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"I liked the bit where her nose got bit off...": A critical examination of the effect of studying a medieval French fairy tale on a low-attaining Year 7 French class

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Abstract

This paper explores new National Curriculum requirements in modern foreign languages, which require students to engage with target language literature. A Year Seven class with a high proportion of students with special educational needs was taught a series of lessons on the medieval French lai 'Bisclavret' and wrote their own fairy-tales. Students were observed to enjoy and engage with the project, with a small observable positive effect on their reading and writing levels. It is hoped that this paper will offer justification and inspiration for teachers to meet the new curriculum requirements in innovative ways with learners of all abilities.

"I liked the bit where her nose got bit off...": A critical examination of the effect of studying a medieval French fairy tale on a low-attaining Year 7 French class

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Introduction

Ki de vice se voelt defender
Estudïer deit e entendre
A grevose ovre comencier
Par ceo s'en puet plus esloignier
E de grand dolur delivrer
Pur ceo començai a penser
D'aucune bone estoire faire…

To protect oneself against vice
One must study and strive
To undertake a great work;
This way, one can distance oneself
And escape from great sorrow.
For this reason, I began to think
Of writing some good story…

Marie de France, *Lais*, ll. 23-29
(Warnke & Harf-Lancner, 1990; translation mine)

The medieval French author Marie de France writes in the twelfth century of the moral and practical benefits of reading and writing literature; nine centuries later, it would seem that the Department for Education (DfE) agrees. The use of authentic literary texts has become a priority in the UK modern foreign languages (MFL) classroom thanks to new key stage 3 (KS3) National Curriculum guidelines from 2014, and new GCSE specifications from 2016. At KS3, "[the modern languages curriculum] should provide opportunities for [students] to communicate for practical purposes, learn new ways of thinking, and *read great literature in the original language*." (DfE, 2014, p.1). A definition of "*great* literature" is not offered, and it may be that this is something of an aspirational aim, but nonetheless the programme of study requires that students are able to convey and

understand "information that goes beyond their immediate needs and interests" and that they "read literary texts in the language […], to stimulate ideas, develop creative expression and expand understanding of the language and culture" (p.2). These expectations are also present at key stage 4: the GCSE subject content from 2016 specifies that students should "acquire new knowledge, skills and ways of thinking through the ability to understand and respond to a rich range of authentic spoken and written material, adapted and abridged, as appropriate, including literary texts" (DfE 2015, p.3). This is not quite "protecting oneself against vice", but it is nonetheless not far from Marie's view of literature as useful for a purpose wider than simple communication.

Reintroducing literature to the MFL classroom after several decades' absence can be imagined to have caused some trepidation among MFL teachers, especially at KS3 where students with all but the most profound special educational needs are required to study a modern foreign language. Many MFL teachers will not have studied target language (TL) literature as part of their undergraduate degrees, and there are many challenges related to bringing literary texts into the classroom, most notably finding suitable texts and ensuring the appropriateness and usefulness of language and content. This project aimed to counter these anxieties, by bringing a literary text which many might consider 'difficult' – the medieval lai *Bisclavret* (see Appendix 1 for a plot summary) - to a group of pupils who already face significant challenges accessing the conventional MFL curriculum. I aimed to investigate whether an intervention of five lessons studying this text could raise students' reading and writing attainment levels, but I also wanted to examine students' reactions to and responses to the text, and find out what (if any) they would perceive the benefits of studying it to be. This paper will begin with a review of literature relating to authentic texts in the MFL classroom, and of strategies to support MFL learners with special educational needs and disabilities, with a brief discussion of existing literature which merges these two topics. I will then proceed to describe my research methodology and outline my five-lesson intervention and resources. Finally, I will present and discuss my findings.

Although there is little research documenting teachers' reaction to the new literature curriculum requirements, I have observed a range of reactions to my project in my placement school, from enthusiasm to amusement to alarm. After I explained my plan to teach medieval literature to the class who form the subject of this study to one teacher, she joked that I should use it as a behaviour management tool – "you can threaten them with it if they don't behave!". Although this was humorous, it reflects some of the attitudes towards literature – and particularly medieval literature –

held by the public; it is perceived as dry, distant, and onerous. It is certainly true that the works of Marie de France would be virtually impossible for pupils and most adults to access completely unmediated, written as they are in 800-year-old Anglo-Norman French. However, using my previous academic specialism as an academic researcher of medieval French, I aimed in this project to demonstrate that such a mediation was possible, to make this text not only accessible, but enjoyable and useful to vulnerable learners.

Literature review

There has been little research which explicitly places itself in the intersection between the fields of special educational needs and disabilities (SEN) and authentic literary texts in MFL. This review will therefore first give a brief account of authenticity and debates surrounding it in practice, with focus on issues relevant to my use of an authentic text; it will then look at literature on MFL provision for pupils with SEN in the UK, and draw out instances where this literature could be seen to support the use of authentic texts.

Authentic literary texts in the MFL classroom

Within the context of MFL teaching, 'authenticity' is an apparently intuitive term which is in fact highly contested. Gilmore's (2007) helpful survey draws out the complexity of critical debate around the term:

> "the debate over authenticity (…) now embraces research from a wide variety of fields including discourse and conversational analysis, pragmatics, cross-cultural studies, sociolinguistics, ethnology, second language acquisition, cognitive and social psychology, learner autonomy, information and communication technology (ICT), motivation research and materials development."
>
> (Gilmore, 2007, p.97)

Given this, it would be impossible to provide a fully comprehensive survey of the debate here, especially as this study is limited to the subset of authentic texts which are 'literary' (the precise definition of which would require yet more space and potential critical acrimony). Authenticity is not only a highly interdisciplinary concept, but one which is highly controversial within disciplines.

The first question we may wish to ask of literature on authenticity is the deceptively simple matter of what constitutes an authentic text. This is particularly relevant for this project, since the text I presented to the class was not only unusual, but presented in various transformations: a medieval

text, 'translated' by me into heavily simplified modern French and then into English, with its French text read out and superimposed onto a digital animation. In what sense is this an 'authentic' use of text in the classroom?

Gilmore's summary article again provides some helpful starting points. After identifying eight different potential definitions of authenticity found across relevant literature, he summarises that

> "the concept of authenticity can be situated either in the text itself, in the participants, in the social or cultural situation and purposes of the communicative act, or in some combinations of these."
>
> (ibid., p.98)

For Gilmore, although he recognises the difficulty in using a term such as 'real', he considers an authentic text as "A stretch of real language, produced by a real speaker or writer for a real audience and designed to convey a real message of some sort" (ibid., p.98). Our adapted medieval text meets these definitions in some ways and not others. The language to which the pupils were exposed was not 'real' in the sense that it was adapted by me, a fluent but non-native French speaker. It was, however, adapted from the words of a medieval author, and spoken aloud by a native French speaker. And although the sentences were not composed by a native speaker, the story – including names, plot, locations, and tone – came directly from the author. Indeed, the level of storytelling is perhaps the greatest sense in which the text I presented is 'authentic'. If we look back to Gilmore's definition of authenticity, the original Breton lai I adapted was indeed written for a 'real audience' – as the Grove Music definition of 'lai' tells us, "the narrative lai, like much other narrative verse, was evidently sung" (Fallows, 2017). If we can describe the 'real message' of the story to be a tale designed to elicit wonder and excitement, this message was no different when I presented the tale to my classroom audience.

Indeed, much of the current thinking on authenticity privileges a more complex understanding of authenticity than simply the extent to which text arrives in the classroom directly from the pen or mouth of a native speaker. In response to what they see as a "problematic […] discourse around authenticity" which "uses authenticity to justify more than it should" (p.579), Badger and MacDonald (2010) argue for a more holistic definition of the term which recognises that "texts are processes not products" (p.578). In other words, a more meaningful definition of authenticity might be found in the process of interaction between learners and the text:

> "When a teacher brings an authentic text into the classroom and learners read it or listen to it, there is a new text and the authenticity is to be found in the degree of similarity between the text process in its original context and the text process in the classroom."
>
> (Badger & MacDonald, 2010, p.581)

As we have seen, if we view the presentation of *Bisclavret* in the classroom as a storytelling event, its use aligns well with Badger and MacDonald's thinking.

This focus on similarity of process leads us naturally to the second question we may wish to ask of the literature on authenticity: what are the benefits of authentic texts in the classroom? On this the literature is in broad agreement: we cannot yet be sure, and any potential benefits are dependent on many factors. Badger and MacDonald are particularly emphatic on this point:

> "Both motivation and level of difficulty [of a text] are a function of the interaction between particular texts and particular language learners. Authentic texts which are motivating for some users will be boring for others; authentic texts which are easy for some language learners will be difficult for others. Authenticity says nothing about the motivational properties of a language sample."
>
> (ibid., p.579)

While a few studies (e.g. Peacock, 2007) have investigated whether authenticity itself impacts on learner motivation and attainment, these have not succeeded in establishing conclusively that it is authenticity *per se*, rather than any other factor, which accounts for any benefits they found. In the case of Peacock's study, for example, authentic materials were tested on a single group of learners with no control group: the same group of learners were given authentic materials one day and "artificial" materials the next, and were asked to evaluate their motivation each day. With no control group, the cumulative effect of the programme of study as a whole, as well as other factors such as the teacher's behaviour, could not be accounted for. Perhaps further experimental study will be able to establish a firm evidence base for authenticity as a motivating factor, but currently we can only say that authenticity forms part of a rich tapestry of variables which may affect motivation and attainment in certain circumstances. As summarised by Gilmore (2007):

> "The success of any particular set of authentic materials in motivating a specific group of learners will depend on how appropriate they are for the subjects in question, how they are exploited in the class (the tasks), and how effectively the teacher is able to mediate between the materials and the students, amongst other variables."
>
> (Gilmore, 2007, p.107)

This study does not intend to establish any empirical conclusions about the entire category of authentic texts. Rather, it intends to take Badger and MacDonald's (2010) "concept of authenticity as a process necessarily embedded in its context, and ask: is it possible to make this text successful

with this group of learners? To do this, we will need to look closely at the needs of the learners in question by reviewing literature on SEN and low-attaining students in the MFL classroom.

Special educational needs in MFL

By their nature, special educational needs are unique to each student. It is not automatically true that a learner with SEN will encounter additional challenge in the MFL classroom. In fact, learners with some conditions – such as certain presentations of Autism Spectrum Disorder – may excel at languages, thanks to associated traits such as strong memory skills. Conversely, many learners who struggle with languages may do so with no diagnosed learning impairment.

However, MFL is often considered a particularly difficult subject for learners with some types of SEN, particularly those who struggle with information processing, working memory, and native language literacy and speech and communication. Before the 1988 Education Reform Act, which made a five year course of study in a modern foreign language a statutory entitlement for all pupils (see p.2, where "a modern foreign language" is named a "foundation subject" at key stages 3 and 4), there was no statutory requirement for a modern language to be taught to any student. Therefore, we can surmise that a learner with special educational needs of this type may never have encountered a modern foreign language. However, after the Act, MFL teachers were exposed to an increasingly wide range of special educational needs in their classrooms (see 'Introduction' in Bovair & Bovair, 1992). Even as the requirement to teach a language at key stage 4 was lifted in 2004, meeting SEN remains a challenge at KS3. Accordingly, in the past three decades a range of professional literature has emerged to help teachers answer two overlapping questions: what difficulties do pupils with SEN face in the MFL classroom, and how can teaching be adapted to address these difficulties? Unsurprisingly, no literature yet recommends adapted medieval fairy tales as the best MFL teaching strategy for SEN pupils. The literature on SEN in MFL will therefore be useful to our study in more general terms: what evidence is there to suggest that use of an authentic literary text might be viable and effective with SEN learners?

Bovair and Bovair's *Modern Languages for All* was published 1992 in the wake of the Education Reform Act, when the first cohort was three years into their 5-year programme and the first GCSEs were two years in the future. Accordingly, part of the book is a 'handbook' of practical advice for teachers on how to adapt teaching for learners facing a variety of difficulties. These include

'breaking goals into manageable units' and providing opportunities for success (pp.34-42); careful thought regarding classroom layout and instructions; and use of games (pp.61-91).

The book is, however, more than a handbook: it is also a heartfelt justification of the ethical value of teaching MFL to all learners, especially those with SEN. The authors warn against an approach to language teaching which takes unsupported oral and written fluency as its only objective:

> "It must be considered that of the percentage of all children learning a foreign language, only a tiny handful will become linguists. Of course we should be aiming to produce adults who can at least converse a little in a foreign language, but if we overlook the opportunities for teaching other skills through the medium of the foreign language, we are, indeed, missing opportunities for all children."
>
> (Bovair & Bovair, 1992, p.20)

The experience of learning a foreign language, the authors argue, is an enriching one even if a student might never retain and produce the language independently. This seems to offer justification for a more creative approach, with less focus on meeting potentially unrealistic standards of fluency, and more emphasis on cultural enrichment and widening horizons. Other research appears to support this view. Salter, Neil, and Wright in their 1998 review of research into SEN and MFL produced for the Northern Irish education authority, similarly recommend moving away from an approach which prioritises transactional fluency:

> "A narrowly instrumental approach can rob language teaching of its great potential to enrich the learners' lives. Even with special needs pupils, narrowness can be avoided. The teaching of modern languages lends itself to a multi-sensory approach in which vision, sound, touch, taste and smell have a place. Such an approach is particularly appropriate for pupils with SEN."
>
> (Salter et al., 1998, p.372)

There appears, therefore, to be significant support for the idea of using cultural materials with SEN learners, provided that these materials are presented with appropriate attention to the challenges these learners may face. The literature points to some of these. Notably, Michèle Deane (2007) notes that care must be taken with SEN learners' motivation: they "must not be allowed to encounter failure" (p.43). Bovair and Bovair (1992) agree, noting that "the best predictor of later success (…) is early success" (p.42). However, returning to our review of literature on authentic texts, it is clear that with the right adaptations, there is no reason why an encounter with a literary text might be any more likely to create 'failure' than a role-play about buying a sandwich.

I mentioned in my introduction that my project was met with mixed initial reactions from staff. Salter et al. (1998) make a systematic review of literature teacher perceptions of teaching MFL to

SEN pupils, reviewing existing literature and making their own investigations, producing findings which support my anecdotal observations: "a teacher interviewed by Collins (1993) described the prospect of having to teach French to pupils with SEN in Key Stage 4 as 'harrowing'" (p.365). In a similar vein, McKeown's (2004) professional handbook *Meeting SEN in the curriculum: Modern Foreign Languages* offers a list of statements for teachers to evaluate as discussion prompts for a continuing professional development (CPD) session. The list includes views such as "children with more severe problems will get no benefit from learning a language and will just hold other children back", and "I have enough to do without worrying about kids who can't read or write" (p.104). While such views are by no means unanimous among teachers – these statements are clearly intended to provoke discussion – the fact that they are included at all indicates they may still exist in some form.

As we have seen, much of the literature on SEN learners recommends open-ended, creative cultural projects, but there is not yet a study which documents in detail a specific cultural project built around an authentic text and its impact on SEN learners. This study aims both to fill that critical gap, and perhaps more importantly to challenge stereotypes and assumptions about SEN learners' potential in the MFL classroom which still exist.

Research Design

The project I designed took place over five 55-minute lessons with a Year Seven French group, situated in an academy in an affluent rural area of East Anglia. The school is academically high-achieving, but the class in question was chosen because of pupils' low prior attainment. Of a total of 16 pupils on the register, one pupil had already been disapplied full-time from the MFL curriculum; another was disapplied part-way through the project. Of the remaining 14 pupils, four have a diagnosed special educational need or disability, and four are in the pupil premium (PP) category (including one student who is in both categories). All except two students are grouped in the 'lower' KS2 prior attainment band based on their standardised test scores.

Denscombe (2014) describes a case study as an inquiry into "something that already exists […] not a situation that is artificially generated for the purposes of the research" (p.77). While it could be argued that this project aims to meet a pre-existing challenge in addressing the curriculum requirements for literature at KS3 mentioned above, I have attempted to meet that challenge in a

deliberately new and unusual way, influenced by my experience and background as a former academic in the field of literature. In this respect, the project is closer to action research, demonstrating "a respect for the practitioner's knowledge" (ibid., p.151) and the need for "action researchers to focus on aspects of their own practice as they engage in that practice" (ibid., p.149). Elliott (1991) identifies the trialling of new curriculum content as a key feature of action research:

> "Curriculum development is not a process which occurs prior to teaching. The development of curriculum programmes occurs through the reflective practice of teaching. The improvement of teaching is not so much a matter of getting better at implementing an externally designed curriculum, but of developing one."
>
> (Elliott, 1991, p.54)

The project, therefore, is chiefly an action research project, seeking to examine closely the effect of studying a specific text on a specific group of learners, while also trialling a solution to a practice-based problem based on my experience as a practitioner. Action research traditionally follows a model of repeating cycles, as depicted in Figure 1:

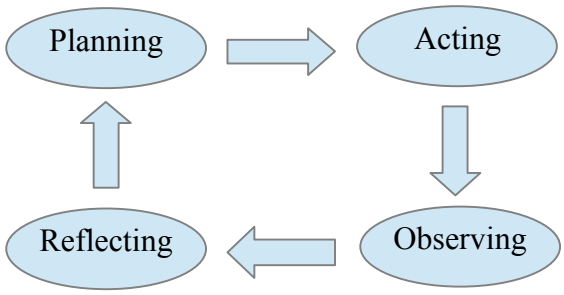


Figure 1: The action research cycle (Reproduced from McNiff, 2013, p.57)

Due to the time constraints embedded in the nature of this project, it was only possible to carry out one cycle of action research. However, I was able to identify questions arising from this cycle which would provide a basis for further cycles in future, which I have posed in the 'Conclusions' section of this essay. To carry out my project, I designed a sequence of lessons around the medieval French lai *Bisclavret,* aiming to answer the research questions (RQs) in Table 1 below:

RQ1	Can the study of a literary work be a viable and effective vehicle for improving reading and writing in low-attaining/SEN learners?
RQ2	To what extent and in what ways will learners engage with and respond creatively to the stimulus text?
RQ3	How will learners perceive the utility of studying a work of literature for their learning and the impact it has had on their skills and attainment?

Table 1: Research questions (RQs)

The sequence of lessons (see Table 2) was designed around two key resources which supported each other in the classroom:

- a 12-minute film by the French animator Emilie Mercier, which I gained permission to edit in the following ways:
    - removed the original audio, which was linguistically far too complex
    - added a heavily adapted audio soundtrack recorded by a native French speaker
    - added subtitles
    - cut 2-3 scenes containing nudity
- a parallel-text story booklet (1 each per pupil), illustrated with stills from the film. The text of the booklet corresponded with the subtitles of the film narration, and each unit of text had an English translation underneath it. See Appendix 2.

Students were then guided to produce their own stories, which I collated in booklet format.

The sequence ran as follows, over the course of two weeks:

Lesson	Overview	Objectives	Language content
1	Introduce new topic, rationale & give some historical context Introduce characters Introduce story booklets Show film for the first time - gap fill to familiarise	To learn about a medieval French fairytale To understand one of the first stories ever written in French and get to know the characters.	Character names
2	Show film again. Develop understanding of events in story - begin to understand some of the sequence & repeat.	To develop our understanding the story of Bisclavret.	Places to live: château, forêt, ciel
3	Design a main character and a 'monster' to feature in the story	Begin to think about writing our own story inspired by Bisclavret; design a main character and a monster to feature in it.	Body parts, incl. 'monstrous' body parts e.g. les cornes, le poil
4	Composing stories: supported writing carousel.	Write our own stories inspired by Bisclavret.	Exposure to simple present tense sentences
5	Performing & reading each other's stories: reviewing learning.	Read each other's stories: evaluate what we have learnt.	Speaking practice

Table 2: Sequence of lessons

I was aware of the need to present manageable objectives at each stage of the sequence. I felt that presenting students with a large quantity of completely unfamiliar TL text on an unfamiliar topic would be alienating and discouraging. I therefore devoted the whole of the first lesson to presenting the story and moved through the rest of the sequence of lessons towards a highly scaffolded writing activity which formed the final writing 'project'. The story booklet I made for the students (see Appendix 2) included English translations of each sentence; for some students, this was still a significant decoding challenge. To help the students further in feeling confident engaging with the text, I presented it by making links to their history curriculum on medieval Britain, to allow them to clearly visualise its context.

Data collection

The data collection methods I used to investigate my three research questions are set out in Table 3. This section will give a brief summary of these methods, and outline my thought processes in choosing and implementing each one.

Research question		Data collection methods
RQ1	Can the study of a literary work be a viable and effective vehicle for improving reading and writing in low-attaining/SEN learners?	Reading and writing attainment levels at the beginning and end of the project Work samples
RQ2	To what extent and in what ways will learners engage with and respond creatively to the stimulus text?	Work samples Questionnaires Interviews My own observations/class teacher feedback
RQ3	How will learners perceive the utility of studying a work of literature for their learning and the impact it has had on their skills and attainment?	Questionnaires Interviews

Table 3: Research questions and data collection methods

Reading and writing levels

To investigate RQ1, I took a quantitative reading and writing measure for the students at the beginning and end of the project. Finding a reliable measure for this presented several problems. With the recent removal of national curriculum levels, a commonly-recognised scale for quantifying attainment in the four skills no longer exists. Schools have replaced these with their own scales of various kinds: in my context, the school now uses a system of 'rainbow steps', attainment descriptors which are aligned to projected KS4 outcomes. I used these 'rainbow steps' to assign students levels in writing before we began the project.

As the school's 'rainbow steps' are designed to reflect assessment performance, they are based on students' 'exam-conditions' performance, i.e. their unsupported production of language. I felt that this was not an organic measure to use, given that students would not be creating their final writing projects under exam conditions. I also did not wish to insert another assessment into their already-crowded school assessment schedule. I therefore chose to assess the students' book-work, ignoring references in the descriptors to their production "from memory". Although this meant a potentially less precise assessment of the students' writing abilities, I felt that it was justified given the level that many students were working at. As an example, when I made my book assessment, several were unable, even with support, to meet level '1', which requires accurate copying of phrases. As Bovair and Bovair (1992) note, copying and labelling is a significant challenge for many SEN learners which may represent a long-term attainment goal rather than a quickly-surpassed first stage (p.52). An analysis of these learners' writing capabilities based on independent production, then, would not have been appropriate.

For reading, I was again reluctant to artificially insert another assessment. A reading assessment was already scheduled for shortly after the project was due to finish, so I decided to compare scores in this assessment with the assessment completed by their previous teacher in December 2016. Using assessment data from topic-based assessments which had nothing to do with the fairy tale's subject matter allowed me to examine whether the skill of reading itself had improved, as opposed to the students' recognition of specific words. Using the existing assessments, however, allowed for less control over timing: if students' reading scores improved between December and March, could this be attributed to work in other topics, or generally increased linguistic knowledge? For this reason, I intended to compare their data with assessments from a class with comparable prior

attainment to see if the increase was in line with expectations, but was unfortunately unable to do this due to other teachers' time constraints, meaning that this data will be a less reliable foundation for any conclusions.

Questionnaires

As Denscombe (2014) notes,

> "[…] questionnaire design needs to take into account the particular capabilities of those who receive the questionnaire. Different target groups might have different abilities and disabilities which have to be taken into consideration not just as an ethical point but as a practical point as well."
>
> (Denscombe, 2014, p.195)

As many students in the class have difficulties with literacy, I had to take care to tailor my questionnaires to gain meaningful information to answer RQ3 and RQ2. Initially I piloted a baseline questionnaire based on a five-point Likert-type scale, to assess students' baseline self-perception of ability (see Appendix 3 for my prototype questionnaire). I soon found, however, that this was an unsuitable data collection method. Although I made efforts to make the questionnaire accessible and appealing using emojis, it appears that this was not enough to avoid what Denscombe describes as the "mental effort" of filling in a questionnaire (p.199). Most students gave the same answer all the way down, and almost all of them rated their perceived ability in all skills as "quite good", avoiding the extremes of the scale (see Cohen, Manion, Morrison, & Bell, 2011, p.327). I suspected that my questionnaire had not sufficiently engaged the students to think in detail about how they saw their own ability, rendering its data unreliable. Based on this pilot, I decided to change my approach. Rather than trying to elicit responses in pre-defined categories, my final questionnaire asked four open questions to allow students' perceptions of what the project had done for them to emerge through their free choice of words (see Appendix 4). Although this might seem to be more demanding on the students' capabilities, it seemed that being asked for qualitative responses was more engaging for them and increased their motivation to respond, perhaps by giving more of an impression that their responses were being 'listened to' (see Denscombe, 2014, p.195, for further discussion of factors affecting respondent motivation).

Interviews

I interviewed five students after the project had finished. I had intended to interview all fourteen students in the class, but due to time constraints I was only able to interview five (Ollie, Annie, Melanie, Noel, Jake), so in practice my sample was a convenience sample formed of those students I was able to access during form time. As noted by Cohen et al., this is a common pitfall of this data collection method, which requires a significant time investment (2011, p.323). I was not able to conduct a satisfactory number to be able to meaningfully code responses, but I have included them in the study anyway where relevant as they contained some useful qualitative data.

Work samples

Students' work samples from the fairy tale-writing project (lessons 3, 4 and homework) were my primary method of answering RQ2. As Taber (2007) notes: "the things that students write (or draw, or perform, etc.) only provide indirect evidence of what they think, know and understand (and need not be reliable guides to what they believe)" (p.263), and for this reason I did not think it appropriate to design a pre-conceived framework to assess creativity and engagement. However, if work samples are considered with due attentiveness to these reservations, and are triangulated with other data collection methods, they can be a valid "'slice of data'" (ibid., p.264): accordingly, I looked at students' outputs in an open-ended way for signs that they had enjoyed or been stimulated by the process of creating them. Inevitably, this is a subjective analysis, and more work would be required to quantify it in detail.

Ethical considerations

I was conscious throughout my project that I was working with a class of particularly vulnerable pupils, whose learning impairments might be seen to make them particularly vulnerable to exploitative research practices. It was therefore vital to adhere rigorously to a framework of ethical guidelines. I initially discussed my research plan with my faculty supervisor, school mentor, and the class's usual teacher, before completing the Faculty of Education's Ethics form, which committed me to conducting the research in accordance with British Educational Research Association (BERA) ethical guidelines (BERA, 2011).

From a teaching perspective, I was aware that special care should be taken to ensure that this project did not have any adverse affects on my students' confidence and self-esteem. In particular, I was aware that being presented with unfamiliar material could cause fear and discomfort among some pupils who might previously have had negative associations with challenge and difficulty in a classroom context, and was keen to mitigate this. I arranged a meeting with the two teaching assistants most often assigned to support the class and explained my scheme of work to them, so that they would be familiar with the material and could model enthusiasm and curiosity for the students. The teaching assistants were also able to give me useful feedback based on their previous experience with the class, and advised that I should initially avoid the word “challenge” when presenting the project: I had been correct in suspecting that the students in this class had come to associate this word with difficulty and discomfort. They also advised me on particular students who were especially vulnerable to low self-esteem when presented with perceived 'difficult' work.

As soon as the students entered the classroom for the first project lesson, they were aware that something was 'different' – rather depressingly, they initially assumed that the folded booklets on the table were assessment papers, and asked “are you testing us?”. It was therefore necessary to immediately explain the parameters of the project to them: I told them that I was “doing a project at my university” and that the project was not about testing them, but “testing to see if reading a story together in French lessons is a good idea for a project”.

To ensure high ethical standards in data collection, I assigned each pupil a pseudonym corresponding to their gender so that they could remain anonymous while being referred to as individuals in the report. Before conducting interviews, I sought permission from the school's Professional Tutor and checked whether parental permission was needed: it was agreed that, in line with the school's data protection policy, recording the students' voices in interviews anonymously did not require any additional parental permissions. Interviews were conducted in form time to avoid students seeing them as a punishment. At the beginning of each interview, I explained that I was “writing a report about the lessons we did”, and explained that their names would not be used in the report. I also explained that they were free to be as honest as possible in their responses and “if you change your mind, you can ask me to delete your interview and I will do it” (right to withdrawal).

Findings

RQ1: Can the study of a literary work be a viable and effective vehicle for improving reading and writing in low-attaining/SEN learners?

Measures of reading and writing scores seem to show a small improvement in both skills over the course of the project. Table 4 shows students' writing levels, assessed by me against the school's 'rainbow steps', before and after the project (see 'research design'). Numbers indicate projected KS4 outcomes; colours indicate the colour communicated to students on the 'rainbow steps'.

Key
SEN
PP
SEN and PP

	Writing in book (before project)	Writing in project	Change	Observations
Lisa	3	3	0	Used storybook unprompted
Olly	5	5	0	
Stephen	4	5	1	
Harry	5	5	0	
Seb	5	6	1	
Melanie	5	DNC		
Danielle	0	2	2	
Clara	5	5	0	
Joe	4	5	1	
Jake	4	5	1	Showed initiative finding language
Noel	4	DNC		Appeared anxious
Leo	3	3		Appeared anxious about writing
Annie	2	4	2	Frequent English but lots of writing
Katie	4	4	0	Possible Google translate
		Total change:	+8	

Table 4: Writing levels before and during the project

Of eleven students who completed the final project, six – a slim majority – improved their writing level. five remained on the same writing level. Across the whole class of fourteen, there was a total improvement of eight levels, making for an average improvement per student of 0.57 levels across the class, or 0.73 across those who completed the project. Although there is no comparison data, it is notable that this improvement took place over the space of only five lessons, as the baseline levels were taken just before the project began.

For some individual students, improvements in writing did not register on the departmental level scale but were nonetheless evident. Danielle has diagnoses of dyslexia and global development delay, and faces significant challenges accessing most of the secondary curriculum. She attends three out of the 5 fortnightly French lessons attended by the rest of the group, spending the others in Learning Support. She has support from a teaching assistant during all lessons. She was present for lesson 1, the first showing of the film and related activities, and lesson 4, the writing carousel lesson.

To reach the first level of the Departmental Progress Grid for writing in Year Seven French, students must be able to produce 'single words from memory and copy longer phrases from an example.' Even disregarding the 'memory' aspect of this descriptor, Danielle's book work showed that she was unable to copy phrases from an example. However, her work from Lesson 4 of the project (see Figure 2) shows her copying an entire sentence of unfamiliar language from a model written by the teaching assistant with no mistakes:

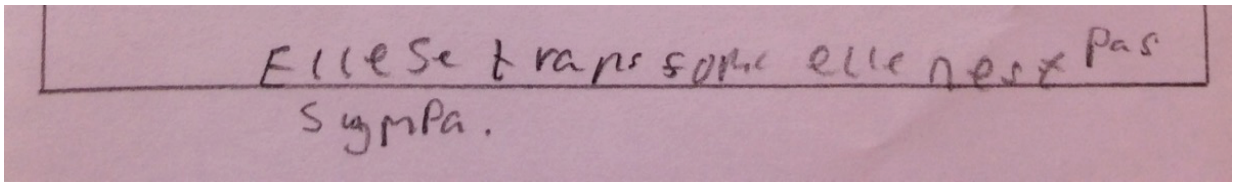


Figure 2: Detail of a page from Danielle's writing project

Her work from this Lesson also showed her engaging with the character design task by choosing and labelling features for her creature. A similar narrative of progress within the levels is evident in her reading assessment after the project: although she still achieved the lowest possible level, she attempted the entire assessment, whereas in December she left most of it incomplete.

In terms of reading, Table 5 shows a general improvement in reading scores between December 2016 and March 2017, which is to be expected. A total of +17 levels equates to +1.22 levels per student. Although there is unfortunately no data for comparison, this is a pleasing level of progress.

Key
SEN
PP
SEN and PP

	Dec 16	Mar 17	Change
Lisa	2	3	+1
Olly	3	5	+2
Stephen	2	4	+2
Harry	3	4	+1
Seb	4	5	+1
Melanie	2	4	+2
Danielle	0	3	+3
Clara	4	4	0
Joe	2	4	+2
Jake	3	3	0
Noel	4	3	-1
Leo	2	4	+2
Annie	2	3	+3
Katie	4	3	-1
		Total change:	+17

Table 5: Reading levels in assessments before and after the project

RQ2: To what extent and in what ways will learners engage with and respond creatively to the stimulus text?

Questionnaire responses and student work seem to show a generally pleasing level of engagement with the project, in terms of enjoyment, interest and creative output.

Engagement

The tables below list all the words given in response to the prompts 'describe the lesson/project in 3 words', broadly coded according to connotation. Within the 'positive' and 'negative' categories I have included only words that are definitively positive or negative beyond reasonable doubt. All remaining words such as 'easy' and 'surprising', although they may well have been meant with either positive or negative connotation in mind, have been placed in 'neutral/ambiguous'. 'Jhon Cena style' appears to be a reference to a popular internet meme regarding the American wrestler John Cena: it is impossible to discern whether this indicates enthusiasm, comparison of the lesson to traits of John Cena, or lack of understanding of the intended purpose of the feedback activity. I have categorised it as 'ambiguous'.

Words given in response to "Describe how you found this lesson in 3 words" end of lesson 1	Words given in response to "Describe how you found the project in 3 words" end of lesson 5
positive (13 words, 34%): fun (x8) interesting (x3) cool exciting	**positive (21 words, 68%):** interesting (x7) fun (x6) good (x2) useful amazing mysterious cool a learning excpeareance [sic] awesome
neutral/ambiguous (24 words, 63%): easy (x7) strange (x5) OK (x3) challenging (x3) different (x3) surprising Jhon Cena style [sic] average	**neutral/ambiguous (9 words, 29%):** OK (4) easy (3) alright (2)
negative (1 word, 3%): boring	**negative (1 word, 3%):** hard
total words: 38	total words: 31

Table 6: Students' feedback on the project after lessons 1 and 5

Table 6 shows a movement from a majority of neutral/ambiguous descriptors after lesson 1 to majority positive after lesson 5. The number of positive words has doubled, and the number of neutral/ambiguous words has halved. Looking at the table, another notable shift between the two surveys is the prevalence of words which connote surprise, difference and strangeness in Lesson 1 (five occurrences of 'strange', three of 'different') which have completely disappeared by Lesson 5. This suggests initial trepidation – perhaps in line with public attitudes towards medieval texts which I described in the introduction – which the project succeeded in allaying by the end.

Fully positive (7): yes 200% 100% yes very fun I did enjoy the project because I learnt new words and very interesting yes yes defenately [sic]
Mixed (4): yes and no cind of hafe and haf [sic] kinda yes and no half boring half ok

Table 7: Coded responses to the question "Did you enjoy doing the project?"

Further evidence in support of the claim that students generally enjoyed the project is provided by the set of questionnaire responses in Table 7. I have coded these as either unequivocally positive or expressing mixed feelings. No student gave a response that could be categorised as unequivocally negative.

Creative response

As mentioned above, since the question of creative response is a subjective one, I have not attempted to code for levels of creativity. There are, however, a few examples from students' writing projects which I would like to discuss here.

Figure 3 shows the final page of Joe's writing project, which he entitled 'In the Dark'. Joe set about the project with some enthusiasm, as he enjoys drawing. His writing project shows sequencing of phrases, and substitution of elements in a sentence, which represent an improvement in his writing skills. I have chosen this page because it includes a joke. The phrase 'Je suis seulement en formation' may well have come from a translation tool, as we have not covered it in class; nonetheless, it is accurately copied, and amusing in context. The fact that he felt confident to project his sense of humour through TL writing arguably shows creative engagement with the project.

Figure 3: Page from Joe's writing project

Figure 4: Page from Jake's writing project

Figure 4 shows the first page of Jake's writing project. Jake initially seemed to struggle with the project; in Lesson 3 he did not complete the classwork set and did not finish it for homework as requested. However, in lesson 4 and the subsequent homework he produced a story including this character design, which shows he has searched for specific vocabulary (indeed, alarmingly specific) to match his design. He has also taken care over his illustration.

The above examples are chosen because they demonstrate what I have interpreted as creative engagement; there were, however, two students who chose not to complete the writing project for homework. Noel, who has an education and health care plan (EHCP) for autistic spectrum disorder, was initially enthusiastic about the project but, as he explained in interview:

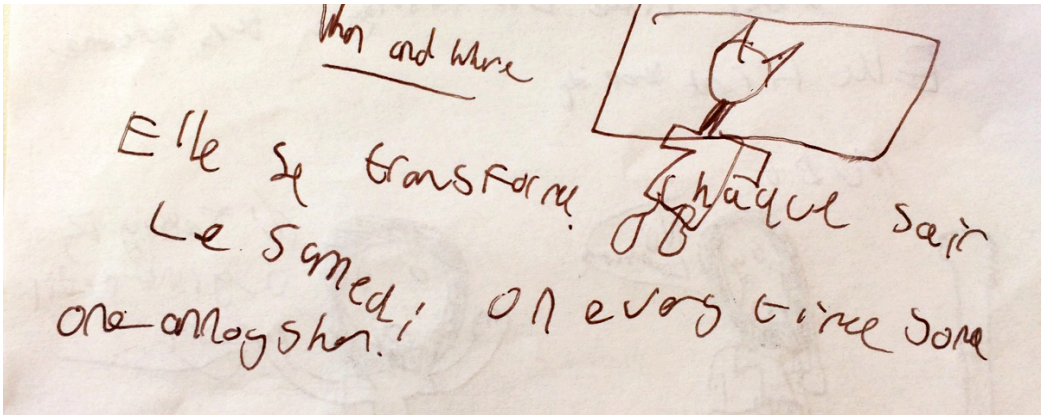
> *At home I've written stories, I've designed over thirty-two monsters. But when we had to do it in the lesson I didn't… I didn't know which one to pick.*

Melanie also chose not to complete the final homework task, and did not complete classwork in several of the lessons. Melanie has no SEN diagnosis, but is frequently observed to exhibit behaviour coded as challenging and defiant in lessons. Her comment was as follows:

> *Well I didn't want to do it in the lesson, I was doing it a bit but it wasn't going to be the real one, I was going to do a better version. But then it was homework and I didn't do it.*

The comments show that different factors affecting students' ability and freedom to respond creatively need to be considered carefully.

For some students, there was an uneasy tension between creativity and use of the target language. For Annie, a PP student who does not have a specific SEN diagnosis but faces significant challenges in accessing the curriculum, the project was clearly highly enjoyable: in her questionnaire responses, she describes it as 'amazing' and 'mysterious'. The work she produced in response to the creative prompt shows that she certainly relished the chance to express herself creatively. However, it seems that at certain points her creative enthusiasm overtook her and she either forgot or was not concerned with the fact that the idea of the project was to write in French, producing some sentences entirely in English and some in mixed English and French, as may be seen in Figure 5 below:



When and Where
Elle se transforme chaque sair [sic]
Le samedi on every time some one annoys her ! [sic]

Figure 5: Detail from a page of Annie's writing project with transcript of text

After lesson 3, I asked the class to complete their character designs for homework in preparation for the next lesson; Annie did this, and also produced six sides of A4 in English (I passed these to her English teacher), which were only loosely connected to the fairytale theme. During the writing carousel in Lesson 4, she wrote several sentences in French, but when completing further work at home she again returned to English. Nevertheless, her French writing was of a higher standard than that which could be found in her book. Her comment on the project in interview was that "it was really good and fun and I liked it, and I learnt lots of words."

RQ3: How will learners perceive the utility of studying a work of literature for their learning and the impact it has had on their skills and attainment?

Students' questionnaire responses showed a variety of perceptions of the utility of the project. They all identified benefits in response to the questions; these ranged from very literal responses (i.e. listing a new word they had learnt) to responses which showed they felt specific skills had improved.

The question "What can you do at the end of the Bisclavret project that you couldn't do at the beginning?" whose responses are presented in Table 8 was designed to assess what students would perceive as the main benefit of the project. The question was deliberately phrased to be open-ended, and accordingly the responses indicate a variety of perceptions. The largest number of students identified vocabulary as the main area in which they had improved, with some even giving examples. A further six students identified either reading, writing or both.

vocabulary (5): new words understanding new words say more words learnt new words say 'where are you' (ou vas tu?) [*sic: 'ou vas tu?' actually translates as 'where are you going?', but the student has clearly retained some aspects of the key meaning of the phrase if not an entirely accurate translation*]
writing (3): write a story in French extend my writing skills write a story in French
reading (2): find missing words in the story explain the story
reading and writing (1): read and write in French more clearly

Table 8: Coded questionnaire answers to "What can you do at the end of the Bisclavret project that you couldn't do at the beginning?"

Table 9 presents responses to the question "What was the most important thing you learned during the project? What will you remember?". This question was, again, designed to be open-ended, to give students another opportunity to identify perceived benefits. Broadly, students were asked to identify the most memorable thing about the project, with no specific guidance as to what criteria to use to judge memorability and relative importance: accordingly, there were an interesting variety of answers.

Story content (7): dramatic scenes the ending when he bit of her nose [sic] the part where bisclavret bites off her nose I will remember the girls nose got bit off [sic] the nose beining bitten of [sic] him bitting her nose off [sic]
Vocabulary (3): new words exampl le chatue [sic] the people and the names were are you (ou vas tu) [sic]
Writing skills (2): some new words that can change my writing so it improves how to rit a story in french [sic]

Table 9: Coded questionnaire answers to "What was the most important thing you learnt during the project? What will you remember?"

A majority of the students gave responses which indicated that story content was their most memorable aspect, with most reporting their favourite violent scene in the fairy tale. Other responses included vocabulary (including more examples) and writing skills. Despite the students' writing being heavily scaffolded, one student identified that she had learnt 'how to rit [sic] a story in French', which suggests a pleasing effect on her self-perception of her abilities in French.

Ollie, a student who does not have a diagnosed SEN, was able to identify a wide range of benefits to the project in interview. Although his KS2 prior attainment is in the 'lower' band, he is one of the highest-attaining students in the class. In the context of the group, then, his specific needs are to be stretched and challenged so that lessons are sufficiently interesting for him to maintain his interest, and the project seems to have been successful in that regard. On his questionnaire, he answered the question 'Did you enjoy the project?' with "Yes 100%". When interviewed and asked, "What could I do to improve the project if I were to do it again?', he answered "Make it longer, because I didn't want it to end." He also stated that he felt several different skills had improved: "writing words in French… writing with those accent things… how to look up in dictionaries and stuff… I think it was really useful, yeah." Writing with accents had not been an aspect which I had made any conscious effort to emphasise or promote during the project, so Ollie's response suggests that being exposed to a passage of TL text had had the benefit of drawing his attention to a feature of the written language.

Discussion

Although this study has presented the findings of three specific research questions in detail, they all stem from a wider holistic question which was identified above in response to the literature on authenticity: can this specific text be used productively with this specific group of learners? My findings seem to show that it can be, and that its productivity is to be found in several places.

In terms of precisely-measured attainment as reported under RQ1, the findings of the project seem tentatively positive but remain inconclusive. A slim majority of students improved their writing level over the course of the project, but the sample size is very small, and this is not sufficiently reliable to justify any definitive conclusions. Perhaps the most important finding under RQ1 is that a module which was nothing whatsoever to do with the curriculum, which taught students vocabulary that they may never encounter again, did not have any detrimental effects on their end-

of-module assessment scores for the module it was inserted into the middle of, and indeed precipitated a small improvement. This shows, if nothing else, that the use of a text so apparently removed from the demands of today's curriculum need not be feared, nor considered a 'sacrifice' of curriculum time. It was never within the scope of this study to show that there is anything intrinsic about medieval fairy tales which makes them guaranteed to improve reading and writing, but the project showed that literary texts can be used with a similar level of effectiveness to other materials.

In terms of RQ2, student levels of engagement and creative response were a pleasure to observe. Given the questionnaire responses and interview comments, it seems justifiable to say that students generally enjoyed the project and the story itself. As discussed in the literature review, Badger and Macdonald (2010) view true 'authenticity' as the extent to which a text's use in the classroom is comparable to its use at its original point of creation, and I would argue that the students' engagement with the text meets this definition of authenticity. There seems to be a world of difference between the audience of a medieval court storyteller and a class of year sevens in a modern academy, and initially it seemed to be so: when students first entered the classroom and saw the story booklet on their desks, one cried "oh no, we've got an assessment!" at the sight of folded paper. However, the students adjusted very quickly to the new context of classroom as storytelling environment. Soon, they were watching the video and gasping at the plot twists, flicking ahead to find out what would happen next, and whispering excitedly to each other about what was to come. Their engagement with the story on its own terms – as a *story* – is shown in their questionnaire responses, where over half of them cited one scene as the part they would remember most, despite receiving no prompts in this direction. This scene – in the students' words, "the bit where the girl's nose gets bitten off" – is the dramatic crux of the story, which must have been remembered by almost everyone who has encountered the story in the eight centuries since it was written. Taking a holistic view, I consider this authentic act of storytelling the among the most successful aspects of the project.

RQ3 asked how learners would perceive the benefit of the project. Firstly, it is pleasing to note that all pupils who completed the questionnaire seemed to perceive that there *was* a benefit. Secondly, the spread of different perceived improvements is interesting: a roughly even balance between reading, writing, and vocabulary. In interviews, other suggestions for skills students felt they had improved were "spelling" and "writing with those accent things", suggesting that exposure to a written text, working with it repeatedly and copying parts of it, was perceived as beneficial. Some

also seemed to perceive the writing activities as not only useful, but in a sense authentic: although stories the students wrote were heavily guided by structured writing frames, several students either said in interview or wrote in questionnaires that they had 'learned how to write a story in French'. This is, hopefully, an experience that will stay with them, and justifies Bovair and Bovair's (1992) assertion that we need not focus on unsupported oral and written fluency to achieve progress with SEN learners.

It was well-established in the literature review (Bovair & Bovair, 1992; Salter et al., 1998) that the specific provenance of any authentic text is less important than its use by the teacher. However, it is worth considering whether the text's authenticity and cultural specificity was a factor in the students' high levels of enjoyment and engagement reported under RQ2 and RQ3. None of them reported this specifically, and this is not altogether surprising: if the concept of authenticity is so contested and complex in academic circles, it is little wonder that SEN Year Seven pupils do not produce discourse on it unprompted. However, we can make some inferences from their questionnaire answers. As reported under RQ2, at the beginning of the project many students described the first lesson using words which conveyed difference – 'strange', 'surprising', etc. By the end of the project, these had all gone. Perhaps the students had simply become accustomed to this new world of werewolves in the classroom by lesson 5. But the fact that such a change in attitude is possible within 2 weeks is a testament to the flexibility and creativity of these young learners, and suggests that cultural specificity and unusualness need not be a barrier – indeed, it may be more of a barrier to teachers than to learners.

Conclusion and recommendations

Although this project has suggested that it may be justified, it will not always be possible to take five lessons out of a scheme of work deliver this sequence, and I will need to consider this in my ongoing practice. If I do teach the sequence again, my findings have shown that I should bear the following in mind:

The needs of autistic learners. It was apparent from Noel's work and his interview responses that the project presented challenges for him, not in terms of creativity itself – he is clearly capable of complex imaginative creation – but rather in terms of converting that creativity from his inner world to the context of the classroom exercise and the constraints of the TL. This seems to be an example

of "inflexible adherence to routines, or ritualised patterns of (…) behaviour" listed as a diagnostic feature of autism spectrum disorder (American Psychiatric Association 2013, p.50), in this case the difficulty of carrying out the task of story-writing in a different subject context and subject to linguistic constraints. If I am to teach the sequence again I will need to address this barrier, perhaps simply by providing more anticipatory reassurance and acknowledgement, or perhaps by providing alternative structures to facilitate creativity.

Challenging behaviour. Melanie, the other student in the class who did not complete her writing task, appeared to decide not to complete it as part of a wider pattern of oppositional behaviour and resistance. It is possible that her unwillingness to complete the task in the lesson was due to a fear of failure and embarrassment and a desire not to lose face in front of peers – her interview comment 'I was doing it [her project] in class but it wasn't going to be the real one...' suggests this. I should consider strategies to minimise this risk when I teach the sequence again, recognising that for some students, open-ended creativity can mean exposing themselves to potential vulnerability.

Stretch and challenge. Some of the students in the class would have been able to cope with a simple explanation of, for example, the present tense verb paradigm. This would have enabled them to write more freely with less use of the writing prompts. It would be worth developing this to ensure all learners get maximum benefit from the sequence.

In terms of professional recommendations, given the specificity and esoteric nature of the project it may not be appropriate to recommend it unreservedly for wider use. As mentioned above, a key element of this project was its origins in my own academic specialism and enthusiasm for the subject matter. This is not to suggest that delivering it requires any specialist knowledge, but rather that it is possible that some of its positive effects were attributable to my own personal enthusiasm for the subject matter, which would be a fruitful subject for future research. If any recommendation can be made, it is that teachers of SEN learners need not fear deviating from a simple, transactional curriculum grounded in learners' own everyday experiences.

In terms of research, two further questions emerged from my project which would merit further study. The first has already been hinted at above: it relates to the difference in scope in answers given to the question "What could you do at the end of the project that you couldn't do at the beginning?". As can be observed in the data, some students interpreted this literally and noted specific words which they had learned; others gave answers which noted development in their

skills. Do these students have a more advanced conceptual understanding of their own learning, or more of a familiarity with the paradigm of self-assessment expected by teachers, or both? Further enquiry, not necessarily MFL-specific, would be necessary to find out.

The second potential research question was raised by the students' work samples, and falls more within the field of applied linguistics. It relates to students' use of their native language and the TL in their creative writing. English is sprinkled across their fairy tales, but its use seems to cluster in a few places: it seems often to be used for paratextual features such as story titles and speech bubbles (with some exceptions). Why did students do this? Although some perceived that they were writing a story, is there a tacit limit to their perception of what the TL can express? Do they at some level see creativity and the TL as incompatible? These questions were far beyond the scope of this study but would be fascinating to try to answer.

Marie de France, author of the *Bisclavret* tale, sets out her philosophy of textual transmission in the prologue to the *Lais*:

> Es livres ke jadis feseient
> Assez oscurement diseient
> Pur ceux ki a venir esteient
> E ki aprendre les deveient
> K'I peüssent gloser la lettre
> E de lur sen le surplus mettre
>
> [In the books which [the ancients] wrote
> They spoke quite obscurely
> So that those who were to come
> And who were to learn them
> Could gloss the letter of them
> And, using their *sen* (intelligence), add
> their own *surplus* (interpretation).]
>
> Marie de France, *Lais*, ll. 11-16
> (Warnke & Harf-Lancner, 1990; translation mine)

According to Marie, who is talking about medieval readers interpreting ancient texts, readers necessarily add something to the texts they read. A medieval reader does not passively receive an ancient text: she glosses it and adds an extra layer of meaning to it. Marie also suggests that this dialogue between reader and author is no accident; it is anticipated in the fabric of the original text

itself. I cannot help but imagine, then, that Marie would have been content to know that her work was being used 800 years in the future for a pedagogical purpose. By responding to Marie's work, the students of the class become the next link in her chain of reading, interpreting and responding: they add a unique *surplus* which it has been my great privilege to gloss.

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Appendix 1

Plot summary of the tale of Bisclavret

A noble and handsome knight, Bisclavret, lives with his beautiful and loving wife. All is well between them except for one thing: each week, Bisclavret disappears for three days, and nobody knows where he goes. His wife confronts him and asks where he goes, but he refuses to tell her.

She becomes more and more worried and eventually persuades him to reveal the truth. He explains that in the process of becoming a wolf he must unclothe himself and that he must hide his clothing in order to facilitate his transformation back to man. Without his clothes, he would "remain a werewolf forever." He doesn't want to tell her where he hides his clothes, but when she insists he reveals his hiding place in a hollow rock.

The wife is terrified and disgusted. She begins to plot how to rid herself of the burden, and contacts a knight who had always wanted her as a lover, but whose advances she had rejected. She offers her "love and body" if he will steal Bisclavret's clothing. The knight agrees and Bisclavret disappears. The lady marries the knight, Bisclavret's friends search for him a while, but give up when he is not found.

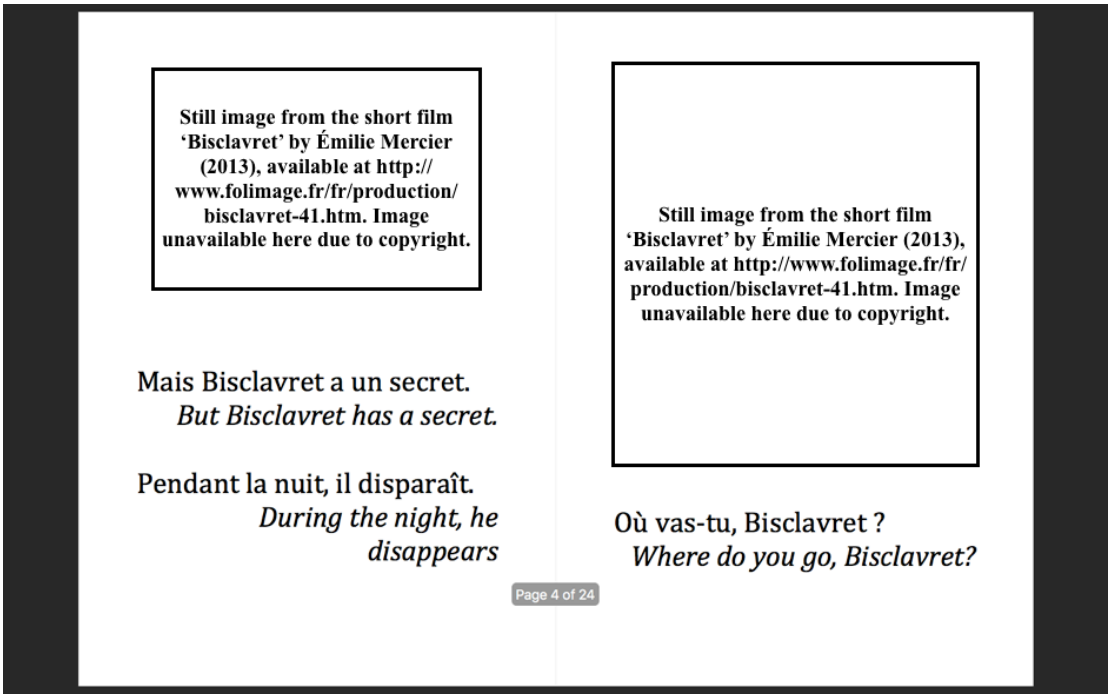
A year passes, until one day when the king is out hunting in the forest where Bisclavret disappeared. The hunting dogs come across the werewolf and the hunters spend their day in pursuit of him, until they find him and are about to kill him. However, Bisclavret, instead of fighting, rushes to the king and begs for mercy by kissing the lord's feet. Though frightened, the king is impressed with the creature’s intelligence and humility, and calls off the hunt. The king brings the wolf back to his castle, where the wolf becomes a loyal companion.

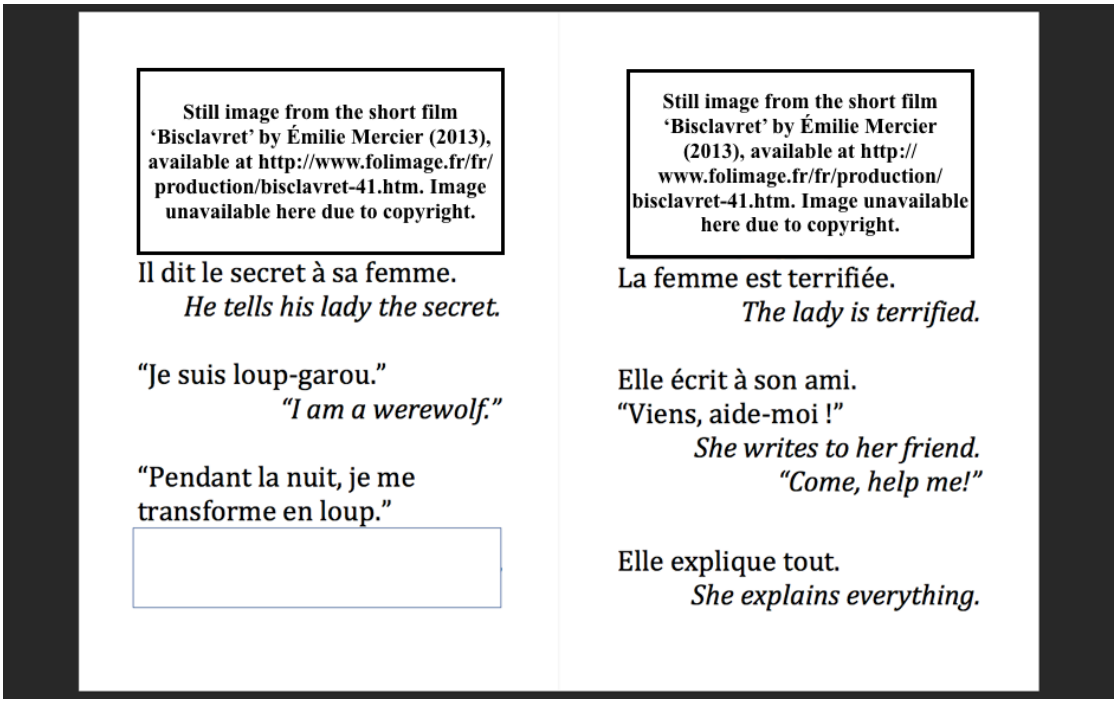
All is well until the king holds court and summons his vassals, one of whom is the knight who had married Bisclavret's wife. When the wolf sees the couple, he launches an attack upon them, attempting to tear them apart. Seeing his ex-wife approach, he launches at her and tears off her nose! He is barely restrained and is on the verge of being killed when a wise man suggests the king question the wife, which he agrees to. Under torture, the now noseless wife confesses everything.

The king demands the woman return the clothes, which she does. The king puts the wolf in his own bedroom with the clothing, and returns soon after to find the human Bisclavret asleep. They are joyfully reunited, and the king restores to Bisclavret his lands, while also banishing the wife and her new husband. Marie tells us that the latter pair had several daughters, all of whom were born without noses.

Appendix 2

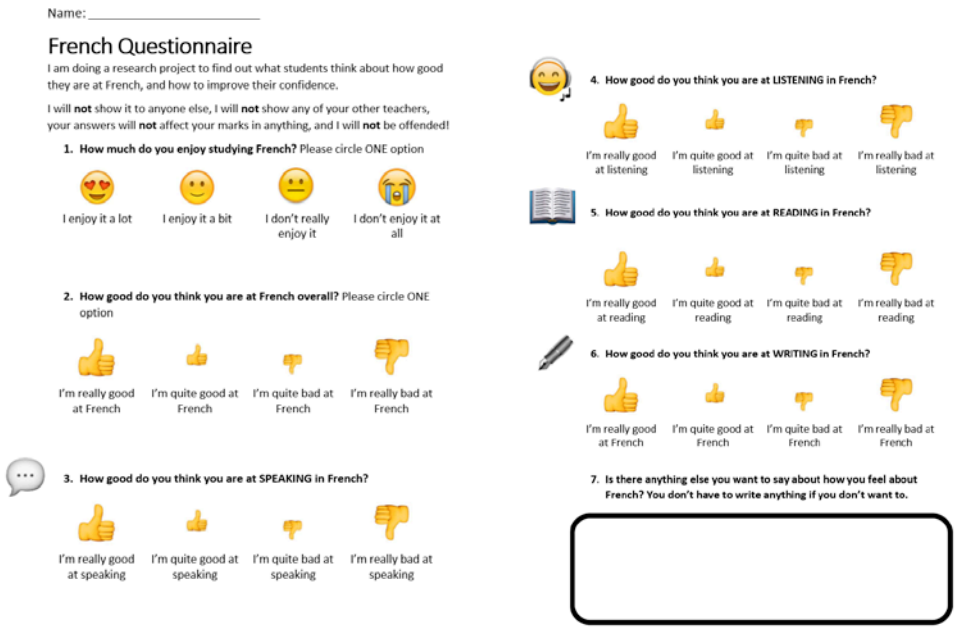
Sample pages from story booklet





Appendix 3

Pilot Questionnaire



Name: _____

French Questionnaire

I am doing a research project to find out what students think about how good they are at French, and how to improve their confidence.

I will **not** show it to anyone else, I will **not** show any of your other teachers, your answers will **not** affect your marks in anything, and I will **not** be offended!

1. **How much do you enjoy studying French?** Please circle ONE option

I enjoy it a lot | I enjoy it a bit | I don't really enjoy it | I don't enjoy it at all

2. **How good do you think you are at French overall?** Please circle ONE option

I'm really good at French | I'm quite good at French | I'm quite bad at French | I'm really bad at French

3. **How good do you think you are at SPEAKING in French?**

I'm really good at speaking | I'm quite good at speaking | I'm quite bad at speaking | I'm really bad at speaking

4. **How good do you think you are at LISTENING in French?**

I'm really good at listening | I'm quite good at listening | I'm quite bad at listening | I'm really bad at listening

5. **How good do you think you are at READING in French?**

I'm really good at reading | I'm quite good at reading | I'm quite bad at reading | I'm really bad at reading

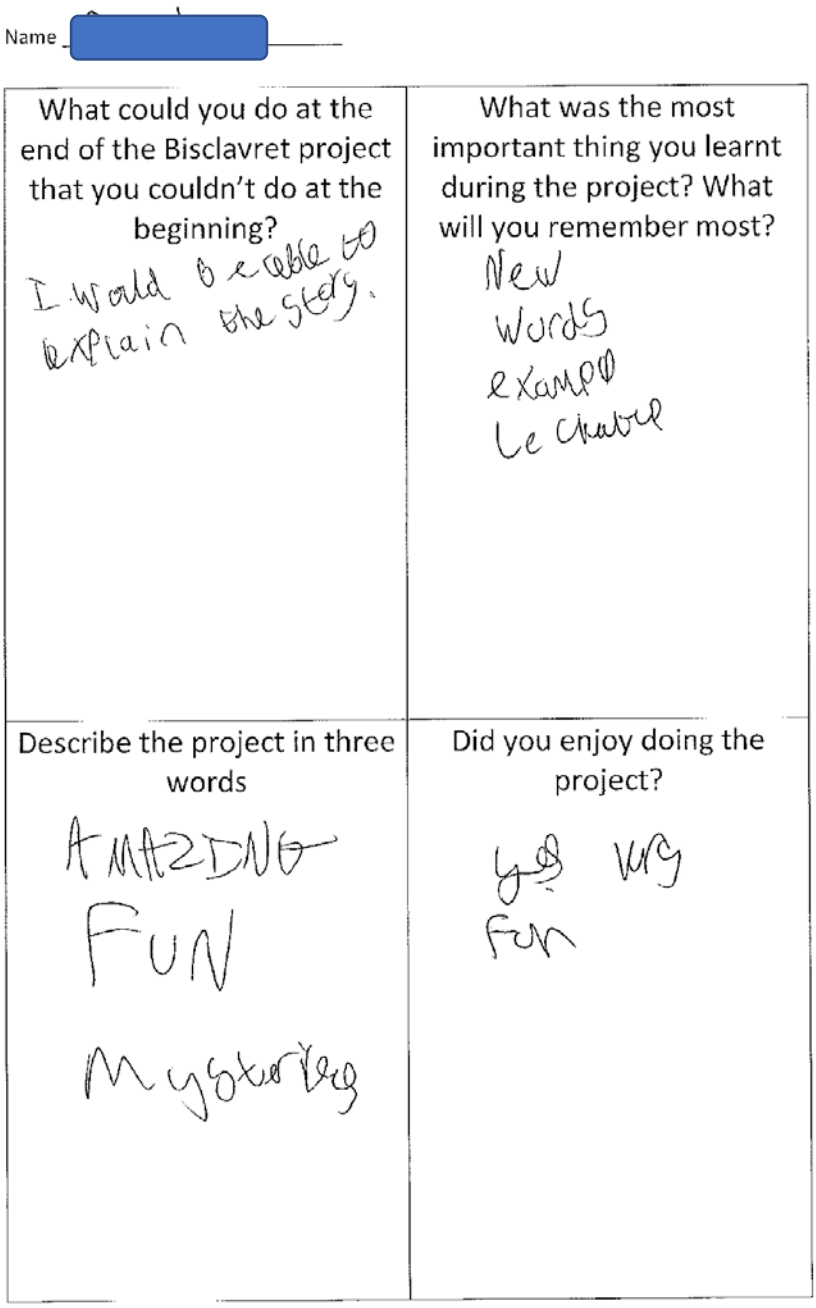
6. **How good do you think you are at WRITING in French?**

I'm really good at French | I'm quite good at French | I'm quite bad at French | I'm really bad at French

7. **Is there anything else you want to say about how you feel about French? You don't have to write anything if you don't want to.**

Appendix 4

Final Questionnaire



Name [redacted]

What could you do at the end of the Bisclavret project that you couldn't do at the beginning?	What was the most important thing you learnt during the project? What will you remember most?
I would be able to explain the story.	New words example Le chaturel
Describe the project in three words	**Did you enjoy doing the project?**
AMAZING FUN Mysterieg	yes very fun

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