
			0, 1, 2, 3		
	0, 1, 2, 3			0, 1, 2, ... 6	
0, 1, 2	0, 1, 2, 3				
				0, 1, 2, ... 6	

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttusen

12	12	12	12	12
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**General comment:** If there is an uncertainty as to whether or not a point should be given, then no point is given (this is contrary to the general rule which teachers follow when giving course assessment and feedback to students). Here, they are not given the benefit of a doubt, and, besides, they do not receive any feedback.

The arrangement of the scoring sheet was as follows:

Personal Information					
Name (First name is sufficient)	ID number	School	Class	Year	Gender

			1. part	2. part - modern poem (>1999)			3. part - poem from the past (<1999)		
Colour	A or B	Scored by	Q. 1	Q. 2	Q. 3	Q. 4	Q. 5	Q. 6	Q. 7
			10	9	3	3	9	3	3
			B(s)	C	B(b)	C	D	B(b)	D

4. part - pers. exp., contemporary relevance					Total points in each category				
Q. 8		Q. 9		Q. 10	B(s)	B(b)	C	D	E
3	6	2	3	6	12	12	12	12	12
B(b)	E	B(s)	B(b)	E					

## G2. Measurement Tool (Icelandic)

Kannanirnar voru metnar út frá eftirfarandi reglum:

### Matsþættir:

B(s). Skilningur á orðaforða um siðferðilegar dygðir og lesti.

B(b). Beiting orðaforða um siðferðilegar dygðir og lesti.

C. Hæfni til að beita hugtökum um dygðir á ljóð úr samtímanum.

D. Hæfni til að beita hugtökum um dygðir á ljóð frá fyrri tíð.

E. Hæfni til að beita hugtökum um dygðir á persónulega reynslu eða veruleika samtímans.

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

Spurning	
1	Gefið 1 B(s)-stig fyrir að velja besta orð og 0,5 stig fyrir að velja jákvæða einkunn þar sem við á eða neikvæða þar sem það á við.
2	Í hverri línu 1 til 3 stig. (1 fyrir rétt mat í miðdálk eða tæka ástæðu; 2 fyrir rétt mat og einhverja ástæðu sem má til sanns vegar færa; 3 fyrir ástæðu sem er rökstudd og í samræmi við mat.) Ef lína 3 er nánast endurtekning á línu 2 þá lækka stig fyrir hana um 1 og ef hún er alger endurtekning gefur hún ekkert stig.
3	1 stig fyrir að nefna einn kost sem til greina kemur; 2 stig fyrir að nefna tvo eða fleiri sem til greina koma; 3 stig fyrir að nefna 2 aðgreinda kosti sem eru vel valdir; Ekkert stig nema notað sé orð yfir dygðir eða lesti (m. neitun). Ef nefndir eru einn eða fl. sem koma til greina en líka e-r sem koma ekki til greina þá mest 1 stig.
4	1 stig fyrir skynsamlegt mat; 2 stig fyrir skynsamlegt mat með rökstuðningi; 3 stig fyrir skynsamlegt mat með góðum rökstuðningi.
5	Í hverri línu 1 til 3 stig. (1 fyrir rétt mat í miðdálk eða tæka ástæðu; 2 fyrir rétt mat og einhverja ástæðu sem má til sanns vegar færa; 3 fyrir ástæðu sem er rökstudd og í samræmi við mat.)
6	1 stig fyrir að nefna einn kost sem til greina kemur; 2 stig fyrir að nefna tvo eða fleiri sem til greina koma; 3 stig fyrir að nefna 2 sem eru vel valdir; Ekkert stig nema notað sé orð yfir dygðir eða lesti (m. neitun). Ef nefndir eru einn eða fl. sem koma til greina en líka e-r sem koma ekki til greina þá mest 1 stig.
7	1 stig fyrir skynsamlegt mat; 2 stig fyrir skynsamlegt mat með rökstuðningi; 3 stig fyrir skynsamlegt mat með góðum rökstuðningi.
8	Miðdálkur: 1 B(b)-stig í hvorri línu fyrir að nefna dygð og 3 stig ef báðar eru vel valdar. Ekkert stig nema notað sé orð yfir dygð eða löst (með neitun) sem til greina kemur. Aftasti dálkur: 1-3 E-stig fyrir að tilgreina skynsamlega ástæðu. (1 ef ein ástæða kemur til greina; 2 ef nefnd er a.m.k. ein góð ástæða; 3 ef ástæða er vel hugsuð og í samræmi við kost sem er lýst eða dygð sem er nefnd.)
9	1-2 B(s)-stig fyrir að útskýra merkingu orðs. 1-3 B(b)-stig fyrir að nefna dæmi. (1 stig gefið ef dæmi má í sumum tilvikum heimfæra upp á hugtak; 2 fyrir dæmi sem á vel við; 3 fyrir mjög gott dæmi.)
10	1-6 stig fyrir að tilgreina eiginleika sem eru til eftirbreytni. (1 stig fyrir að nefna persónu sem er kunn af einhverju góðu; 2 til 4 stig fyrir að nefna einn eftirbreytniverðan eiginleika. 5 til 6 fyrir að tilgreina a.m.k. tvennt sem er eftirbreytnivert og einkennir viðkomandi persónu.)
	Hámarksfjöldi stiga

Athugasemd

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttusen

B(s)	B(b)	C	D	E	
0, ½, 1, ... 10					
		0, 1, 2, ... 9			
	0, 1, 2, 3				Ath. möguleika á að gefa eitt stig fyrir orðasamband sem lýsir dygð (t.d. „forðast að ljúga“).
		0, 1, 2, 3			
			0, 1, 2, ... 9		
	0, 1, 2, 3				Ath. möguleika á að gefa eitt stig fyrir orðasamband sem lýsir dygð (t.d. „forðast að ljúga“).
			0, 1, 2, 3		
	0, 1, 2, 3			0, 1, 2, ... 6	
0, 1, 2	0, 1, 2, 3				
				0, 1, 2, ... 6	
<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	

**Almenn athugasemd:** Ef vafi leikur á hvort gefa á stig er ekkert stig gefið (þetta er öfugt við þá reglu sem kennarar fylgja við námsmat og endurgjöf til nemenda. Hér njóta þeir ekki vafans enda fá þeir enga endurgjöf.

Innsláttarformið var sett upp eins og hér segir:

**Persónuupplýsingar**

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttusen

Nafn (Eiginafn nægir)	Auðkenni	Skóli	Athugasemd	Árg.	Kyni

			1. part	2. hluti – ljóð úr samtíð (>1999)				3. hluti – ljóðfrá síðustu öld (<1999)		
Próf/litur	A eða B	Metið af	Sp. 1	Sp. 2	Sp. 3	Sp. 4	Sp. 5	Sp. 6	Sp. 7	
			10	9	3	3	9	3	3	
			B(s)	C	B(b)	C	D	B(b)	D	

4. hluti - pers. reynsla., verul. samt.					Stig alls í hverjum flokki				
Sp. 8		Sp. 9		Sp. 10	B(s)	B(b)	C	D	E
3	6	2	3	6	12	12	12	12	12
B(b)	E	B(s)	B(b)	E					

**Character Education Through Poetry**

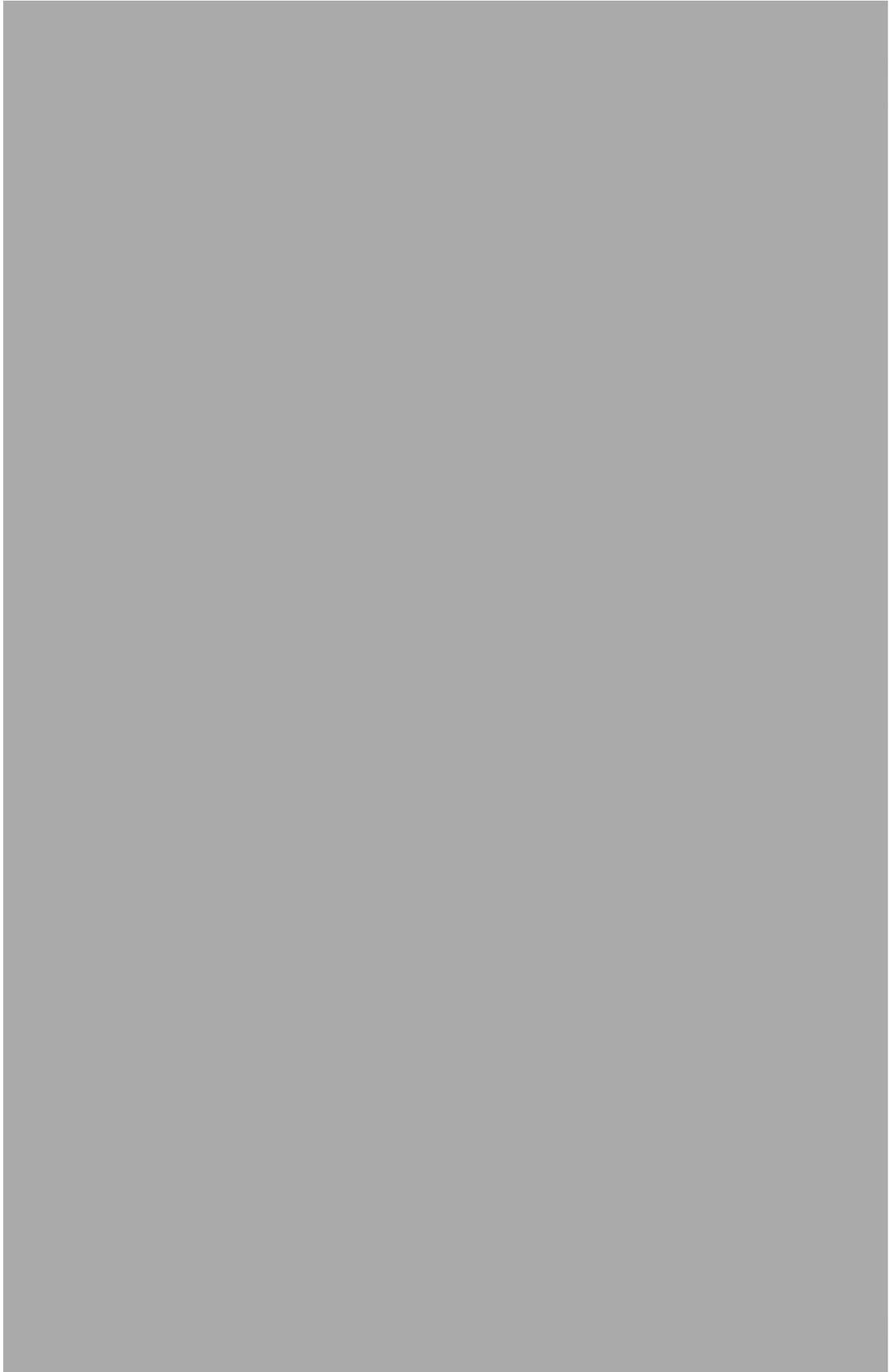
Kristian Guttesen

H. PhD Researcher's DBS Certificate



## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen



## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

### 11. Lesson Plans in English

#### Lesson Plans (1-6)

##### Lesson Plan #1

<b>Name:</b> Kristian Guttesen	
<b>Group:</b> 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	<b>boys:</b> <b>girls:</b>
<b>Date:</b> Character Education/poetry #1	<b>Duration of lesson:</b> 1x 80 min
<b>Aim of the lesson:</b> For students to adopt the method of a philosophical dialogue to investigate questions that interest the students, and they decided to address.	<b>Learning materials:</b>
<b>Status of the Students' Knowledge:</b> The students do not need to have had prior knowledge of engaging in a philosophical dialogue.	
<b>The content of the lesson (and justification):</b>  a) Photocopies of the poem to hand out to students, a whiteboard to write questions and ideas on.	
<b>Approach (and justification):</b>  Creative and critical thinking is most efficiently developed through a dialogue of a community of peers that is committed to investigate together the questions they are interested in seeking answers to. Creating and developing a community of inquiry is an exciting and diverse project for students in preschool, primary-, or secondary school. <a href="#">Robert Fisher Ph.D.</a> has described the development of a community of inquiry by comparing the behavioural patterns that characterise a group that is starting out as a community of inquiry with that of a group that has evolved into a developed community of inquiry. His method can be viewed <a href="#">here</a> (Sigurðardóttir, 2013).	
<b>What does the teacher do?</b>  The teacher has two roles, both the traditional one of a moderator, while he/she also tries to encourage the students to engage in the conversation so that they themselves keep it	<b>What do the students do?</b>  Have students sit in a circle so that everyone in the group can look at everyone else during the discussion.

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

going and are at a certain liberty to determine the direction of the conversation.

At the start of the dialogue the teacher reminds the students of the dialogue rules, that the group has decided on, see e.g. the teacher's notes for the [Dialogue Rules](#).

The work process that we recommend in this assignment is basic recipe for a philosophical dialogue. This type of work is described in more detail in the teacher's notes for the [Basic Recipe for a Philosophical Dialogue](#). In the next column, you will find a glossary of the process.

When you moderate a philosophical dialogue, it is advisable to keep the following points in mind:

- It is the students who ought to talk amongst themselves. You should guide them in how to do it well.
- Listening is a basic condition for conversation to take place. You remind the students of that by saying, for example: 'did you catch what... said?' or 'can anyone summarise for the group what we are discussing now?'
- It is an indication of quality of a philosophical discussion when it goes into depth about the topic at hand, rather than just naming countless examples of the same thing. While students provide arguments, perspectives and examples that shed new light on the subject matter, the dialogue is still on the right track. If students start to jump from one thing to another or repeat what others have already said, the conversation will become worse, and it is likely that the participants will soon get bored.
- Remember to take time at the end of the lesson to ask the students to summarise what they have heard and learned from the conversation. This can be done in various ways, for example by having everyone write in a notebook how they want to answer the original question or by taking turns and having everyone say what they

You choose what suits you and the group best: sitting on the floor, sitting on chairs, sitting at a table or any other installation that springs to mind.

When the students have settled in, you distribute copies of the poem and the group reads it outloud together. Each student can read one sentence, and those who do not want to read just say 'pass'.

Call for questions from the students and write them up on the whiteboard so that everyone can see them. Write the name of the questioner after each question so that you can ask her/him for explanations or elaborations later on in the process.

When students do not have any more questions or the whiteboard is full, the students must choose one question (or a category of similar questions) to start the dialogue.

The voting process is quick, but if the group is just starting out, it may be fitting to keep the voting anonymous. It is a good idea to assign each question a number on the whiteboard, and have each student write down the number of the question he or she chooses. The tickets are collected by the teacher or a student, the votes are counted and then a conversation is held based on the chosen question.

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

want to they would like the question for the next session to be.

### A Variation of the Theme

To give the students a better opportunity to relate to the content of the story before they formulate questions, you could let them re-enact the situation the story tells and solve a specific problem. For example, you can let the group (or an individual who enjoys having the spotlight on him or her) imagine that they are graduating from high school and have to decide whether to take a year off to travel before they go to junior college or get a job or work for a year to save up some money. Each participant in the circle takes on the role of a particular age, for example 'I am 6 years old', 'I am 30 years old' and 'I am 75 years old' – what decision would each 'I' make?

When put in the position of having to pay the travel debts, some of the 'I's would probably choose work over travel. Others might consider the memories and experiences of a long journey important for promoting the independence and openness needed to succeed in higher education.

Such a game could be used to bring out different points of view on issues such as drug use, smoking and responsible sex. The game is not expected to elicit clear and definitive answers in the student group, but it can broaden the students' thinking about these issues. Perhaps more diverse interpretations could be made in the student group by encouraging them to present their 'I' in a dramatic way as some kind of a 'ghosts of the past and the future' as Dickens does in his Christmas Carol.

### The Philosophy of the Poem – Utilitarianism

Utilitarianism is a theory of ethics that considers the act or behaviour that leads to 'the greatest happiness for most' to be the right one. In order to decide what is the right thing to do, you should, according to this theory, calculate how many people benefit from the benefit in question and how much that benefit will be, and then subtract the number of people who will suffer from the same decision and how much their suffering will be. In other words, it is best to do what maximises happiness and minimizes suffering. Further information on Utilitarianism can be found on [Wikipedia](#) and on the [Science Web](#).

Utilitarianism can be criticised in various ways. For example, it is difficult to accurately predict the consequences of one's decisions, and it is very difficult to measure happiness and probably not worth the time to go through this measurement process every time a moral decision has to be made. The essence of Utilitarianism, however, is that an act is considered good if its consequences are good, rather than that the act is judged good or bad because it follows or breaks some pre-given rule.

It is also important according Utilitarianism that the interests of all individuals have equal value. When assessing impact, therefore, all individuals have 'one vote and no one more than one.' You can try out the exercise, which the story is based on, on yourself by doing the

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

following thought experiment: If happiness is very important to you in life, is happiness then not equally important no matter in what period of your life you experience it? Imagine that you are 30 years old when you make a decision concerning a particular dilemma. The consequences of this decision on your life should be as important to you when you are 70-71 years old as the consequences for your life when you are 30-31 years old (as long as you are still alive and well). It is based on this idea that the characters of the story emerge, one character for each year I have lived and all have equal voting rights when it comes to decision making.

### **The Philosophy of the Poem - Caution or Freedom**

It is obviously far-fetched to be able to look at an entire lifetime just as an eagle looks over its hunting grounds. One may even be concerned about the impact that such an overview could have on the nation's consumption patterns and economic growth, if everyone were to constantly make decisions in light of the fact that they would have to save for old age. But the other extremes are certainly present when people make decisions that have serious consequences and can even destroy body and soul just to enjoy the slightest quick pleasure. Such decisions would not be successful in the eyes of the 'I'-jury.

Perhaps the most important question that the story might raise is 'To what extent should I consider in the future when I am faced with a decision?' Psychology, for instance, on the one hand that the ability to resist temptation and wait for a reward is strongly linked to how successful one is in life (see, for example, the Ted Talk, [Marshmallow Experiment](#)). But when you are young or in love, such calculations about real life decisions seem to place you in the category of strong-willed individual with a mind like a spreadsheet. Would a person in love, for instance, be interested in discussing his or her future marriage with a view to figuring out the pros and cons of the marriage? Or does he or she rather follow their instinct, based on emotions?

If it is hard or weird not to feel particularly connected to the year you are living right now, then is it not much harder to try to connect with another person's life? How can the happiness of others matter to me as much as my own? It can easily be said that calculating happiness is really just too difficult, even out of the question. On the one hand, the logistics seem to be too complex, and on the other hand, it can also be argued that it is completely unrealistic to expect empathy for individuals to the extent that they can weigh the pros and cons regardless of their own situation and feelings at any given time. In fact, it seems inhuman to give more weight to those closest to you than to strangers, or to value your own life more than the lives of others. But playing around with the status quo, 'completely neutral' can be a good thought experiment and push us a little more towards empathy and caring for other people in the past, present and future.

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

MY

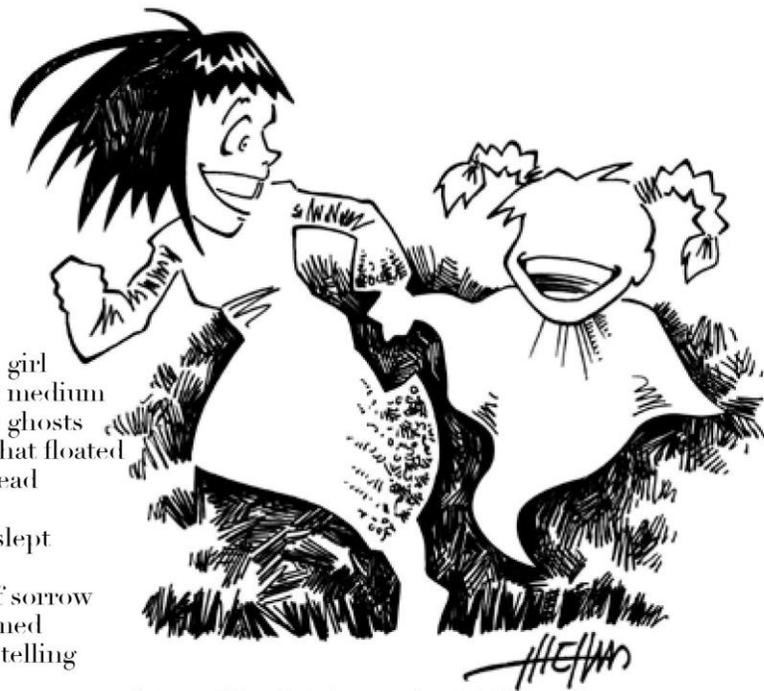
first ghost, was a photo of a corpse that used to hang upon the wall  
in my grandmother's living room  
a little girl that died alone from a strange epidemic  
she looked so peaceful that I thought she was sleeping

it wasn't until granny fell on the floor in a trance  
and her voice transformed into a bright voice of girl  
I realised that those who sleep without waking up are  
grief generators

I clutched hard at the doll  
my aunt gave me on her deathbed

the spirit of the girl  
the spirit of the medium  
the spirit of the ghosts  
thin blue mist that floated  
into the dolls head

this doll never slept  
it stared at me  
with eyes full of sorrow  
that always seemed  
on the verge of telling  
me something



years later a friend stole my ghostdoll  
and every time I see the girl  
it looks like the light blue mist has blown into her head  
and the eyes of the doll stare vividly back at me

I avoid meeting this girl  
who is always dressed in big white dresses  
with pale pink roses in her hair

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

### Lesson Plan #2

<b>Name:</b> Kristian Guttesen	
<b>Group:</b> 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	<b>boys:</b> <b>girls:</b>
<b>Date:</b> Character Education/poetry #2	<b>Duration of lesson:</b> 1x 80 min
<b>Aim of the lesson:</b> For students to adopt the method of a philosophical dialogue to investigate questions that interest the students, and they decided to address.	<b>Learning materials:</b>
<b>Status of the Students' Knowledge:</b> The students have participated in one lesson involving a philosophical dialogue.	
<b>The content of the lesson (and justification):</b>  a) Poems will be read that the students reflect on and adapt to their own experience. By reflecting on the poems, the knowledge value of aesthetics and the knowledge value of humanity are illustrated in such a way that the students learn to take themselves seriously, when they find how an artistic perspective can shape the view of the world. To this end, the poem has an unequivocal pedagogical value.  During this lesson, we will focus on the virtue of compassion and the emotions of pride and shame.  Compassion means 'being able to put oneself into the shoe of another, to feel the harmony between individuals, to feel for others, to rejoice with others, to grieve with others and to want to give something to others' (Gunnar Hersveinn, 2005, p. 110).  Pride is an emotion that springs from our achievements in the world. We can feel proud when we succeed in a mission and achieve our goals. It concerns the individual themselves, and arises from the construction or training of talents. It is dependent on personal success, for example, passing a difficult exam. [...] Pride has been overshadowed by pride and has often been confused with complacency, vanity, arrogance, or even obvious things, like being an Icelander. Some people never experience this feeling because they are too humble (Gunnar Hersveinn, 2005, p. 52).  Shame is something you feel without being able to rid yourself of it, and which causes discomfort. This occurs when one is ashamed of something one has done or something has (rightly or wrongly) been said about one a person. To a great extent, shame is the opposite of	

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

pride.

### Approach (and justification):

Creative and critical thinking is most efficiently developed through a dialogue of a community of peers that is committed to investigate together the questions they are interested in seeking answers to. Creating and developing a community of inquiry is an exciting and diverse project for students in preschool, primary-, or secondary school. [Robert Fisher Ph.D.](#) has described the development of a community of inquiry by comparing the behavioural patterns that characterise a group that is starting out as a community of inquiry with that of a group that has evolved into a developed community of inquiry. His method can be viewed [here](#) (Sigurðardóttir, 2013).

### What does the teacher do?

The teacher has two roles, both the traditional one of a moderator, while he/she also tries to encourage the students to engage in the conversation so that they themselves keep it going and are at a certain liberty to determine the direction of the conversation.

At the start of the dialogue the teacher reminds the students of the dialogue rules, that the group has decided on, see e.g. the teacher's notes for the [Dialogue Rules](#).

The work process that we recommend in this assignment is basic recipe for a philosophical dialogue. This type of work is described in more detail in the teacher's notes for the [Basic Recipe for a Philosophical Dialogue](#). In the next column, you will find a glossary of the process.

When you moderate a philosophical dialogue, it is advisable to keep the following points in mind:

- It is the students who ought to talk amongst themselves. You should guide them in how to do it well.
- Listening is a basic condition for conversation to take place. You remind the students of that by saying, for example: 'did you catch what... said?' or 'can anyone

### What do the students do?

Have students sit in a circle so that everyone in the group can look at everyone else during the discussion.

You choose what suits you and the group best: sitting on the floor, sitting on chairs, sitting at a table or any other installation that springs to mind.

When the students have settled in, you distribute copies of the poem and the group reads it outloud together. Each student can read one sentence, and those who do not want to read just say 'pass'.

Call for questions from the students and write them up on the whiteboard so that everyone can see them. Write the name of the questioner after each question so that you can ask her/him for explanations or elaborations later on in the process.

When students do not have any more questions or the whiteboard is full, the students must choose one question (or a category of similar questions) to start the dialogue.

The voting process is quick, but if the group is just starting out, it may be fitting to keep the voting anonymous. It is a good idea to assign each question a number on the whiteboard,

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

summarise for the group what we are discussing now?’

- It is an indication of quality of a philosophical discussion when it goes into depth about the topic at hand, rather than just naming countless examples of the same thing. While students provide arguments, perspectives and examples that shed new light on the subject matter, the dialogue is still on the right track. If students start to jump from one thing to another or repeat what others have already said, the conversation will become worse, and it is likely that the participants will soon get bored.
- Remember to take time at the end of the lesson to ask the students to summarise what they have heard and learned from the conversation. This can be done in various ways, for example by having everyone write in a notebook how they want to answer the original question or by taking turns and having everyone say what they want to they would like the question for the next session to be.

and have each student write down the number of the question he or she chooses. The tickets are collected by the teacher or a student, the votes are counted and then a conversation is held based on the chosen question.

Virtue: **Compassion**

*Compassion*

If the misery of the heart is an open wound  
and something goes wrong  
then he who finds tears will find  
that beauty resides in words.

We perceive the warm invitation of the mind  
which is heavenly to believe,  
where compassion is a cotton wool

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

that wants to nurture us.

And misery saith goodbye to all those  
who are overcome by difficulties,  
if they see the bright light of understanding  
which shines with good intentions.

– Kristján Hreinsson

### **Initial Question and Individual Assignment (Optional):**

Is compassion spontaneous/self-triggered or is there something else that triggers it? Explain your answer.

What does it mean to put oneself into the shoes of another?

Now, a philosophical dialogue, based on the students' questions, begins. First, the dialogue rules must be introduced. The class has a limited amount of time to reach a conclusion. If no agreement is reached, the teacher can for example call for an election.

### **A Possible Group Assignment:**

Which words in the poem are difficult? Use dictionaries/search engines to find out their meaning.

---

Virtue/emotion: **Pride**

*Pride*

If your heart supports your pride  
and elevates your mind,  
then you possess that which matters, but not that  
which does not matter.

And although your luck seems fragile

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

do not be afraid  
but respect your wisdom  
and feel the pride in your chest.

Because that which always is healthy for you  
is a desire from the roots of the heart  
and if you recognise strength and pride,  
you stand on solid ground.

– Kristján Hreinsson

### **Initial Question and Individual Assignment (Optional):**

Are there different types of pride? If so, which ones? If not what makes them the same?

Now, a philosophical dialogue, based on students' questions, begins. First, the dialogue rules must be introduced. The class has a limited amount of time to reach a conclusion. If no agreement is reached, the teacher can for example call for an election.

### **A Possible Group Assignment:**

Is there a connection between national pride and national pride? Why/why not?

---

Emotion: **Shame**

*Shame*

The nerve of life from difficult experiences  
shall be knotted on a just cause  
but sometimes you have to endure shame  
when the thread tears the harm.

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

If unjust thinking dictates  
the justice you distinguish,  
then let the perception shine on  
so that you will not hide shame.

If you respect human welfare,  
you practice your thinking,  
and best of all is the shame  
which shows a fragile heart.

– Kristján Hreinsson

### **Initial Question and Individual Assignment (Optional):**

What is positive about shame? What is negative about shame? Justify your statement.

Now, a philosophical dialogue, based on the students' questions, begins. First, the dialogue rules must be introduced. The class has a limited amount of time to reach a conclusion. If no agreement is reached, the teacher can for example call for an election.

### **A Possible Group Assignment:**

Is it possible to be proud of shame? How then/why not?

### **Further Processing**

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

### Lesson Plan #3

<b>Name:</b> Kristian Guttesen	
<b>Group:</b> 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	<b>boys:</b> <b>girls:</b>
<b>Date:</b> Character Education/poetry #3	<b>Duration of lesson:</b> 1x 80 min
<b>Aim of the lesson:</b> For students to adopt the method of a philosophical dialogue to investigate questions that interest the students, and they decided to address.	<b>Learning materials:</b>  Poems on slides or in handouts.
<b>Status of the Students' Knowledge:</b> The students have participated in two lessons involving a philosophical dialogue.	
<b>The content of the lesson (and justification):</b>  a) Poems will be read that the students reflect on and adapt to their own experience. By reflecting on the poems, the knowledge value of aesthetics and the knowledge value of humanity are illustrated in such a way that the students learn to take themselves seriously, when they find how an artistic perspective can shape the view of the world. To this end, the poem has an unequivocal pedagogical value.  During this lesson, we will focus on the virtue of compassion and the emotion of pride.  Compassion means 'being able to put oneself into the shoe of another, to feel the harmony between individuals, to feel for others, to rejoice with others, to grieve with others and to want to give something to others' (Gunnar Hersveinn, 2005, p. 110).  Pride is an emotion that springs from our achievements in the world. We can feel proud when we succeed in a mission and achieve our goals. It concerns the individual themselves, and arises from the construction or training of talents. It is dependent on personal success, for example, passing a difficult exam. [...] Pride has been overshadowed by pride and has often been confused with complacency, vanity, arrogance, or even obvious things, like being an Icelander. Some people never experience this feeling because they are too humble (Gunnar Hersveinn, 2005, p. 52).	
<b>Approach (and justification):</b>  Creative and critical thinking is most efficiently developed through a dialogue of a community of peers that is committed to investigate together the questions they are interested in seeking answers to. Creating and developing a community of inquiry is an exciting and diverse project for students in preschool, primary-, or secondary school. <a href="#">Robert Fisher Ph.D.</a>	

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

has described the development of a community of inquiry by comparing the behavioural patterns that characterise a group that is starting out as a community of inquiry with that of a group that has evolved into a developed community of inquiry. His method can be viewed [here](#) (Sigurðardóttir, 2013).

### What does the teacher do?

The teacher has two roles, both the traditional one of a moderator, while he/she also tries to encourage the students to engage in the conversation so that they themselves keep it going and are at a certain liberty to determine the direction of the conversation.

At the start of the dialogue the teacher reminds the students of the dialogue rules, that the group has decided on, see e.g. the teacher's notes for the [Dialogue Rules](#).

The work process that we recommend in this assignment is basic recipe for a philosophical dialogue. This type of work is described in more detail in the teacher's notes for the [Basic Recipe for a Philosophical Dialogue](#). In the next column, you will find a glossary of the process.

When you moderate a philosophical dialogue, it is advisable to keep the following points in mind:

- It is the students who ought to talk amongst themselves. You should guide them in how to do it well.
- Listening is a basic condition for conversation to take place. You remind the students of that by saying, for example: 'did you catch what... said?' or 'can anyone summarise for the group what we are discussing now?'
- It is an indication of quality of a philosophical discussion when it goes into depth about the topic at hand, rather than just naming countless examples of the same thing. While students provide arguments,

### What do the students do?

Have students sit in a circle so that everyone in the group can look at everyone else during the discussion.

You choose what suits you and the group best: sitting on the floor, sitting on chairs, sitting at a table or any other installation that springs to mind.

When the students have settled in, you distribute copies of the poem and the group reads it aloud together. Each student can read one sentence, and those who do not want to read just say 'pass'.

Call for questions from the students and write them up on the whiteboard so that everyone can see them. Write the name of the questioner after each question so that you can ask her/him for explanations or elaborations later on in the process.

When students do not have any more questions or the whiteboard is full, the students must choose one question (or a category of similar questions) to start the dialogue.

The voting process is quick, but if the group is just starting out, it may be fitting to keep the voting anonymous. It is a good idea to assign each question a number on the whiteboard, and have each student write down the number of the question he or she chooses. The tickets are collected by the teacher or a student, the votes are counted and then a conversation is held based on the chosen question.

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

perspectives and examples that shed new light on the subject matter, the dialogue is still on the right track. If students start to jump from one thing to another or repeat what others have already said, the conversation will become worse, and it is likely that the participants will soon get bored.

- Remember to take time at the end of the lesson to ask the students to summarise what they have heard and learned from the conversation. This can be done in various ways, for example by having everyone write in a notebook how they want to answer the original question or by taking turns and having everyone say what they want to they would like the question for the next session to be.

Virtue: **Compassion**

*The Help*

Newspapers and radio bring us news  
of the genocide  
and now everyone has a duty to participate:  
so we tear out our hearts,  
place them hanging on us  
as a badge of honour  
and roam outside for a good while  
  
before we go to bed  
on our folly  
and turn whole and undivided  
to the dream life.

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

– Þorsteinn frá Hamri

### **Initial Question and Individual Assignment (Optional):**

What is the poem about?

Try to draw it.

Now, a philosophical dialogue, based on the students' questions, begins. First, the dialogue rules must be introduced. The class has a limited amount of time to reach a conclusion. If no agreement is reached, the teacher can for example call for an election.

### **A Possible Group Assignment:**

The Help. Read the poem once more and think about its contents. Then write an article/inspiration about helping your neighbour. Do we have a duty to help other individuals, groups, or nations? What are we doing today? (Valdimarsdóttir & Sigtryggsdóttir, 2011)

### **Virtue: Compassion**

#### *Experience*

I guess I had turned eight that summer. It was around noon in late summer, I scraped down alone to the river. Usually, a wooden tub full of water stood on the riverbank, which the women used for washing, but we, the kids, sometimes kept herrings in it that we caught in the river. We quickly released them again, we just wanted to look at them. I took off my shoes and went barefoot into the shallow river. The water was clear and cold. Some large herrings swam quickly between the rocks. I immediately managed to grab one and ran with it, holding it in my palms, and released it into the tub. At that instance, I discovered that the water was boiling. hot, ready for washing - the trout drifted up, veins splitting, and floated dead with the white belly sticking out of the water. What are facts and common sense if experience contradicts

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

both of these? You say, 'fish have no voice', that they  
do not emit any sound. But I will remember the screaming of that trout  
for as long as I live.

– Vilborg Dagbjartsdóttir

### **Initial Question and Individual Assignment (Optional):**

What does the statement 'fish have no voice' do for the poem?

Can you give an example of when you saw/read about/heard about someone injuring themselves? What happened? Is it logical to feel pain in such a situation?

Now, a philosophical dialogue, based on the students' questions, begins. First, the dialogue rules must be introduced. The class has a limited amount of time to reach a conclusion. If no agreement is reached, the teacher can for example call for an election.

### **A Possible Group Assignment:**

Re-write the poem from the point of view of an adult.

### **Virtue: Compassion**

*Journey's End*<sup>54</sup>

The star of love  
over Steeple Rock  
is cloaked in clouds of night.  
It laughed, once, from heaven  
on the lad grieving  
deep in the dark valley.

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<sup>54</sup> Translation by Dick Ringler, retrieved from: <https://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/Jonas/Ferdalok/Ferdalok.html>  
(Accessed: 18.9.2021)

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

I know where all hope —  
where my whole world —  
flames with the fire of God.

I throw off the chains  
of thought, I fling  
myself into your soul.

I sink myself,  
see into your being,  
live your very life;  
each gracious moment  
that God loves you  
blooms in my burning heart.

Alone together  
we gathered flowers  
high on the heath at dawn.  
I wove you wreaths,  
reverently laying  
loving gifts in your lap.

You heaped my forehead  
with fragrant rings  
of bright blue flowers,  
one, then another;  
you nodded and smiled  
and swiftly snatched them away.

We laughed in the highlands  
while heaven grew clear,  
bright at the mountain brim.

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

Not a single joy  
seemed to exist  
apart from living our life.<sup>1</sup>

The wise flower-elves  
wept in the hollows,  
they knew we would need to part.

We thought it was drops  
of dew, and kissed  
cold tears from the crossgrass.

I held you on horseback  
in the hurtling stream  
and felt with fond assurance  
I could lift and carry  
so light a flower  
over all the leagues of life.

Beside the bank  
of Boar River  
I carefully combed your hair;  
eye stars flash,  
flower lips smile,  
cheeks turn ruby red.

He is far from your fair  
friendship, the lad  
deep in the dark valley.

The star of love  
over Steeple Rock  
is burning back of clouds.

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

The heavens part  
the high planets,  
blade parts back and edge;  
not even eter-  
nity can part  
souls that are sealed in love.

– Jónas Hallgrímsson

### **Initial Question and Individual Assignment (Optional):**

Is the protagonist sincere? Why/why not?

Whom is the protagonist speaking to? What has happened?

Now, a philosophical dialogue, based on the students' questions, begins. First, the dialogue rules must be introduced. The class has a limited amount of time to reach a conclusion. If no agreement is reached, the teacher can for example call for an election.

### **A Possible Group Assignment:**

*Poetry slam* (Valdimarsdóttir & Sigtryggsdóttir, 2011).

Virtue/emotion: **Pride**

*Laugavegur*<sup>55</sup>

Oh the mercy of living in such a country live with wonders every day how much  
this affects me this closeness to nature I stress over the soup and  
nod to my foreign colleagues yesyes of course I have travelled

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<sup>55</sup> Translation by Úlfhildur Dagsdóttir (Þrastardóttir, 2017).

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

the ringroad back and forth seen wild geese without flying feathers hovered over  
the erupting grímsvötn looked at askja kverkfjöll and shining  
lónsöræfi all this and much more in colour and singing sound oh  
god bless ómar ragnarsson and the subscription is not at all expensive.

– Sigurbjörg Prastardóttir

### Initial questions:

Um hvað fjallar ljóðið?

Hvar er ljóðmælandinn staddur og hvaða merkingu hefur það?

Now, a philosophical dialogue, based on the students' questions, begins. First, the dialogue rules must be introduced. The class has a limited amount of time to reach a conclusion. If no agreement is reached, the teacher can for example call for an election.

### A Possible Group Assignment (Optional)

A creative writing exercise about one's own experience of the country and attitudes towards it. The students can, for instance, discuss individual places that are dear to them or have influenced them. The teacher can also give out the following tasks: a. Describe a place that has had a good effect on you. Try to understand why this site had a good influence on you, and try to convey it in the text. Give the description a name. b. Do you have a dream place? What kind of place is it? Give this place a name (Valdimarsdóttir & Sigtryggsdóttir, 2011b).

Virtue/emotion: **Pride**

*andrea karítas*

toothless smile from small one

induces tears under the eyelids

one more miracle

who relies entirely on me

so beautiful, so beautiful, so beautiful

do you see, mum? do you see what I made?

do you see what I could do?

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

and yet, I'm nothing but breasts  
in her eyes.

– Sigurbjörg Sæmundsdóttir

### **Initial Question:**

Can someone who has not given birth to/had a child comprehend what pride is?

Now, a philosophical dialogue, based on the students' questions, begins. First, the dialogue rules must be introduced. The class has a limited amount of time to reach a conclusion. If no agreement is reached, the teacher can for example call for an election.

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

### Lesson Plan #4

<b>Name:</b> Kristian Guttesen	
<b>Group:</b> 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	<b>boys:</b> <b>girls:</b>
<b>Date:</b> Character Education/poetry #3	<b>Duration of lesson:</b> 1x 80 min
<b>Aim of the lesson:</b> For students to adopt the method of a philosophical dialogue to investigate questions that interest the students, and they decided to address.	<b>Learning materials:</b>  Poems on slides or in handouts.
<b>Status of the Students' Knowledge:</b> The students have participated in two lessons involving a philosophical dialogue, and one lesson involving reading a poem and a philosophical dialogue about poetry and virtues.	
<b>The content of the lesson (and justification):</b>  a) Poems will be read that the students reflect on and adapt to their own experience. By reflecting on the poems, the knowledge value of aesthetics and the knowledge value of humanity are illustrated in such a way that the students learn to take themselves seriously, when they find how an artistic perspective can shape the view of the world. To this end, the poem has an unequivocal pedagogical value.  During this lesson, we will focus on the emotions of pride and shame.  Pride is an emotion that springs from our achievements in the world. We can feel proud when we succeed in a mission and achieve our goals. It concerns the individual themselves, and arises from the construction or training of talents. It is dependent on personal success, for example, passing a difficult exam. [...] Pride has been overshadowed by pride and has often been confused with complacency, vanity, arrogance, or even obvious things, like being an Icelander. Some people never experience this feeling because they are too humble (Gunnar Hersveinn, 2005, p. 52).  Shame is something you feel without being able to rid yourself of it, and which causes discomfort. This occurs when one is ashamed of something one has done or something has (rightly or wrongly) been said about one a person. To a great extent, shame is the opposite of pride.	
<b>Approach (and justification):</b>  Creative and critical thinking is most efficiently developed through a dialogue of a community of peers that is committed to investigate together the questions they are interested	

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

in seeking answers to. Creating and developing a community of inquiry is an exciting and diverse project for students in preschool, primary-, or secondary school. [Robert Fisher Ph.D.](#) has described the development of a community of inquiry by comparing the behavioural patterns that characterise a group that is starting out as a community of inquiry with that of a group that has evolved into a developed community of inquiry. His method can be viewed [here](#) (Sigurðardóttir, 2013).

### What does the teacher do?

The teacher has two roles, both the traditional one of a moderator, while he/she also tries to encourage the students to engage in the conversation so that they themselves keep it going and are at a certain liberty to determine the direction of the conversation.

At the start of the dialogue the teacher reminds the students of the dialogue rules, that the group has decided on, see e.g. the teacher's notes for the [Dialogue Rules](#).

The work process that we recommend in this assignment is basic recipe for a philosophical dialogue. This type of work is described in more detail in the teacher's notes for the [Basic Recipe for a Philosophical Dialogue](#). In the next column, you will find a glossary of the process.

When you moderate a philosophical dialogue, it is advisable to keep the following points in mind:

- It is the students who ought to talk amongst themselves. You should guide them in how to do it well.
  - Listening is a basic condition for conversation to take place. You remind the students of that by saying, for example: 'did you catch what... said?' or 'can anyone summarise for the group what we are discussing now?'
- It is an indication of quality of a philosophical discussion when it goes into depth about the topic at hand, rather than just

### What do the students do?

Have students sit in a circle so that everyone in the group can look at everyone else during the discussion.

You choose what suits you and the group best: sitting on the floor, sitting on chairs, sitting at a table or any other installation that springs to mind.

When the students have settled in, you distribute copies of the poem and the group reads it out loud together. Each student can read one sentence, and those who do not want to read just say 'pass'.

Call for questions from the students and write them up on the whiteboard so that everyone can see them. Write the name of the questioner after each question so that you can ask her/him for explanations or elaborations later on in the process.

When students do not have any more questions or the whiteboard is full, the students must choose one question (or a category of similar questions) to start the dialogue.

The voting process is quick, but if the group is just starting out, it may be fitting to keep the voting anonymous. It is a good idea to assign each question a number on the whiteboard, and have each student write down the number of the question he or she chooses. The tickets are collected by the teacher or a student, the votes are counted and then a conversation is held based on the chosen question.

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

naming countless examples of the same thing. While students provide arguments, perspectives and examples that shed new light on the subject matter, the dialogue is still on the right track. If students start to jump from one thing to another or repeat what others have already said, the conversation will become worse, and it is likely that the participants will soon get bored.

- Remember to take time at the end of the lesson to ask the students to summarise what they have heard and learned from the conversation. This can be done in various ways, for example by having everyone write in a notebook how they want to answer the original question or by taking turns and having everyone say what they want to they would like the question for the next session to be.

Emotion: **Pride**

*A Poem About #EURO2016*

Charge, tempo, offence, tempo, defence, tempo. The disappointment is made to be conquered, like the English, like hangovers and heatwaves are made to be conquered. We will not give up until the going gets tough, will not give up in the tailwind when everything is over, will not give up until later but it pays off to be well prepared and start training early. You can't just give up like that.

The field is made of grass, the grass is green and we are sinews, bones and beaten souls. The blue sky sprouts warriors in football boots that fall to the ground like pears, like landmines, like patriotic love. It is important to be celebrated; important that these eleven men we celebrate dance themselves like meshes in a net, move like water lilies on an ocean of grass, and that everyone make it home, despite the terrorism and the Russian hooligans. The game will not play itself and the most important things is that the other team loses, the most important thing is not to die, the most important is to win, participate and receive money from FIFA as well as ad revenues. In that order.

That is to say. Song, tempo, defence, tempo, the box, tempo, headbutts and all these amazing cuts, all these amazing passes, all these amazing changes. The game is made to be conquered, the odds are made to be conquered, Austrians, cues and defence are made to be conquered.

But one moment, please. These football boots are pink.

These abs sells underwear.

This head is a fashion statement that disrupts domestic harmony.

We flip the hour glass and everyone is allowed to lose control of their emotions while there's still sand in the upper compartment. Everyone can be demonic, love moulded as a 120 kilos of flesh, nothing but fat and bones, and everything that happens while there's still sand in the upper

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

compartment will be forgiven, ninety minutes plus injury time again and again until it's all over, but please be home, under the covers, having turned off your fanatical shouts of joy before the last grain of sand has dropped.

The metal detector gates are narrow as the squinted eyes of the Icelandic supporters in the sun are narrow and they stare at little blue men playing a ball game.

History is written by investors, bureaucrats and oligarchs in undersized team jerseys.

History is written by a brave man with goalkeeper gloves, written in the soil with barely used football boots, written in the goalposts and the goal-lines.

It is crucial that you get a ticket for the game or smuggle your way in and remember to write history when you come home, it is crucial to write it on parchment and carve it into flag-colored diaries, turn the diaries in to the National Archive and pass out in your own bed after the game.

Nothing can last forever but history lasts forever, like love, like the motherland, like the starting lineup.

What I wanted to say: The songs, tempo, the goal bar, tempo, the penalties, tempo, Brexit, tempo, the children who sew the balls and their bloody fingers. The common agricultural policy. I feel that we are losing our grips.

No.

Fight on.

Tempo.

Concentrate.

The game is either about to get won or get even.

We cannot afford to let the mood dampen, the tempo drop.

Tempo.

Everyone who's not on the pitch is the twelfth man, except for Gudjohnsen, who's on the bench.

Tempo.

The disappointment was made to be celebrated. The disappointment was made to be learned from. The disappointment is tearing us apart, like love. Icelanders, like love, are made to conquer themselves; the motherland, like love, to conquer itself; everything is made to conquer itself, to drive itself into the dust accompanied by the thunderous applause of supporters, fireworks and cheers from a surprisingly partial referee.

The humiliation is total and the euphoria of victory numbing.

The humiliation will make you free and the euphoria of victory comes with withdrawal symptoms, defeat and surrender.

The humiliation belongs to the victors, the wrath, the spite and the disappointment belong to the victors; the euphoria of victory is chaos, hubris and joie de vivre. I mean, Weltschmerz. I mean sisu. Walking Spanish.

We've probably already lost anyway.

Ball games are for children, like love, ball games are meant to kindle our patriotism, our dignity, our grace, like love, to give children stronger identities.

Ball games are fillers, something to insert between advertisements.

Ball games are the opium of the people, the coo of hummingbirds, the leisurely hilarity of the working classes and an excuse to differentiate between strangers, the up-and-coming and the burnouts; an excuse to pick teams, draw groups, vent one's nationalist prejudice and perform the role of a whole, all as one, I become you and you become me and we become you and you become something totally different from every one else; an excuse to do nothing; an excuse to fight over something that – for once – has no significance, and everyone of us is born offside in the eyes of the referee, everyone of us guilty and injured.

Stars fall on the stadium carrying the logos of insurance companies and breweries, crying about yellow cards and crying about red cards and crying about the colors of the rainbow, the rush of the crowd and other people's homesickness, stars fall and disappear into the night to drown themselves

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

in the world's most shallow beers, fall exhausted fully dressed on a hotel bed leaving their face paint on the pillowcase, stars fall while the days run out one after the other in the sun, on Instagram, in poetic descriptions in sixty different languages conjoining in a scream of totality and from this scream the earth is made.

Which explains the shape of it.

And so forth and so forth.

– Eiríkur Örn Norðdahl

### **Initial Question and Individual Assignment (Optional):**

Is it impossible to understand a poem, if it contains foreign or incomprehensible words? What words?

How does football relate to pride? Is it good or bad? (Give arguments for your answer)

Now, a philosophical dialogue, based on the students' questions, begins. First, the dialogue rules must be introduced. The class has a limited amount of time to reach a conclusion. If no agreement is reached, the teacher can for example call for an election.

### **A Possible Group Assignment**

Rephrase the poem in one sentence.

### **Tilfinning: Blygðun**

*Miniver Cheevy*

Miniver Cheevy, child of scorn,

Grew lean while he assailed the seasons;

He wept that he was ever born,

And he had reasons.

Miniver loved the days of old

When swords were bright and steeds were prancing;

The vision of a warrior bold

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

Would set him dancing.

Miniver sighed for what was not,  
And dreamed, and rested from his labors;  
He dreamed of Thebes and Camelot,  
And Priam's neighbors.

Miniver mourned the ripe renown  
That made so many a name so fragrant;  
He mourned Romance, now on the town,  
And Art, a vagrant.

Miniver loved the Medici,  
Albeit he had never seen one;  
He would have sinned incessantly  
Could he have been one.

Miniver cursed the commonplace  
And eyed a khaki suit with loathing;  
He missed the mediæval grace  
Of iron clothing.

Miniver scorned the gold he sought,  
But sore annoyed was he without it;  
Miniver thought, and thought, and thought,  
And thought about it.

Miniver Cheevy, born too late,  
Scratched his head and kept on thinking;  
Miniver coughed, and called it fate,  
And kept on drinking.

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

– Edwin Arlington Robinson

### **Initial Question and Individual Assignment (Optional):**

Retell the poem using as few words as possible.

What kind of shame is being described?

Is it or is it not justifiable? Give arguments for your answer.

Now, a philosophical dialogue, based on the students' questions, begins. First, the dialogue rules must be introduced. The class has a limited amount of time to reach a conclusion. If no agreement is reached, the teacher can for example call for an election.

### **A Possible Group Assignment:**

*Poetry slam/Poetry rap* (Valdimarsdóttir & Sigtryggdóttir, 2011).

Emotion: **Shame**

#### *Visiting Hours*

The old chants never leave one untouched:

Why can you

not be like him?

I steel myself a new day

and in my search for a crime

appropriate to the fine

I am visiting you again for the last time.

I say: So, you have a TV.

I say: God damn, I was hungover yesterday.

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

I say: And when are you coming home?

But maybe it was none of that  
which caused your hopelessness  
and unexpected frustration.

Maybe you knew more than I did.  
Maybe the questions haunted you.

Do I live in his mind? In the mind of the other?

I do not know myself  
in the mind of whom  
or which ones  
nor how I live.

The old chants never leave one untouched.

My only consolation is the memory of the day  
when I will come  
into the living room and see you on your feet in one piece.

– Anton Helgi Jónsson

### **Initial Questions:**

What is the difference between the guilt spoken of in the poem and an unspoken shame?

What is meant by the conclusion of the poem? How is it related or not related to shame? (Give arguments for your answer)

Now, a philosophical dialogue, based on the students' questions, begins. First, the dialogue rules must be introduced. The class has a limited amount of time to reach a conclusion. If no agreement is reached, the teacher can for example call for an election.

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

### A Possible Individual Assignment (Optional)

Write a reply to Jónsson's poem.

Emotion: **Shame**

*sustainable interrogation*

I knew myself best humiliated  
in the presence of power my tongue split into three :  
they licked the eyes, the ears and the lips –

but that is the reason people swim in vain blue water like tall flowers  
from the flesh of a child decorate  
and therefore people go to the barber without the veins being cut

and therefore men go to haircuts without cutting veins  
so deep the trust hollows out the stone

the maid polishes her nails with a sharp knife: but no one dies  
sperm banks bear fruit in tie knots

The women who tie the knots control the mood better than a weather god  
forgetfulness soothes agitation more precise than calm

I knew myself best humiliated  
in the presence of power my tongue split into three :  
like blind snakes that lack instinct

– Kristín Ómarsdóttir

### Initial Questions:

Now, a philosophical dialogue, based on the students' questions, begins. First, the dialogue rules must be introduced. The class has a limited amount of time to reach a conclusion. If no agreement is reached, the teacher can for example call for an election.

### A Possible Individual Assignment (Optional)

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

Emotion: **Shame**

### *Rivertown*

I'm a kid in Rivertown, a suburb of R., and awake the morning after a carnival which is a yearly event in the district. When I've finished my cereal I go out into the hallway and notice that the doors on the apartment opposite mine are open; a nasty smell comes out through the door and when I walk down the stairs I hear the dog whining and he runs after me, snatches at the legs of my pants and barks like he wants to show me something but I kick him, go outside and close the door behind me.

The tables and the hats with the red dots are still there and the clothes are still hanging across the sky from cords over the yard; the adults are lying on the ground and some of them have their eyes closed but others are awake staring at the sky or mumbling. I walk to the cemented football-field and swing in the net of one of the goals but then I move to the playground and the tubes which are old sewage-tubes and sit in one of them and think.

All around me it's quiet like the district is waiting for something. Nearby, in the gravel outside the tube, lies a man with a bottle of wine. I stand up and look at the bottle which is black; near the spout there's a cork or something with a hollow in it and inside the hollow there's a small, golden goblet like sea-pirates drink from. I figure the goblet fits like a glass inside my doll's house and start tugging the bottle away from the man, stand on his shoulder and he lets go.

I use my knife to pluck away the goblet which is beautiful and tiny and I put it in my pocket; then I walk round the yard finding more black bottles and plucking the goblets loose and collecting them and then I walk into the neighbouring yard where I meet a girl who's alone like me and collecting cigarettes and stubs for smoking. I help her in finding stubs and searching the adults and then we go inside her home, she puts the telly on and watches a cartoon and smokes and I try smoking but not much. After the cartoon is finished we go back outside and try and break into the store but it's locked and we're afraid to break the windows.

On the parking-lot by the store stands the bookmobile; it's open, we enter it and the driver isn't there. We search for the keys so we can take the car for a drive but we don't find them and sweep the books from the shelves, scream and run screaming outside and down Lavaroad but the screams are fake, nobody's there to follow us or stop us.

We walk down to the river, the girl says she hates school and we reach the dam. Above the dam is the lagoon which is green but below everything's white and dry except for a puddle with a fish in it; he's stuck in the puddle. We climb down towards the puddle and start worrying if maybe the lagoon will be emptied but we go anyway and sit by the puddle and watch the fish try and hide itself between the rocks but its back sticks out and he can't hide. We smoke and the girl says I don't know how to smoke and teaches me to say amen when I inhale the smoke and before I blow it away from me again. I say amen amen, often in a row, and she laughs at me and starts collecting rocks to throw at the fish who's as big as a salmon. When the girl starts throwing the rocks I watch the fish get scratches on his back when the rocks hit him and white

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

spots and some of them are pinkish. I smoke and begin to have strange thoughts about the fish, sea-monsters and pirate-ships, I don't feel good and everything spins. I start puking bent over and notice a white rock in the ground and the cereal floats in chunks above it. I don't know if the girl has left because I can't turn my head to look. My eyes are closed, I hold my arms over my head and later, when I look around, I'm in the doll's house, the girl is with me, we're locked inside and it's night; we sit on the floor by an old slice of cucumber, we talk and try to organise something and drink from the goblets.

– Steinar Bragi

### Initial Question:

Núna hefst heimspekileg samræða út frá spurningum nemenda sem fram komu. Fyrst þarf að kynna samræðureglur. Bekkurinn hefur takmarkaðan tíma til að komast að niðurstöðu. Ef ekki næst sátt, þá getur kennarinn t.d. kallað eftir kosningu.

### A Possible Group Assignment (Optional)

#### Lesson Plan #5

<b>Name:</b> Kristian Guttesen	
<b>Group:</b> 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	<b>boys:</b> <b>girls:</b>
<b>Date:</b> Character Education/poetry #3	<b>Duration of lesson:</b> 1x 80 min
<b>Aim of the lesson:</b> For students to adopt the method of a philosophical dialogue to investigate questions that interest the students, and they decided to address.	<b>Learning Materials:</b> Slides ritlist_vinnustofa_nr1_9iii2018.pptx Newspapers
<b>Status of the Students' Knowledge:</b> The students have participated in two lessons involving a philosophical dialogue, and two lessons involving reading a poem and a philosophical dialogue about poetry and virtues.	
<b>The content of the lesson (and justification):</b>  a) Creative writing exercises	

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

### Approach (and justification):

Creative and critical thinking is most efficiently developed through a dialogue of a community of peers that is committed to investigate together the questions they are interested in seeking answers to. Creating and developing a community of inquiry is an exciting and diverse project for students in preschool, primary-, or secondary school. [Robert Fisher Ph.D.](#) has described the development of a community of inquiry by comparing the behavioural patterns that characterise a group that is starting out as a community of inquiry with that of a group that has evolved into a developed community of inquiry. His method can be viewed [here](#) (Sigurðardóttir, 2013).

When the students learn to compose texts (and witness the results) based on precise instructions, they learn to use their own creativity. Short assignments with direct instructions have a huge impact on this activity, whether the students have tried to compose a poem previously or not.

### What does the teacher do?

The teacher has two roles, both the traditional one of a moderator, while he/she also tries to encourage the students to engage in the conversation so that they themselves keep it going and are at a certain liberty to determine the direction of the conversation.

At the start of the dialogue the teacher reminds the students of the dialogue rules, that the group has decided on, see e.g. the teacher's notes for the [Dialogue Rules](#).

The work process that we recommend in this assignment is basic recipe for a philosophical dialogue. This type of work is described in more detail in the teacher's notes for the [Basic Recipe for a Philosophical Dialogue](#). In the next column, you will find a glossary of the process.

When you moderate a philosophical dialogue, it is advisable to keep the following points in mind:

- It is the students who ought to talk amongst themselves. You should guide them in how to do it well.

### What do the students do?

Have students sit in a circle so that everyone in the group can look at everyone else during the discussion.

You choose what suits you and the group best: sitting on the floor, sitting on chairs, sitting at a table or any other installation that springs to mind.

When the students have settled in, you distribute copies of the poem and the group reads it out loud together. Each student can read one sentence, and those who do not want to read just say 'pass'.

Call for questions from the students and write them up on the whiteboard so that everyone can see them. Write the name of the questioner after each question so that you can ask her/him for explanations or elaborations later on in the process.

When students do not have any more questions or the whiteboard is full, the students must choose one question (or a category of similar questions) to start the dialogue.

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

- Listening is a basic condition for conversation to take place. You remind the students of that by saying, for example: ‘did you catch what... said?’ or ‘can anyone summarise for the group what we are discussing now?’
- It is an indication of quality of a philosophical discussion when it goes into depth about the topic at hand, rather than just naming countless examples of the same thing. While students provide arguments, perspectives and examples that shed new light on the subject matter, the dialogue is still on the right track. If students start to jump from one thing to another or repeat what others have already said, the conversation will become worse, and it is likely that the participants will soon get bored.
- Remember to take time at the end of the lesson to ask the students to summarise what they have heard and learned from the conversation. This can be done in various ways, for example by having everyone write in a notebook how they want to answer the original question or by taking turns and having everyone say what they want to they would like the question for the next session to be.

The voting process is quick, but if the group is just starting out, it may be fitting to keep the voting anonymous. It is a good idea to assign each question a number on the whiteboard, and have each student write down the number of the question he or she chooses. The tickets are collected by the teacher or a student, the votes are counted and then a conversation is held based on the chosen question.

See slides (Appendix K1)

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

### Lesson Plan #6

<b>Name:</b> Kristian Guttesen	
<b>Group:</b> 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	<b>boys:</b> <b>girls:</b>
<b>Date:</b> Character Education/poetry #3	<b>Duration of lesson:</b> 1x 80 min
<b>Aim of the lesson:</b> For students to adopt the method of a philosophical dialogue to investigate questions that interest the students, and they decided to address.	<b>Learning Materials:</b> Slides ritlist_vinnustofa_nr1_9iii2018.pptx Newspapers
<b>Status of the Students' Knowledge:</b> The students have participated in two lessons involving a philosophical dialogue, and two lessons involving reading a poem and a philosophical dialogue about poetry and virtues.	
<b>The content of the lesson (and justification):</b>  a) Creative writing exercises	
<b>Approach (and justification):</b>  Creative and critical thinking is most efficiently developed through a dialogue of a community of peers that is committed to investigate together the questions they are interested in seeking answers to. Creating and developing a community of inquiry is an exciting and diverse project for students in preschool, primary-, or secondary school. <a href="#">Robert Fisher Ph.D.</a> has described the development of a community of inquiry by comparing the behavioural patterns that characterise a group that is starting out as a community of inquiry with that of a group that has evolved into a developed community of inquiry. His method can be viewed <a href="#">here</a> (Sigurðardóttir, 2013).  When the students learn to compose texts (and witness the results) based on precise instructions, they learn to use their own creativity. Short assignments with direct instructions have a huge impact on this activity, whether the students have tried to compose a poem previously or not.	

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

### What does the teacher do?

The teacher has two roles, both the traditional one of a moderator, while he/she also tries to encourage the students to engage in the conversation so that they themselves keep it going and are at a certain liberty to determine the direction of the conversation.

At the start of the dialogue the teacher reminds the students of the dialogue rules, that the group has decided on, see e.g. the teacher's notes for the [Dialogue Rules](#).

The work process that we recommend in this assignment is basic recipe for a philosophical dialogue. This type of work is described in more detail in the teacher's notes for the [Basic Recipe for a Philosophical Dialogue](#). In the next column, you will find a glossary of the process.

When you moderate a philosophical dialogue, it is advisable to keep the following points in mind:

- It is the students who ought to talk amongst themselves. You should guide them in how to do it well.
- Listening is a basic condition for conversation to take place. You remind the students of that by saying, for example: 'did you catch what... said?' or 'can anyone summarise for the group what we are discussing now?'
- It is an indication of quality of a philosophical discussion when it goes into depth about the topic at hand, rather than just naming countless examples of the same thing. While students provide arguments, perspectives and examples that shed new light on the subject matter, the dialogue is still on the right track. If students start to jump from one thing to another or repeat what others have already said, the conversation will

### What do the students do?

Have students sit in a circle so that everyone in the group can look at everyone else during the discussion.

You choose what suits you and the group best: sitting on the floor, sitting on chairs, sitting at a table or any other installation that springs to mind.

When the students have settled in, you distribute copies of the poem and the group reads it out loud together. Each student can read one sentence, and those who do not want to read just say 'pass'.

Call for questions from the students and write them up on the whiteboard so that everyone can see them. Write the name of the questioner after each question so that you can ask her/him for explanations or elaborations later on in the process.

When students do not have any more questions or the whiteboard is full, the students must choose one question (or a category of similar questions) to start the dialogue.

The voting process is quick, but if the group is just starting out, it may be fitting to keep the voting anonymous. It is a good idea to assign each question a number on the whiteboard, and have each student write down the number of the question he or she chooses. The tickets are collected by the teacher or a student, the votes are counted and then a conversation is held based on the chosen question.

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

become worse, and it is likely that the participants will soon get bored.

- Remember to take time at the end of the lesson to ask the students to summarise what they have heard and learned from the conversation. This can be done in various ways, for example by having everyone write in a notebook how they want to answer the original question or by taking turns and having everyone say what they want to they would like the question for the next session to be.

See slides (Appendix L1)

### References:

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## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

### 12. Lesson Plans in Icelandic

Kennsluáætlanir (1-6)

*Kennsluáætlun #1*

<b>Nafn:</b> Kristian Guttesen	
<b>Hópur:</b> 9. bekkur	<b>strákar:</b> <b>stelpur:</b>
<b>Dagsetning:</b> Mannkostamenntun/ljóð #1	<b>Lengd kennslustundar:</b> 1x 80 mín
<b>Markmið:</b> Að nemendur tileinki sér aðferð heimspekilegrar samræðu til að rannsaka spurningar sem vekja áhuga nemenda og ákveðið er að taka fyrir.	<b>Kennslugögn:</b>
<b>Staða nemenda:</b> Nemendur þurfa ekki að hafa ástundað heimspekilega samræðu áður.	
<b>Efni kennslustundar (og rök):</b>  b) Ljósrit af ljóðinu fyrir nemendur, tafla til að skrifa upp spurningar og hugmyndir.	
<b>Nálgun (og rök):</b>  Skapandi og gagnrýnin hugsun verður best þjálfuð í samræðufélagi jafningja sem skuldbinda sig til að rannsaka sameiginlega þær spurningar sem þeir hafa áhuga á að leita svara við. Það er spennandi og fjölbreytt verkefni að skapa og þróa samræðufélag nemenda í leik-, grunn- eða framhaldsskóla. <a href="#">Robert Fisher Ph.D.</a> hefur lýst þróun samræðufélags með samanburði á hegðunarmynstrum sem einkenna hóp sem er að hefja störf sem samræðufélag og hópi sem orðinn er þróað samræðufélag. Greiningu hans má skoða <a href="#">hér</a> (Brynhildur Sigurðardóttir, 2013).	
<b>Hvað gerir kennarinn?</b>  Kennarinn gegnir bæði hefbundnu stjórnunarhlutverki, en reynir eftir fremsta megni að ýta undir þátttöku nemenda, þannig að þeir haldi sjálfir umræðunni gangandi og hafi líka visst svigrúm til að stýra stefnu hennar.  Við upphaf samræðu er gott að kennari minni nemendur á helstu samræðureglur sem hópurinn	<b>Hvað gera nemendur?</b>  Láttu nemendur sitja í hring þannig að hver og einn geti horft á alla hina í hópnum þegar samræðan er í gangi.  Þú velur hvað hentar þér og hópnum: sitja á gólfi, sitja á stólum, sitja við borð eða önnur uppsetning sem þér dettur í hug.

hefur sett sér, sjá til dæmis kennsluseðilinn [Samræðureglur](#).

Vinnuferlið sem við mælum með í þessu verkefni er ákveðin grunnuppskrift að heimspekilegri samræðu. Slíkri vinnu er nánar lýst á kennsluseðlinum [Grunnuppskrift að heimspekilegri samræðu](#). Hér til hliðar er ferlið í hnotskurn.

Þegar þú stjórnar samræðunni er gott að hafa eftirfarandi atriði í huga:

- Það eru nemendur sem eiga að tala saman, þú bendir þeim á hvernig þeir gera það með góðu móti.
- Hlustun er grundvallarskilyrði til að samræða geti átt sér stað. Þú minnir nemendur á það t.d. með því að segja: „heyrdir þú hvað ... sagði?“ eða „getur einhver sagt hópnum um hvað við erum núna að tala?“
- Það er gæðamerki á heimspekilegri samræðu að farið sé á dýptina frekar en að nefnd séu ótal dæmi um sama hlutinn. Á meðan nemendur bæta við rökum, sjónarhornum og dæmum sem bregða nýju ljósi á efnið þá er samræðan á réttri leið. Ef nemendur fara að hoppa úr einu í annað eða endurtaka það sem aðrir hafa þegar sagt þá er samræðan að hjakka í sama farinu og líklegt að þátttakendum fari fljótlega að leiðast.
- Mundu að taka tíma í lok kennslustundarinnar og láta nemendur draga saman það sem þeir hafa heyrt og lært af samræðunni. Þetta má gera á ýmsan hátt, t.d. með því að láta alla skrifa í vinnubók hvernig þeir vilji svara upphaflegu spurningunni eða með því að fara hringinn og láta alla segja hvað þeir vilja spyrja næst.

### Tilbrigði við stefið

Til að gefa nemendum betra tækifæri til að tengja sig við efni sögunnar<sup>56</sup> áður en þeir móta spurningar gætir þú látið þá leika aðstæðurnar sem sagan segir frá og leysa tiltekna klípu. Þú getur til dæmis látið hópinn (eða einstakling sem nýtur þess að vera miðpunktur athyglinnar) ímynda sér að hann hafi verið að útskrifast úr framhaldsskóla og þurfi að ákveða hvort hann ætti

Þegar nemendur hafa komið sér fyrir dreifir þú ljóðinu og hópurnar les það saman, upphátt. Hægt er að láta hvern nemanda lesa eina málsgrein, þeir sem vilja ekki lesa segja bara „pass“.

Kallaðu eftir spurningum frá nemendum og skrifaðu þær á töflu þannig að allir sjái þær. Skráðu nafn spyrjandans aftan við spurninguna svo hægt sé að biðja hann um útskýringar eða tengingar seinna í vinnuferlinu.

Þegar nemendur hafa ekki fleiri spurningar eða taflan er orðin full þá velja nemendur eina spurningu (eða flokk líkra spurninga) til að hefja samræðuna.

Fljótlegt er að greiða atkvæði og ef hópurnar er nýbyrjaður að vinna saman getur borgað sig að hafa atkvæðagreiðsluna „leynilega“. Þá er gott að númera allar spurningarnar á töflunni og láta hvern nemanda skrifa númer þeirrar spurningar sem hann velur á miða. Miðunum er safnað saman af kennara eða nemanda, atkvæði talin og svo hefst samræða um þá spurningu sem fær flest atkvæði.

<sup>56</sup> Ljóðið *Fyrsti draugurinn minn*, eftir Birgittu Jónsdóttur, er prentað neðst í þessari kennsluáætlun.

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

að taka sér ársleyfi til að ferðast áður en hann hefur háskólanám eða fá sér vinnu þetta ár og safna í sjóð. Hver þátttakandi í hringnum leikur hlutverk tiltekins árs, t.d. „ég 6 ára“, „ég 30 ára“ og „ég 75 ára“ – hvaða ákvörðun myndi hvert „ég“ taka?

Sum „ég“ sem væru í þeim sporum að þurfa að borga ferðaskuldirnar myndu eflaust velja vinnuna fram yfir ferðalagið. Önnur gætu metið minningar og reynslu af miklu ferðalagi mikilvæg til að efla sjálfstæði og víðsýni sem nauðsynleg eru til að geta unnið vel í háskólanámi.

Svona leikur gæti nýst til að draga fram ólík sjónarmið varðandi málefni eins og fíkniefnaneyslu, reykingar og ábyrgt kynlíf. Það er ekki við því að búast að leikurinn dragi fram skýr og endanleg svör í nemendahópnum en hann getur víkkað út hugsun nemenda um málefnið. Ef til vill mætti draga fram fjölbreyttari túlkningar í nemendahópnum með því að hvetja þá til að kynna „ég-ið“ sitt á dramatískan hátt sem einhvers konar „draugar fortíðar og framtíðar“ eins og Dickens gerir í Jólasögu sinni.

### Heimspækin í ljóðinu – Nytjastefnan

Nytjastefnan er kenning í siðfræði sem lítur svo á að sú athöfn eða hegðun sé rétt sem leiði til „mestrar hamingju fyrir flesta“. Til að taka ákvörðun um hvað sé réttast að gera ættir þú samkvæmt þessari kenningu því að reikna hversu margar manneskjur hafi hag af því sem um ræðir og hversu mikill sá hagur verður, og draga síðan frá fjölda þeirra sem munu líða fyrir sömu ákvörðun og hversu mikil þjáning þeirra verður. Með öðrum orðum þá er réttast að gera það sem hámarkar hamingju og lágmarkar þjáningu. Frekari skýringar á nytjastefnunni má t.d. lesa á [Wikipediu](#) og á [Vísindavefnum](#).

Nytjastefnu má gagnrýna á ýmsan hátt. Það er til dæmis erfitt að spá nákvæmlega fyrir um afleiðingar ákvarðana, mjög erfitt að mæla hamingju og líklega ekki tímans virði að fara í gegnum þetta mælingaferli í hvert sinn sem taka þarf siðferðilega ákvörðun. Kjarni nytjastefunnar snýst engu að síður um að athöfn er talin góð ef afleiðingar hennar eru góðar, frekar en að athöfnin sé dæmd góð eða slæm vegna þess að hún fylgi eða brjóti einhverja fyrirfram gefna reglu.

Það skiptir líka miklu máli samkvæmt nytjastefnunni að hagsmunir allra einstaklinga hafi jafn mikið gildi. Þegar áhrif eru metin hafa því allir einstaklingar „eitt atkvæði og enginn meira en eitt“. Þú getur prófað æfinguna sem sagan fjallar um á sjálfum þér með því að gera eftirfarandi æfingu: Ef hamingja skiptir þig miklu máli í lífinu, er hún þá ekki alveg jafn mikilvæg alveg sama á hvaða tímabili ævi þinnar þú upplifir hana? Ímyndaðu þér að þú sért 30 ára þegar þú tekur ákvörðun í tilteknu máli. Afleiðingar þessarar ákvörðunar á líf þitt þegar þú ert 70-71 árs ættu að vera þér jafn mikilvægar og afleiðingarnar fyrir líf þitt þegar þú ert 30-31 árs (svo fremi þú verðir enn á lífi og þökkalega hress). Það er út frá þessari hugmynd sem persónur sögunnar verða til, ein persóna fyrir hvert ár sem ég hef lifað og allar hafa jafnan atkvæðisrétt þegar kemur að ákvörðunartöku.

### Heimspækin í ljóðinu – Varkárni eða frelsi

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

Það er augljóslega langsótt að hægt sé að líta yfir heila ævi rétt eins og örn horfir yfir veiðilendur sínar. Það má kannski meira að segja hafa áhyggjur af því hvaða áhrif slík yfirsýn gæti haft á neyslumynstur og hagvöxt þjóðarinnar, ef allir væru stöðugt að taka ákvarðanir í ljósi þess að þeir þyrftu að spara til elli ára. En hinar öfgarnar eru vissulega til staðar þegar fólk tekur ákvarðanir sem hafa alvarlegar afleiðingar og geta jafnvel eyðilagt líkama og sál til þess eins að njóta örstuttrar skyndi nautnar. Slíkar ákvarðanir fengu ekki náð fyrir augum kviðdóms „ég-borðsins“.

Mikilvægasta spurningin sem sagan gæti vakið er ef til vill „Hversu mikið ætti ég að hugleiða framtíðina þegar ég stend frammi fyrir ákvörðun?“ Sálfræðin svarar til dæmis úr annarri áttinni að hæfileikinn til að standast freistingar og bíða eftir umbun er í sterkum tengslum við almenna velgengni manneskjunnar í lífinu öllu (sjá t.d. „[Marshmallow Experiment](#)“ á Ted.com). En þegar þú ert ungur eða ástfanginn þá virðast slíkir útreikningar í alvöru málum setja þig í flokk með harðhausum og rúðustrikuðum heilum. Hefur ástfangin manneskja til dæmis áhuga á að rökræða væntanlegt hjónaband sitt og reikna út kosti og galla? Eða fylgir hún tilfinningunum hugsunarlaust?

Ef það er erfitt eða skrýtið að vera ekki sérstaklega tengdur árinu sem maður lifir einmitt núna, er þá ekki miklu erfiðara að ætla að reyna að tengjast lífi annarrar manneskju? Hvernig getur hamingja annarra skipt mig jafn miklu máli og mín eigin? Það má auðveldlega segja að útreikningur á hamingju sé í raun bara alltof erfiður, jafnvel útilokaður. Bæði virðist stærðfræðin vera alltof flókin en svo má líka halda því fram að það sé algjörlega óraunhæft að ætla einstaklingum samhygd í þeim mæli að hann geti vegið kosti og galla óháð sinni eigin stöðu og tilfinningum hverju sinni. Það virðist í raun ómanneskjulegt að gefa þeim sem standa manni næst ekki meira vægi en ókunnu fólki, eða að meta ekki eigið líf meira en lífa annarra. En að leika sér að því að taka stöðu þess „fullkomlega hlutlausa“ getur verið góð æfing og ýtt okkur örlítið meira í áttina að samhygd og umhyggju fyrir öðru fólki í fortíð, nútíð og framtíð.

## FYRSTI

draugurinn minn var mynd af líki sem hékk uppi  
á vegg í stofunni hjá ömmu  
hún var falleg þessi litla stúlka  
sem dó alein úr einkennilegri farsótt  
svo friðsæl að ég hélt hana sofa

það var ekki fyrr en amma féll í trans á gólfð  
og rödd hennar breyttist í hjarta stúlkurödd  
að ég skildi að þeir sem sofa  
án þess að vakna eru  
harmvaldar

ég hélt fast um dúkkuna  
sem ömmusystir mín  
færði mér á dánarbedinu

andi stúlkunnar  
andi miðilsins  
andi drauganna  
var þunn blá þoka sem flaug  
inn í höfuð dúkkunnar

þessi dúkka svaf aldrei  
heldur starði á  
mig með sorgmæddum augum  
sem létu alltaf eins og þau væru  
alveg að fara að segja mér eitthvað

löngu seinna stal vinkona mín  
frá mér draugadúkkunni

og alltaf þegar ég sé þessa fyrrverandi vinkonu  
þykist ég sjá að bláleita slæðan hefur fokið inn í höfuð á henni  
og augu dúkkunnar stara lifandi til baka á mig

ég forðast að mæta þessari stúlku  
sem klæðir sig í allof stóra hvíta kjóla  
með föllbleikum rósum



## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

### Kennsluáætlun #2

<b>Nafn:</b> Kristian Guttesen	
<b>Hópur:</b> 9. bekkur	<b>strákar:</b> <b>stelpur:</b>
<b>Dagsetning:</b> Mannkostamenntun/ljóð #2	<b>Lengd kennslustundar:</b> 1x 80 mín
<b>Markmið:</b> Að nemendur tileinki sér aðferð heimspekilegrar samræðu til að rannsaka spurningar sem vekja áhuga nemenda og ákveðið er að taka fyrir.	<b>Kennslugögn:</b>
<b>Staða nemenda:</b> Nemendur hafa tekið þátt í einum tíma í heimspekilegri samræðu.	
<b>Efni kennslustundar (og rök):</b> <p>b) Lesin verða ljóð sem nemendur máta við eigin reynslu og spegla sig í. Þekkingargildi fagurfræðinnar og þekkingargildi mennskunnar mætast á þeim stað þar sem nemandinn lærir að láta taka sig alvarlegan, þegar hann finnur hvernig listrænt sjónarhorn getur mótað sýn hans á heiminn. Til þess hefur ljóðið ótvírætt kennslufræðilegt gildi.</p> <p>Í þessum tíma verður unnið með dygdina samlíðan og tilfinningarnar stolt og blygðun.</p> <p>Samlíðan felst í „að geta sett sig í spor annarra, skynja samhljóminn milli einstaklinga, finna til með öðrum, gleðjast með öðrum, syrgja með öðrum og vilja gefa öðrum eitthvað af sér“ (Gunnar Hersveinn, 2005, p. 110).</p> <p>Stolt er tilfinning sem sprettur af afrekum okkar í heiminum. Við getum fundið til stolts þegar okkur tekst eitthvert ætlunarverk og við náum markmiðum okkar. Það varðar mann sjálfan og fylgir í kjölfar framkvæmda eða þjálfunar á hæfileikum. Það hvílir á persónulegum árangri, til dæmis að ná erfiðu prófi. [...] Stolt hefur fallið í skuggann af drambi og hefur oft verið ruglað saman við sjálfumgleði, hégómaskap, ofmetnað eða bara sjálfsagða hluti eins og að vera Íslendingur. Sumir fara á mis við þessa tilfinningu vegna þess að þeir eru of lítillátir (Gunnar Hersveinn, 2005, p. 52).</p> <p>Blygðun er eitthvað sem maður ber án þess að geta losnað við það og sem veldur vanlíðan. Blygðun er þegar maður skammast sín fyrir eitthvað sem maður hefur gert eða sem haldið er fram (með réttu eða röngu) um mann. Að nokkur leyti er hún andstæða stolts.</p>	

### Nálgun (og rök):

Skapandi og gagnrýnin hugsun verður best þjálfuð í samræðufélagi jafningja sem skuldbinda sig til að rannsaka sameiginlega þær spurningar sem þeir hafa áhuga á að leita svara við. Það er spennandi og fjölbreytt verkefni að skapa og þróa samræðufélag nemenda í leik-, grunn- eða framhaldsskóla. [Robert Fisher Ph.D.](#) hefur lýst þróun samræðufélags með samanburði á hegðunarmynstrum sem einkenna hóp sem er að hefja störf sem samræðufélag og hópi sem orðinn er þróað samræðufélag. Greiningu hans má skoða [hér](#) (Brynhildur Sigurðardóttir, 2013).

### Hvað gerir kennarinn?

Kennarinn gegnir bæði hefbundnu stjórnunarhlutverki, en reynir eftir fremsta megni að ýta undir þátttöku nemenda, þannig að þeir haldi sjálfir umræðunni gangandi og hafi líka visst svigrúm til að stýra stefnu hennar.

Við upphaf samræðu er gott að kennari minni nemendur á helstu samræðureglur sem hópurinn hefur sett sér, sjá til dæmis kennsluseðilinn [Samræðureglur](#).

Vinnuferlið sem við mælum með í þessu verkefni er ákveðin grunnuppskrift að heimspekilegri samræðu. Slíkri vinnu er nánar lýst á kennsluseðlinum [Grunnuppskrift að heimspekilegri samræðu](#). Hér til hliðar er ferlið í hnotskurn.

Þegar þú stjórnar samræðunni er gott að hafa eftirfarandi atriði í huga:

- Það eru nemendur sem eiga að tala saman, þú bendir þeim á hvernig þeir gera það með góðu móti.
- Hlustun er grundvallarskilyrði til að samræða geti átt sér stað. Þú minnir nemendur á það t.d. með því að segja: „heyrðir þú hvað ... sagði?“ eða „getur einhver sagt hópnum um hvað við erum núna að tala?“
- Það er gæðamerki á heimspekilegri samræðu að farið sé á dýptina frekar en að nefnd séu ótal dæmi um sama hlutinn. Á meðan nemendur bæta við rökum, sjónarhornum og dæmum sem bregða nýju

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Þú velur hvað hentar þér og hópnum: sitja á gólfi, sitja á stólum, sitja við borð eða önnur uppsetning sem þér dettur í hug.

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Kallaðu eftir spurningum frá nemendum og skrifaðu þær á töflu þannig að allir sjái þær. Skráðu nafn spyrjandans aftan við spurninguna svo hægt sé að biðja hann um útskýringar eða tengingar seinna í vinnuferlinu. Spurðu spyrjandann hvort og hvernig sérhver spurning tengist viðfangsefninu.

Þegar nemendur hafa ekki fleiri spurningar eða taflan er orðin full þá velja nemendur eina spurningu (eða flokk líkra spurninga) til að hefja samræðuna.

Fljótlegt er að greiða atkvæði og ef hópurinn er nýbyrjaður að vinna saman getur borgað sig að hafa atkvæðagreiðsluna „leynilega“. Þá er gott að númera allar spurningarnar á töflunni og láta hvern nemanda skrifa númer þeirrar spurningar sem hann velur á miða. Miðunum er safnað saman af kennara eða nemanda,

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Kristian Guttesen

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- Mundu að taka tíma í lok kennslustundarinnar og láta nemendur draga saman það sem þeir hafa heyrt og lært af samræðunni. Þetta má gera á ýmsan hátt, t.d. með því að láta alla skrifa í vinnubók hvernig þeir vilji svara upphaflegu spurningunni eða með því að fara hringinn og láta alla segja hvað þeir vilja spyrja næst.

atkvæði talin og svo hefst samræða um þá spurningu sem fær flest atkvæði.

### Dygð: **Samliðan**

#### *Samkennd*

Ef hjartans eynd er opið sár  
og eitthvað fer úr skorðum  
þá finnur sá sem fellir tár  
að fegurð býr í orðum.

Við skynjum hugans hlýju boð  
sem himneskt er að trúá,  
þar samkenndin er væðarvoð  
sem vill að okkur hlúa.

Og eymdin kveður alla þá  
sem erfiðleikar buga  
ef skilningsljósið skært þeir sjá  
sem skín af góðum huga.

– Kristján Hreinsson

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### Upphafsspurning og einstaklingsverkefni (valkvætt):

Er samkennd sjálfsprottin eða er eitthvað annað sem vekur hana? Útskýrðu svarið.

Hvað er að setja sig í spor annarra?

Núna hefst heimspekileg samræða út frá spurningum nemenda sem fram komu. Fyrst þarf að kynna samræðureglur. Bekkurinn hefur takmarkaðan tíma til að komast að niðurstöðu. Ef ekki næst sátt, þá getur kennarinn t.d. kallað eftir kosningu.

### Hugsanlegt hópverkefni:

Hvaða orð eru erfið í ljóðinu? Notið uppflattirit/netið til að komast að merkingu þeirra.

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Dygð/tilfinning: **Stolt**

*Stolt*

Ef hjartað styður stoltið þitt  
á stall það huga lyftir,  
þá átt þú það en ekki hitt  
sem engu máli skiptir.

Og þó að lánið virðist valt  
þú vart skalt beita þjósti  
en visku þína virða skalt  
og vekja stolt í brjósti.

Því það sem jafnan þér er hollt  
er þrá frá hjartans rötum  
og ef þú greinir styrk og stolt,  
þú stendur traustum fótum.

– Kristján Hreinsson

**Upphafsspurning og einstaklingsverkefni (valkvætt):**

Eru ólíkar tegundir af stolti? Ef svo, hverjar? Ef ekki hvað gerir þær eins?

Núna hefst heimspekileg samræða út frá spurningum nemenda sem fram komu. Fyrst þarf að kynna samræðureglur. Bekkurinn hefur takmarkaðan tíma til að komast að niðurstöðu. Ef ekki næst sátt, þá getur kennarinn t.d. kallað eftir kosningu.

**Hugsanlegt hópverkefni:**

Eru tengsl á milli þjóðarstolts og þjóðarrembinga? Hvers vegna/hvers vegna ekki?

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Tilfinning: **Blygðun**

*Blygðun*

Lífsins taug í raunum römm  
um réttlát mál skal hnyta  
en stundum þarf að þola skömm  
er þráðinn meinin slíta.

Ef ranglát hugsun ræður því  
að réttlæti þú greinir,  
þá skynjun láttu skína í  
svo skömm þú ekki leynir.

Ef velferð manna virðir þú,  
þú vandar hugsun þína,  
og allra best er blygðun sú

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Kristian Guttesen

sem brothætt hjörta sýna.

– Kristján Hreinsson

### **Upphafsspurning og einstaklingsverkefni (valkvætt):**

Hvað er jákvætt við skömm? Hvað er neikvætt við skömm? Rökstyddu mál þitt.

Núna hefst heimspekileg samræða út frá spurningum nemenda sem fram komu. Fyrst þarf að kynna samræðureglur. Bekkurinn hefur takmarkaðan tíma til að komast að niðurstöðu. Ef ekki næst sátt, þá getur kennarinn t.d. kallað eftir kosningu.

### **Hugsanlegt hópverkefni:**

Er hægt að vera stolt/ur af skömm? Hvernig þá/hvers vegna ekki?

**Frekari úrvinnsla**

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Kristian Guttesen

### Kennsluáætlun #3

<b>Nafn:</b> Kristian Guttesen	
<b>Hópur:</b> 9. bekkur	<b>strákar:</b> <b>stelpur:</b>
<b>Dagsetning:</b> Mannkostamenntun/Ljóð #3	<b>Lengd kennslustundar:</b> 1x 80 mín
<b>Markmið:</b> Að nemendur tileinki sér aðferð heimspekilegrar samræðu til að rannsaka inntak tiltekinnna ljóða og velta fyrir sér dygðinni samlíðan og tilfinningunum stolt og blygðun.	<b>Kennslugögn:</b> Ljóð á glærum og/eða í úthendum.
<b>Staða nemenda:</b> Nemendur hafa tekið þátt í einum tíma í heimspekilegri samræðu og einum tíma í ljóðalestri.	
<b>Efni kennslustundar (og rök):</b>  a) Lesin verða ljóð sem nemendur máta við eigin reynslu og spegla sig í. Þekkingargildi fagurfræðinnar og þekkingargildi mennskunnar mætast á þeim stað þar sem nemandinn lærir að láta taka sig alvarlegan, þegar hann finnur hvernig listrænt sjónarhorn getur mótað sýn hans á heiminn. Til þess hefur ljóðið ótvírætt kennslufræðilegt gildi.  Í þessum tíma verður unnið með dygðina samlíðan og tilfinninguna stolt.  Samlíðan felst í „að geta sett sig í spor annarra, skynja samhljóminn milli einstaklinga, finna til með öðrum, gleðjast með öðrum, syrgja með öðrum og vilja gefa öðrum eitthvað af sér“ (Gunnar Hersveinn, 2005, p. 110).  Stolt er tilfinning sem sprettur af afrekum okkar í heiminum. Við getum fundið til stols þegar okkur tekst eitthvert ætlunarverk og við náum markmiðum okkar. Það varðar mann sjálfan og fylgir í kjölfar framkvæmda eða þjálfunar á hæfileikum. Það hvílir á persónulegum árangri, til dæmis að ná erfiðu prófi. [...]  Stolt hefur fallið í skuggann af drambi og hefur oft verið ruglað saman við sjálfumgleði, hégómaskap, ofmetnað eða bara sjálfsgæða hluti eins og að vera Íslendingur. Sumir fara á mis við þessa tilfinningu vegna þess að þeir eru of lítillátir (Gunnar Hersveinn, 2005, p. 52).	
<b>Nálgun (og rök):</b>	

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Kristian Guttesen

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nemanda, atkvæði talin og svo hefst samræða um þá spurningu sem fær flest atkvæði.

### Dygð: **Samliðan**

*Liðsinni*

Blöð og útvarp flytja okkur fregnir  
af þjóðamorðunum  
og nú ber öllum skylda til hluttekningar:  
svo við rífum úr okkur hjörtun,  
heingjum þau utaná okkur  
einsog heiðursmerki  
og reikum úti góða stund

áðuren við leggjumst til svefns  
á afglöpum okkar  
og snúum okkur heilir og óskiptir  
að draumlífinu.

– Þorsteinn frá Hamri

### **Upphafsspurning og einstaklingsverkefni (valkvætt):**

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Um hvað fjallar ljóðið?

Freistaðu þess að teikna ljóðið.

Núna hefst heimspekileg samræða út frá spurningum nemenda sem fram komu. Fyrst þarf að kynna samræðureglur. Bekkurinn hefur takmarkaðan tíma til að komast að niðurstöðu. Ef ekki næst sátt, þá getur kennarinn t.d. kallað eftir kosningu.

### **Hugsanlegt hópverkefni** (Úr *Mér er í mun. Kennsluleiðbeiningum*)

Liðsinni. Lesið ljóðið enn einu sinni og veltið fyrir ykkur innihaldi þess. Skriðið síðan grein/hugvekju um liðsinni við náungann. Ber okkur skylda til að aðstoða aðra einstaklinga, hópa eða þjóðir? Hvað gerum við í dag? (Valdimarsdóttir & Sigtryggsdóttir, 2011)

### Dygð: **Samlíðan**

*Reynsla*

Ætli ég hafi ekki orðið átta ára þá um sumarið. Það var um hádegisbilið síðsumars að ég skrapp einsömum niður að á. Venjulega stóð trébali fullur af vatni á árbakkanum, konurnar notuðu hann til þvotta en við krakkarnir geymdum stundum í honum síli sem við veiddum í ánni. Við slepptum þeim fljótt aftur, vorum bara að skoða þau. Ég fór úr skónum og óð berfætt út í grunna ána. Vatnið var tært og kalt. Stór síli skutust milli steina. Mér tókst strax að fanga eitt og hljóp með það í lófunum og slepti því í balann. Um leið uppgötvaði ég að vatnið var sjóðheitt, tilbúið fyrir þvott — silungurinn rak upp skerandi vein og flaut dauður með hvítan kviðinn upp úr vatninu. Hvað eru staðreyndir og skynsemi ef reynslan stangast á við hvorutveggja? Fiskar hafa enga rödd, segir þú, þeir gefa ekki frá sér hljóð. En ég man nístandi óp silungsins meðan ég lifi.

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– Vilborg Dagbjartsdóttir

### **Upphafsspurning og einstaklingsverkefni (valkvætt):**

Hverju breytir staðhæfingin „Fiskar hafa enga rödd“ fyrir ljóðið?

Getur þú nefnt dæmi um þegar þú sást/last um/heyrðir af því þegar einhver meiddi sig? Hvað gerðist? Er rökrétt að finna til í slíku tilviki?

Núna hefst heimspekileg samræða út frá spurningum nemenda sem fram komu. Fyrst þarf að kynna samræðureglur. Bekkurinn hefur takmarkaðan tíma til að komast að niðurstöðu. Ef ekki næst sátt, þá getur kennarinn t.d. kallað eftir kosningu.

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Endurgerið ljóðið út frá sjónarhorni fullorðins einstaklings.

### Dygð: **Samliðan**

*Ferðalok*

Ástarstjörnu  
yfir Hraundranga  
skýla næturský;  
hló hún á himni,  
hryggur þráir  
sveinn í djúpum dali.

Veit ég hvar von öll  
og veröld mín  
glædd er guðs loga.  
Hlekki brýt ég hugar  
og heilum mér  
fleygi faðm þinn í.

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Sökkvi eg mér og sé ég  
í sálu þér  
og lífi þínu lifi;  
andartak sérhvert,  
sem ann þér guð,  
finn ég í heitu hjarta.

Tíndum við á fjalli,  
tvö vorum saman,  
blóm í hárrí hlíð;  
knýtti ég kerfi  
og í kjöltu þér  
lagði ljúfar gjafir.

Hlóðstu mér að höfði  
hringum ilmandi  
bjartra blágrasa,  
einn af öðrum,  
og að öllu dáðist,  
og greipst þá aftur af.

Hlógum við á heiði,  
himinn glaðnaði  
fagur á fjallabrún;  
alls yndi  
þótti mér ekki vera  
utan voru lífi lifa.

Grétu þá í lautu  
góðir blómálfar,

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Kristian Guttusen

skilnað okkarn skildu;  
dögg það við hugðum  
og dropa kalda  
kysstum úr krossgrasi.

Hélt ég þér á hesti  
í hörðum straumi,  
og fann til fullnustu,  
blómknapp þann gæti  
ég borið og varið  
öll yfir æviskeið.

Greiddi ég þér lokka  
við Galtará  
vel og vandlega;  
brosa blómvarir,  
blika sjónstjörmur,  
roðnar heitur hlýr.

Fjær er nú fagri  
fylgd þinni  
sveinn í djúpum dali;  
ástarstjarna  
yfir Hraundranga  
skín á bak við ský.

Háa skilur hnetti  
himingeimur,  
blað skilur bakka og egg;  
en anda sem unnast  
fær aldregi

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eilífð að skilið.

– Jónas Hallgrímsson

### **Upphafsspurning og einstaklingsverkefni (valkvætt):**

Er ljóðmælandinn einlægur? Hvers vegna/hvers vegna ekki?

Hvern er ljóðmælandinn að ávarpa? Hvað hefur gerst?

Núna hefst heimspekileg samræða út frá spurningum nemenda sem fram komu. Fyrst þarf að kynna samræðureglur. Bekkurinn hefur takmarkaðan tíma til að komast að niðurstöðu. Ef ekki næst sátt, þá getur kennarinn t.d. kallað eftir kosningu.

### **Hugsanlegt hópverkefni (Úr *Mér er í mun. Kennsluleiðbeiningum*)**

*Ljóðaslamm* (Valdimarsdóttir & Sigtryggsdóttir, 2011).

Dygð/tilfinning: **Stolt**

*Laugavegur*

Ó þá náð að eiga svona land búa með undrum alla daga ákaflega  
sem það mótar mig þetta náttúrunávígi ítreka ég yfir súpunni og  
nikka til erlendra starfsbræðra jájá blessaðir veriði ég hef farið  
hringinn fram og til baka séð heiðagæsir í sárum svifið yfir  
gjósandi grímsvötnum skoðað öskju kverkfjöll og blikandi  
lónsöræfi allt þetta og miklu fleira í lit og syngjandi víðómi ó  
guð varðveiti ómar ragnarsson og svo eru afnotagjöldin alls ekki  
há.

– Sigurbjörg Þrastardóttir

### Upphafsspurningar:

Um hvað fjallar ljóðið?

Hvar er ljóðmælandinn staddur og hvaða merkingu hefur það?

Núna hefst heimspekileg samræða út frá spurningum nemenda sem fram komu. Fyrst þarf að kynna samræðureglur. Bekkurinn hefur takmarkaðan tíma til að komast að niðurstöðu. Ef ekki næst sátt, þá getur kennarinn t.d. kallað eftir kosningu.

### Hugsanlegt einstaklingsverkefni (valkvætt)

Ritunarverkefni um eigin upplifun af landinu og afstöðu til þess. Nemendur geta t.d. fjallað um einstaka staði sem eru þeim kærir eða hafa haft áhrif á þá. Kennari getur einnig lagt eftirtalin verkefni fyrir: a. Lýstu stað sem hefur haft góð áhrif á þig. Gerðu þér grein fyrir hvers vegna þessi staður hafði góð áhrif á þig og reyndu að koma því til skila í textanum. Gefðu lýsingunni nafn. b. Áttu þér draumastað? Hvernig er hann? Gefðu staðnum nafn (Valdimarsdóttir & Sigtryggisdóttir, 2011b).

### Dygð/tilffining: **Stolt**

*andrea karítas*

tannlaust bros frá litlum  
framkallar tár undir augnlökunum  
enn eitt kraftaverkið  
sem reiðir sig algjörlega á mig

svo falleg, svo falleg, svo falleg

sérðu mamma? Sérðu hvað ég bjó til?  
sérðu hvað ég gat?

svo er ég ekkert nema brjóst í  
hennar augum.

– Sigurbjörg Sæmundsdóttir

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

### **Upphafsspurning:**

Getur einhver sem ekki hefur átt/eignast barn skilið hvað stolt er?

Núna hefst heimspekileg samræða út frá spurningum nemenda sem fram komu. Fyrst þarf að kynna samræðureglur. Bekkurinn hefur takmarkaðan tíma til að komast að niðurstöðu. Ef ekki næst sátt, þá getur kennarinn t.d. kallað eftir kosningu.

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

### Kennsluáætlun #4

<b>Nafn:</b> Kristian Guttesen	
<b>Hópur:</b> 9. bekkur	<b>strákar:</b> <b>stelpur:</b>
<b>Dagsetning:</b> Mannkostamenntun/ljóð #4	<b>Lengd kennslustundar:</b> 1x 80 mín
<b>Markmið:</b> Að nemendur tileinki sér aðferð heimspekilegrar samræðu til að rannsaka inntak tiltekinnna ljóða og velta fyrir sér dygðinni samlíðan og tilfinningunum stolt og blygðun.	<b>Kennslugögn:</b> Ljóð á glærum og/eða í úthendum.
<b>Staða nemenda:</b> Nemendur hafa tekið þátt í tveimur tímum í heimspekilegri samræðu og einum tíma í ljóðalestri og samræðu um ljóð og dygðir.	
<b>Efni kennslustundar (og rök):</b>  a) Lesin verða ljóð sem nemendur máta við eigin reynslu og spegla sig í. Þekkingargildi fagurfræðinnar og þekkingargildi mennskunnar mætast á þeim stað þar sem nemandinn lærir að láta taka sig alvarlegan, þegar hann finnur hvernig listrænt sjónarhorn getur mótað sýn hans á heiminn. Til þess hefur ljóðið ótvírætt kennslufræðilegt gildi.  Í þessum tíma verður unnið með tilfinningarnar stolt og blygðun. Stolt er tilfinning sem sprettur af afrekum okkar í heiminum. Við getum fundið til stols þegar okkur tekst eitthvert ætlunarverk og við náum markmiðum okkar. Það varðar mann sjálfan og fylgir í kjölfar framkvæmda eða þjálfunar á hæfileikum. Það hvílir á persónulegum árangri, til dæmis að ná erfiðu prófi. [...] Stolt hefur fallið í skuggann af drambi og hefur oft verið ruglað saman við sjálfumgleði, hégómaskap, ofmetnað eða bara sjálfsgæða hluti eins og að vera Íslendingur. Sumir fara á mis við þessa tilfinningu vegna þess að þeir eru of lítillátir (Gunnar Hersveinn, 2005, p. 52).  Blygðun er eitthvað sem maður ber án þess að geta losnað við það og sem veldur vanlíðan. Blygðun er þegar maður skammast sín fyrir eitthvað sem maður hefur gert eða sem haldið er fram (með réttu eða röngu) um mann. Að nokkur leyti er hún andstæða stols.	
<b>Nálgun (og rök):</b>	

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

Skapandi og gagnrýnin hugsun verður best þjálfuð í samræðufélagi jafningja sem skuldbinda sig til að rannsaka sameiginlega þær spurningar sem þeir hafa áhuga á að leita svara við. Það er spennandi og fjölbreytt verkefni að skapa og þróa samræðufélag nemenda í leik-, grunn- eða framhaldsskóla. [Robert Fisher Ph.D.](#) hefur lýst þróun samræðufélags með samburði á hegðunarmynstrum sem einkenna hóp sem er að hefja störf sem samræðufélag og hópi sem orðinn er þróað samræðufélag. Greiningu hans má skoða [hér](#) (Brynhildur Sigurðardóttir, 2013).

### Hvað gerir kennarinn?

Kennarinn gegnir bæði hefbundnu stjórnunarhlutverki, en reynir eftir fremsta megni að ýta undir þátttöku nemenda, þannig að þeir haldi sjálfir umræðunni gangandi og hafi líka visst svigrúm til að stýra stefnu hennar.

Við upphaf samræðu er gott að kennari minni nemendur á helstu samræðureglur sem hópurinn hefur sett sér, sjá til dæmis kennsluseðilinn [Samræðureglur](#).

Vinnuferlið sem við mælum með í þessu verkefni er ákveðin grunnuppskrift að heimspekilegri samræðu. Slíkri vinnu er nánar lýst á kennsluseðlinum [Grunnuppskrift að heimspekilegri samræðu](#). Hér til hliðar er ferlið í hnotskurn.

Þegar þú stjórnar samræðunni er gott að hafa eftirfarandi atriði í huga:

- Það eru nemendur sem eiga að tala saman, þú bendir þeim á hvernig þeir gera það með góðu móti.
- Hlustun er grundvallarskilyrði til að samræða geti átt sér stað. Þú minnir nemendur á það t.d. með því að segja: „heyrðir þú hvað ... sagði?“ eða „getur einhver sagt hópnum um hvað við erum núna að tala?“
- Það er gæðamerki á heimspekilegri samræðu að farið sé á dýptina frekar en að nefnd séu ótal dæmi um sama hlutinn. Á meðan nemendur bæta við rökum, sjónarhornum og dæmum sem bregða nýju

### Hvað gera nemendur?

Láttu nemendur sitja í hring þannig að hver og einn geti horft á alla hina í hópnum þegar samræðan er í gangi.

Þú velur hvað hentar þér og hópnum: sitja á gólfi, sitja á stólum, sitja við borð eða önnur uppsetning sem þér dettur í hug.

Þegar nemendur hafa komið sér fyrir dreifir þú ljóðinu og hópurinn les það saman, upphátt. Gott er að fara fyrst yfir það með hópnum hvaða dygd eða tilfinning hafa ætti í huga við lestur ljóðsins og ganga úr skugga um að allir skilji hugtakið.

Kallaðu eftir spurningum frá nemendum og skrifaðu þær á töflu þannig að allir sjái þær. Skráðu nafn spyrjandans aftan við spurninguna svo hægt sé að biðja hann um útskýringar eða tengingar seinna í vinnuferlinu. Spurðu spyrjandann hvort og hvernig sérhver spurning tengist viðfangsefninu.

Þegar nemendur hafa ekki fleiri spurningar eða taflan er orðin full þá velja nemendur eina spurningu (eða flokk líkra spurninga) til að hefja samræðuna.

Fljótlegt er að greiða atkvæði og ef hópurinn er nýbyrjaður að vinna saman getur borgað sig að hafa atkvæðagreiðsluna „leynilega“. Þá er gott að númera allar spurningarnar á töflunni og láta hvern nemanda skrifa númer þeirrar spurningar sem hann velur á miða. Miðunum er safnað saman af kennara eða nemanda,

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

Ljósi á efnið þá er samræðan á réttri leið. Ef nemendur fara að hoppa úr einu í annað eða endurtaka það sem aðrir hafa þegar sagt þá er samræðan að hjakka í sama farinu og líklegt að þátttakendum fari fljótlega að leiðast.

- Mundu að taka tíma í lok kennslustundarinnar og láta nemendur draga saman það sem þeir hafa heyrt og lært af samræðunni. Þetta má gera á ýmsan hátt, t.d. með því að láta alla skrifa í vinnubók hvernig þeir vilji svara upphaflegu spurningunni eða með því að fara hringinn og láta alla segja hvað þeir vilja spyrja næst.

atkvæði talin og svo hefst samræða um þá spurningu sem fær flest atkvæði.

Tilfinning: **Stolt**

*Ljóð um #EM2016*

Áhlaup, tempó, sókn, tempó, vörn, tempó. Vonbrigðin eru gerð til að sigrast á þeim, einsog Englendingar, einsog timburmenn og hitabylgjan eru gerð til að sigrast á þeim. Við gefumst ekki upp fyrren á móti blæs, gefumst ekki upp í meðbyr þegar allt er liðið hjá, gefumst ekki upp fyrren síðar en það borgar sig að vera vel undirbúin(n) og hefja æfingar snemma. Maður gefst ekki upp bara sisona.

Völlurinn er gerður úr grasi, grasið er grænt og við erum sínar, bein og marðar sálir. Í bláum himni spíra vígamenn í takkaskóm sem falla til jarðar einsog perur, einsog jarðsprengjur, einsog föðurlandsástin. Það skiptir öllu að einhver fagni manni; skiptir öllu að þessir ellefu menn sem við fögnum dansi einsog möskvar í neti, hreyfi sig einsog vatnaliljur í grashafi, og allir komist heim fyrir hryðjuverkunum og rússnesku fótboltabullunum. Leikurinn leikur sig ekki sjálfur og mestu skiptir að hinir geti ekki neitt, mestu skiptir að deyja ekki, mestu skiptir að sigra, vera með, fá pening frá FIFA og auglýsingatekjur. Í þessari röð.

Altso. Söngur, tempó, vörn, tempó, teigur, tempó, skallar og allar þessar ótrúlegu klippingar, allar þessar ótrúlegu sendingar, allar þessar ótrúlegu innáskiptingar. Leikurinn er gerður til að sigrast á honum, líkurnar eru gerðar til að sigrast á þeim, Austurríkismenn, biðraðirnar og varnarveggurinn til að sigrast á þeim.

En augnablik. Þessir takkaskór eru bleikir.

Þessir magavöðvar selja nærbuxur.

Þetta höfuð er tískuyfirlýsing sem sundrar friðsælum heimilum.

Við hvolfum stundaglasinu og það mega allir missa stjórn á tilfinningum sínum meðan enn er sandur í efra hólfinu. Það mega allir vera djöfulóðir, ástin í 120 kílóa líkamsgervi, ekkert nema spik og bein og það verður allt fyrirgefið sem gerist á meðan enn er sandur í efra hólfinu, níutíu mínútur plús uppbótartími, aftur og aftur þar til yfir lýkur, en verið komin heim, undir sæng og búin að slökkva fanatísk fagnaðarópin áður en síðasta sandkornið fellur.

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

Málmleitarhliðin eru þröng einsog þírð augu Tólfunnar í sólinni eru þröng og þau mæna á litla bláleita kalla í boltaleik.

Sagan er skrifuð af fjárfestum, bjúrókrötum og óligörkum í of litlum liðstreyjum.

Sagan er skrifuð af upplitsdjörfum manni með markmannshanska, skrifuð í jarðveginn með lítið notuðum takkaskóm, skrifuð í samskeytin og markalínurnar.

Það er lyklatríði að fá miða á leikinn eða smygla sér inn og muna svo að skrifa söguna þegar maður kemur heim, það er lyklatríði að rita hana á bókfell og rista hana í dagbækur í fánalitunum, skila dagbókunum á Landsbókasafnið og drepast svo í sínu eigin hótélherbergi eftir leikinn.

Ekkert getur varað að eilífu en sagan varir að eilífu, einsog ástin, einsog föðurlandið, einsog byrjunarliðið.

Það sem ég vildi sagt hafa: Lögin, tempó, stöngin, tempó, vítin, tempó, Brexit, tempó, börnin sem sauma boltana og blóðugir fingur þeirra. Búvörusamningurinn. Tempó. Ég finn að við erum að missa tókin.

Nei.

Koma svo.

Tempó.

Einbeita sér.

Leikurinn er annaðhvort við það að vinnast eða hálfkast.

Við megum ekki við því að missa niður stemninguna, missa niður tempóið.

Tempó.

Allir sem eru ekki inni á vellinum eru tólfti maðurinn nema Eiður, sem er á bekknum.

Tempó.

Vonbrigðin eru til að fagna þeim. Vonbrigðin eru til að læra af þeim. Vonbrigðin eru til að stía okkur í sundur, einsog ástin. Íslendingar, einsog ástin, eru gerðir til að sigrast á sjálfum sér; fósturjörðin, einsog ástin, til að sigrast á sjálfri sér; allt er þetta gert til að sigrast á sjálfu sér, til að knýja sig í duftið við dýnjandi undirleik stuðningsmanna, flugeldasýningar og hvatningaróp frá furðu vilhóllum dómara.

Niðurlægingin er alger og sigurvíman deyfandi.

Niðurlægingin mun gera þig frjálstan og sigurvímunnar fylgja niðurtúrar, bugun og uppgjöf.

Niðurlægingin er sigurvegaranna, bræðin, heiftin og vonbrigðin eru sigurvegaranna; sigurvíman er kaos, hubris og joie de vivre. Ég meina Weltschmerz. Ég meina sisu. Walking Spanish.

Við erum áreiðanlega búin að tapa hvort eð er.

Boltaleikir eru fyrir börn, einsog ástin, boltaleikir eru til að kynda þjóðarstoltið, reisnina, tignina, einsog ástin, til að styrkja sjálfsmynd barna.

Boltaleikir eru uppfyllingarefni, eitthvað til að brúa bilið milli auglýsinga.

Boltaleikir eru ópíum atvinnuveganna, kurrið í kólibrífluglum, frístundakátína hinna vinnandi stétta og átylla til að gera upp á milli ókunnugra, hinna efnilegu og hinna útbrenndu; átylla til þess að velja í lið, draga í riðla, fá útrás fyrir þjóðernisfordóma og gegna hlutverki liðsheildarinnar, öll sem eitt, ég verð þú og þú verður ég og við verðum þið og þið verðið eitthvað annað en allir aðrir; átylla til þess að gera ekki neitt; átylla til þess að rifast um eitthvað sem — aldrei þessu vant — skiptir engu máli, og öll fæðumst við líka rangstæð í augum dómarans, öll brotleg og meidd.

Það hrapa stjörnur á leikvanginn merktar tryggingafyrirtækjum og brugghúsum, grenjandi um gul spjöld og grenjandi um rauð spjöld og grenjandi um regnbogalitina, mannþröngina og heimþrá annarra, hrapa stjörnur og hverfa út í nóttina til þess að drekkja sér í heimsins grynustu bjórum, hrapa úrvinda á hótélkoddá í öllum fötunum og skilja eftir sig andlitsmálningu í koddaverinu, hrapa stjörnur á meðan dagarnir klárast hver á fætur öðrum í sólinni, á instagram, í ljóðrænum lýsingum á sextíu ólíkum tungumálum sem öll renna saman í eitt allsherjar óp og úr þessu ópi verður jörðin til.

Sem útskýrir hvers vegna hún er svona í laginu.

Og svo framvegis og svo framvegis.

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

– Eiríkur Örn Norðdahl

### **Upphafsspurning og einstaklingsverkefni (valkvætt):**

Er ómögulegt að skilja ljóð, ef í því eru framandi eða óskiljanleg orð? Hvaða orð?

Hvernig tengist fótbolti og stolt? Er það gott eða slæmt? (Rökstyddu svarið)

Núna hefst heimspekileg samræða út frá spurningum nemenda sem fram komu. Fyrst þarf að kynna samræðureglur. Bekkurinn hefur takmarkaðan tíma til að komast að niðurstöðu. Ef ekki næst sátt, þá getur kennarinn t.d. kallað eftir kosningu.

### **Hugsanlegt hópverkefni (Úr *Mér er í mun. Kennsluleiðbeiningum*)**

Endursegið ljóðið í einni setningu.

Tilfinning: **Blygðun**

*Mangi Hró*<sup>57</sup>

Af skömm og mæðu Mangi Hró  
magur grét og blés í kaunin,  
að vera á dögum þótti þó  
þyngsta raunin.

Mangi unni eldri tíð,  
ef hann leit á brynjur glansa,  
vakra fáka, vopn og stríð  
vildi hann dansa.

<sup>57</sup> Translation by Atli Harðarson, see: <https://notendur.hi.is/atlivh/ljod/Robinson.htm#2> (Accessed 18.9.2021)

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

Yfir því sem ei var til  
andvarpaði og lét sig dreyma.  
Kunni á fornum fræðum skil  
og fann sig heima.

Sakna kvaðst hann Kamelot  
kappa Tróju og refilejóða,  
ljóða- seiddi hann langt í brott  
lýran góða.

Sótti ef gat hann sollinn í,  
en syndir litlar drýgja náði,  
þó mektarfólkið Medici  
mjög hann dáði.

Hversdagsleikinn mæddi mest,  
miðaldirnir þráði af hjarta  
þá jarla klæddi og jöfra best  
járnið bjarta.

Oft í þungum þönkum sat,  
þótti dapurt allt sitt gengi,  
Mangi Hró því grufað gat  
og grufað lengi.

Um þann tíma er hann hlaut  
örlög sín, allt ljóta brasið,  
hóstandi hann heilann braut  
og hellti í glasið.

– Edwin Arlington Robinson

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

(þýð. Atli Harðarson)

### Upphafsspurning og einstaklingsverkefni (valkvætt):

Endursegðu ljóðið í eins stuttu máli og þú getur.  
Í hverju felst skömmin sem verið er að lýsa?

Á hún rétt á sér eða ekki? Rökstyddu skoðun þína.

Núna hefst heimspekileg samræða út frá spurningum nemenda sem fram komu. Fyrst þarf að kynna samræðureglur. Bekkurinn hefur takmarkaðan tíma til að komast að niðurstöðu. Ef ekki næst sátt, þá getur kennarinn t.d. kallað eftir kosningu.

### Hugsanlegt hópverkefni (Úr *Mér er í mun. Kennsluleiðbeiningum*)

*Slamm/ljóðarapp*

### Tilfinning: **Blygðun**

*Heimsóknartíminn*

Gömlu stefin láta mann aldrei ósnortinn:

Afhverju getur þú  
ekki verið eins og hann?

Ég hnupla mér nýjum degi  
og í leit minni að glæp  
sem hæfi sektinni  
vitja ég þín aftur í hinsta sinn.

Ég segi: Svo þú ert þá bara með sjónvarp.

Ég segi: Djöfulli var ég timbraður í gær.

Ég segi: Og hvenær kemurðu heim?

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

En kannski var það ekkert af þessu  
sem olli vonleysi þínu  
og óvæntri gremju.  
Kannski vissir þú meira en ég.  
Kannski leituðu spurningarnar á þig.

Lifi ég í huga hans? Í huga hins?

Sjálfur veit ég ekki  
í huga hvers  
eða hverra  
né hvernig ég lifi.  
Gömlu stefin láta mann aldrei ósnortinn.

Einasta huggun mín er minningin um daginn  
þegar ég mun koma  
inn í stofuna og sjá þig heilan á fótum.

– Anton Helgi Jónsson

### **Upphafsspurningar:**

Hver er munurinn á sektinni sem talað er um í ljóðinni annars vegar og hinni óorðuðu skömm  
hins vegar?

Hvað er átt við með niðurlagi ljóðsins? Hvernig tengist það eða tengist ekki kenndinni  
skömm? (Rökstyddu svarið)

Núna hefst heimspekileg samræða út frá spurningum nemenda sem fram komu. Fyrst þarf að  
kynna samræðureglur. Bekkurinn hefur takmarkaðan tíma til að komast að niðurstöðu. Ef ekki  
næst sátt, þá getur kennarinn t.d. kallað eftir kosningu.

### **Hugsanlegt einstaklingsverkefni (valkvætt)**

Semdu ljóð sem er hugsað sem svar við ljóði Antons Helga.

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

Tilfinning: **Blygðun**

*sjálfbær yfirheyrsla*

Niðurlægð þekkti ég mig best  
í návist valds klofnaði tunga mín í þrjár :  
þær sleiktu augu, eyru, varir –

en þess vegna synda menn í hégómabláu vatni sem höfug blóm  
úr barnsholdi skreyta  
og þess vegna fara menn til hárskera án þess að klippist á æðar  
svo djúpt holar traustið steininn

ambátt þússar neglur með hvassri þjöl : en enginn ferst  
í bindishnútum ávaxtast sæðisbankar

Konurnar sem bindin hnýta stýra skapferlinu betur en veðurguð  
gleymska sefar æsing nákvæmar en logn

niðurlægð þekkti ég mig best  
í návist valds fléttuðust tungurnar þrjár  
líktog blindir snákar sem í vantar eðlishvöt

– Kristín Ómarsdóttir

### Upphafsspurningar:

Núna hefst heimspekileg samræða út frá spurningum nemenda sem fram komu. Fyrst þarf að kynna samræðureglur. Bekkurinn hefur takmarkaðan tíma til að komast að niðurstöðu. Ef ekki næst sátt, þá getur kennarinn t.d. kallað eftir kosningu.

### Hugsanlegt einstaklingsverkefni (valkvætt)

Tilfinning: **Blygðun**

*Árbærinn*

Ég er krakki í Árbænum, úthverfi í Reykjavík, og vakna daginn eftir grímuball sem er árlegt í hverfinu. Þegar ég hef étið morgunkorn fer ég fram á gang og sé að dyrnar inn í íbúðina á móti eru opnar; út um dyrnar kemur vond lykt og þegar ég geng niður stigann heyri ég væl í hundinum og hann hleypur á eftir mér, glefsar í skálmarnar á buxunum og geltir eins og hann vilji sýna mér eitthvað en ég sparka í hann, fer út og loka hurðinni á eftir mér.

Borðin og dúkarnir með rauðu doppunum eru ennþá og fötin hanga ennþá á snúrum sem eru í himninum yfir portið; fullorðna fólkið liggur á jörðinni og sumt er með augun lokuð en annað vakandi og horfir upp í loftið eða umlar. Ég labba út á steypa fótboltavöllinn og hangi í netinu í öðru markinu en fer svo yfir að róluvellinum og rörunum sem eru gömul klóakrör og sest inn í eitt þeirra og hugsa.

Alls staðar í kringum mig er þögn eins og hverfið sé að bíða eftir einhverju. Skammt frá mér í mölinni utan við rörið liggur karl með vínflösku. Ég stend upp og skoða flöskuna sem er svört; nálægt stútnum er korkur eða eitthvað með holu og í holunni er lítill, gylltur bikar eins og sjóræningjar drekka úr. Ég hugsa að bikarinn passi eins og glas inn í dúkkuhúsið mitt og togast á við karlinn um flöskuna, stíg ofan á öxlina á honum og hann sleppir.

Ég nota vasahnífinn til að plokka burt bikarinn sem er fallegur og pínulítill og læt hann í vasann; svo labba ég um portið og finn fleiri svartar flöskur og plokka bikarana lausa og safna þeim og labba svo yfir í næsta port og þar hitti ég stelpu sem er alein eins og ég og er að safna sígarettum og stubbum til að reykja. Ég hjálpa henni við að tína stubba og leita á fólkinu og svo förum við inn til hennar, hún kveikir á teiknimynd í sjónvarpinu og reykir og ég prófa að reykja en lítið. Eftir að teiknimyndin klárast förum við aftur út og reynum að komast inn í sjoppuna en hún er læst og við þorum ekki að brjóta rúðurnar.

Á bílastæðinu hjá sjoppunni stendur bókaþillinn; hann er opinn, við förum inn í hann og bílstjórinn er hvergi. Við leitum að lyklnum til að prófa að keyra en finnum þá ekki og hendum bókunum úr hillunum, öskrum og hlaupum öskrandi í burtu niður Hraunbæinn en öskrin eru gervi, það er enginn þarna til að elta okkur eða stoppa.

Við löbbum niður að Elliðaánum, stelpa segist hata skólann og við komum að stíflunni. Ofan við stífluna er lónið sem er grænt en fyrir neðan er allt hvítt og þurrt nema pollur þar sem er fiskur; hann er fastur í pollinum. Við klifrum niður að pollinum og erum hrædd um að kannski verði hleypt úr lóninu en förum samt og setjumst við pollinn og horfum á fiskinn reyna að fela sig á milli steinanna en bakið kemur upp úr og honum tekst ekki að fela sig. Við reykjum og stelpa segir að ég kunni ekki að reykja og kennir mér að segja *amen* þegar ég soga reykinn ofan í mig og áður en ég blæs frá mér. Ég segi *amen, amen*, oft í röð, og hún hlær að mér og fer að tína steina til að henda í fiskinn sem er stór eins og lax. Þegar stelpa byrjar að kasta steinunum fylgist ég með fiskinum sem hrufast á bakinu og fær hvítar skellur og sums staðar bleikar þegar steinarnar lenda á honum. Ég reyki og fer að hugsa undarlega um fiskinn, sjóskrímsli og sjóræningjaskip, mér líður illa og allt snýst. Ég byrja að æla fram fyrir mig og sé hvítan stein í jörðinni og morgunkornið spýtt í klessum ofan á. Ég veit ekki hvort stelpa er farin af því ég get ekki snúið höfðinu til hliðanna. Ég er með lokuð augu, held um hausinn með höndunum og seinna, þegar ég horfi í kringum mig, er ég í dúkkuhúsinu, stelpa er með mér, við erum læst inni og það er nótt; við sitjum á gólfinu við gamla agúrkusneið, tölum saman og reynum að skipuleggja eitthvað og drekkum úr glösum.

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

### **Upphafsspurning:**

Núna hefst heimspekileg samræða út frá spurningum nemenda sem fram komu. Fyrst þarf að kynna samræðureglur. Bekkurinn hefur takmarkaðan tíma til að komast að niðurstöðu. Ef ekki næst sátt, þá getur kennarinn t.d. kallað eftir kosningu.

### **Hugsanlegt einstaklingsverkefni (valkvætt)**

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttusen

### Kennsluáætlun #5

<b>Nafn:</b> Kristian Guttusen	
<b>Hópur:</b> 9. bekkur	<b>strákar:</b> <b>stelpur:</b>
<b>Dagsetning:</b> Mannkostamenntun/ljóð #5	<b>Lengd kennslustundar:</b> 1x 80 mín
<b>Markmið:</b> Að nemendur öðlist færni í að beita tilteknum verkfærum við ljóðagerð. Jafnframt að nemendur tileinki sér aðferð heimspekilegrar samræðu til að rannsaka spurningar sem vekja áhuga nemenda og ákveðið er að taka fyrir.	<b>Kennslugögn:</b> Glærur ritlist_vinnustofa_nr1_9iii2018.pptx
<b>Staða nemenda:</b> Nemendur hafa tekið þátt í tveimur tímum í heimspekilegri samræðu og tveimur tímum í ljóðalestri og samræðu um ljóð og dygðir.	
<b>Efni kennslustundar (og rök):</b>  b) Ritlistaræfingar	
<b>Nálgun (og rök):</b>  Skapandi og gagnrýnin hugsun verður best þjálfuð í samræðufélagi jafningja sem skuldbinda sig til að rannsaka sameiginlega þær spurningar sem þeir hafa áhuga á að leita svara við. Það er spennandi og fjölbreytt verkefni að skapa og þróa samræðufélag nemenda í leik-, grunn- eða framhaldsskóla. <a href="#">Robert Fisher Ph.D.</a> hefur lýst þróun samræðufélags með samburði á hegðunarmynstrum sem einkenna hóp sem er að hefja störf sem samræðufélag og hópi sem orðinn er þróað samræðufélag. Greiningu hans má skoða <a href="#">hér</a> (Brynhildur Sigurðardóttir, 2013).  Þegar nemendur læra að semja texta (og uppgötva árangurinn) út frá nákvæmum fyrirmælum, læra þeir að virkja eigin sköpunarkraft. Stutt verkefni með beinum fyrirmælum hafa gríðarleg áhrif á þessa virkni hvort heldur sem nemandinn hefur áður prófað að yrkja ljóð eða ekki.	
<b>Hvað gerir kennarinn?</b>  Kennarinn leggur fyrir ritlistaræfingar.  Nemendur vinna stuttar tímaæfingar og eru hvattir til að lesa upp afraksturinn.	<b>Hvað gera nemendur?</b>  Þú velur hvað hentar þér og hópnum: sitja á gólfi, sitja á stólum, sitja við borð eða önnur uppsetning sem þér dettur í hug.

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

Kennarinn gegnir bæði hefbundnu stjórnunarhlutverki, en reynir eftir fremsta megni að ýta undir þátttöku nemenda, þannig að þeir haldi sjálfir umræðunni gangandi og hafi líka visst svigrúm til að stýra stefnu hennar.

Við upphaf samræðu er gott að kennari minni nemendur á helstu samræðureglur sem hópurinn hefur sett sér, sjá til dæmis kennsluseðilinn [Samræðureglur](#).

Vinnuferlið sem við mælum með í þessu verkefni er ákveðin grunnuppskrift að heimspekilegri samræðu. Slíkri vinnu er nánar lýst á kennsluseðlinum [Grunnuppskrift að heimspekilegri samræðu](#). Hér til hliðar er ferlið í hnotskurn.

Þegar þú stjórnar samræðunni er gott að hafa eftirfarandi atriði í huga:

- Það eru nemendur sem eiga að tala saman, þú bendir þeim á hvernig þeir gera það með góðu móti.
- Hlustun er grundvallarskilyrði til að samræða geti átt sér stað. Þú minnir nemendur á það t.d. með því að segja: „heyrðir þú hvað ... sagði?“ eða „getur einhver sagt hópnum um hvað við erum núna að tala?“
- Það er gæðamerki á heimspekilegri samræðu að farið sé á dýptina frekar en að nefnd séu ótal dæmi um sama hlutinn. Á meðan nemendur bæta við rökum, sjónarhornum og dæmum sem bregða nýju ljósi á efnið þá er samræðan á réttri leið. Ef nemendur fara að hoppa úr einu í annað eða endurtaka það sem aðrir hafa þegar sagt þá er samræðan að hjakka í sama farinu og líklegt að þátttakendum fari fljótlega að leiðast.
- Mundu að taka tíma í lok kennslustundarinnar og láta nemendur draga saman það sem þeir hafa heyrt og lært af samræðunni. Þetta má gera á ýmsan hátt, t.d. með því að láta alla skrifa í vinnubók hvernig þeir vilji svara upphaflegu spurningunni eða

Þegar nemendur hafa komið sér fyrir leggur þú æfingarnar ein af annarri fyrir nemendur. Nemendur glíma við æfingarnar og skiptast á að lesa afraksturinn upphátt. Gott er að leyfa sem flestum að láta ljós sitt skína.

Kallaðu eftir spurningum frá nemendum og skrifaðu þær á töflu þannig að allir sjái þær. Skráðu nafn spyrjandans aftan við spurninguna svo hægt sé að biðja hann um útskýringar eða tengingar seinna í vinnuferlinu.

Þegar nemendur hafa ekki fleiri spurningar eða taflan er orðin full þá velja nemendur eina spurningu (eða flokk líkra spurninga) til að hefja samræðuna.

Fljótlegt er að greiða atkvæði og ef hópurinn er nýbyrjaður að vinna saman getur borgað sig að hafa atkvæðagreiðsluna „leynilega“. Þá er gott að númera allar spurningarnar á töflunni og láta hvern nemanda skrifa númer þeirrar spurningar sem hann velur á miða. Miðunum er safnað saman af kennara eða nemanda, atkvæði talin og svo hefst samræða um þá spurningu sem fær flest atkvæði.

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

með því að fara hringinn og láta alla segja hvað þeir vilja spyrja næst.	
Sjá glærur (Appendix K2)	

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

### Kennsluáætlun #6

<b>Nafn:</b> Kristian Guttesen	
<b>Hópur:</b> 9. bekkur	<b>strákar:</b> <b>stelpur:</b>
<b>Dagsetning:</b> Mannkostamenntun/ljóð #6	<b>Lengd kennslustundar</b> 1x 80 mín
<b>Markmið:</b> Að nemendur öðlist færni í að beita tilteknum verkfærum við ljóðagerð. Jafnframt að nemendur tileinki sér aðferð heimspekilegrar samræðu til að rannsaka spurningar sem vekja áhuga nemenda og ákveðið er að taka fyrir.	<b>Kennslugögn:</b> Glærur ritlist_vinnustofa_nr2_9iii2018.pptx Fréttablöð/dagblöð
<b>Staða nemenda:</b> Nemendur hafa tekið þátt í tveimur tímum í heimspekilegri samræðu og tveimur tímum í ljóðalestri og samræðu um ljóð og dygðir.	
<b>Efni kennslustundar (og rök):</b>  a) Ritlistaræfingar	
<b>Nálgun (og rök):</b>  Skapandi og gagnrýnin hugsun verður best þjálfuð í samræðufélagi jafningja sem skuldbinda sig til að rannsaka sameiginlega þær spurningar sem þeir hafa áhuga á að leita svara við. Það er spennandi og fjölbreytt verkefni að skapa og þróa samræðufélag nemenda í leik-, grunn- eða framhaldsskóla. <a href="#">Robert Fisher Ph.D.</a> hefur lýst þróun samræðufélags með samanburði á hegðunarmynstrum sem einkenna hóp sem er að hefja störf sem samræðufélag og hópi sem orðinn er þróað samræðufélag. Greiningu hans má skoða <a href="#">hér</a> (Brynhildur Sigurðardóttir, 2013).  Þegar nemendur læra að semja texta (og uppgötva árangurinn) út frá nákvæmum fyrirmælum, læra þeir að virkja eigin sköpunarkraft. Stutt verkefni með beinum fyrirmælum hafa gríðarleg áhrif á þessa virkni hvort heldur sem nemandinn hefur áður prófað að yrkja ljóð eða ekki.	
<b>Hvað gerir kennarinn?</b>  Kennarinn leggur fyrir ritlistaræfingar.  Nemendur vinna stuttar tímaæfingar og eru hvattir til að lesa upp afraksturinn.	<b>Hvað gera nemendur?</b>  Þú velur hvað hentar þér og hópnum: sitja á gólfi, sitja á stólum, sitja við borð eða önnur uppsetning sem þér dettur í hug.

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

Kennarinn gegnir bæði hefbundnu stjórnunarhlutverki, en reynir eftir fremsta megni að ýta undir þátttöku nemenda, þannig að þeir haldi sjálfir umræðunni gangandi og hafi líka visst svigrúm til að stýra stefnu hennar.

Við upphaf samræðu er gott að kennari minni nemendur á helstu samræðureglur sem hópurinn hefur sett sér, sjá til dæmis kennsluseðilinn [Samræðureglur](#).

Vinnuferlið sem við mælum með í þessu verkefni er ákveðin grunnuppskrift að heimspekilegri samræðu. Slíkri vinnu er nánar lýst á kennsluseðlinum [Grunnuppskrift að heimspekilegri samræðu](#). Hér til hliðar er ferlið í hnotskurn.

Þegar þú stjórnar samræðunni er gott að hafa eftirfarandi atriði í huga:

- Það eru nemendur sem eiga að tala saman, þú bendir þeim á hvernig þeir gera það með góðu móti.
- Hlustun er grundvallarskilyrði til að samræða geti átt sér stað. Þú minnir nemendur á það t.d. með því að segja: „heyrðir þú hvað ... sagði?“ eða „getur einhver sagt hópnum um hvað við erum núna að tala?“
- Það er gæðamerki á heimspekilegri samræðu að farið sé á dýptina frekar en að nefnd séu ótal dæmi um sama hlutinn. Á meðan nemendur bæta við rökum, sjónarhornum og dæmum sem bregða nýju ljósi á efnið þá er samræðan á réttri leið. Ef nemendur fara að hoppa úr einu í annað eða endurtaka það sem aðrir hafa þegar sagt þá er samræðan að hjakka í sama farinu og líklegt að þátttakendum fari fljótlega að leiðast.
- Mundu að taka tíma í lok kennslustundarinnar og láta nemendur draga saman það sem þeir hafa heyrt og lært af samræðunni. Þetta má gera á ýmsan hátt, t.d. með því að láta alla skrifa í vinnubók hvernig þeir vilji svara upphaflegu spurningunni eða

Þegar nemendur hafa komið sér fyrir leggur þú æfingarnar ein af annarri fyrir nemendur. Nemendur glíma við æfingarnar og skiptast á að lesa afraksturinn upphátt. Gott er að leyfa sem flestum að láta ljós sitt skína.

Kallaðu eftir spurningum frá nemendum og skrifaðu þær á töflu þannig að allir sjái þær. Skráðu nafn spyrjandans aftan við spurninguna svo hægt sé að biðja hann um útskýringar eða tengingar seinna í vinnuferlinu.

Þegar nemendur hafa ekki fleiri spurningar eða taflan er orðin full þá velja nemendur eina spurninguna (eða flokk líkra spurninga) til að hefja samræðuna.

Fljótlegt er að greiða atkvæði og ef hópurinn er nýbyrjaður að vinna saman getur borgað sig að hafa atkvæðagreiðsluna „leynilega“. Þá er gott að númera allar spurningarnar á töflunni og láta hvern nemanda skrifa númer þeirrar spurningar sem hann velur á miða. Miðunum er safnað saman af kennara eða nemanda, atkvæði talin og svo hefst samræða um þá spurninguna sem fær flest atkvæði.

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

með því að fara hringinn og láta alla segja hvað þeir vilja spyrja næst.	
Sjá glærur (Appendix L2)	

### Heimildaskrá:

Anna Steinunn Valdimarsdóttir og Ingibjörg Sigtryggsdóttir. (2011) *Mér er í mun. Kennsluleiðbeiningar.*

*Tillögur að vinnubrögðum.* Kópavogur: Námsgagnastofnun.

Brynhildur Sigurðardóttir. (2013) Þróun samræðufélags. *Verkefnabanki Heimspekitorgsins.*

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Buckley, J. (2013) Ég, ég sjálf og við. *Verkefnabanki Heimspekitorgsins.*

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Gunnar Hersveinn. (2005) *Gæfuspör.* Reykjavík: JPV.

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Tilvitnun samkvæmt skilmálum Copyleft. Verkefni: Buckley, J., Ég, ég sjálf og við, Þýðing: Brynhildur Sigurðardóttir.

Útgefandi: Heimspekitorg, vefsíða Félags heimspekikennara. Útgáfuár: 2013. Notist ekki í ábataskyni og prentist aðeins út á pappír samkvæmt samningum Fjölís um endurgjald fyrir ljósritun úr vernduðum verkum. Tilvitnun eftir Kristian Guttesen.

## **Character Education Through Poetry**

Kristian Guttesen

### J1. Information Sheet for Teachers/Academics - Stage 2B Longitudinal Study (English)

#### **Information Sheet for Teachers/academics**

#### **University of Birmingham Research Project on Character Education Through Poetry**

This research is taking place within the School of Education at the University of Birmingham, following guidelines and methods developed at The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, based in the School of Education is a pioneering research centre focusing on character, virtues and values in the interest of human flourishing. The Centre promotes and builds character strengths in the contexts of the family, school, community, university, professions, voluntary organisations and the wider workplace.

Between Autumn 2018 and Spring 2019, we carried out an intervention at [Insert School Name] & [Insert School Name] with the aim to foster character strengths in the school context. Participating students reflected on character strengths that connect them to other people and, over a 3-week period, and took part in activities to develop these strengths. The overall aim of the study is to help create responsible, caring and connected citizens.

We are interested to see if a greater sense of connection to and responsibility for other people will foster better wellbeing in those taking part, and whether the project will encourage students to connect with and help other people.

The aim of this interview is to investigate how, in the view of teachers and/or academics with experience in using poetry in education, how this can best be done with the holistic moral and emotional development of students in mind.

This document provides further information about the study which you may wish to read before deciding whether you are happy for the responses you provide to be used as data in our research project.

*Further information about the conduct of the study and the use of any data collected can be found below:*

#### ***What is this study about?***

This project examines whether it is possible to promote character strengths in young people aged 14–15 as a direct result of a targeted 6-week programme. The activities that make up the programme will take place in form time and in longer once-weekly lessons. We would like to know whether we can create in young people a greater sense of connection to and responsibility for other people as a result of the study. Furthermore, we are interested to see whether this might lead to better wellbeing in those taking part.

#### ***What has happened?***

The project started in the Autumn of 2018 (for 3 weeks) and ran into the Spring of 2019 (for 3 weeks). Findings from the project will be shared with the participants and there will be an opportunity for parents/guardians to hear more about the results of the study. All data from the study will be made freely available in a published research report by 2021.

## **Character Education Through Poetry**

Kristian Guttesen

### ***How will this study benefit the wider society?***

This research aims to build up our common life and wellbeing by stimulating reflection and action on human strengths that connect us to other people. We hope that our research will help to create responsible, caring and connected citizens.

### ***Will the information be kept confidential?***

Yes. This study has been reviewed and approved by the Humanities & Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee of the University of Birmingham and will be conducted following ethical and legal guidelines as set out by the Committee. All data will be handled confidentially. The only people to see any information you provide will be researchers at the University of Birmingham who work on the project. Prior to analysis, they will assign an ID code to the data so that your identity will be protected at all times. All data, in its original form, will be stored on secure University of Birmingham servers or in locked filing cabinets. This data may be stored for up to ten years, in line with University of Birmingham guidelines.

### ***With whom will my responses to the project activities be shared?***

Only anonymised data will be made more widely available so that your responses cannot be identified. This applies to reports and publications made available by the researchers and the John Templeton Foundation (the funders of this project). The data may be archived at a Data Centre such as the UK Data Archive. This will allow other registered researchers to have access to the data in this anonymised form.

### ***How will the information I provide be used?***

The researchers on the team will use your responses to evaluate whether it is possible to promote other-oriented character strengths in a three-week programme. Your responses might be used to illustrate publications and reports. However, confidentiality would be strictly enforced and your responses would not be identified as yours.

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should contact the researchers involved. They will do their best to answer any further questions you may have (see below)

### ***What if I want to withdraw my data later in the study?***

Please note that you have the right to withdraw data from being used in the study at any point up to the completion of the programme. If this is the case, please contact the researchers conducting the study.

### ***Who is conducting this research?***

The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues ([www.jubileecentre.ac.uk](http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk)) at the University of Birmingham is conducting this research. We are happy to talk to you more about the project or answer your questions. You can contact us by telephone or via email:

Professor Kristján Kristjánsson

**Character Education Through Poetry**

Kristian Guttesen

Principal Investigator

[Redacted]

Kristian Guttesen

PhD Candidate

[Redacted]

## Kynningarbréf fyrir kennara og fræðimenn

### Rannsóknarverkefni um ljóðlist og mannkostamenntun við Menntavísindasvið Háskólans í Birmingham

Rannsóknin, sem framkvæmd er á Menntavísindasviði Háskólans í Birmingham, fylgir forskrift og aðferðafræði sem þróaðar hafa verið við Jubilee-rannsóknarmiðstöðin fyrir mannkosti og dygðir. Við Jubilee miðstöðina er unnið brautryðjendastarf og sjónum beint að mannlegu eðli, dygðum og gildum. Miðstöðin vinnur að eflingu mannkosta í samhengi fjölskyldu, skóla, samfélags, háskóla, starfsgreina, sjálfboðastofnana og vettvang atvinnulífsins.

Á tímabilinu haustið 2018 og vorið 2019 var íhlutun gerð í tveimur skólum á höfuðborgarsvæðinu með það að markmiði að efla mannkosti í samhengi skóla. Nemendur sem tóku þátt veltu fyrir sér mannkostum sem tengja þá við annað fólk og á þriggja vikna tímabili og tóku þátt í verkefnum til að þróa þessa styrkleika.

Við höfum áhuga á að sjá hvort aukin meðvitund á tengslum við og ábyrgð gagnvart öðru fólki stuðli að betri líðan hjá þeim sem taka þátt og hvort verkefnið hvetji nemendur til að tengjast og hjálpa öðru fólki.

Markmiðið með þessu viðtali er að rannsaka hvernig, að mati kennara og/eða fræðimanna sem hafa innsýn í og reynslu af ljóðlist í kennslu, hvernig best sé hægt að gera þetta á heildrænan hátt, með siðferðilegan og tilfinningalegan þroska nemenda í huga.

Þetta skjal veitir frekari upplýsingar um rannsóknina sem þú ert hvött/hvattur til að kynna þér áður en þú ákveður hvort þú sért sát/ur við að svörin sem þú veitir verði notuð sem gögn í rannsóknarverkefninu.

*Nánari upplýsingar um framkvæmd rannsóknarinnar og notkun gagna sem safnað er má finna hér að neðan:*

#### **Um hvað fjallar rannsóknin?**

Í rannsókninni er kannað hvort hægt sé að efla persónustyrkleika ungs fólks á aldrinum 14–15 ára sem bein afleiðing af markvissri 6 vikna dagskrá. Íhlutunin samanstendur af verkefnum sem unnin eru í tvöfaldri kennslustund einu sinni til tvisvar í viku. Rannsókninni er ætlað að leiða í ljós hvort skapa megi hjá unglingum meiri tilfinningu fyrir tengslum við og ábyrgð gagnvart öðru fólki. Ennfremur höfum við áhuga á að sjá hvort þetta gæti leitt til betri líðanar hjá þeim sem taka þátt.

#### **Hvað hefur átt sér stað?**

Verkefninu var hrundið af stað haustið 2018 (á 3gja vikna tímabili) og aðalrannsóknin var gerð vorið 2019 (á 3gja vikna tímabili). Niðurstöðum verkefnisins verður deilt með þátttakendum og gefst foreldrum/forráðamönnum tækifæri á að fræðast um niðurstöður rannsóknarinnar. Öll gögn rannsóknarinnar verða gerð aðgengileg ókeypis og birt á rafrænu sniði fyrir lok árs 2021.

#### **Hvernig mun rannsóknin gagnast samfélaginu í víðari skilningi?**

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Kristian Guttesen

Rannsóknin miðar að því að því að efla sameiginlegt líf okkar og vellíðan með því að örva ígrundun og styrkja þær gjörðir sem tengja okkur við annað fólk. Við vonum að rannsóknir okkar muni hjálpa til við að skapa ábyrga, umhyggjusama og innbyrðis tengda borgara.

### ***Mun ríkja trúnaður um upplýsingarnar?***

Já. Rannsóknin hefur verið metin og samþykkt af siðanefnd Hug- og félagsvísindadeildar Háskólann í Birmingham og verður hún framkvæmd í samræmi við þá siðferðilegu og lagalegu skilmála sem nefndin setur fram. Farið verður með öll gögn sem trúnaðarmál. Eina fólkið sem sér allar upplýsingar sem þú gefur upp verða þeir fræðimenn við Háskólann í Birmingham sem að verkefninu koma. Áður en greining fer fram munu þeir úthluta gögnum auðkenni þannig að persónuauðkenni þitt verður ógreinanlegt á öllum stigum rannsóknarinnar. Öll gögn, í sinni upprunalegri mynd, verða geymd á öruggum netþjónum Háskólans í Birmingham eða í læstum skjalaskápum. Heimilt er að geyma þessi gögn í allt að tíu ár í samræmi við reglur Háskólans í Birmingham.

### ***Með hverjum verður svörum mínum í viðtalinu deilt?***

Aðeins ópersónuleggreinaleg gögn verða gerð aðgengileg þannig að ekki er hægt að bera kennsl á svör þín. Þetta á við um skýrslur og rit sem rannsakendur og John Templeton Foundation stofnunarinnar (sem fjármagnar Jubilee rannsóknarmiðstöðina þar sem þetta doktorsverkefni er unnið) mun gera aðgengileg. Leyfilegt er að geyma gögnin í gagnamiðstöð eins og breska gagnasafninu. Það mun gefa öðrum skráðum vísindamönnum kleift að fá aðgang að gögnunum á þessu ópersónugreinanlegu sniði.

### ***Hvernig verða upplýsingarnar sem ég veiti notaðar?***

Rannsakendurnir sem kom að minni rannsókn munu nota svör þín til að meta hvort hægt sé að efla mannkosti sem beinast að öðrum manneskjum í þriggja vikna íhlutun. Svör þín gætu verið notuð til að sem dæmi í ritum og skýrslum. Aftur á móti yrði ítrustu þagnarskyldu gætt og svör þín yrðu ekki rekjanleg til þín.

Hafir þú áhyggjur af einhverjum þáttum þessarar rannsóknar ættirðu að hafa samband við rannsakanderna sem taka þátt í henni. Þeir munu gera sitt besta til að svara frekari spurningum sem þú gætir haft (sjá hér að neðan).

### ***Hvað ef ég vil afturkalla gögnin mín í rannsókninni síðar?***

Góðfúslega skal bent á að þú hefur rétt til að afturkalla gögnin, og verða þau þá ekki notuð í rannsókninni, hvenær sem er þar til rannsókninni lýkur. Ef svo er raunin, hafðu vinsamlegast samband við fræðimennina sem framkvæma rannsóknina.

### ***Hverjir standa að rannsókninni?***

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Jubilee rannsóknarmiðstöðin fyrir mannkosti og dygðir ([www.jubileecentre.ac.uk](http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk)) við Menntavísindasvið Háskólans í Birmingham stendur fyrir rannsókninni í samstarfi við Menntavísindasvið Háskóla Íslands. Okkur er ljúft og skylt að ræða við þig og svara spurningum þínum, ef einhverjar eru. Þú getur haft samband við okkur í síma eða í gegnum tölvupóst:

Prófessor Kristján Kristjánsson  
aðalrannsakandi

████████████████████  
████████████████

Kristian Guttesen  
doktorsnemi

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## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

### K1. Slides – Character Education/Poetry, Lesson #5 (English)

#### Creative Writing Workshop no. 1

1

#### First assignment: The Deacon of Dark River

- A deacon who lived on a farm called Myrká (Dark River) had a girlfriend named Guðrún. She lived on farm called Bægisá located on the other side of a big river called Hörgá. One day the deacon rode his horse Faxi to Bægisá to meet Guðrún so they could discuss their plans for Christmas. The deacon promised to ride to Bægisá on Christmas Eve and bring Guðrún to Myrká where they could celebrate the holiday together. But on his way back home that day, the deacon was unexpectedly caught in a heavy storm. He fell into the Hörgá river where he suffered a severe head injury and drowned.

2

#### The Deacon of Dark River :cont:

- The deacon's body was found the next day by a farmer and buried a week before Christmas. But the news of his death somehow had not reached Guðrún. On Christmas Eve, as per their arrangement, the deacon arrived at her farm. She had barely finished dressing, and only had time to put on one sleeve of her coat before they were off on their journey. As they rode, his face was hidden by a hat and scarf, but when they came to Hörgá river the horse tripped and the deacon's hat fell forward.

3

#### The Deacon of Dark River :cont:

- Guðrún saw his terrible head injury. As the moon shined upon them he said, "The moon fades, death rides. Don't you see a white spot on the back of my head, Garún, Garún?" She replied, "I see, what is". After that, they did not speak a word until they came to the deacon's farm Myrká. When they got off the horse, the deacon spoke again. "Wait here Garún, Garún. While I move Faxi, Faxi (the deacon's horse) over the fence, fence". (In Icelandic folklore, ghosts often speak in verse, repeating the last word of each line.)

4

## Character Education Through Poetry

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### The Deacon of Dark River :cont:

- The moon passes,  
death rides; do you  
not see a white speck  
on my neck,  
Garún, Garún?

5

### The First Task: The Deacon of Dark River

- The poet Jóhann Jónsson (1896-1932) wrote the poem Lullaby<sup>58</sup> by spinning from the above poem:
- The moon passes.  
Death rides.  
Shadows grey silently hover over the roofs.  
It is fun to dream of good fortunes.  
The moon passes.

6

### The First Task: The Deacon of Dark River

- In this exercise you should imitate the form of the poem Lullaby and write your own poem
  - The poem should include one or both of the following concepts:
  - Compassion, shame

7

### The Second Task: Free Flow

- Write a poem that includes the following words:  
Tree, lane, dragon, pride

8

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<sup>58</sup> Hjálmarsson, J. (2002). Retrieved from: <https://www.mbl.is/greinasafn/grein/659809/> (Accessed: 23.5.2018)

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttusen

### Third Task: A 3<sup>rd</sup> Person Perspective

- Pride
  - Shame?
  - Compassion
- 
- Love?
  - Hatred?
  - Other?

9

### A Task

- Clichéd metaphors

Example:

Hungry like the wolf  
Bright as the sun  
Dark as the night

10

### A Task

- Clichéd metaphors

Example:

Hungry like  
Bright as  
Dark as

11

### Task: Three Transformed Clichéd Metaphors

- Write a poem that opens on one of these three paragraphs, ends on another, and contains the third. You can also use any line as a title. Write between 8-10 paragraphs linking the paragraphs. You have 15 minutes.

(Eiríkur Örn Norðdhal)

12

### After the Exercise

- Jumping between different images – or mixing different texts – is a way of creating inconsistencies or energy. There is usually some kind of tension between different text elements, some kind of gap that must be crossed over a bridge, that sparks in between. All texts live and thrive on an imbalance that seeks balance – without this imbalance, the text is blunt and predictable. But the space must not be too big either – there is a difference between beautiful music and simple noise.

(EÖN)

13

### Fifth Tasks: Using Exactly 10 Words

- Fear?
  - Jealousy?
  - Trust?
- 
- Prying?
  - Joy?
  - Other?

14

## Character Education Through Poetry

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### The Sixth Task: Poem About Shame



15

### Assignment

- Take fifteen minutes to write a poem/text about how, why and what you want to write (as an author) – you do not have to share it with the class, unless you want to, but if you do want, you can post it on your Facebook page.
- Send me your thoughts.
- After that, we will discuss your submissions.

16

### Next Lesson

You will work in groups

You will be assigned *reading buddies* within class

Tomorrow you will

- Show them what you wrote today/tonight, and something you would like to develop further
- show them something you wrote before this class and would like to develop further

You will systematically be assigned to new *reading circles*

Hopefully, the conclusion will be that you gain *reading buddies* that will continue to work with and read and critique each other's poems/texts

17

### Creative Writing :glossary:

- If one wants to learn to how write, one has to – in addition to with an almost religious intensity – write a lot. Everything else comes naturally, one gradually becomes the writer one is. The more you write, the better you become at writing.

18

### Creative Writing :cont:

- Creative writing is not exclusive craft moreso than music – and we have varying degrees of handicap when it comes to taking the first steps, we are diverse in how quickly we can learn the basics – but I am convinced that everyone can learn how to write as well as they wish to, it is all a matter of practice and devotion.

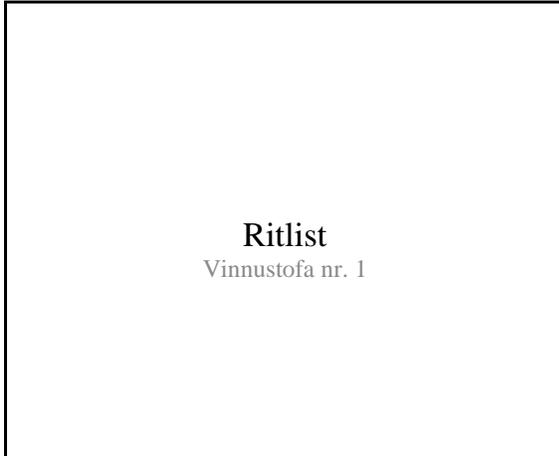
(Eiríkur Örn Norðdahl)

19

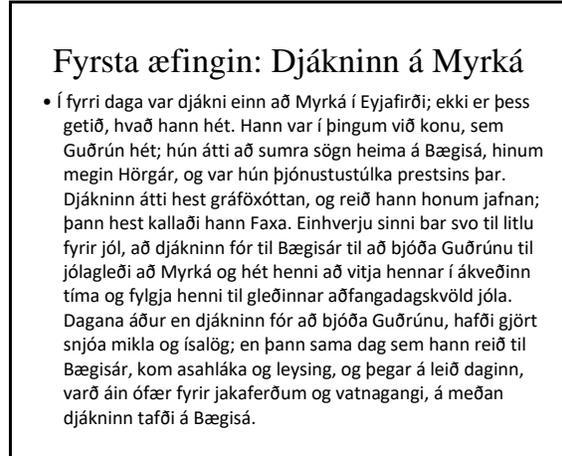
## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

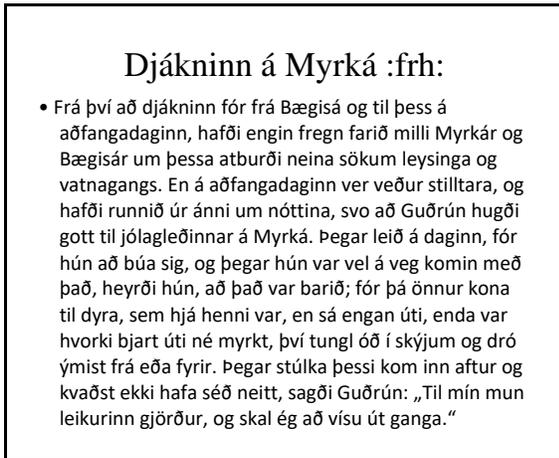
### K2. Slides – Character Education/Poetry, Lesson #5 (Icelandic)



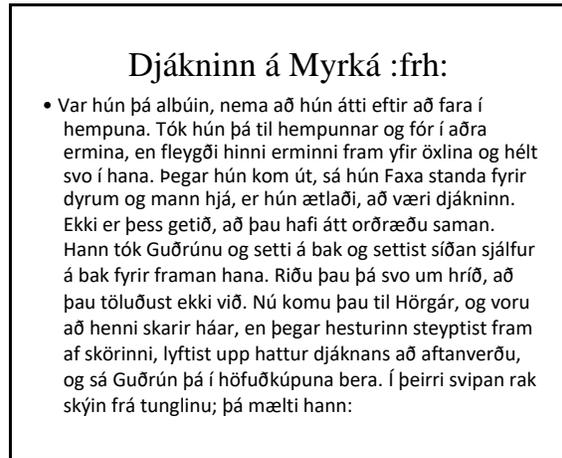
1



2



3



4

## Character Education Through Poetry

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### Djárninn á Myrká :frh:

- „Máninn líður,  
dauðinn ríður; sérðu  
ekki hvítan blett í  
hnakka mínum,  
Garún, Garún?“

5

### Fyrsta æfingin: Djárninn á Myrká

- Skáldið Jóhann Jónsson (1896-1932) orti ljóðið Vögguvísu<sup>59</sup> með því að spinna út frá ofangreindu ljóði:
- Máninn líður.  
Dauðinn ríður.  
Skuggar gráir hljótt yfir hjarnið sveima.  
Gaman er um gæfu horfna að dreyma.  
Máninn líður.

(Jóhann Hjálmarsson, 2002)

6

### Fyrsta æfingin: Djárninn á Myrká

- Í þessari ritunaræfingu eigið þið að líkja eftir umgjörð (formi) ljóðsins Vögguvísu og semja eigið ljóð
- Í ljóðinu eiga eitt eða fleiri af eftirfarandi hugtökum að koma fyrir: samkennd, samvitund, samlíðun, samhygð, skömm, blygðun

7

### Önnur æfingin: Frjálst form

- Semjið ljóð þar sem fram koma eftirfarandi orð:  
tré, stígur, dreki, stolt

8

### Þriðja æfingin: 3. persónu frásögn

- Stolt?
  - Skömm?
  - Samkennd?
- 
- Ást?  
Hatur?  
Annað?

9

### Æfing

- Klisjukenndar myndlíkingar (viðlíkingar)

Dæmi:

Háll sem áll  
Björt sem sólin  
Dimm eins og nóttin

10

<sup>59</sup> Hjálmarsson, J. (2002). Retrieved from: <https://www.mbl.is/greinasafn/grein/659809/> (Accessed: 23.5.2018)

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

### Æfing

- Klisjukenndar myndlíkingar (viðlíkingar)

Dæmi:

Háll sem  
Björt sem  
Dimm eins og

11

### Æfing: Þrjár umbreyttar klisjukenndar myndlíkingar (viðlíkingar)

- Skrifaðu ljóð sem opnar á einni af þessum þremur málsgreinum, lýkur á annarri og inniheldur þá þriðju. Einnig má nota einhverja línuna sem titil. Skrifaðu á bilinu 8-10 málsgreinar sem tengja málsgreinarnar. Þú hefur 15 mínútur.

(Eiríkur Örn Norðdhal)

12

### Að lokinni æfingu

- Að stökkva á milli ólíkra mynda – eða blanda saman ólíkum textum – er aðferð til þess að skapa ósamræmi eða orku. Á milli ólíkra textaelementa skapast yfirleitt einhvers konar spenna, einhvers konar gap sem brúast, sem gneistar á milli. Allur texti lifir og þrífst á ójafnvægi sem leitar jafnvægis – án þessa ójafnvægis er textinn átakalaus og framvindan fyrirsjáanleg. En bilin mega heldur ekki vera of stór – það er munur á fallegum tónskratta og einföldum hávaða.  
(EÖN)

13

### Fimmta æfingin: Í nákvæmlega 10 orðum

- Ótti?  Öfund?
- Abryðisemi? Gleði?
- Traust? Annað?

14

### Sjötta æfingin: Ljóð um skömm



15

### Heimaverkefni

- Gefið ykkur fimmtán mínútur til þess að skrifa texta/ljóð um það hvernig, hvers vegna eða hvað þið viljið skrifa – þið þurfið ekki að deila honum með bekknum, frekar en þið viljið, en getið sett þá á Facebooksíðuna ykkar.
- Sendið mér hugleiðingar ykkar.
- Að því loknu ræðum við textana sem þið senduð inn.

16

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttusen

### Í næsta tíma

Vinnið þið meira í hópum

Þið eignist „ritvini“ innan bekkjarins

Á morgun munuð þið

- sýna þeim eitthvað sem þið skrifuðuð í dag/í kvöld og gætuð hugsað ykkur að vinna meira með
- sýna þeim eitthvað sem þið skrifuðuð fyrir þennan tíma og gætuð hugsað ykkur að vinna frekar

Vinnið með stöðugt nýjum ritvinum í „rithringjum“

Niðurstaðan verður (ef til vill/vonandi) sú að þið eignist ritvini sem þið getið átt í áframhaldandi samstarfi við

17

### Ritlist :glósur:

- Ef maður vill læra að skrifa þarf maður – fyrir utan að lesa af trúarlegri áfergju – að skrifa mikið og oft. Allt annað kemur af sjálfu sér, maður verður smám saman til, skref fyrir skref. Þeim mun meira sem maður skrifar, þeim mun betur veit maður hvernig maður vill skrifa.

18

### Ritlist :frh:

- Ritlist er ekki iðn frekar en tónlist – og við höfum mismikla forgjöf þegar kemur að fyrstu skrefunum, misfljót að tileinka okkur grundvallarreglurnar – en ég er sannfærður um að það geti allir lært að skrifa einsog þeir vilja sjálfir skrifa og það eina sem þurfi til sé æfing og ástundun.

(Eiríkur Örn Norðdahl)

19

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

### L1. Slides – Character Education/Poetry, Lesson #6 (English)

#### Creative Writing Workshop no. 2

1

#### A Task

1. Think of a person you know.
2. If this person was a colour, what colour would they be?
3. If this person was a period in history, what period would they be?
4. If this person was a particular time of day, what time of day would they be?
5. If this person was a furniture, what furniture would they be?
6. If this person was a season, what season would they be?
7. Write down something that would be typical for this person to say.

You can step outside of the classroom.

(EÖN)

2

#### A Task :cont:

- Now you have blah and blah and blah and blah. Use these words and terms to write a tribute to this person – a poem or short prose. Be careful not to use the words directly as metaphors, except in a more specific sense – Not: Soffía is like an armchair; but rather: Soffía walks like an armchair, or walks with an armchair, Soffía has armchairs on her brain, in her arms, Soffía is like a red armchair in the late nineteenth century. The text should be about 10-20 paragraphs – you have 15 minutes.

(EÖN)

3

#### After the Exercise:

- Do you feel as if you have discovered something new about this person? Did you surprise yourself? Is the text true or beautiful or interesting or all of the above? What did you think was most important thing that came through?

(Eiríkur Örn Norðdahl)

4

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

### Writing Circle :first attempt:

- You will work in groups
- Each one of you has brought something they wrote yesterday (or something relatively new), and want to develop further

5

### Writing Circles Groups 1-4

Group 1 A B C D E	Group 3 í J K L M
Group 2 F G H I	Group 4 N O Ó P

6

### A Task

Our country's God! Our country's God!  
We worship Thy name in its wonder sublime.  
The suns of the heavens are set in Thy crown  
By Thy legions, the ages of time!  
With Thee is each day as a thousand years,  
Each thousand of years, but a day,  
Eternity's flow'r, with its homage of tears,  
That reverently passes away.  
Iceland's thousand years,  
Iceland's thousand years!  
Eternity's flow'r, with its homage of tears,  
That reverently passes away.<sup>60</sup>

Revise at will, replace nouns or sentences or whatever,  
rearrange lines, write down from memory, distort, turn out  
and so on. You have 15 minutes.

(EÖN)

7

### After the Exercise:

- The purpose of this exercise is similar to the purpose of disassembling a radio to understand how it works, or at least form a theoretical point of view, to understand how it works. Another purpose is simply to desecrate the literature – to allow oneself to shred it a little, to take it down.

- Did you find it uncomfortable to attack the national anthem? Any holiness? What do you think is left - what elements remain the national anthem, in this remix? What kind of elements did you bring to the table? Was the result comical, sad? Did the feeling change? Does the new text describe your attitude towards the national anthem?

(EÖN)

- What does the feeling you may have for the national anthem have to do with pride? Give arguments for your answer.

8

<sup>60</sup> Translation retrieved from: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lofs%C3%B6ngur> (Accessed: 18.9.2021)

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

### Group Assignment

- Newspapers
- 2-4 in each group
- Find a news article
- Write a poem/prose/short story based on this article
- It must contain 2-3 of the following virtues/emotions: shame, loneliness, joy, depression, compassion, pride, love

9

### A Task

- Write a letter to yourself in the past
- Write a letter to yourself in the future

10

### After the Exercise

#### MADNESS

The other day I met myself on a street downtown.

I myself addressed myself and said:

- Good morning, Sir Myself, be completely unalarmed.

It is not you, but myself, who's mad.

- D. Sigurðarson

11

### Writing Circles Groups 5-8

Group 5	Group 7
A	Í
B	J
C	K
D	L
E	M
Group 6	Group 8
F	N
G	O
H	Ó
I	P

12

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

### A Task: The Division

- Write a short story where two characters have to share something. It can be a record collection, an heir, dinner leftovers or whatever. Do they both crave this thing, or neither? Is there an old controversy behind the characters' relationship - or does the thing have a backstory? What causes the vibration?

13

### After the Exercise



14

### A Task

- Write about the sun as if you love her
- Write about the sun as if you hate her

15

### After the Exercise

2

Sun,  
the sun was with me  
like a slender woman  
in yellow shoes.

Twenty fathoms down  
my love and faith slept  
like a flowering anemone.

And the sun passed  
over the unsuspecting flower  
in yellow shoes.<sup>61</sup>

- S. Steinarr

16

<sup>61</sup> Translated from the Icelandic by Christopher Burawa and Cynthia Hogue. Retrieved from: <https://www.asymptotejournal.com/poetry/steinn-steinarr-time-and-water/> (Accessed: 28.1.2022)

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

### To Conclude: Home Assignment

- Write, read, read some more, and then write ...

17

### Lokaæfing dagsins

1. Read through your 'Poem About Shame' (workshop no. 1) and pick your favourite sentence.
2. Read through today's assignment (a tribute to someone) and pick your favourite sentence.
3. Read through today's latter assignment (a revision of the national anthem) and pick your favourite sentence.
4. Write a poem that begins with one of these three sentences, ends with another, and contains somewhere within it the third one. You can also use one of these lines as a title. Write about 8-10 sentences. You have 15 minutes.
  - Revise the poem. You have 15 minutes. (EÖN)

18

### After the Exercise:

- Jumping between different images – or mixing different texts – is a way of creating inconsistencies or energy. There is usually some kind of tension between different text elements, some kind of gap that must be crossed over a bridge, that sparks in between. All texts live and thrive on an imbalance that seeks balance – without this imbalance, the text is blunt and predictable. But the space must not be too big either – there is a difference between beautiful music and simple noise.

19

THESE WORDS I WRITE  
KEEP ME FROM  
TOTAL MADNESS.

Charles Bukowski.



20



21

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

### L2. Slides – Character Education/Poetry, Lesson #6 (Icelandic)

**Ritlist**  
Vinnustofa nr. 2

1

**Æfing**

8. Hugsaðu um manneskju sem þú þekkir.
9. Ef manneskjan væri litur, hvaða litur væri hún?
10. Ef manneskjan væri tímabil í sögunni, hvaða tímabil væri hún?
11. Ef manneskjan væri tiltekinn tími dags, hvaða tími dags væri hún?
12. Ef manneskjan væri húsgagn, hvaða húsgagn væri hún?
13. Ef manneskjan væri árstíð, hvaða árstíð væri hún?
14. Skrifðu niður eitthvað sem væri dæmigert fyrir manneskjuna að segja.

Þið getið farið fram. (EÖN)

2

**Æfing :frh:**

- Nú eruð þið með bla og bla og bla og bla. Notið þessi orð og hugtök til að skrifa hyllingu til manneskjunnar – ljóð eða styttri prósa. Gætið ykkar að nota orðin ekki beint sem myndlíkingar (viðlíkingar), nema í sértækari skilningi – ekki: Soffía er einsog hægindastóll, heldur Soffía gengur einsog hægindastóll, eða gengur með hægindastól, Soffía er með hægindastóla á heilanum, í fanginu, Soffía er einsog rauður hægindastóll á nítjándu aldar síðkvöldum. Bara 10-20 málsgreinar – þið fáið 15 mínútur.

(EÖN)

3

**Að lokinni æfingu:**

- Finnst ykkur þið hafa uppgötvað eitthvað nýtt um manneskjuna? Komið þið sjálfum ykkur á óvart? Er textinn sannur eða fallegur eða áhugaverður eða allt í senn? Hvað fannst ykkur mikilvægast að kæmist í gegn?

(Eiríkur Örn Norðdahl)

4

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttusen

### Rithringur :fyrsta atrenna:

- Þið vinnið í hópum
- Hver og einn sýnir hinum eitthvað sem hann skrifaði í gær (eða tiltölulega nýlega) og gæti hugsað sér að vinna meira með

5

### Rithringir Hópar 1-4

Hópur 1	Hópur 3
A	í
B	J
C	K
D	L
E	M
Hópur 2	Hópur 4
F	N
G	O
H	Ó
I	P

6

### Æfing

Ó, guð vors lands! Ó, lands vors guð!  
Vér lofum þitt heilaga, heilaga nafn! Úr  
sólkerfum himnanna hnyta þér krans  
þínir herskarar, tímanna safn.  
Fyrir þér er einn dagur sem þúsund ár  
og þúsund ár dagur, ei meir:  
eitt eilífðar smáblóm með titrandi tár,  
sem tilbiður guð sinn og deyr.  
:: Íslands þúsund ár, ::  
eitt eilífðar smáblóm með titrandi tár,  
sem tilbiður guð sinn og deyr.

Endurskrifið að vild, skiptið út nafnorðum eða sögnum  
eða hverju sem er, endurraðið línum, skrifið upp eftir  
minnið, afbakið, snúið út úr og svo framvegis. Þið hafið 15  
mínútur.

(EÖN)

7

### Að lokinni æfingu:

- Tilgangurinn með þessari æfingu er áþekkur tilganginum með því að taka sundur útvarp til þess að átta sig á því hvernig það virkar, eða mynda sér allavega kenningu um hvernig það virkar. Annar tilgangur er einfaldlega að afhelga bókmenntirnar – að leyfa sér að tæta þær svoltið í sig, taka þær niður.
- Fannst ykkur óþægilegt að ráðast að þjóðsöngnum? Einhver heilagleiki? Hvað finnst ykkur sitja eftir – hvaða element eru það úr þjóðsöngnum sem eru áfram í rímixinu? Hvers konar element eru það sem þið tókuð með að borðinu? Var niðurstaðan kómísk, sorgleg? Breyttist tilfinningin? Lýsir nýi textinn afstöðu ykkar til þjóðsöngsins?  
(EÖN)
- Hvað hefur sú tilfinning sem þið kunið að hafa til þjóðsöngsins með stolt að gera? Útskýrið svarið.

8

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

### Hópverkefni

- Fréttablöð/dagblöð
- 2-4 í hverjum hóp
- Finnið frétt
- Skrifið ljóð/prósa/örsögu út frá henni
- Verður að miðla a.m.k. 2-3 þessara dygða/tilfinninga: blygðun, einmanakennd, gleði, hugarvél, samkennd, skömm, stolt, ást

9

### Æfing

- Skrifaðu bréf til sjálfs þín í fortíðinni
- Skrifaðu bréf til sjálfs þín í framtíðinni

10

### Að lokinni æfingu

GEÐVEIKI

Um daginn mætti ég sjálfur sjálfum mér á götu niðri í bæ.

Ég sjálfur ávarpaði sjálfan mig og sagði:

– Góðan dag, herra ég sjálfur, verið þér alveg óhræddur.

Það eruð ekki þér, heldur ég sjálfur, sem er ruglaður.

- D. Sigurðarson

11

### Rithringir Hópar 5-8

Hópur 5	Hópur 7
A	Í
B	J
C	K
D	L
E	M
Hópur 6	Hópur 8
F	N
G	O
H	Ó
I	P

12

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

### Æfing: Uppskiptingin

- Skrifaðu örsögu þar sem tvær persónur þurfa að skipta einhverju á milli sín. Það getur verið plötusafn, arfur, kvöldmatarleifar eða hvað sem er. Girnast þær báðar þennan hlut, eða hvorugar? Liggur eitthvert gamalt deilumál að baki sambandi persónanna – eða á hluturinn einhverja baksögu? Hvað veldur titringnum?

13

### Að lokinni æfingu



14

### Æfing

- Skrifaðu um sólina eins og þú elskir hana
- Skrifaðu um sólina eins og þú hatir hana

15

### Að lokinni æfingu

2

Sólin,  
sólin var hjá mér, eins  
og grannvaxin kona, á  
gulum skóm.

Í tvítugu djúpi svaf  
trú mín og ást eins  
og tvílit blóm.

Og sólin gekk yfir  
grunlaust blómið á  
gulum skóm.

- S. Steinnarr

16

### Að lokum: Heimaverkefni

- Yrkið, lesið, lesið síðan meira og farið svo að yrkja...

17

### Lokaæfing dagsins

5. Lesið í gegnum verkefnið „Ljóð um skömm“ (**vinnustofa 1**) og veljið eftirlætis málsgreinina.
6. Lesið í gegnum fyrra verkefnið í dag (**hylling til einherrar manneskju**) og veljið eftirlætis málsgreinina.
7. Lesið í gegnum seinna verkefnið í dag (**endurgerð þjóðsöngsins**) og veljið eftirlætis málsgreinina.
8. Skrifaðu ljóð sem opnar á einni af þessum þremur málsgreinum, lýkur á annarri og inniheldur þá þriðju. Einnig má nota einhverja línuna sem titil. Skrifaðu á bilinu 8-10 málsgreinar sem tengja málsgreinarnar. Þú hefur 15 mínútur.
  - Endurskrifaðu ljóðið. Þú hefur fimmtán mínútur. (EÖN)

18

## Character Education Through Poetry

Kristian Guttesen

### Að lokinni æfingu:

- Að stökkva á milli ólíkra mynda – eða blanda saman ólíkum textum – er aðferð til þess að skapa ósamræmi eða orku. Á milli ólíkra textaelementa skapast yfirleitt einhvers konar spenna, einhvers konar gap sem brúast, sem gneistar á milli. Allur texti lifir og þrífst á ójafnvægi sem leitar jafnvægis – án þessa ójafnvægis er textinn átakalaus og framvindan fyrirsjáanleg. En bilin mega heldur ekki vera of stór – það er munur á fallegum tónskratta og einföldum hávaða.

19

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20



21