

## **Learning with Harry, Alice and the Gruffalo: Children's and young adult literature in the EFL classroom**

Project coordinator: Susanne Reichl  
Time frame: 2009 - 2012

This project, still in early stages, aims at drawing on the potential inherent in children's and young adult literature for the EFL classroom. Because of the strong connection to the target-group in English-speaking countries, there is a strong motivational argument for this kind of literature, one that has been without doubt ever since the Harry Potter books started motivating more and more children to read fiction in English.

This study investigates writing for young readers from an early age onwards (with picturebook classics such as "The Gruffalo") up to upper secondary level to look at the potential of bestselling novels for young adults such as "Noughts and Crosses" by Malorie Blackman or the "Twilight"-series by Stephenie Meyer, and stresses the significance of providing a book-rich environment from an early age onwards. Graded readers and story-telling will be included in a rather extended notion of literature, in order to make the most of the potential of books to encourage language learning, intercultural learning, L2 literacy, and other skills that can be promoted through literature for young readers, such as empathy and critical thinking. Some of the more recent approaches to teaching literature at school will be considered, such as action and production orientation, as will the various suggestions for the introduction of intensive and extensive reading programmes.

Apart from Susanne Reichl's own contributions to the project (in progress), she has been supervising diploma / Ph.D theses on the following topics:

- "Teaching the school story in the EFL classroom"
- "Taboo in young adult literature"
- "School violence in young adult fiction"
- "Film adaptations of children's classics in the classroom"

Preparations are underway for a conference and an essay collection on the topic.