

MASTEROPPGAVE

“No time for that!”

A Study of Teaching Reading and Reading Strategies to English Language Learners in Lower Secondary School in Norway

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Abstract

The main goal of this thesis is to investigate the extent to which Norwegian teachers of English use reading strategies in lower secondary school. It follows up my findings in an earlier pilot study of the reading habits and skills of Norwegian pupils studying English (Vignjevic 2010). This time, I wanted to look into the subject of reading from the teacher's point of view. Based on previous research and the reports after PISA surveys, I started with the assumption that reading instruction at lower secondary level is largely neglected.

The method applied is a qualitative and quantitative survey among 30 teachers of English, carried out at 11 lower secondary schools in different parts of Norway. I made a web-based questionnaire with items about the professional backgrounds of the teachers, their instruction of reading strategies, and to a certain degree their attitudes towards reading as one of the skills they are supposed to develop in their students. The data were summarized by the programme and analyzed and interpreted by me. The survey confirmed a second assumption of mine: that most teachers depend mainly on the English textbooks they use with their pupils in the classroom for their choice of reading materials.

Consequently, I went on to carry out an analysis of these textbooks, focusing on the texts selected, reading methods and strategies applied and the types of reading exercises included.

The findings show that although the teachers consider reading an important skill, the pupils do not get enough practice using different reading strategies to improve their ability to learn from their reading. It also became clear that pupils need to learn to use a more varied repertoire of reading strategies in order to meet the requirements of the English LK06 syllabus. My findings in the textbook analysis show that most of the textbooks hinder teachers from working with reading strategies and from choosing extensive reading as a method for improving pupils' reading skills. The connections between these two investigations are shown in the rest of the thesis.

Though the findings cannot be generalized to all pupils and teachers at lower secondary level in Norway, I argue that they provide a useful picture of the current situation with regard to the use of reading strategies in English classes at this level.

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*A teachers' job is not to make work easy.
It is to make it difficult.
If you are not challenged, you do not make mistakes.
If you do not make mistakes, feedback is useless.*

*John Hattie
(qtd. in Mansell)*

1. Introduction

1.1 Reading and Studies on Reading

The implementation of the Knowledge Promotion Reform has led to an immense focus on reading as one of the five basic skills, which have to be trained in all subjects and at all levels throughout 13 years of obligatory education of Norwegian pupils. International surveys like PISA¹ and PIRLS² assess and compare, among other things, the pupils' reading literacy and reading skills. Norwegian pupils do not perform as well as one would expect considering the economic affluence and general literacy level of the country as a whole when they reach the PISA age of 15; the results are much better for the Norwegian 9 year olds who participate in PIRLS (Roe 102). According to Roe, we know little about what kind of reading education Norwegian pupils receive after the first years of their schooling. Furthermore, the explicit use of learning/reading strategies in Norwegian schools is lower than in the countries that we compare Norway with. This is causing concern, since PISA shows that there is a connection between the PISA results and the use of reading strategies in teaching. It also suggests that some teachers may not have covered the topics of reading strategies and tools in their basic training. This background information illustrates why I am puzzled about how teachers contribute to develop good, strategic readers, and it also implies that there is a problem in need of a solution.

The results from the PISA survey show that there has been little progress in the reading skills of Norwegian pupils since the year 2000, despite all the focus on reading in the Department of Education and a new curriculum in 2006. There are still great differences in reading skills between boys and girls. It is important to underline that this pertains to pupils' reading skills in their mother tongue (Norwegian), but it is likely that the situation is similar when it comes to English. Why do we not see more marked results of the massive focus on reading in Norway after the devastating results of PISA from 2000 onwards? Do progress and improvement of results take such a long time?

¹ Programme for International Student Assessment

² Progress in International Reading Literacy Study

Presently, in Scandinavia, there is a lot of research on the importance of teaching reading strategies to pupils, but how much is really being done in the classroom? Two main reasons for neglecting teaching reading strategies are lack of time and lack of knowledge among teachers. Some of the research I present here is quite new and still ongoing, referred to during the first research conference on the nexus between reading and writing in Stavanger this year. Teaching of reading is polarized between learning to read and reading to learn, meaning that these two processes seldom intertwine. The latter - reading to learn - seems to have a low priority in Norway. It also seems that the amount of work done in class regarding reading skills and reading comprehension depends on individual teachers, which causes large differences between schools in different parts of Norway (cf. Haukås). The preliminary results of the Tertnes project (ibid.) in Bergen show that there is no focus whatsoever on reading strategies at lower secondary level (in English or Norwegian), and that the teachers involved in the project state that the greatest challenges they face are finding enough time, enough energy, enough resources for cooperation and sufficient competence. Furthermore, Haukås claims that in Norway it has been largely focused on the amount of reading rather than on strategic reading. Therefore, Norwegian pupils have a rather poor reading comprehension – in class there is very little focus on reading strategies.

Throughout my career as a teacher I have often reflected on the fact that some of my students do not read (well) enough, be it in their first language or their second. I have experienced that this causes them many difficulties: in reading for learning, in writing and in language learning. Consequently they have a poor vocabulary, poor writing skills and poor results in school. My master's thesis deals with how reading and reading strategies are taught to Norwegian learners of English in lower secondary school. The focus is on teachers and what they do in their classrooms in order to help their students become better readers. I am particularly interested in finding out whether they promote extensive reading, and if so how they go about it.

1.2 Research Statement

My major research question is: “In which ways and how systematically do English teachers teach reading strategies in lower secondary school in Norway?” I will elaborate on this question in my description of a survey which was carried out among the English teachers. The description of the survey will illustrate the following subquestions: Which methods do the teachers use? Why do they focus on exactly those methods? How often do they practice them? Do they use different reading strategies for different purposes? Is extensive reading used enough (at all)? How often is extensive reading recommended and applied? What happens if teachers discover that their pupils do not read well enough in English? How do teachers help pupils improve their reading skills? How are the

reading skills assessed? How can teachers give pupils more insight on the importance of reading, especially extensive reading?

What I wanted to achieve with my research is to learn more about how teachers help pupils to work on, develop and improve their reading skills. What is being done and what can be done in order to improve the reading skills of Norwegian learners of English? My assumption is that explicit teaching of reading strategies, accompanied by a continuous focus on reading, improves students' reading skills, their language learning skills and, of course, their writing skills. Consequently, a better understanding of the benefits of reading, seen from a teacher's point of view, is the pedagogical aim of my research.

The methods I used to investigate this topic are twofold. First, I designed a survey for English teachers working at lower secondary level (a combination of quantitative and qualitative questions). I collected my material by carrying out a survey among a group of English teachers in order to answer my research question. In the survey they were asked about their teaching practice and attitudes regarding reading. How important do teachers consider reading; how do they rank it compared to other basic skills? Teaching a 2-hour per week subject in lower secondary school, some English teachers may experience that they have too little time to focus on reading in school. Is this really so? Would they focus more or less on reading given other circumstances? What does the teaching of reading strategies depend on? Do teachers know enough about reading strategies to help their pupils develop into strategic readers? Which methods do they use? Do they assess how well their English learners read? The research on reading says that the aspects mentioned above, and above all learner training, are important (Nuttall 34); but how can we realize this in the classroom?

Second, I carried out a textbook analysis of the English textbooks that the teachers in the survey use with their pupils. This analysis consists of, first and foremost, looking into the different reading exercises and the reading strategies they involve, along with a rough overview of the texts and genres included in each textbook. Do the textbooks structure the teaching of reading strategies? Do the textbooks include exercises with different reading strategies? If so, does this mean that these strategies are being taught? Through the survey and textbook examination I hoped to reveal the teachers' practice in the classroom. Are English teachers qualified to teach reading strategies? If not, good textbooks might compensate for their lack of training in reading strategies.

I chose this research topic not only because it is interesting; through my work I hope to contribute to new insight and increase the knowledge that already exists on the use of reading strategies in the English education of Norwegian pupils in lower secondary school. This thesis may raise as many questions as it answers. I am confident that awareness about reading and strategies will have both immediate and long-term benefits for classroom teaching. It is likely to awaken teachers'

curiosity about language in general. Perhaps they will notice things about English and literacy that have never occurred to them before. It is my hope that teachers will find ways of incorporating their new insight and understanding into their educational practice. These are the possible pedagogical implications of this thesis and hence the value of this research. I hope that the results of the survey and the textbook analysis will present a meaningful contribution to the chosen study field, and have a positive impact on the lives of real learners in the real world.

2. Reading Theory

This thesis begins with a theoretical outline of previous research. Crucial terminology is defined and explained, and relevant theories on reading are presented. This is followed by a detailed description of the experimental set up in the section on method. Then the results of the research are presented, describing the major findings from the survey and the textbook analysis. A discussion of the results follows, together with the pedagogical and other implications of the findings. The thesis ends with a summary and some concluding remarks.

Research to date has provided insight into reading in a foreign language and different approaches to it. In this section, relevant theoretical background for my study will be outlined, together with the necessary definitional clarifications.

2.1 What is Reading? Why Reading?

I start this section on reading theory with some definitional clarifications about reading literacy, reading skills, reading strategies and methods, followed by a description of how reading in English is presented in vital documents such as the national curriculum, the Common European Frame of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and the European Language Portfolio (ELP).

Literacy is a many-faceted phenomenon. Defined solely as the ability to read and write on a basic level, literacy is not in danger as such. There are few total illiterates in Norway today. Still, there exists a “literacy crisis”, meaning that many of our pupils and students simply do not read and write well enough in order to meet and handle the complex literacy demands of modern society (Krashen ix). This means that they have problems processing, understanding, replicating or writing different kinds of texts and information. The results from the PISA 2006 show that Norwegian pupils’ reading skills have declined since the PISA 2003 (cf. Roe and Solheim). This gives reason to believe that Krashen’s argument about a literacy crisis applies to Norway as well.

PISA’s motto, “Learning for life”, reveals the agenda of this assessment programme: measuring skills that the international society considers important in a lifelong perspective. Reading literacy in PISA is defined as the ability to comprehend different types of texts, to use texts in learning situations and for one’s own development, to find relevant information, to understand the main message, to interpret and draw conclusions, to reflect upon and evaluate the contents (Kjærnsli et al. 15). From 2000 to 2006, the whole OECD³ area has experienced a decrease in reading literacy, but compared to the other OECD countries with similar economic backgrounds, Norway tops the list of poor readers. Reading literacy in Norway is way below average scores in the OECD area, and

³ The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

significantly worse in 2006 than in 2000 and 2003. Another study, PIRLS 2006 (Progress in Reading Literacy Study) shows the same negative development in Norwegian 10-year olds' reading literacy. Compared to the other Nordic countries (Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland), Norway has the poorest score when it comes to pupils' reading skills. The results from PISA and PIRLS show that Norwegian pupils have poorer literacy skills than one would expect in a country with such a well developed, affluent economy and a relatively high level of education in the population (cf. Roe and Solheim). Can these results be attributed to too little reading?

Reading is a necessary skill for learning in all school subjects and in order to function successfully in a modern society. This skill is central in second language learning; so many teachers have probably spent a considerable amount of time on trying to persuade their pupils to read more in order to master their second language better. Language learners need various training and working methods in order to develop a sound, instrumental level of literacy in their second language. Extensive reading is only one of them.

Reading is an interactive process which takes place between the text on one side, and the reader's processing strategies and background knowledge on the other (Lems et al. 33). To read, one needs to master a set of word-level skills, called bottom-up skills, which enable us to decode connected text. As we learn to decode, we also learn a set of strategic reading skills, called top-down skills, which readers use together with background knowledge to construct meaning from text (ibid.). Keiko Koda says, "[...] processing skills alone do not make readers proficient" (205). In other words, reading is defined as a complex process, combining both decoding skills when processing text, and analytical and cognitive skills that are needed for comprehension.

There is a significant correlation between positive attitudes towards reading and reading skills. It means that by developing a positive attitude, pupils will read more and improve their reading achievement. Norwegian boys' reading habits and attitudes towards reading changed in a positive direction from 2000 to 2006, but this has not affected their reading scores (Kjærnsli et al. 27). Change takes time. Since they were the least positive boys' group in PISA 2000, this change is certainly good, although it is not visible in their reading achievements. It would be wrong to conclude that good reading habits do not have any positive effect on reading achievements; both research and reason contradict this. "Good reading habits lead definitely to better reading habits, but it takes time" (Roe and Solheim 13).

As mentioned above, there was no change in the reading achievements of Norwegian pupils in the PISA studies of 2000, 2003 and 2006; the trend in reading has been increasingly negative from 2000 to 2006. In terms of numbers Norwegian students had an average of 503 points in 2009, and are now almost back at the same level as in 2000, when the average score for reading was 505 points. The

report *Back on track*, published after the PISA 2009, shows uplifting tendencies with regard to reading skills of Norwegian pupils compared to 2006, when the average score was 484 points (Kjærnsli and Roe 89).

Significant gender differences in reading skills can be explained by the fact that boys read less (i.e. they spend more time on other activities). A more controversial opinion is that texts read in school appeal more to girls than to boys. Yet another one is that there is a lack of male teachers in Norwegian schools, meaning that boys lack male (reading) role models. Additionally, there are other factors that play a great role in how much pupils read; various social and cultural factors, at home and in society, influence the reading habits of Norwegian pupils, as well as their attitudes towards reading (Kjærnsli et al. 145).

Make Space for Reading is the Norwegian Government's strategic plan to stimulate a love of reading and reading skills. The plan was launched in 2003 and a sum of roughly 10 million euro was granted for the first three years. Some of the main aims of this strategy plan were to improve reading skills and the motivation to read among children and young people, to improve teachers' skills at teaching reading, provision of literature and use of school libraries, to increase society's awareness of reading as a basis for other learning, cultural skills, quality of life and participation in working life and a democratic society. Introducing children and young people to new literature and authors is part of the strategy to create a love of reading. The public libraries are working with schools on several projects. Bookshops, publishers, and authors are also involved. Some of the measures in this strategy plan are: free books for 6th and 7th graders on World Book Day, a reading web site, brochures for parents, pupils and teachers that are regularly sent out to all schools, a network for skills development for school libraries has been set up, and the National Centre for Reading Education and Research was set up in 2004.

In Norway, there is little formal reading training after the children have learnt to read in 1st or 2nd grade. This is about to change, partly because of the sharper focus on basic skills in the national curriculum. Presently, there exists little reading education in lower and upper secondary school. The majority of teachers share a common failing; they work minimally with reading comprehension, reading strategies and reading motivation (Hellekjær, "Lesing"). Teachers lack competence in how to teach reading strategies. Pupils read a lot at school (cf. Vignjevic), but reading skills get little attention in the classroom compared to writing skills (Kjærnsli et al. 255).

2.1.1 Reading Skills

The OECD, being the organizer of the PISA surveys, is the organization behind the definition of basic skills, or the key competencies which we need for a successful life and a well functioning society

(Øgreid). Basic skills are not an addition to the competence aims in the curriculum, but a way of working with these aims. They are a method for learning a subject, and a way of learning to express oneself in the same subject. Sometimes there is confusion between basic education in reading, writing and mathematics which pupils get in the 1st and 2nd grade in primary school and basic skills that pupils work on continuously and with an increasing degree of difficulty throughout their schooling.

We experience ever growing requirements pertaining to literacy in all sectors of our society. Therefore, the main mission of teachers is to enable their pupils to master the text universe outside school - a mission which, if not impossible, is at least formidable. English teachers face a double challenge; not only do they need to help their pupils to master different texts, in addition they have to do it in a foreign language. It seems that the literacy skills from the first language (L1) can be transferred to the second language (L2), but such transfer is not necessarily automatic (Eisterhold 99). This means that, in order to facilitate the transfer of skills, teaching is important. English teachers need to be explicit in their teaching of that relationship. Joan Carson Eisterhold claims that writing teachers who are sensitive to the role that L1 reading and writing abilities play in developing L2 literacy skills, will be “better prepared to help L2 learners utilize those relationships to become proficient second language writers” (ibid. 100).

Reading as an activity in a language classroom is considered as the appropriate input for acquisition of writing skills as well, because it is assumed that reading texts will somehow function as a model from which writing skills can be learned, or inferred. There is evidence that suggests that a relationship between reading and writing exists. Furthermore, it seems that there are correlations between reading achievement and writing ability: better writers tend to be better readers. Moreover, there are correlations between writing quality and reading experience: better writers read more than poorer writers. Better readers tend to produce more syntactically mature writing than poorer readers, which suggests that there are correlations between reading ability and syntactic complexity in writing (ibid. 88).

Free voluntary reading (FVR) is recommended by Stephen Krashen as a way of achieving “advanced second language proficiency” (x). Reading as a leisure activity is the best predictor of comprehension, vocabulary and reading speed. There are clear differences between good and poor writers (good ones reported more pleasure reading at all ages). Not one poor writer reported “a lot” of pleasure reading (ibid. 6). Krashen reports that there are studies that confirm that those who read more in their second language also write better in that language (ibid. 7). One of the problems with this research is that the results rely on how much reading people say they do (which may or may not be accurate). In addition, there might be other factors responsible for literacy development than FVR. Krashen claims that the development of writing ability and of L2 proficiency occur in the same way:

through comprehensible input with a low affective filter (meaning: small amount of negative feelings toward the activity in question). He theorizes that writing competence derives from “large amounts of self-motivated reading for interest and/or pleasure” (Eisterhold 88).

Barbara Blair comments that the literature on extensive reading indicates that there are many benefits to be gained indirectly from employing this method. “Like intensive reading, extensive reading helps to build learners’ vocabulary, introducing them to words and language chunks that may not be included in short texts, and giving them a sense of common word partnerships. It also develops their understanding of grammar by allowing them to see all sorts of grammatical structures in use” (cf. Blair). The method itself involves no teaching; language is acquired by exposure. A positive aspect of this type of “language learning process” is that learners have chosen the text themselves, which increases their motivation and creates a more positive attitude towards reading and language learning. At least one important implication emerges from this insight: How to utilize this in school?

Blair states that there is little experimental research on extensive reading. Warwick Elley’s study from the early 90’s reports the improvement of all language skills and learners’ attitudes towards reading (ibid.). Reading competence spreads to other language skills, i.e. it contributes to general language acquisition. Raphael et al. claim that students’ ability to write texts and clarify information depends on how good their reading skills are, and how much experience they have with extracting the necessary information from the texts they read (284).

Studies of extensive reading indicate gain in general language learning, but few of them examine vocabulary growth. Marlise Horst’s study on extensive reading and learning L2 vocabulary from 2005 shows how extensive reading affects vocabulary growth. Her research is introduced by underlining the importance of exposure to “enough print” (356). All of the abovementioned arguments speak in favour of more reading.

2.1.2 Reading Strategies and Methods

Someone who cannot read must be taught – he or she must learn to read. Literature on reading points at the distinction between learning to read (which most pupils learn during their first school years), and reading to learn. Instruction in the skills of learning from reading is generally called “content reading” instruction by reading authorities, according to Lee Gunderson (33).

In the Common European Frame of Reference for Languages, strategies are defined like this: “A *strategy* is any organised, purposeful and regulated line of action chosen by an individual to carry out a task which he or she sets for himself or herself or with which he or she is confronted” (CEFR 10). In CEFR, ‘Can Do’ descriptors are provided for communicative activities like reception, interaction and production, but also for some of the strategies employed by the learners in performing

communicative activities. “Strategies are seen as a hinge between the learner’s resources (competences) and what he/she can do with them (communicative activities)” (CEFR 25). Reading strategies become thus a necessity for all readers who, sooner or later, encounter comprehension obstacles of one kind or another; reading being closely connected to both cognition and learning.

Keiko Koda suggests six reasons why strategic reading is critical in school learning:

- strategies allow readers to elaborate, organize and evaluate information
- the acquisition of reading strategies overlaps with the development of cognitive strategies to enhance attention, memory, communication and learning
- strategies are personal cognitive tools that can be used flexibly
- strategic reading reflects metacognition and motivation (readers need to have both the knowledge and disposition to use strategies)
- strategies that foster reading and thinking can be taught directly by teachers
- strategic reading can enhance learning throughout the curriculum (206).

The last two bullet points are of particular interest for school teachers who wish to utilize reading for learning as a method that works for their pupils in the long run. The teaching aim with regard to reading strategies is to help pupils to reach a level of competence at which they can use strategies such as skimming. Pupils can only achieve this when limitations in their language skills and range of vocabulary do not slow down their reading. Therefore, “extensive reading outside the classroom is important” (Blair and Rimmereide 167).

The six chosen reading methods are listed in the survey with a short definition. As a model for my categorization I have used Stangeland and Forst’s monograph on reading methods:

- skimming (gaining a general impression of a text),
- scanning (searching for a specific piece of information),
- super-reading (reading as quickly as one can),
- photo-reading (getting a quick overview over the structure in a text),
- speed reading (reading so quickly that one only decodes the words) and
- reflective reading (analyzing and reflecting upon a text).

2.2 Similarities and Differences between Reading in L1 and L2

Teachers of English often face a challenge in helping their students become good readers. For second language learners, reading texts in English can be difficult, “especially for students who have not developed age-appropriate levels of literacy in their first language” (Han and Anderson 102). We find an abundance of research on reading in the first language (L1), but less in the second language (L2). There are fundamental differences between reading in L1 and L2. Keiko Koda describes three

major distinctions between the two. First, unlike beginning L1 readers, L2 learners can draw on their prior literacy experience, which probably facilitates their reading in L2. Second, L1 readers already have a substantial linguistic foundation (through their oral practice of their L1) before they start their formal literacy training. This is something that the readers of L2 lack. This is why the initial focus differs; L1 training emphasizes decoding, and L2 instruction emphasizes building of the linguistic foundation. Third, information processing in L1 reading occurs in a single language; whereas it involves two languages in L2 (Koda 7). This is something to be taken into consideration when researching L2 reading.

Some pupils do not read efficiently in their L1, which hinders them in developing efficient reading in the foreign language. According to Christine Nuttall, there is a strong transfer of reading habits from one language to another (58). Furthermore, she says that few readers manage to bring their foreign language reading speeds up to anything like their L1 speeds. But if they do not read much in L1, and if bad reading habits have developed, “attention to L1 reading is a useful preliminary, especially where the writing system is similar to that of the target language. Improved L1 reading habits can then transfer to foreign language reading” (ibid.). This certainly calls for more cooperation between teachers of L1 and L2 in Norwegian schools.

2.3 Reading in LK06

The English subject curriculum in Norway is the framework for teachers of English in Norwegian schools. It is one of the results of the Knowledge Promotion Reform of 2006; its Norwegian abbreviation is LK06. In Norway, English is a compulsory subject for all pupils from 1st to 11th grade. The curriculum starts by stating the general objectives of the subject, common to all levels of instruction. Furthermore, it includes the teaching objectives for English in primary school, lower secondary school and upper secondary school. There are three main areas in the curriculum: Communication, Language learning and Culture, society and literature. The basic skills (reading, writing, oral, math, using digital tools) are presented along with the specific competence aims which are to be attained after Year 2, Year 4, Year 7 and Year 10, as well as after Vg1 (programmes for general studies) and Vg2 (vocational education programmes).

During the first ten years at school, pupils should develop a relatively high level of communicative competence in English, including all five basic skills. How these skills are supposed to be learned is not specified in the curriculum. According to LK06, “[d]eveloping reading skills in English also improves general reading skills” (Blair and Rimmereide 166). At the same time as they progress in reading, the LK06 curriculum in English emphasizes that “pupils must be able to use [...] reading [...] strategies that are suitable for the purpose” (LK06 5).

How do lower secondary teachers interpret these aims? How do they work with them in the classroom? These questions influenced my decision to investigate what happens in the classroom as far as the use of reading strategies and the focus on reading is concerned. In addition, I wanted to find out what kinds of texts teachers use when they teach reading strategies or encourage their pupils to read. Do they rely on the texts in textbooks? What kinds of reading strategies do textbooks propose for pupils to use?

A comparison of the previous curriculum, L97, with LK06, shows that the former was highly specific about the (literary) texts to be read by the pupils. At the same time, it was less specific about the genres than LK06. The novel had a much stronger place in L97; it was specifically mentioned that the pupils should read at least one longer literary work. This requirement is no longer found in LK06. What are the consequences of this change? As the curriculum no longer specifically requires that the pupils read longer literary works, do teachers choose to cut out extensive reading, and focus on other types of texts instead? The dilemma between the importance of extensive reading and omitting it in the English classroom because of the lack of time (among other things) will be addressed in my discussion of the findings in section 4.

Some of the background information about reading and writing as basic skills is drawn from the Norwegian core curriculum and the subject curriculum for English. The Knowledge Promotion Reform places increased focus on basic skills and knowledge promotion through outcome-based learning. The National Curriculum (LK06) is comprised of the Core Curriculum and the Quality Framework, the subject curricula, and of teaching hours per subject. Compared to the previous national curriculum, LK06 imposes much stronger reading requirements on Norwegian pupils, in spite of the fact that extensive reading has disappeared in English. This can be seen in four different areas: reading as one of the basic skills, greater emphasis on vocabulary learning, more detailed aims for reading (the ability to utilize different reading strategies), core curriculum from 1st grade in primary school to 1st grade in secondary school).

Basic skills in English are described in the English Subject Curriculum in the section preceding the competence aims. Basic skills are also integrated in the competence aims where they contribute to the development of competence in the subject, while also being part of this competence. In the subject of English, basic skills are: expressing oneself in writing and orally, reading, using digital tools and having skills in mathematics (in English). Writing and reading skills are understood as follows:

Being able to express oneself in writing and orally in English is a key part of developing English linguistic competence and is a common thread throughout the competence objectives at all levels. These skills are important tools in working on understanding and using English in increasingly varied and demanding contexts across cultures and subject fields. Having oral skills means being able to both listen and speak.

Being able to read English is part of the practical language competence and means being able to read and understand, to explore and reflect upon increasingly more demanding texts and thus gain insight

across cultures and disciplines. Developing reading skills in English also improves general reading skills. (LK06 3)

As we can see the curriculum is quite concrete in defining the different aims, thus instructing teachers on what they should be doing in the classroom.

Explicit teaching of reading strategies and training to use them in reading to learn has been proven to have good effect on pupils' reading skills. Andreassen reports that these pupils score better than the control group regarding the use of strategies, such as anticipating the content, explaining difficult words, asking questions and summing up (105). This strategic competence did not seem to result in a higher score on the reading tests or improvement of the pupils' motivation for reading. A large body of international research has developed in the past two or three decades investigating the factors which influence reading comprehension after the first reading instruction. This research identifies background knowledge, use of strategies and motivation as the most important ones (ibid. 106). Most Norwegian studies on teaching reading strategies are focused on Norwegian language. But, a few recent studies have investigated the use of reading strategies in English, among them the ongoing Tertnes project in Bergen. The results so far were reported at the Nordic Conference on Reading and Writing in Stavanger in May 2011. They confirm that there is no particular focus on reading strategies in lower secondary school in Norway, either in Norwegian or English. It is a time consuming task to focus on reading strategies and teachers do not seem to realize that one can save time by teaching pupils to read so well that they can learn from written texts. It is not only the pupils who do not generalize reading strategies, teachers do not do this either, confining this activity to the realm of the pupils' mother tongue.

2.4 Reading in the European Language Portfolio

As a supplement to LK06, The European Language Portfolio makes it possible for learners to keep a record of their own language development and to document their progress towards language competence by recording their learning experiences (cf. Blair and Rimmereide 168). This process of documentation is facilitated by various 'Can do' statements, which help the pupils to evaluate and reflect upon their own language learning. In my survey I have not used questions about the Portfolio. Being one of the important European language documents, the Portfolio says something about expected practice. Although Norwegian teachers are not bound to use the Portfolio in their teaching by the national curriculum, it describes the expectations to teachers with regards to reading skills. Unfortunately, the questions whether teachers use it, how they use it, and whether it makes pupils more aware of reading strategies, lie outside the scope of my study.

2.5 Reading in the CEFR

In the Common European Frame of Reference (CEFR), reading activities are described in the section about receptive activities and strategies. Reading, or visual reception, is defined as an activity where the user/reader “receives and processes as input written texts produced by one or more writers.

Examples of reading activities include:

- reading for general orientation;
- reading for information, e.g. using reference works;
- reading and following instructions;
- reading for pleasure” (CEFR 68)

Furthermore, it is stated that language users might read for different purposes: either for gist, or specific information, or detailed understanding, among others (ibid.). In order to act as a reader, the language learner must be able to carry out a sequence of actions; reading is a communicative language process which involves several different skills – visual, orthographic, linguistic, semantic and cognitive. The reader needs these skills in order to be able to:

- “*perceive* the written text (visual skills);
- *recognise* the script (orthographic skills);
- *identify* the message (linguistic skills);
- *understand* the message (semantic skills);
- *interpret* the message (cognitive skills)” (CEFR 91)

These CEFR guidelines describe extensively the different reading strategies thought to delineate and improve reading skills. The skills above are represented in the textbook exercises I have analyzed. Moreover, the descriptions above helped me to categorize reading exercises in my textbook analysis.

In summary, the section above gives a brief presentation of how reading and reading strategies are treated in the abundant literature on these subjects. Definitional clarifications are given, and I have shown how reading is treated in the important documents that guide English teachers in Norway, first and foremost the English curriculum, but also background documents such as the Common European Framework of Reference, and The European Language Portfolio.

3. Method

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the experimental set-up, the methodology of the study and the materials used will be described in detail. The research uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods; a survey and a textbook analysis. As Sandra McKay explains, survey research is “sandwiched between statistical experimental research and qualitative research because survey research can use both statistical and qualitative analysis” (17). Written survey questions can be highly structured or they can be open-ended, thus providing both large amounts of highly structured information, and individual answers which are not as standardized as the structured ones.

3.2 Survey Design

For my research purposes, I constructed a survey by using an online survey generator called Survey Monkey. The goal was to design a solid, well-structured, unbiased and effective survey, with simple written questions. It was important for me to construct clear, direct questions and answers, using language that survey participants would understand. The survey was sent out in Norwegian for this reason. I did not want my subject to feel that their own English language competence was being tested. The surveys in both English and Norwegian are included in Appendix I and II. The two principles that guided me in writing the questions were relevancy and accuracy. If the researcher asks the respondents about things they do not know, this may result in inaccurate data. I had to take into consideration the following items: the wording style, question sequence, the survey length (i.e. how long it takes to answer the entire survey), and the brevity of the questions (the opposite might actually result in confusing the respondents).

The types of survey questions range from open-ended questions (comments) to closed-ended and highly structured ones (yes/no, multiple choice, rating scale, etc.). It is the choice of questions used in a survey that will play a role in producing unbiased and relevant survey responses. In the end, it is the question types that determine what type of information is collected. I have used the following types of questions in my survey:

- Open-ended questions, which allow respondents to answer in their own words. In my online survey, textboxes are provided with the question prompt in order for respondents to type in their answer. Open-ended questions seek a free response and aim to determine what is foremost in the respondent’s mind. These are useful when asking for attitude or feelings, likes and dislikes, memory recall, opinions, or additional comments. I. Brace calls for caution regarding

drawbacks in connection to the use of open-ended questions (qtd. in *Smart Survey* 9). Sometimes respondents may find it difficult to express their feelings. This can result in respondents answering “I don’t know” or skipping a question. Furthermore, open-ended questions take more time and effort to fill out and at times they can have a larger skip rate. Also, analyzing open-ended comments can be time-consuming and difficult.

- Closed-ended questions with pre-designed answers with a small or large set of potential choices. One type of closed-ended question is a question which allows respondents to choose one of two answer choices (e.g. Yes or No), while another type allows respondents to choose one of many answer choices.
- Ranking questions were used when all the choices listed had to be ranked according to a level, for example, the level of importance.
- Matrix and rating type questions were used when surveying the frequency of teachers’ behaviours or attitudes. I tried to present the rating scale in a logical and consistent order, e.g. I ordered the rating choices from high to low (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree going from left to right).

A common type of matrix-rating scales is called Likert scales. Rating scales are popular ways of collecting subjective data where one wants to measure a respondent’s ideas (e.g. opinions, knowledge, or feelings). When creating rating scales, Likert scales in particular, one has to consider if one wants the scales to be balanced or unbalanced. A Likert scale is designed as an “agree – disagree” scale. This setup gives respondents a series of attitude dimensions. For each dimension, the respondent is asked whether, and how strongly, they agree or disagree with each dimension using a point rating scale. Likert scales are given scores or assigned a weight to each scale, usually from 1 to 5. The purpose of the Likert scale is to sum the scores for each respondent (the response average). According to Brace, the intent of the Likert is in that the statement will represent different aspects of the same attitude (qtd. in *Smart Survey* 12).

As mentioned previously, the survey combines different types of questions: open-ended, close-ended and rating. A combination of open-ended, close-ended and rating questions was chosen in order to provide uniformity of data and richer, more varied information. Open-ended questions allow the informants to answer in their own words. These questions are not placed in the beginning of the survey, as they presumably demand a higher degree of reflection (cf. what is already written about question sequence above). Since the respondents’ personal opinion is asked for, this type of questions is least intrusive towards the end. The open-ended questions were formulated as short answer questions, encouraging the respondents to express an opinion, or simply describe a class or an activity.

Close-ended questions typically demand that the respondents choose one of several answers. In the present survey, a combination of checklist format and Likert-scale questions was used. Checklist format questions require that respondents check one or several answers that apply to their situation; here: the kinds of texts their pupils read, how often they use different reading strategies, just to mention a few. Likert-scale questions were formed around statements about reading and teaching of reading strategies. Here the respondents were asked to select one of four categories by ticking off their answer. They were prompted to state to which extent they agree or disagree with statements about the basic skills and their teaching of reading (q. 1, 5). The 4-point Likert-scale (i.e. an even number of options) was chosen in most of the cases in order to force the respondents to take a clear stand on these topics. In one instance I used a Likert scale with an uneven number of options (q. 4), because I was first and foremost interested in which one of the basic skills the respondents ranged as the most important. Some of the close-ended questions target the pedagogical motivations and curriculum background for using reading strategies in the classroom; others investigate the kinds of texts used for that purpose. One of the questions focuses on describing the student group. The last questions are about the respondents' personal profile (gender, level of education, teaching experience, work place).

For the purposes of this research project, the teachers have been asked to contribute by answering questions on how they teach reading and reading strategies, what kinds of strategies they teach and how often, attitudes towards reading and teaching reading and which texts they use when working on reading. They were informed that their participation in the research was voluntary, confidential and anonymous. Initially, the survey was intended for teachers of 8th grade in lower secondary school, but as the survey period drew to an end, I chose to include all levels in lower secondary school, thus having access to a larger sample of respondents.

Originally, approximately 60 English teachers were invited to respond to the survey, however, only 30 actually did. Calculating the response rate is something one does in order to determine whether the collected data sample is acceptable in size. The response rate is the percentage of people who responded to the survey. It is calculated by dividing the number of complete surveys (30) with the number of participants contacted (60). In this case it amounts to 50%, which is quite satisfactory. In order to determine an acceptable response rate, one has to take a look at the way in which the survey is administered. For online surveys, the average response rate is 30% (cf. *Smart Survey* 20-21). Also, the purpose of the research plays a role in determining whether the response rate is acceptable. If the objective is to measure effects of an intervention, then the response rates are more important. If the survey's objective is just to gain insight (as it is with mine), the response rates are less important.

The survey was sent to the principals as a web link in a mail, accompanied with the cover letter explaining the purpose of the survey (see Appendix V). The principals forwarded the mail to the

teachers of English at their school. Moreover, I sent a personal mail to some of my teacher friends and former colleagues, with the same cover letter and a web link to the survey. Some of the teachers were invited via a personal message and a Facebook link, an access point which Survey Monkey allows for. Only a few of the invited teachers responded to the survey via the Facebook access point.

I chose to write the survey in Norwegian although it targeted teachers of English. As the intension was certainly not to judge their English skills, I reasoned that probably most of the teachers were more likely to answer if the survey was presented to them in Norwegian. For the purposes of this thesis, the survey was later translated into English (cf. Appendix II). In the following the survey will be described in detail.

The survey “Reading in English in lower secondary school in Norway” is divided into five sections; the introductory text in section 1, followed by a series of 24 questions which are grouped into sections 2-5, according to the topic treated in each of them. The printed version is enclosed in Appendix I (the original version in Norwegian) and Appendix II (the English translation). There is an asterisk in front of some of the questions, meaning that these questions are obligatory, and the respondents were not allowed to continue before these questions were answered. The survey is built around the following items: Which reading methods do the teachers use? How often do they practice them? Do they use different reading strategies for different purposes? Is extensive reading used and/or recommended? How do teachers help pupils improve their reading skills? How can teachers convey to their pupils the importance of reading, especially extensive reading? The main goal of the survey is to shed some light on my major research question, as presented in the introduction of this thesis.

Section 1, as I have already mentioned, is the introductory text, where the purpose of the survey is stated. It very much resembles the cover letter that accompanied the emails sent to the head teachers of the schools asked to participate in this research. In the introduction, the respondents were informed of the intentions behind the survey and who was conducting it. A short background regarding the development of the reading skills of Norwegian pupils was given, and the respondents were informed that by participating in the survey they would help shed some light on how English teachers in lower secondary schools work with reading. Furthermore, they were informed of how their responses would be handled and how the results of the survey would be used, as well as that their participation would be rewarded with a copy of the thesis. It is always good to disclose one’s privacy practices to the respondents. Doing this helps to increase response rates by putting potential respondents more at ease (*Smart Survey* 26). I did so both on the introduction page of the survey, and in the body of the email to the head masters containing the link inviting English teachers to take the survey.

Each of the sections (pages) of the survey was preceded by short instruction stating what was required from the respondents; they were asked to follow the instructions and to answer as precisely as possible. The respondents were informed that the time needed to answer the whole survey was approximately 10 minutes. In the end, they were thanked for their time and wished good luck when answering the questions.

Section 2 is called “The Curriculum”. As the Norwegian curriculum emphasizes the basic skills in all subjects, I wanted to find out how the respondents feel that work on reading skills in particular is being taken care of in English classes. This section consists of two questions.

Question 1 is a rating question of the Likert-scale type. The respondents are asked to read the statements and choose one alternative. There are four alternatives for each statement, ranged from the most positive one (Strongly agree) on the left to the least positive one (Strongly disagree) on the right. In order to avoid confusing the respondents, I chose to sort the answer alternatives consistently in this fashion throughout the survey; the most positive, or the most frequent or the most important answer choice was placed on the left. The statements that the respondents need to consider here are all related to different aspects of reading, as they are directly or indirectly described in the curriculum. Here is the list:

- how the teachers assess pupils’ motivation for reading in English,
- do they know enough about reading strategies,
- do the pupils use different strategies when they read,
- whether they put more weight on reading strategies in 8th grade compared to 9th and 10th,
- whether they spend a lot of time on reading,
- whether the pupils are good readers,
- do they read a lot,
- are they given reading tasks,
- do they work mostly with the texts from the textbook,
- whether the curriculum goals can be achieved by using the textbook,
- whether they consider reading strategies easily integrated into their teaching,
- whether they believe they can achieve all the goals from the curriculum with their pupils,
- whether the textbook stimulates the training of reading strategies, and
- whether the significance of reading and reading skills is stressed by the head teacher of their school.

Question 2 is also a rating question, where the goal is to determine how often different genres are read each semester. There are five answer alternatives, ranging from the most frequent (Weekly) to the least frequent (Once a semester). Since one of the competence aims in the English curriculum after Year 10 is that the pupil shall be able to read and understand texts of different lengths and genres, I was curious about which of these text types and genres pupils read most and how often: report, article, poem, short story, newspaper, play, directions, novel, letter/e-mail, web page, magazine, comics (or other; allowed for by the comment field).

Section 3 is called “Reading skills in English”, and consists of five questions. The main goal of this section is to investigate how the respondents work on reading skills in English.

Question 3 asks how often pupils practice on the different reading methods. The six chosen methods are listed with a short definition, in case some of the respondents are unsure of what they are. The clarity of the questions and the importance of adjusting them to the level of “the least educated respondent” were discussed above. The respondents were thus asked how often their pupils practice

- skimming (gaining a general impression of a text),
- scanning (searching for a specific piece of information),
- super-reading (reading as quickly as one can),
- photo-reading (getting a quick overview over the structure in a text),
- speed reading (reading so quickly that one only decodes the words) and
- reflective reading (analyzing and reflecting upon a text).

There are four alternatives, ranging from the most frequent (Once a week or more often) to the least frequent (Few times a school year). Here I believe I could have added one more alternative (Never), because I think (I have not investigated it, so I cannot be sure) that some of the methods are practised seldom or never (like super-reading and speed reading). Nevertheless, I chose to keep the alternatives as they are, and consider the answers as truthful; in a way, this question can be considered a repetition of different reading methods for the readers of the survey.

Question 4 asks the respondents to range the five basic skills according to the importance given (when taught) in class. Again, the alternatives were ranged in the same manner as previously, from the most important (Very important) on the left, to the least important (Not so important) on the right. Here, there are only three alternatives to choose from, and this is the only one of the Likert scale questions in the survey that has an uneven number of answers. My main goal was to determine which of the basic skills teachers attributed the highest importance in class. The five basic skills were sorted in the order they appear in the curriculum: being able to express oneself orally, being able to express oneself in writing, being able to read, having skills in mathematics and being able to use digital tools.

Question 5 presents different statements about what is actually being done in class with regard to reading skills and use of reading strategies. This question is connected to question 1 as its practical mirror; question 1 investigates attitudes and what is expected by the educational authorities, while question 5 investigates what teachers actually do with their pupils. The respondents are asked to tick off one of four alternatives, which range from Strongly agree to Strongly disagree. The statements are about:

- whether the goals of reading are being communicated to pupils,
- how important vocabulary is for reading and understanding,
- whether reading strategies are being taught explicitly,
- whether reading skills are included in other learning activities,
- whether pupils choose the appropriate reading strategy,
- if they are encouraged to make notes in order to understand a text better,
- whether reading comprehension is checked,
- whether they train on techniques that make pupils read quicker,
- if they consider they have enough time to train on reading skills,
- whether they repeat and review, and
- whether pupils are encouraged to enlarge their vocabulary.

Question 6 is a simple close-ended yes-no question (giving a third alternative; “I don’t remember”), asking the respondents if they, during the past five years, had been offered a course in teaching reading strategies. The reason that I chose five years as the time period in question 6 is the appearance of the new Norwegian curriculum in 2006. With the weight it places on the basic skills, I was interested in checking out whether this has been followed up by training the teachers in the years after the curriculum was implemented in Norwegian schools.

Question 7 is an open-ended question providing a dialogue box where the respondents can write their own answer. This question is only to be answered if the answer to the previous question is affirmative; the respondents are asked to explain what the course had resulted in.

Section 4 is called “Your English pupils”, and consists of ten questions. In this section I ask for information that can help me to form an opinion of the group that the respondents work with, and many of the aspects of that work, not only the pupils themselves. Since some of my respondents teach at several levels in lower secondary school, they were asked to think of their 8th graders (if they had any) when answering the questions. Also, if they had more than one class at one level, they were asked to concentrate on only one group. This was simply to make it easier for them to decide on one group of students and answer in a more precise manner. In addition to the questions about the pupils, I have two

questions at the end about the teaching material and how cooperation between English teachers at different schools is organized. I now see that I could have included two of the questions from section 5 here, but this will be explained in more detail in section 5. Most of the questions in section 4 (except for q. 10, 14 and 15) are of the simple, close-ended, multiple choice type.

Question 8 asks at which level the respondents are teaching English this year (2010/11). There are four alternatives to choose from – 8th, 9th, 10th and “I am not teaching English this year”. It is possible to tick off more than one alternative.

Question 9 requires the respondents to specify how many English classes they are teaching this year: 1, 2, 3 or other (open answer box). Here they either choose one of the multiple choice alternatives, or fill in their own answer.

Question 10 is a fairly easy open-ended question asking how many pupils they have in the class. This answer they have to fill in on their own; an answer box is provided.

Questions 11 to 13 investigate whether there are students with special needs in the classes in question. The reason for this is that pupils with special needs often demand special teaching methods and learning materials. Therefore it is interesting to see how many of these there are, and try to figure out how and if their needs are catered for. Question 11 asks about pupils with special needs and an individual learning plan in English. Question 12 asks the same for the subject of Norwegian. Question 13 asks how many pupils there are from different language minorities. The minority pupils will often need special attention when it comes to reading in both English and Norwegian. There are three alternatives to choose from in each of these questions, ranging from “None” through “1-3” to “More than 3”.

Question 14 is the most descriptive of the open-ended questions in the survey, and probably the one that demanded most effort from the respondents. It asks them to give a brief description of the group of pupils, including some information about their English skills and their motivation for learning English. The reason that I wanted them to describe the group is because teachers choose learning materials and teaching methods with their pupils in mind. It is interesting to read how the teachers analyze their group of pupils in terms of both skills and motivation, which in my opinion are crucial elements in language learning. I created an answer box with quite a lot of space for writing, allowing the respondents to express most of the thoughts they had about their pupils.

Question 15 is also an open-ended question, but similarly to question 10, it asks only for a number: more specifically, the total number of pupils at each respondent’s school. The answer is relevant in terms of examining whether the size of the school has any influence on how cooperation between teachers is organized, and how much reading material they have available.

Question 16 is a multiple choice question asking if the respondents think they have a sufficient amount of teaching material available at their school, in order to cater for the reading interests of all pupils. There are three alternatives; the first one is positive (“We have enough reading material”), the other one is negative (“We need more reading material”), and the third one is for those who do not know the answer to this (“I don’t know how much reading material is available at my school”).

Question 17 treats the system level of English teaching at each school, asking how the cooperation within the “English department” is organized. Having the time and opportunity for teamwork, in order to meet, plan lessons, projects and exchange ideas is a vital part of teachers’ profession, and this is the reason this item is in the survey. In order to answer this question, the respondents may choose between four alternatives (and they are allowed to tick off several answers): either “As teams of teachers that teach at the same level (but different subjects)”, or “English teachers form their own section”, or “I have no other English teachers to cooperate with”, or “At the municipality level (English teachers from different schools cooperate)”. In case there are other forms of cooperation, a comment box is provided.

Section 5 is called “Your Personal Profile”, and includes questions on demographics and personal data of the respondents. I recognize that, by a mistake, two questions about teaching (and reading) material (q. 22 and 23) were placed in this section. Had I had the opportunity to move them, they would be placed at the end of section 4.

Question 18 is about the respondents’ sex; a multiple choice question with two alternatives: male or female. A lot has been said and written about the lack of male teachers at the lower levels in Norwegian schools. Whether this has any influence on the teaching of reading skills in English is not the major focus of this thesis, but it is interesting to see how male and female teachers are represented in this sample group.

Question 19 aims to establish the highest level of education in English of each respondent. I wanted to see whether higher education in the subject has some influence on the focus on reading and reading strategies. The alternatives are chosen according to the closest possible number of ECTS credits in different teacher (or language) training programmes. There are eight alternatives:

- less than 15 ECTS credits,
- 15 ECTS credits (half semester),
- 30 ECTS credits (one semester),
- 60 ECTS credits (one year),
- 80/90 ECTS credits (three semesters),
- 120 ECTS credits or more (two years),

- “allmennlærer” (teacher with a three or four year general education diploma which enables them to teach in grades 1-10 in all subjects), and finally,
- no formal competence in English.

Question 20 is an open-ended question which asks them to stipulate the number of years they have taught English. Experience is an important part of teacher training, in addition to formal education, which is the reason I am interested in this.

Question 21 is a multiple-choice question about the other subjects the respondents might teach. There are nine alternatives to choose between: Maths, Science, Norwegian, Social science, Physical education, Religion and ethics, Second foreign language, Music/Arts/Home economics, and finally a box for those who teach only English.

Questions 22 and 23 treat the teaching materials the respondents use with their English pupils. Both are open-ended questions, meaning that they have to answer in their own words. Question 22 asks which textbook they use in their English class. If they do not use any textbooks, they are asked to specify that in their answer. Question 23 asks for a closer look at the teaching materials in English, demanding the respondents to specify what other teaching materials they use, in addition to the textbook.

The last question, number 24, asks the respondents to state the name of the municipality they work in. This is to ensure that there is a geographical spread in my sample material. All the other traces of where each respondent works will be anonymized. They could choose between four municipalities that showed up automatically (Nittedal, Skedsmo, Eidskog, Vefsn), or write the name of their municipality in the comment box. The four abovementioned were the municipalities I had in mind for my research while I was still planning the survey. The survey was sent out to several other possible respondents after it was published and opened for collecting the answers.

3.3 Pilot Survey

Prior to sending out the survey to the principals, a pilot survey was tested out on seven teachers at primary, lower secondary and upper secondary levels, in addition to one test person without any pedagogical background. The test pilot of the survey serves two functions. First, it serves as the initial pre-test of the survey, and second, it is the last step in finalizing the survey questions and form. The pre-test is possibly one of the most critical steps in administering a survey (cf. Mackey and Gass 43). By choosing NOT to conduct a test pilot, one could jeopardize the accuracy of the data. The test pilot offers feedback on whether the survey’s wording and clarity is apparent to all survey respondents and whether the questions mean the same thing to all respondents. The basic goals of the pre-test are to evaluate the efficacy of the questionnaire and to estimate the length of the survey (i.e. time needed to

take the survey). It was important for me to check out whether I had managed to make an objective survey, by avoiding leading questions and questions loaded with emotionally charged words, stereotypes etc.

In the following I will describe some of my major concerns during my test run. The most important things were that the respondents understand the objective of the survey and that the wording of the survey is clear and unambiguous. My absolute priority was that the answers collected would reflect what I intended regarding the purpose of the survey. If the objective was made clear enough to the respondents, I reasoned that the answers given were likely to be sincere and realistic. Moreover, the questions had to be simple and immediately understandable. Since the survey was administered in writing and the respondents did not have the possibility to ask what was meant by a question, the clarity of each question was one of the most important aspects. I had to consider whether any of the questions generate response bias. Some of the test persons responded to this. These items were therefore rephrased in order to reduce ambiguity.

I did not want the survey to be too long. At the same time, it was important to me that I got all the answers that I thought were necessary for my argumentation in the thesis. As the survey was designed online, some of the questions were obligatory. After the test run, I reduced the number of obligatory questions, as it appeared that some of the respondents did not understand why they were not allowed to continue, (mis)interpreting it as a technical glitch in the survey. This, I suspect, resulted in their premature exit, instead of answering the obligatory questions. It seems that this was a problem for some of the respondents in the actual survey as well, but I cannot be sure of this. Maybe they simply did not want to complete the questionnaire.

Another concern was question sequence, which should motivate the respondents to reply and make sure that the survey flows in an orderly fashion. Three areas were particularly important: the opening questions (which had to be easy and interesting), question flow (once a topic is established, all related questions should come up before a second topic is raised), and location of sensitive answers. It was important to ensure that the respondents felt comfortable while answering the questions. Normally, survey authors are advised not to include sensitive questions in the beginning. If one chooses to include them in the beginning, one runs a risk of respondents refusing to reply and exiting the survey. Sensitive questions include information like demographics (name/place/age/sex), personal information and expressing opinions and attitudes. These items (like questions 5, 14, 18-20 and 23, for example) are likely to produce irritation, embarrassment or confusion (cf. McKay 37-39), and I did not want to present them to the respondents in the beginning of the survey. Had I chosen to do so, I fear that the informants might have chosen not to respond or even to leave the survey. That is why personal

questions and questions targeted at mapping teachers' attitude towards teaching reading were introduced towards the end of the survey.

Furthermore, the answer choices had to be compatible with the respondents' experience in the matter, i.e. reading strategies. I am aware that there are many lower secondary schools in Norway that have teachers of English without any formal education in the subject. Although many of them may do a satisfactory job as teachers, they might not have the training or the relevant vocabulary needed to understand all the aspects of the survey. A person without any training in reading methods might have difficulties understanding what is meant by scanning or skimming, for instance. Moser and Kalton argue that, as a survey author, one has to put oneself "in the position of the typical, or rather the least educated, respondent" (qtd. in *Smart Survey* 4). Questions that are easily understood increase both the accuracy and frequency of respondents' answers. This is why I tried to use language that was simple in both words and phrasing. Another thing was to ask precise questions, avoiding things that are too general or too complex.

I also had to consider whether any of the items required the informants to think too long or too hard before responding. These items might need rephrasing or placement somewhere else in the survey, in order to ensure that the respondents answer. This is especially true for questions 1, 5, and 11-15.

According to my test audience, the survey was perceived as easy to understand. They reported that the length was acceptable, and that the survey had a logical flow. They made comments on the layout and length of some of the questions. Based on the responses from the test persons, some of the questions and statements in the survey were modified and rephrased, and others even completely left out. For example, I needed to rephrase terms like "successful reader", and make them less ambiguous and change some of the verbs in the statements from "feel" into "believe", "think", "know".

In order to maximize the response rate, I undertook several measures both prior to the survey, and along the way. First of all, I requested participation in advance. I emailed a survey invitation with the cover letter to the principals of the schools involved, and received responses almost immediately. The reason for writing a cover letter and an introduction to the survey was to include information regarding the purpose of the survey, giving reasons for participation, explaining the terms of anonymity and confidentiality and how the results would be used. I also offered an incentive for participation, by promising a copy of the thesis as a gift to those schools that agreed to participate. Furthermore, I tried to allow enough time to complete the survey. The cut-off date was set approximately two months from the opening of the survey to the respondents. It was essential for my work schedule not to extend this deadline, so all the responses had to be collected within this period of time. In addition, the survey was provided with clear and direct instructions, i.e. detailed explanations

of how to navigate through and submit the survey, as well as instructions for each section and each question. This was done in order to create a survey that was easy to use. During the survey period I sent out several reminders to those who had not completed the survey.

3.4 Textbook Collection and Table Design

The survey was open for the respondents for six weeks (March 1st – April 15th 2011). After the cut-off date in the middle of April, I spent some time collecting the textbooks that the respondents reported they used with their classes. Some of the textbooks were easy to get hold of, being available at my school; others I needed to borrow from other schools. I carried out an analysis of seven English textbooks. These are: *Key English*, *Crossroads*, *Flight*, *New Flight*, *Search*, *Searching* and *Voices in Time*. Unfortunately, there is one textbook that one of the teachers reported using (*Come On*) that I have not managed to get hold of within the time period designated for working on this part of the thesis. Among the seven textbooks mentioned above, one is not represented on the teachers' list (*Flight*), but I chose to include it in my analysis out of sheer curiosity. *Flight* is the "old" version (published in connection with the Curriculum from 1997), while *New Flight* is its new cousin (published in 2006, after LK06 appeared). I intended to compare the two versions of this textbook in order to find out which changes, adjustments and curriculum traces I could find. The seven tables are to be found as Appendix VI (1-7) at the end of this thesis.

The main reason for wanting to carry out a rather simple textbook analysis was to investigate the types of texts represented in them, how the focus on reading is displayed (if any), and which types of reading exercises and reading strategies were involved. As many teachers reported that they used textbooks in their English teaching, it was justifiable and necessary to take a look at how the textbooks cover reading and reading strategies.

I designed a table in order to simplify the analysis as much as possible. Analyzing textbooks is a time-consuming job, and I soon realized that it could develop into a thesis topic on its own if I made it too detailed.

The table consists of six parts. First, there is simple publisher information about the book (title, name of the publisher, year of publication). Second, I included a rough text count with a rather simple genre selection. The genres represented are poem/song, play/musical, short story/fairy tale/myth/fable, e-mail/letter/card/diary, instructions/directions, information text/report/article/argument/interview, novel/extract from a novel. I have not consulted any theoretical literature in order to make my genre classification more scientific. Genres are not the focus of this thesis at all. Nevertheless, a rough overview of the text types represented in the textbooks was necessary in order to prove that the textbooks help teachers in their text selection, which according to the curriculum, needs to be varied in

genre and length. Third, I investigated which reading methods were applied in the textbook: skimming, scanning, super-reading, photo-reading, quick reading and reflective reading. Here, I applied the same categories as in the survey (see q. 3). Fourth, I made an overview of the types of reading exercises, by using the same categories as the CEFR uses (cf. the theory section above): reading for general orientation, reading for information, reading and following instructions and reading for pleasure. I did not count the number of occurrences of either the reading methods or the types of reading exercises; I was simply interested in registering whether they occur or not. Fifth, there is an overview of the reading strategies involved. These are divided into three types: pre-reading strategies, while reading strategies and after reading strategies. In the parenthesis under each of these, there are a few examples of each strategy. The goal here was to determine to which extent different strategies are represented in each textbook. More about this can be read in section 4.2, where the data from the analysis are presented. Finally, the table allows for a short description of how reading as a skill is treated in the textbook, e.g. how the focus on reading is displayed, whether there is any focus on reading in general, whether extensive reading or reading for pleasure have a prominent role, whether the focus on reading and strategies is explicit or implicit etc.

3.3 Data Collection

3.3.1 Respondents

The participants in this research project and the respondents in my survey are lower secondary school teachers of English. The schools I chose for participation in my survey were 10 lower secondary schools from 7 different municipalities in Norway. The selection of schools and teachers was affected by my familiarity with them, while I at the same time wanted to collect data from a large geographical area. Therefore, the schools contacted belong both to my own municipality, the neighbouring municipalities, and some municipalities quite far away from my own. The more distant schools were contacted because I have a personal connection to them; by appealing to this in the email I hoped for a higher response rate. The better one knows one's respondents, the more likely it is to gain a higher response rate.

It was fairly easy to conduct a web-based survey compared to a more traditional one, in paper form, using regular mail. For practical, administrative and ethical reasons, the principals of all the schools in question were first contacted and asked to participate, and also to convey my request to their English teachers. Getting permission from the head teachers to carry out the survey at their schools was one of the important ethical aspects I had to deal with. This was done by e-mail. The process resulted in 30 respondents from different parts of Norway. In addition to this channel, I

emailed some of my personal contacts, like former colleagues and teacher friends. In this case, I did not contact their head teachers first; partly because some of them were on maternity or student leave, or because I knew them so well that I considered it artificial to contact their superiors first.

Thirty teachers from eleven different lower secondary schools in Norway have responded to the survey. Geographically, the group is well spread, representing eight different municipalities (Skedsmo, Østfold, Nittedal, Eidskog, Vefsn, Hobøl, Lunner and Asker). The schools these teachers work at differ in size, ranging from 200 to approximately 500 pupils. This is a rather small-scale survey, with few respondents, so the findings cannot be generalized to the teaching of English in Norway as a whole. However, it points out a tendency that other teachers and schools might recognize in their own practice. My research involved some ethical considerations. The teachers' participation in the research had to be voluntary. The results/analysis had to be made anonymous. Another ethical consideration was the need to give the respondents insight into the results of my research. Informing them about the findings shows them that their participation in the project was valuable and important.

3.3.2 Conducting the Survey

The time spent on designing and piloting the survey was approximately three weeks. The time spent on conducting it was a month and a half. During the survey period, I sent out two rounds of reminders to the head teachers and individual respondents. The first round was sent out after four weeks, and the second one just a few days before the cut-off date (April 15th 2011). This has actually resulted in a higher response rate.

3.3.3 Textbook Analysis

My motivation for carrying out the textbook analysis was my assumption that most teachers depend on the textbooks and allow them to limit their reading material choices – an assumption confirmed by my teacher survey. When teachers say that they rely on textbooks in teaching reading, it was essential to investigate to what degree the textbooks they use make this task achievable, to which extent the textbooks focus on reading (and reading strategies), as well as which types of reading exercises they involve. Together, these two investigations give an interesting picture of how reading strategies are taught in this research population.

Another reason for my choosing textbook analysis as the means of triangulation (i.e. using multiple methods or multiple data sources) in order to verify my interpretations of the teacher survey, was the fact that textbooks are “an operationalization of the curriculum” (Bachmann, qtd. in Lande 12-13; my translation). This means that textbooks in most cases serve as an interpreter of the goals in the curriculum. Earlier this dubious role of the textbooks was checked and approved by the National

centre for learning materials, but since the mid-2000s, this is no longer the case, and the publishing houses have the sole responsibility for making textbooks that follow the curriculum. Not only that, textbooks play a central role in Norwegian classrooms: “Norwegian classrooms have for a long time been ruled by traditional teachers following the textbook relatively closely” (Imsen, qtd. in Lande 12; my translation). Although the last two Norwegian curricula emphasize several teaching methods that involve making pupils more active, it would seem that teachers still prefer the traditional way of teaching through giving lectures and textbook based exercises.

My textbook analysis is relatively simple, and was carried out after the textbooks were gathered and the analysis table designed. I call it an analysis and not a survey because looking for reading strategies may involve a degree of analysis. The following points from CEFR are important in the textbook analysis where I look at the reading exercises included:

- reading for general orientation;
- reading for information, e.g. using reference works;
- reading and following instructions;
- reading for pleasure (68).

In the analysis it was essential to focus only on those exercises that involve reading strategies and try to ignore the others. Most of the textbooks traditionally consist of many varied after reading exercises, which will be addressed in more detail in section 4.

3.4 Analyzing and Presenting Data

Survey Monkey offers automatic calculations of the survey data in the “Analyze” section of the account. This enables the user to see immediate statistics, export data in different formats, and generate diagrams of different kinds. The presentation of the survey and the English textbooks, i.e. the summary and discussion of the results, together with the diagrams and tables illustrating them comes in section 4 of this thesis. Presenting the data and reporting the results is the final stage of my research, resulting in this thesis. The audience for this report are first and foremost teachers of English in Norwegian lower secondary schools, but also others who are interested in the topic of teaching reading and reading strategies.

3.5 Validity and Reliability

According to Sandra Lee McKay, validity and reliability are of utmost importance for sound research (11). These terms are understood and dealt with somewhat differently in qualitative and quantitative research. Since this study is designed mostly along the lines of the quantitative research

tradition, I will explain how the terms validity and reliability are understood within this tradition and within my research. These definitions have been taken into consideration in designing the survey.

There are three major types of validity: construct, internal and external. Construct validity deals with the degree to which the instruments used in the study measure the construct that is being examined (12). The measures selected must appear to an outsider to be a reasonable way of assessing the construct being examined (in this case, teaching reading). External validity deals with the extent to which the findings can be generalized to a wider population. McKay states that “statistical generalizations are only possible with a large random sample” (17). The research population in my study is not large, as I emphasize on several occasions throughout this thesis, but it is chosen purposefully to reflect the population of English teachers in Norway (variation in geography, teaching experience, education, gender). Internal validity deals with the degree to which the research design has managed to ensure that the different variables do not influence the outcome of the study.

There are two types of reliability: internal and external. Internal reliability deals with the extent to which someone else analyzing the same data would come up with the same results. External reliability relates to whether another researcher, undertaking a similar study, would come to the same conclusions (13). The degree to what validity and reliability are actually ensured in my study will be discussed along with the results in section 4.

4. Results and Discussion

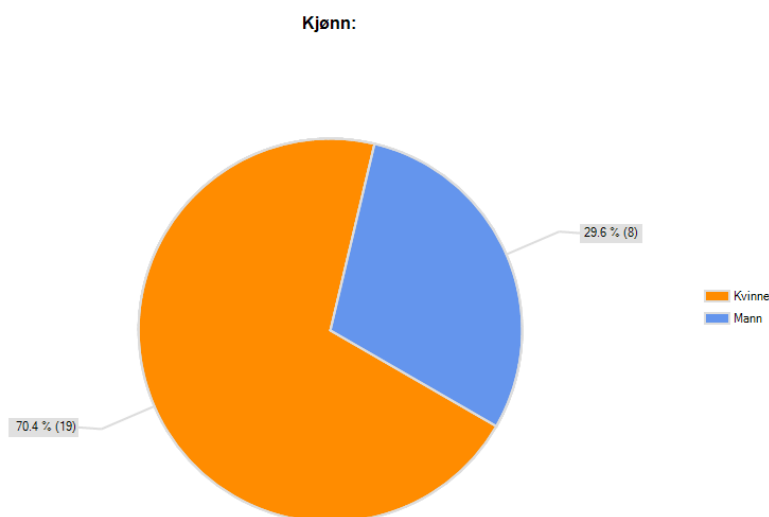
The description and discussion of the results is divided into three subsections; the results of the survey (4.1), the textbook analysis (4.2) and the summary of the major findings and their implications (4.3).

4.1 Survey Results

In the following, the answers given to the questions in the survey are examined in detail and the questions are grouped according to topic. My analysis of the survey begins with a description of the respondents' profiles. As mentioned in section 3.2, the survey was sent to 60 teachers of English working in different lower secondary schools in Norway. 30 of them answered the survey, which resulted in a response rate of 50%.

4.1.1 Personal Profile of the Respondents

The answers to question 18 revealed that the respondents as a group consist of 8 men (29, 6%) and 19 women (70, 4%). The female-male ratio in primary and lower secondary school in Norway is thus confirmed also by these small numbers. Typically enough at this level in the Norwegian school system, men and women are not equally represented. Although it most certainly would be interesting to examine whether there are any gender differences in what teachers report about their classroom habits when it comes to teaching reading strategies, this lies outside the scope of this thesis.

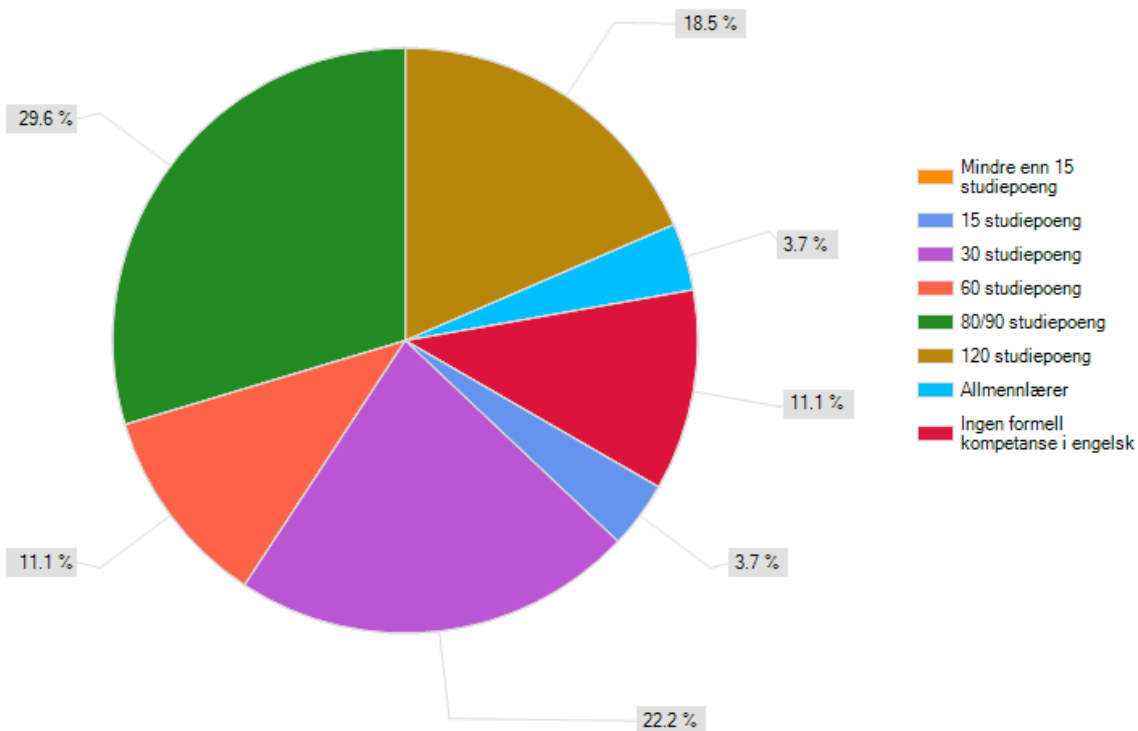


Three respondents failed to answer this question. These three respondents failed to answer some of the other questions in the survey as well. It is likely that they either chose to exit the survey

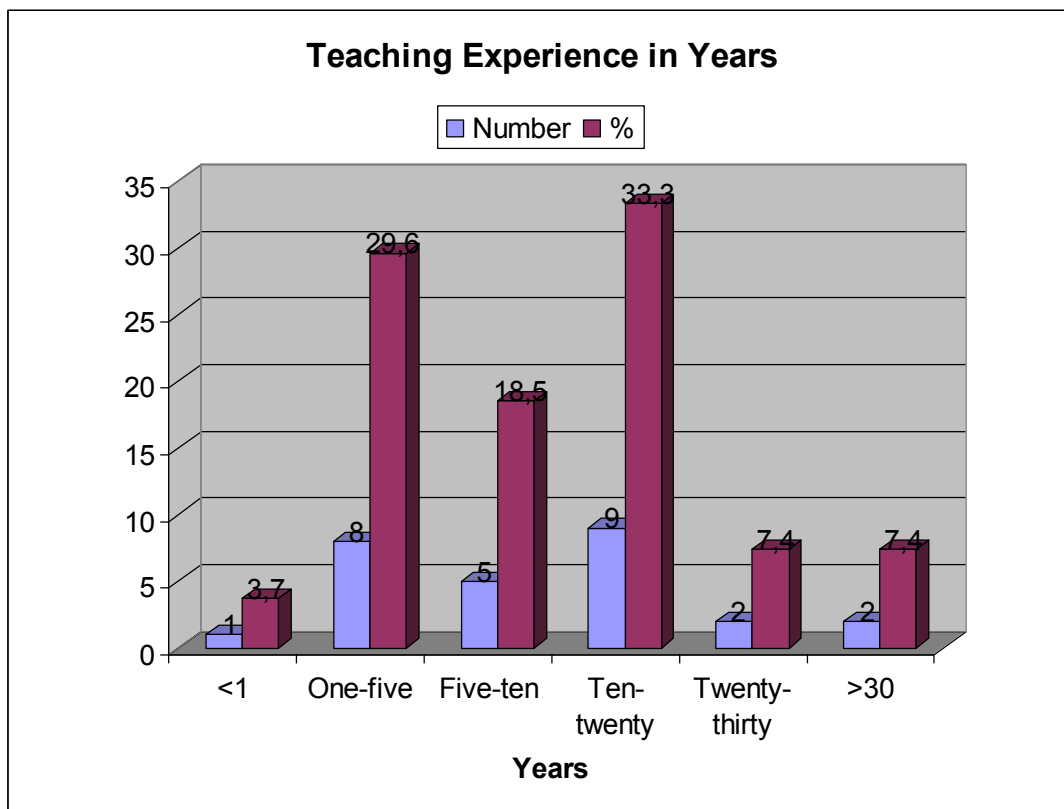
prematurely, or they failed to answer the obligatory questions, thus being prevented from finishing the survey.

The formal qualifications of the respondents and their highest level of education in English is the focus of question 19. The majority of respondents (59, 2%) fulfil the government's minimum competence requirement for teachers of English at lower secondary level, which is 60 ECTS credits (cf. Møller et al.). 29, 6% of these have 80-90 ECTS credits, which corresponds to approximately three semesters of English at the tertiary level. 11, 1% have 60 ECTS credits or a basic university course in English. Finally, 18, 5% have 120 ECTS credits (or more), which can be equated to a Master's level course. The proportion of qualified English teachers is thus quite large. The other group (approximately 40%) consists of teachers that are not qualified for teaching English at lower secondary level. 22% of them have 30 ECTS credits, or a one semester course in English. 3,7% have 15 ECTS credits (which equals a term/trimester course) and the same proportion (3,7%) were educated at a teachers college. Finally, 11, 1% reported that they have no formal education in English whatsoever. Having in mind that English is one of the three written exam subjects after Year 10, this is disturbing.

Høyeste kompetanse i engelsk:



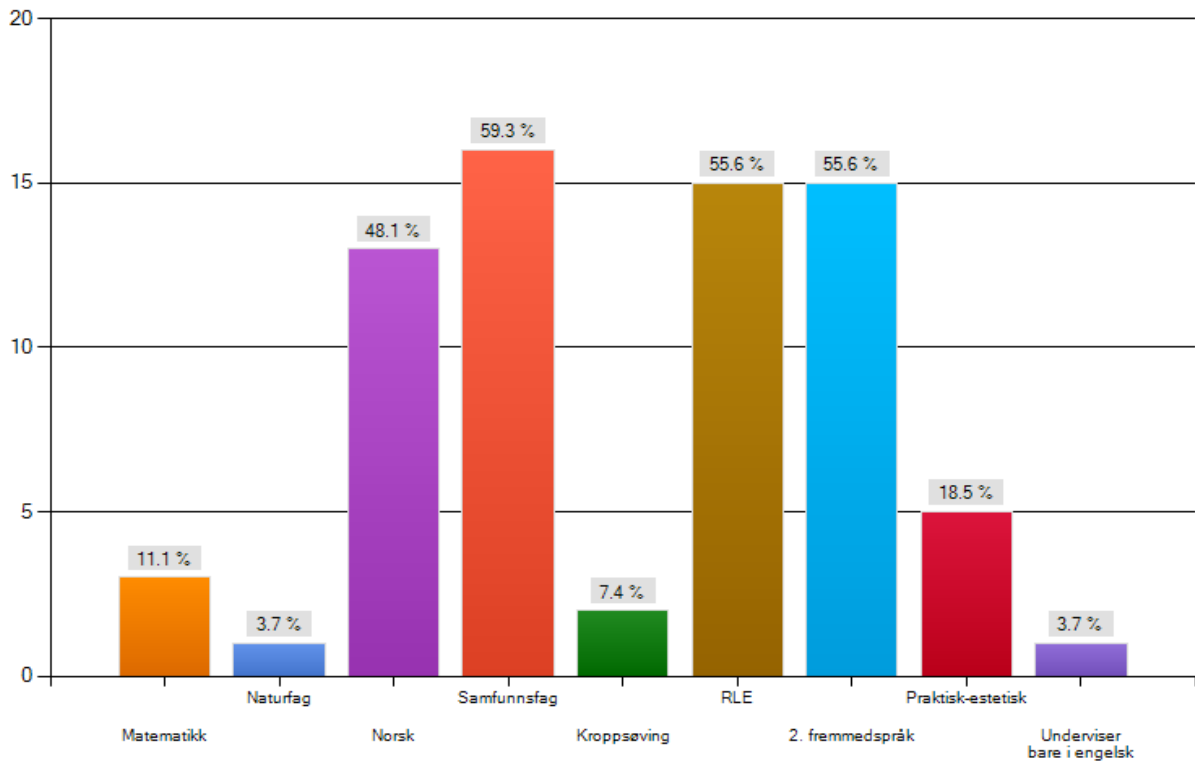
If we look at their teaching experience in English, the numbers show that very few of the respondents are complete beginners (3, 7% stated that this was their first school year as an English teacher). The largest group is that of respondents having 10-20 years of teaching experience, equalling 33, 3%. Second largest is the group with 1-5 years of teaching experience in English, or 29, 6%. Then there are those who have taught English for 5-10 years, here there are 18, 5% of them. The most experienced teachers, those with 20-30 and more than 30 years of teaching experience make up the two smallest groups, representing 7, 4% each. It is tempting to say that this is symptomatic for the teacher situation in Norway, as very few employees grow old in this profession. It is interesting to see whether teaching experience influences the way reading strategies are taught. Perhaps (young) teachers coming out of teacher's college or university are those who have the best and most up-to-date education in strategic reading? After examining the individual answers in my survey population there is no reason to believe that they do. On the contrary, teachers who have the least experience say that their knowledge of reading strategies is not that good. This gives reason to believe that the focus on reading strategies in teacher education is rather poor.



Most of the 30 respondents teach other subjects in addition to English. Many of them have teaching competence combining English with another language, either Norwegian or a foreign language. The most common subjects in combination with English are (in this group): social science

(59, 3%), second foreign language (55, 6%), religion/ethics (55, 6%) and Norwegian (48, 1%). It seems that the other school subjects are less common in combination with English: 18, 5% teach music/arts/home economics, 11, 1% teach maths, 7, 4% teach physical education, while 3, 7% teach natural science in addition to English.

I tillegg til engelsk, underviser jeg i (eller har undervist i): Det er mulig å sette kryss ved flere alternativer.



Only one of the respondents (3, 7%) reported that English is the only subject he or she is teaching this year. There are few teachers who teach English exclusively. Whether this is because very few wish to specialize in English only, or it has to do with the needs of the schools in question, it is difficult to say having only these results to rely on. Compared to Finland, one of the OECD countries which topped the PISA rankings with regard to reading skills (Kjærnsli and Roe 89), Norway has few teachers who are specialists in teaching only one subject.

4.1.2 Curriculum

This section is built around statements relating to the curriculum. As described in the theoretical part of this thesis, the Norwegian curriculum emphasizes the development and training of the five basic skills, including reading. This section consists of two questions.

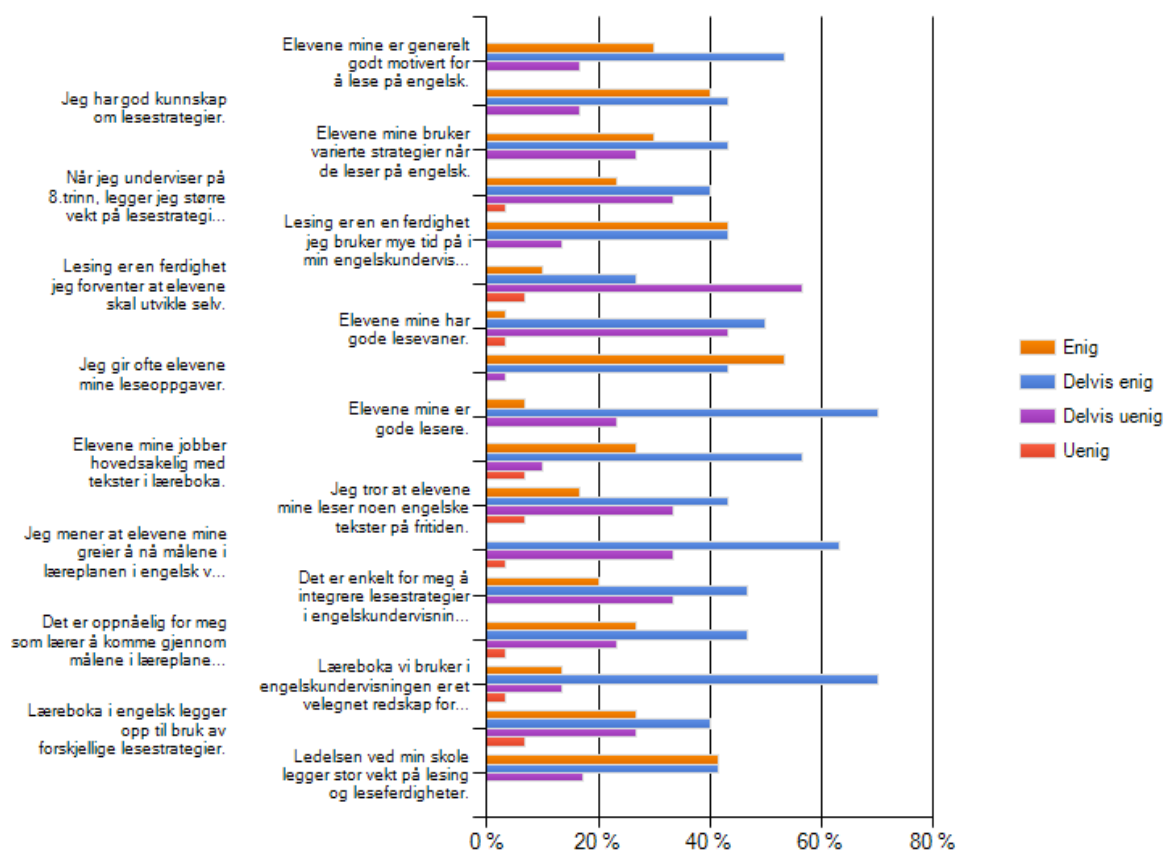
The first question is a close-ended (Likert scale) question, proposing four alternatives for each of the 17 statements about reading and the curriculum. All of the respondents (30) answered each

statement. Statement 1 deals with how the respondents perceive the pupils' motivation for reading. If we put the alternatives "Strongly agree" and "Agree" together, 83, 3% have the impression that their pupils are well-motivated for reading. I would like to compare this result to four other statements in this question, 3, 7, 9 and 11. Statement 3 claims "My pupils use different strategies when they read English". Put together, 73, 3% of the respondents agree strongly (30%) or partly (43, 3%) with this statement. 26, 7% disagree partly, probably meaning that many of the involved pupils have some potential for development. When evaluating statement nr. 7, 53, 3% of the informants agreed that their pupils had good reading habits, while 46, 6% disagreed. Nevertheless, 76, 6% agree with the statement that claims that their pupils are good readers (nr. 9). 23, 3% of the respondents disagreed with the same statement. There is thus a discrepancy between pupils being good readers without having good reading habits. When and how did they develop good reading skills? What do these teachers actually mean? Do they want their pupils to read more? 60% of them said that they thought their pupils read English texts in their spare time, while 40% did not believe their pupils read very much English when not in school (statement 11). It would seem that the respondents have pupils who are more motivated for reading than their reading habits and reading skills indicate, and that they, according to their teachers, read only a little English outside class. Of the 60% that believed their pupils read in English in their spare time, 16, 7% strongly agreed, while 43, 3% partly agreed, which could indicate that they were not sure or that the pupils read very little when they are not in school. Perhaps a statement evaluated by the respondents in question 5 can shed more light on this. I therefore choose to discuss this statement here instead of later in this subsection. This statement (nr. 5) asked the teachers to evaluate whether their pupils were able to choose a reading strategy suitable for the type of text were reading. As few as 6, 9% strongly agreed that their pupils could choose an appropriate reading strategy. Apart from this, 58, 6% partly agree, probably meaning that their pupils from time to time managed to choose the right strategy. On the other hand, 34, 5% partly disagreed, their experience being that a few of their students were able to make the right decision about reading strategies when confronted with a text. The pupils' ability to choose a reading strategy that matches the intention with their reading seems to have some influence on the quality of their reading skills.

When asked whether they have good knowledge of reading strategies (statement 2), 40% strongly agreed, 43, 3% agreed, while 16, 7% disagreed. This can be interpreted in the direction that most of the respondents evaluate their competence in reading strategies in a positive manner. We shall discuss this in greater detail when we come to question 6/7 (course in reading strategies). Furthermore, many of the respondents confirm in their answer to statement 13 that it is fairly easy for them to integrate reading strategies into their English teaching; 20% strongly agree and 46, 7% partly agree with this. 33, 3% partly disagree. There may be several different explanations here. One can be lack of

competence, and another might be lack of time. It would seem that the respondents use a considerable amount of time on reading in their English classes (statement 5). The amount of time is not defined. 43, 3% strongly agree with this statement, while 43, 3% only agree (or partly agree). To me, this suggests that the teachers in question experience the amount of time spent on reading as considerable. Only 13, 3% disagree with this statement. When we come to question 5, we will see what they say about the amount of time they feel that they have available. Furthermore, the respondents seem to put slightly more weight on teaching reading strategies to 8th graders compared to 9th and 10th graders. When answering the fourth statement, 23, 3% strongly agreed that they put more weight on reading strategies in 8th grade, 40% partly agreed, while the group that disagreed partly or strongly comprises 36, 6%. This seems rather natural, as I interpret the results, because 8th graders are the youngest pupils at lower secondary level, so perhaps teachers experience that they profit the most from or need the most work on reading strategies. Nevertheless, some of the respondents disagree with this, and from their answers it would seem that they put equal weight on reading strategies through all three years of lower secondary school.

Les gjennom følgende påstander og velg ett svaralternativ:



53, 3 % strongly agree with the statement that they often give their pupils reading tasks (statement 8), while 43, 3% only agree. Together this amounts to 96, 6%, meaning that teachers assign

quite a lot of reading tasks to lower secondary pupils. Few of these teachers expect pupils to develop their reading skills completely on their own (statement 6): 63, 4% disagree with this statement (partly or strongly). 10% said they strongly agreed that this is pupils' responsibility, while 26, 7% said they (partly) agreed. It would be interesting to investigate what lies underneath this. Do they believe that their pupils should read more on their own? Were they thinking about reading strategies when answering this question? Of course, there is a possibility that this question was misunderstood by some of the respondents. But the fact that 63, 4% disagreed tells me that the majority of teachers believe that reading as a skill should be developed in school.

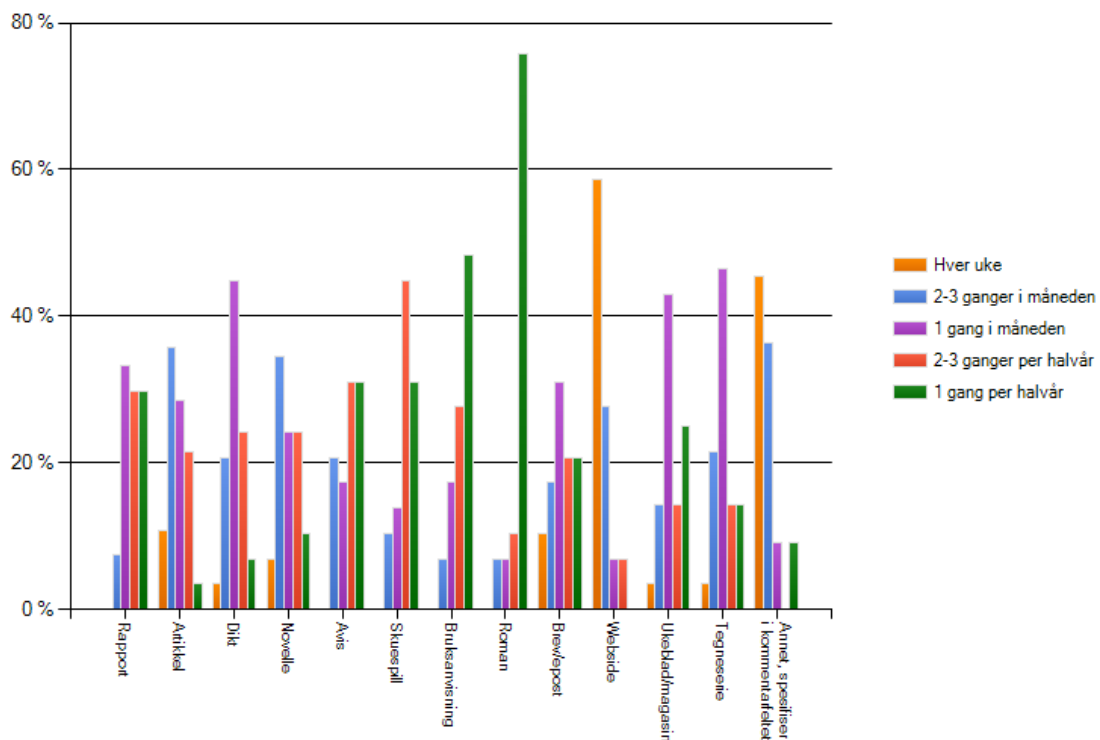
The last statement, no. 17, claimed that "The management of my school stresses the significance of reading and reading skills". I intended to investigate whether the teachers experienced that the "system" facilitated the teaching activities around reading. The majority of respondents (82, 8%) strongly or partly agree that their head and deputy masters expect that the pupils ought to develop good reading skills. Only 17, 2% partly disagree with this. If the school management expects results and stresses the importance of a skill or an area of learning, will they try to motivate teachers to work with these areas? This can for example be done by buying the necessary and varied reading material or by allowing their teachers to increase their competence in reading (strategies).

A rather important and interesting group of statements (10, 12, 15 and 16) in this question relates to the textbooks used by the respondents. The majority of teachers confirm that their pupils mostly work with texts in their textbooks. 26, 7% strongly agree with this, while 56, 7% agree (together this comprises 83, 4%). 10% disagree partly and 6, 7% strongly disagree. This is of importance as it suggests that most teachers rely principally on the textbook when planning and structuring their lessons. That is why the textbook analysis is interesting in connection to this study. When asked whether they believed that their pupils can reach the goals in the curriculum by working with their textbooks (statement 12), 63, 3% of the teachers answered that they partly agreed with this. 33, 3% partly disagreed and 6, 7% disagreed completely. Are teachers in the latter group using a textbook that they are dissatisfied with? None of the respondents chose the most positive answer alternative to this statement (Strongly agree). Can we say that they were thus displaying a healthy scepticism towards the textbook as an institution? When asked directly to consider to what degree the textbook they use in the classroom is a suitable tool for achieving the goals in the curriculum (nr. 15), an overwhelming 70% partly and 13, 3% strongly agree, while 13,3% partly disagree and 3,3% strongly disagree. This aroused my curiosity about which textbook this last respondent used; unfortunately, he or she failed to answer question 22. Finally, when asked if the textbook they use stimulates the training of different reading strategies, 66, 7% agree that it does (26, 7% strongly and 40% partly), while 26, 7% partly disagree and 6, 7% strongly disagree. Later on, I will examine which

books these teachers are satisfied with when it comes to reading strategies. To sum up, the general opinion of my respondents seems to be that reaching all the goals in the English curriculum with their pupils is a fairly achievable task. One fourth of them (26, 7%) strongly agree with the statement that this is possible (nr. 14), 46, 7% partly agrees, while 23, 3% partly disagree, and 3, 3% disagree completely. Later some of these statements will be related to the textbook analysis.

The second question in this subsection is about the text selection or different genres that the respondents use in their English classes. One of the competence aims in the English curriculum is that the pupil shall be able to read and understand texts of different lengths and genres. The question was thus aimed towards determining which genres are being read and how often. The genres chosen here are the same as those that can be found in the textbook analyses later on in the thesis. The teachers had to answer how often each of the genres was read by their pupils. 29 of 30 respondents answered this question, but some of the genres were left out by some of the respondents. The lowest response count for a genre in this question is 27 (of 29), so that makes the answers quite reliable in this context.

Ett av målene for engelskopplæringen etter 10.årstrinn er at elevene skal lese og forstå tekster av ulik lengde og i flere sjangere. Hvor ofte leser elevene dine følgende teksttyper på engelsk:

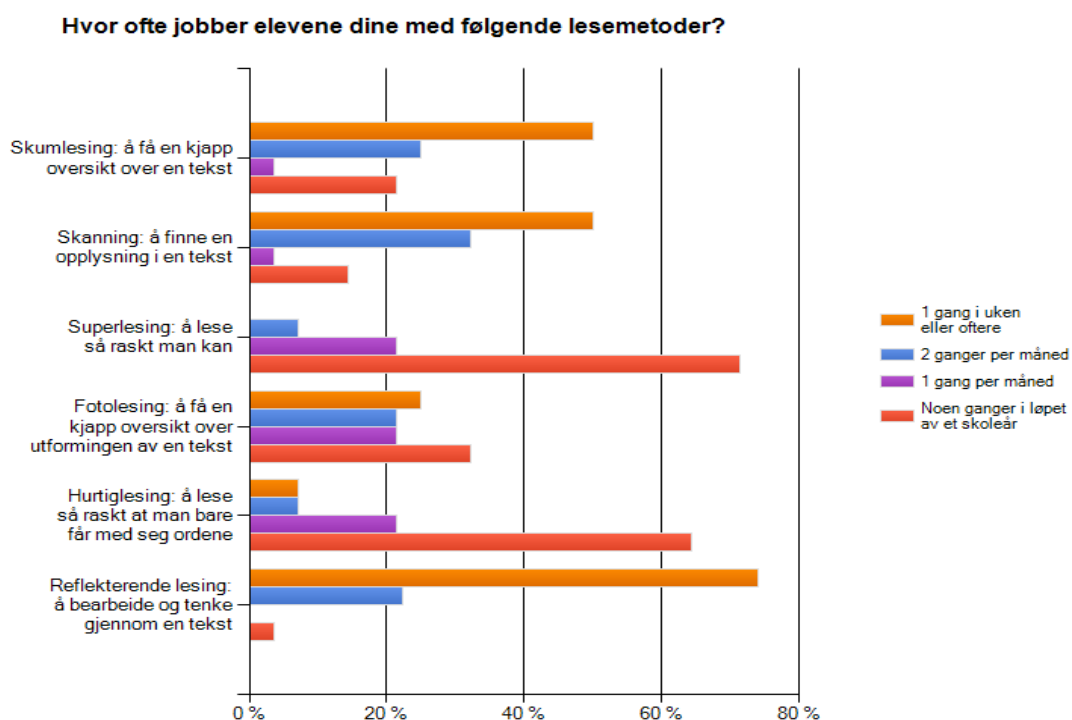


The most frequently read type of text (every week) is online texts (web pages), containing different genres according to 58, 6% of the respondents. Moving on to the next frequency level, twice or three times a month, we can see that two more genres appear as most commonly used: 35,7% of the

respondents list articles (information texts) and 34, 5% short stories. Then come the texts read approximately once a month: 46, 4% mention comics, 44, 8% poems, and 42, 9% specify magazines. In fourth place in this category we find letters and e-mails. Now we are approaching the texts that are read quite seldom, only twice or three times a semester. The largest group here contains plays (44, 8% state this) and newspapers (31%) and reports (29, 6%). The texts with the lowest reading frequency among the pupils of my respondents are novels (75, 9%) and instructions/directions (48, 3%). These are the texts that are read only once a semester (or even more seldom). There are very few respondents that stated that their pupils read novels more often than once a semester (6, 9% of them state that this happens 2-3 times a month, 6, 9% once a month and 10, 3% 2-3 times a semester). The question is whether their students read whole novels or just extracts from them, as found in the textbooks (as will be discussed in the textbook analysis). The novel was once obligatory reading at least once a year (L97), but since it disappeared from the curriculum in 2006, it is my impression that some teachers choose to leave it out of their teaching plans. Extensive reading has thus more or less become the sole responsibility of the pupils (cf. Wauthier 35).

4.1.3 Working with Reading Skills

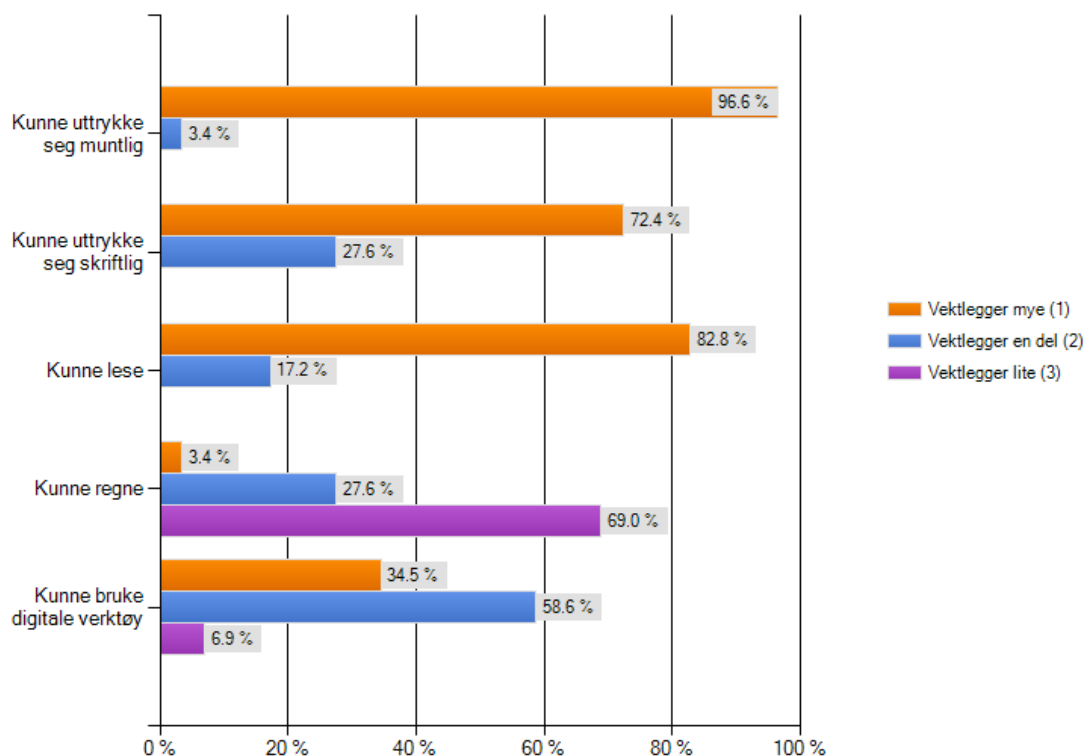
The questions in this subsection focus on how reading skills are practiced and taught by the respondents. There are five questions in this section, which starts off with question 3, asking the respondents how often different reading methods are practiced by their pupils.



The methods they could choose are all named and briefly defined, in order to help the respondents understand the question clearly. The following methods were being used once a week or more often: skimming and scanning (50% specified this frequency for each method) and 74, 1% of the teachers categorized reflective reading as the method they used most frequently. That is quite a large percentage. In my opinion this is good, because if the teachers really DO work as they say they do, they analyze the texts in detail by using in-depth reading strategies that help pupils understand more, learn new words, expressions and forms, and remember more. The least used reading methods are super-reading and speed reading; 71, 4% and 64, 3% of the teachers reported that these methods are being used only few times a year. This is not surprising, I might add, as these methods aim mostly at increasing the reading speed of readers who do not read effectively. One of the answers surprised me, though – 3, 7% of the respondents stated that their students practiced reflective reading only few times a year. Either this is true, indicating a very sad practice, or the respondent(s) might have misunderstood the question.

The next question, number 4, investigates how the respondents range the five basic skills according to importance in their teaching.

Rangér de grunnleggende ferdighetene ut fra hvordan du vektlegger dem i engelskundervisningen din:



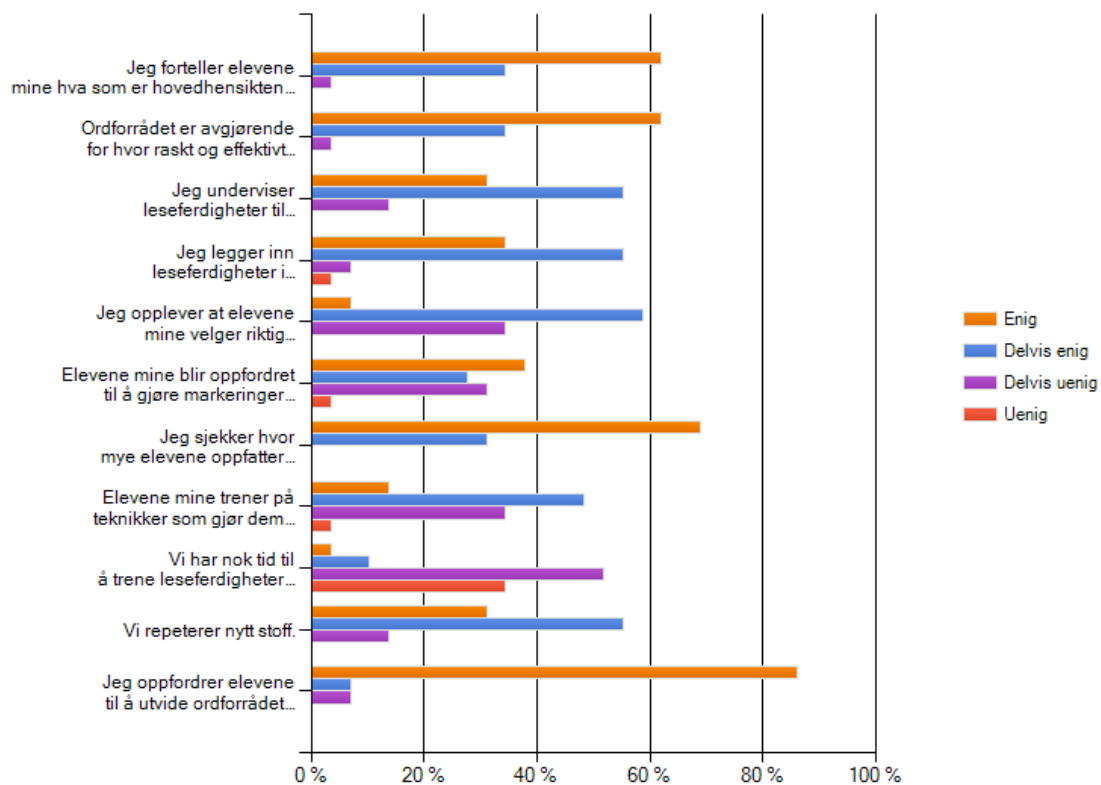
Each of the skills could be rated on a three-level scale: Very important, Important and Less important. Being able to express oneself orally is THE most important skill for 96, 6% of the

respondents (rating average 1,03), followed by “Being able to read”, which 82, 8% give a lot of weight in their teaching (rating average 1,17). In third place in importance among the basic skills is “Being able to express oneself in writing”; 72, 4% ranged writing as a skill they put a lot of weight on in class. Being able to use digital tools is a skill that the majority of the respondents (58, 6%) considered “Important”, neither more nor less (rating average 1,72). Only 6.9% considered this skill less important, explaining this by having too little time in school to use digital tools with their pupils. This might also be caused by other things; there are still lower secondary schools in Norway that do not have enough computers for their pupils. Finally, having skills in mathematics does not seem to be a top priority for my respondents. As many as 69% consider this skill less important (!), while 27, 6% think it is of average importance (rating average 2,66). Only 3, 4% (1 respondent) considers it very important; I wonder whether this person has a special preference for maths, or is perhaps teaching maths as well as English. 29 of 30 respondents answered this question. I cannot help but think that they answered so negatively with regard to the mathematical skills because they might have been influenced by the fact that the survey is about reading, thus making them rank reading skills more important than mathematical skills.

Question 5 lists eleven statements about what is actually done in school regarding the use of reading strategies. As I wrote in the section on method, this question is connected to question 1 by being its practical counterpart; question 5 investigates what teachers actually do with their pupils.

The first statement, “I tell my pupils what the goal of their reading is”, is part of a teacher’s ABC. Communicating the intention of a reading activity is as important as stating the aim of any other learning activity. When the pupils know what the aim is, this normally has a positive effect on their interest and motivation to perform a task. When we look at the answers, we see that 62, 1% strongly agree with this statement 34, 5% (partly) agree, and 3, 4% disagree. This tells me that a very small number of teachers choose not to communicate the goals of reading to their pupils, which is a pleasing result. I think that those who partly agree with this statement sometimes talk about the goals with their pupils, and sometimes do not.

Vurdér følgende påstander og velg ett svaralternativ:



The following six statements are grouped together despite the fact that they appear in another sequence in question 5 (so the respondents would not be influenced by their previous answer). I group them together now because they belong to the same topic – reading activities in the classroom. When confronted with statement 3, “I teach reading skills to my pupils”, most of the respondents agreed, either strongly (31%) or partly (55, 2%). Only 13, 8% of the 29 respondents said that they partly disagreed, probably meaning that they teach reading skills rather seldom. The situation is almost the same when we look at statement 4, “I include reading skills in other learning activities”: 34, 5% strongly agree, 55, 2% (partly) agree, 6, 9% (partly) disagree and 3, 4% strongly disagree. It would seem from these two statements that reading skills are sometimes taught and sometimes integrated in other learning activities. Furthermore, when responding to statement 6 “My pupils are encouraged to make notes in the text in order to comprehend it better”, we see that the respondents’ answers are almost equally distributed across the three first alternatives (37, 9% strongly agree, 27, 6% agree and 31% disagree). Then come two strategies that are used quite a lot, “we repeat and review” in statement 10 and “I check how much they comprehend” in statement 7. Repeating and reviewing the new learning material seems to be an activity that is used relatively often; 31% strongly agree with this statement, while a total of 55, 2% partly agree. On the other hand, checking the pupils’ comprehension is the most frequent activity among those listed in question 5. More than two thirds of my respondents

(69%) strongly agree with this statement, while the rest (31%) partly agree. This is the only statement where the teachers respond in such unison. This tells me that they must be using many activities and after-reading exercises designed for comprehension check. The textbook analysis later on will show that the textbooks are filled with after-reading exercises designed for this purpose. Now we are moving on to the next and final activity in this group of statements, namely nr. 8: “My pupils train techniques that can help them read quicker”. The number of respondents agreeing or disagreeing with this statement is almost the same on each end of the scale. 48, 3% partly agree, while 34, 5% partly disagree. Those that strongly agree comprise a small group of 13, 8% of the respondents, and only 3, 4% strongly disagree. When we compare this answer to the rankings from question 3, where the teachers were asked how often different reading methods were practised, we can see that super-reading and speed reading are activities used either a few times each school year by the majority of the respondents (71, 4% for super-reading and 64, 3% for speed reading), while a small number of them practiced these methods as often as once a month (21, 4% if we combine the methods). I would say that the results for these two questions confirm one another.

Statement 9 is essential for understanding the treatment that reading skills receive in various English classrooms in Norway: “We have enough time to train reading skills in our English lessons”. Most of the teachers in my survey disagree with this statement, 51, 7% partly and 34, 5% strongly. Together the number expressing disagreement with regard to having enough time amounts to 86, 2%. Only 10, 3% partly agree and 3, 4% strongly agree in this case. Compared to the answers from statement 5 in question 1, where they said that reading is a skill they spend a lot of time on, we can infer that many teachers use a considerable amount of time in their English lessons on reading, but would, in spite of this, like to use even more time. Some work on reading and reading strategies is being done, but the respondents would like to have had more time to focus on these activities. This is one of the difficult aspects of being a teacher: deciding on which goals to work with at which point in time and for how long. Many of the goals and skills in the curriculum are interpreted as equally important, and some teachers distribute the time spent on each of the goals according to what is going to be tested, either during the pupils’ final exams or on tests like the national reading test in English. This is a web based test carried out each year in 5th, 8th and 9th grade, which focuses mainly on comprehension, vocabulary and reading for information.

Since successful readers and good reading skills depend on a solid vocabulary, I included two statements about vocabulary in question 5. According to Bamford and Day, reading is an important source of incidental vocabulary learning (193). They say that good things happen to students who read a great deal in the new language, as is shown in research studies: “they become better and more confident readers, they write better, their listening and speaking abilities improve, and their

vocabularies get richer” (ibid. 1). The first statement about vocabulary (nr. 2) states the following opinion: “Vocabulary is of crucial importance for how quickly and efficiently pupils read and understand a text”. There is no doubt that the majority of the respondents agree with this statement; 62, 1% strongly and 34, 5% partly. However, there are also a few respondents (3, 4%) who disagree with this statement about the significance of vocabulary with regard to reading speed and comprehension. I am somewhat surprised that the percentage which choose the “Strongly agree” alternative was not even higher. The second statement on vocabulary (nr. 11) investigates how the respondents transform their opinion into action: “I encourage my pupils to enlarge their vocabulary in different ways”. Here, the majority of the respondents agree that this is exactly what they do – 86, 2% agree strongly and 6, 9 % partly. Only 6, 9% admit that this is something they do not work with very much.

Summing up, the purpose of this question was to find out how the respondents work with reading. I am tempted to say that the results so far seem to point in one direction. Twenty-nine out of thirty respondents answered, giving thus a rather detailed picture of how they treat certain reading skills in their classroom. In her master’s essay, Claudine Wauthier reports on how twelve teachers at Halden upper secondary school use reading strategies when working with literary texts. Her results suggest that, in her research population, it would seem that the use of reading strategies is common among the majority of teachers. This is not surprising, as “the development of reading strategies is one of the main goals of the new curriculum KL06” (Wauthier 27). Glenn O. Hellekjær’s dissertation from 2005, examining whether and to what extent Norwegian upper secondary EFL⁴ instruction prepares for the reading of English texts and textbooks in higher education, revealed that Norwegian students experience reading problems in higher education. Between 30 and 40% of his respondents reported reading difficulties, which were due to poor language proficiency. The respondents who read a lot of English or had had CLIL⁵ courses were those with the highest reading scores (Hellekjær, “Acid Test” 4). According to the last PISA results, there is no reason to believe that the basic reading proficiency of Norwegian pupils is poor. The problem is rather that they lack training in reading the texts within an academic language register and texts which demand a good comprehension of large quantities of detailed information (cf. Kjærnsli and Roe 91). This type of reading literacy is something that Norwegian pupils will need in higher education and, later on, in work.

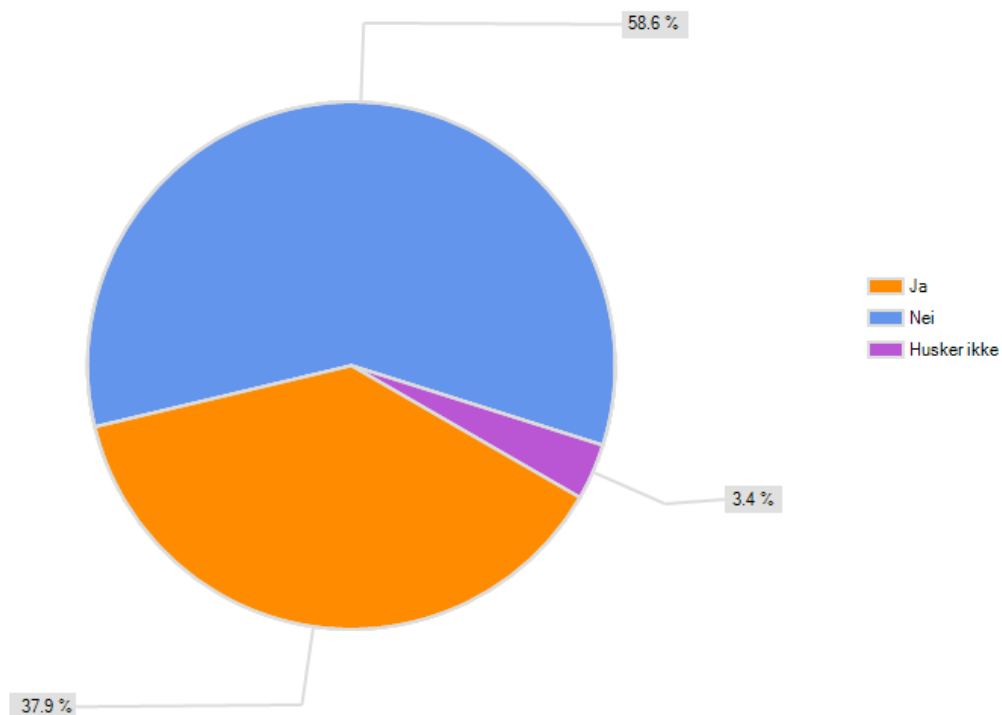
Question 6 investigates whether the respondents were offered a course in teaching reading strategies during the past five years. 29 teachers answered here, 37, 9% of them responding “Yes”, 58, 6% responding “No”, and 3, 4% could not remember. Compared to statement 2 in question 1, (“I know enough about reading strategies”), we can see that 40% strongly agreed with this, maybe

⁴ English as a Foreign Language

⁵ Content and Language Integrated Learning

corresponding with the persons who participated in these courses about reading and reading strategies. 43, 3% partly agreed that they knew enough and 16, 7% partly disagreed, the numbers fitting rather nicely with the section diagram below, showing that 58,6% of the respondents who had not been offered any kind of reading courses. Perhaps teacher education should be a part of the plan on further improvement of the reading skills of Norwegian pupils?

Har du blitt tilbudt kurs i leseoppl ring/lesestrategier i l pet av de siste 5  rene?



Those who answered positively to question 6 were asked to elaborate on their answer in question 7. Here, they could comment on the results in their own words. Their answers are summarized and translated here (the original is to be found in Appendix IV):

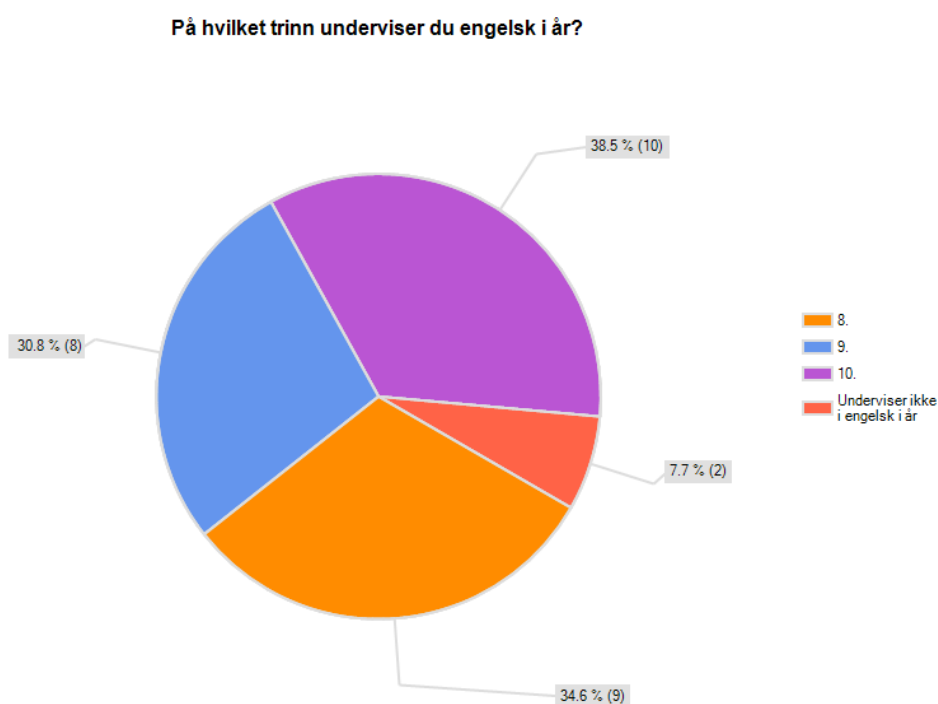
- More focus on reading strategies suitable for different pupils
- Variation in teaching and raised consciousness about own teaching plans
- Simple reading techniques that can be used in all subjects, not only in language teaching
- Taking time to actually practice reading strategies with pupils
- Higher level of consciousness about own teaching
- Tips and advice on how to teach reading and strategies

There is no doubt that having had a course in reading strategies had positive results for the respondents. Those who have not learned anything new, reported that they at least got a renewed

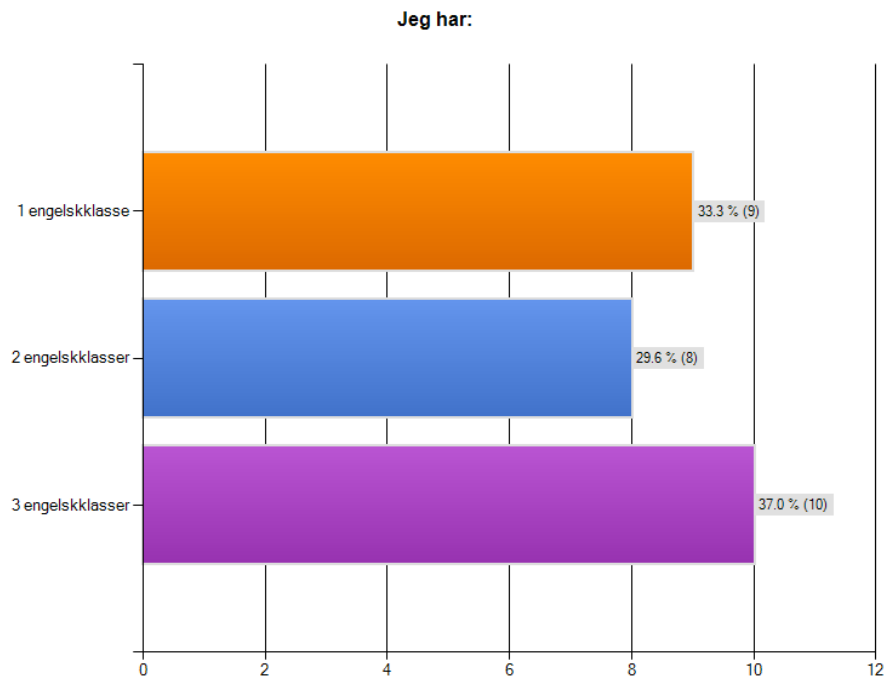
interest and focus on reading, and became more conscious of the fundamental importance these activities have on their pupils' learning.

4.1.4 Learners and Learning Material

The last subsection pertaining to the results of the survey contains the questions related to learners and learning material. When asked at which level(s) they are teaching this school year (question 8), the teachers report the following: 34, 6% teach 8th grade, 30, 8% 9th, and 38, 5% 10th. The results also show that 7, 7% of them are not teaching English this year. Four respondents skipped this question. Since I was aware that some of the respondents were teaching at several levels, they were asked to think about their 8th graders when answering. I anticipated that if teachers were focusing on teaching reading strategies in lower secondary school at all, they were most likely to do that in 8th grade.



Question 9 aimed at establishing how many English classes the respondents had. The answers are almost equally distributed between the alternatives (one, two or three classes). In addition there were five comments in the field labelled "Other", where alternative answers were specified. 33, 3% of the respondents have only one English class, 29, 6% have two, and 37 % have three classes. One of the respondents answered that he or she had four (!) English classes and two did not have any pupils this year.

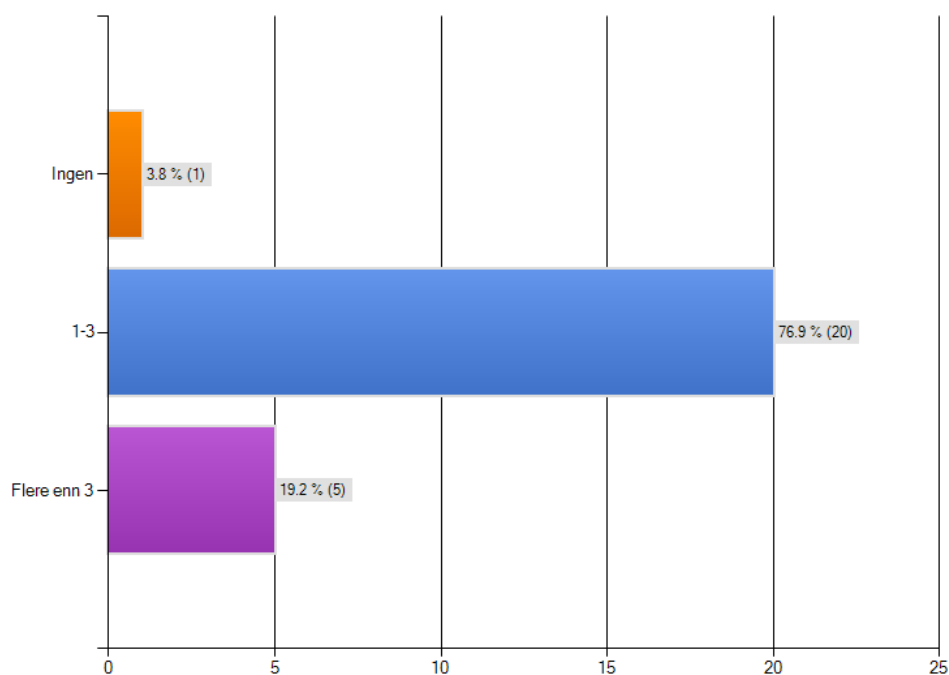


The number of classes of course has an influence on how the teachers plan and carry out their teaching. Having several classes at the same level in the same subject makes the planning easier. This is not the case if one teaches one subject at different levels. Since these considerations have consequences for how much written assessment work a teacher has to do throughout the school year, this influences how much time they have for focusing on reading strategies.

The next question, number 10, investigated the size of the respondents' classes, in order to find out whether there are significant differences there. The respondents were asked to fill in the number of pupils in their English class (see Appendix IV). The size of a class will always affect learning activities; the larger the group, the trickier it is to reach every individual. 26 teachers responded to this question. The most common class size in this survey contained more than 25 pupils – according to 57, 7% of the respondents. Then follows a class size of 15-20 pupils (23%). 11, 5% have classes with 20-25 pupils, while only 7, 7% of the respondents have between 10 and 15 pupils. Large classes with pupils with mixed abilities, combined with a few pupils with special needs demand a lot from teachers in terms of differentiation.

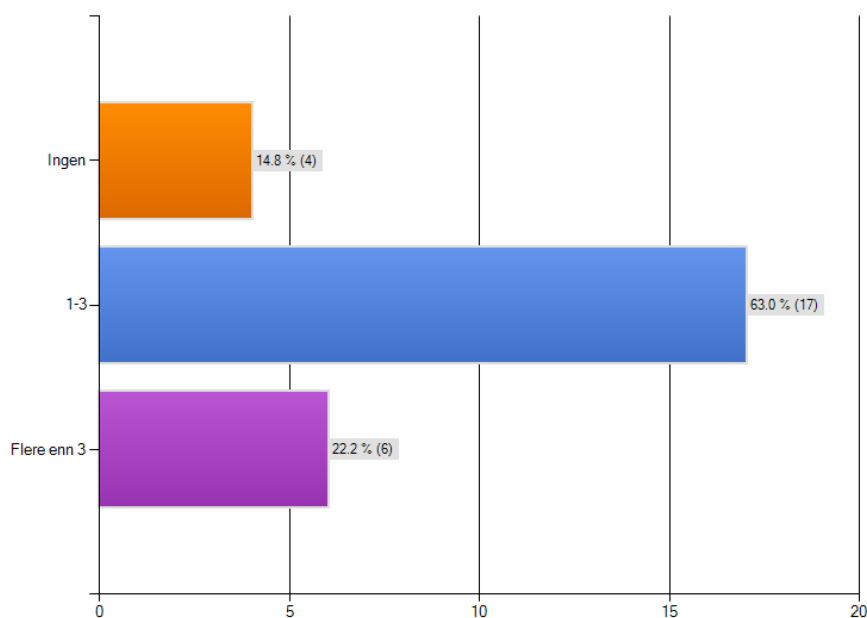
Now we move on to three questions that aimed to establish whether the teachers had any pupils with special needs. The first one of these, question 11, asked how many pupils have special needs in English (meaning an individual plan that radically deviates from the plan for the rest of the class in terms of learning goals and/or methods). As the diagram below shows, 76, 9% of the 26 teachers who answered said that they had one to three such pupils. 19, 2% had even more than three, while only 3, 8% had none.

Hvor mange av elevene i gruppa har vedtak om spesialundervisning i engelsk (IOP)?



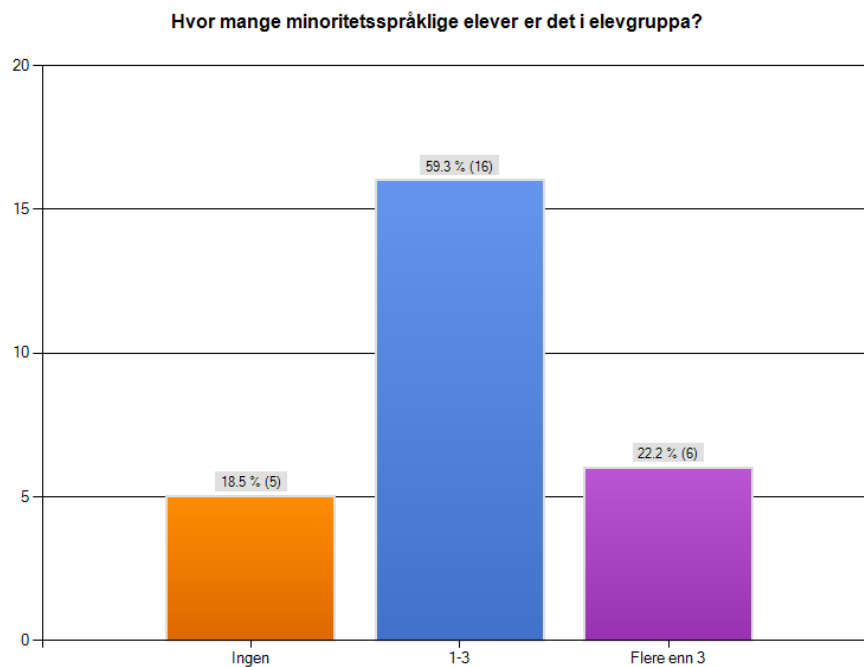
The second question in this group, number 12, aims at finding out how many of their English pupils had special needs in Norwegian. Here, 27 teachers answered and 63% of them said they had one to three such pupils in their class. 22, 2% had more than three, while almost 15% had none.

Hvor mange av elevene i gruppa har vedtak om spesialundervisning i norsk (IOP)?



The final question in this group (13) sought to establish how many pupils from different language minorities there were in the respondents' class. Pupils with this background may have a challenging task in attempting to learn and read in English more or less simultaneously with Norwegian. Of 27

respondents, 59, 3% answered that they had one to three such pupils, 22, 2% had more than three, while 18, 5% answered that they had none.



After this, the respondents were, in yet another open-ended question, asked to briefly describe their group of pupils in terms of their English skills and their motivation for learning English. The respondents' original comments in Norwegian can be found in Appendix IV. In the following, I will sum up their answers and point out the main trends. Together, the descriptions show us the picture of an average English class, revealing that its pupils have many different needs and that their skills and motivation for learning English are not uniform. The respondents use expressions like “extremely varied” and “a great degree of differences” when describing their groups. Although many pupils have average English skills, there are a few students that excel in written and oral skills, in vocabulary and grammar, and are well-motivated for learning even more. On the other hand, there is an equally small group in each class which has difficulties within almost all basic skills and has lost their motivation for most school subjects. Moreover, some pupils are well-motivated but lack the very basics of the subject. The “lucky” teachers, as I call them, have students who, in spite of difficulties with English, keep their motivation intact and work well in order to improve their English skills. Many pupils find their motivation in realizing the importance of being able to communicate in English. One of the teachers expresses this in the following way: *“My 8th graders are a diverse group in terms of cultural background, interests and skills. They make use of each other’s strong points and are well-motivated for developing their language skills. They are motivated for working with English because it is used in the social media, spare time activities and by their idols, but also by their co-pupils and grown-ups*

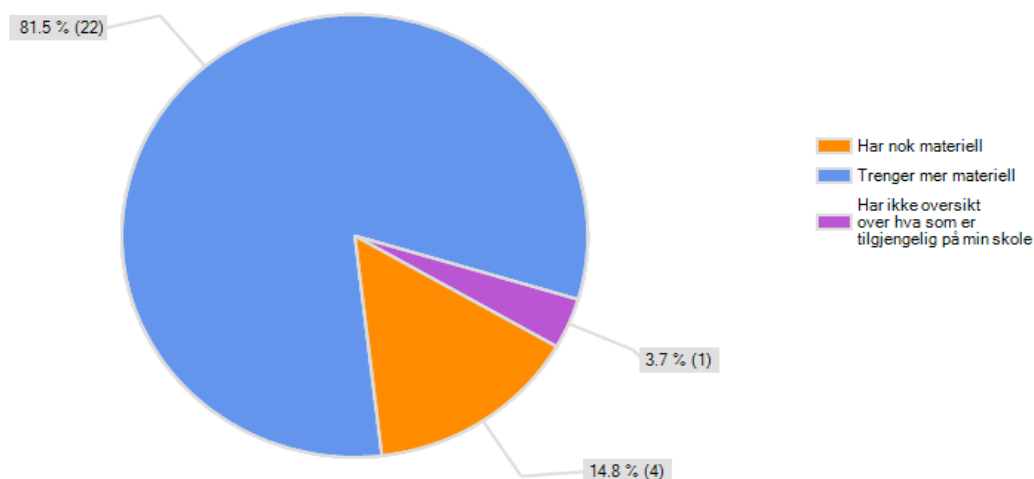
around them". Many of the respondents experience that serving all levels in a class with mixed abilities is an especially demanding part of their teaching job. In the words of another teacher: "*The main challenge is having too few English lessons at lower secondary level in order to achieve the wanted results. I think it was a great mistake to cut down on the number of lesson units in lower secondary school. The problem is also in having this enormous gap in skills between the high and low-achieving pupils in a class*".

Determining the school size was the focus in question 15, an open-ended question where the teachers were asked to write the total number of pupils. As I mentioned above in the description of the survey, the answer is relevant in terms of investigating whether school size has any influence on how cooperation between teachers is organized, and how much reading material they have available. The schools in this survey vary in size, ranging from 200 to approximately 500 pupils. Twenty-seven respondents answered this question, and three failed to do so. Twelve of the schools in the survey have 200-300 pupils, thirteen have 400-500 pupils, and two have 300-400 pupils. By examining the individual answers⁶, we can see that those respondents who teach in big schools (over 400 pupils) are more satisfied with the reading material at their school. On the other hand, it does not seem that school size has any consequences on how cooperation between teachers is organized at each school. It is more likely that this depends on which municipality they work in (i.e. teacher cooperation within each municipality is organized more or less in the same way).

When analyzing the answers to question 16, "*Is there a sufficient amount of teaching material at your school in order to cater for the reading interests of all pupils*", it is quite obvious that most of the teachers in this survey (81, 5%) were of the opinion that they needed more reading material. A few of them (14, 8%) said that they had enough reading material, so it is somewhat interesting to take a look at which municipalities and school sizes they belonged to. Maybe there is a connection between those three variables, although it cannot be said to be significant when so few respondents take that stand. Finally, 3, 7% of the teachers do not know how much reading material is available at their school.

⁶ The individual answers are not included in the Appendix section, as that could be perceived as a breach of promised anonymity, disclosing too much information about each respondent.

Er det tilstrekkelig med undervisningsmaterieil på din skole for å ivareta lesing på engelsk?



The last question in this section of the survey (17) dealt with the topic of cooperation between English teachers and the way this is organized at each school. Teacher cooperation is an important part of teacher competence development, having consequences for consciousness raising and sharing of experience, knowledge and good teaching plans. There are different ways of organizing teacher cooperation; some schools group their teachers in teams that teach different subjects at the same level, others form sections or departments where all the teachers teaching the same subject at that school are organized as a team. Some municipalities organize teacher cooperation at an even higher level, gathering English teachers from different schools in a team that exchanges experience and knowledge. Some schools combine several of the above ways of cooperation, and teachers could therefore pick several alternatives when answering. Also here, 27 teachers answered, while 3 chose to skip this question. The majority of the respondents, 92, 6% report that they cooperated with other English teachers within an English section or department. Some of these (59, 6%) cooperated in teams with teachers teaching other subjects as well. Others (22, 2%) had the opportunity to cooperate with other English teachers at the municipality level. Lastly, 3, 7% reported that they did not have other English teachers to cooperate with. This is a real pity; not being able to discuss teaching experiences and share knowledge with others is a drawback for one's professional development.

Questions 22 and 23 are moved from the section about personal profiles, because they thematically belong in this section. Question 22 asked the respondents to specify which textbook they

used in their English class, or to indicate that they did not use any textbooks if that was the case. 27 of 30 respondents answered this question. The books they were using were as follows (the number of teachers in parenthesis): *Searching* (8), *Crossroads* (7), *Key English* (6), *New Flight* (4), *Search* (1), *Voices in time* (1) and *Come On* (1). Two of the teachers combined 2 of these books in their teaching (*Key English* and *Searching*). One teacher indicated that he or she did not use any textbooks this year. This means that 26 of 27 teachers who responded to this question (or 96%) actually say that they rely on a textbook in their English teaching. Question 23 sought to fill in the picture even more, asking if any other learning materials were being used by the respondents. As this is an open-ended question, the teachers could describe additional learning material in their own words. The complete list of these can be seen in Appendix IV, but here are the main items mentioned: short stories and articles from the Internet, films, music, easy readers, games, novels, magazines, newspapers, link collections on the school's web page, Smartboard, other textbooks, home-made work sheets, exercises on the Internet, self-made resources, comics, different objects (like charts, flags, tickets). 23 respondents answered this question, while 7 failed to do so. Perhaps they did not use other material than the textbook or they did not want to take time to fill in their answers.

Most of the teachers reported that they used textbooks in their teaching. As a conclusion to this subsection, it would seem that the lower secondary teachers of English participating in this survey generally rely on the textbook in their choice of reading material. Therefore it is relevant to analyze what their textbooks have to offer when reading is in question. The discussion of the results of the textbook analysis follows below in subsection 4.2.

The textbook is not the same as the curriculum. As we shall see in a little while, most textbook authors are rather conscious about making it very clear that their textbook fulfils the requirements of the curriculum. But it is of crucial importance that teachers are critical to the (reading) sources used in the classroom, as there is no guarantee that the textbook covers all the goals and intentions of the curriculum. The respondents' comments on question 23 above might indicate that their attitude towards the textbook is not uniform. The majority use texts and tasks from the textbook, but they also design their own tasks and use other sources when necessary, for example when there is need for variation or when differentiation factors occur (cf. the fact that most of the teachers reported that they had a small number of pupils with special needs in their groups).

I would like to add some final comments to this section. The survey may appear a bit too ambitious, asking questions that are not discussed in great detail in the analysis. Unfortunately, the survey was designed so early in the process of forming the research questions that I reasoned that it was better to ask too much than too little, just in case I should need the information along the way. We saw that some teachers omitted parts of the survey, or a few questions, especially those that are open-

ended. One reason is that they might have been eager to finish, another is that they did not want to answer. It would seem that three of the respondents did not finish the survey, perhaps because of technical problems – for example, not being allowed to proceed in the survey because they chose to omit a mandatory question. Maybe some of the open-ended questions should have been rephrased, placed earlier in the survey or given a checklist format. In spite of the fact that some of the informants did not complete the questionnaire, the present survey provides enough material to be able to say that most of the teachers represented in it have satisfactory formal qualifications and some degree of teaching experience, thus giving enough reliability to the survey. The results, although far from being fully representative for the whole country, can be an indicator of certain tendencies, thus being a little bit more than just a random sample.

4.2 Textbook Analysis

In this section, the table for each of the seven textbooks will be described (see Appendix VI). The discussion of the major findings follows, comparing them to the results from the survey, particularly those pertaining to reading material and strategies. My main motivation for carrying out a textbook analysis like this was to investigate how the textbooks cover reading and reading strategies, since 96% of the respondents reported that they used textbooks in their teaching. I investigated the types of texts represented in the textbooks, how the focus on reading was displayed, and which types of reading exercises and reading strategies were involved.

4.2.1 Text Selection in the Textbooks

My genre classification cannot be said to be scientific; I have not consulted any theoretical literature as guidance. As I stated in the description of the textbook analysis in section 3, genres are not the focus of this thesis. Even so, I made a rough overview of the text types represented in the textbooks in order to find out whether they are varied in genre and length, as the curriculum demands that the text selection should be. Here comes an overview of the text types represented in each textbook, including a rough text count.

Voices in Time contains 10 poems/songs, 2 plays/musicals, 5 examples of short stories/fairy tales/myths/fables, 0 e-mails/letters/cards/diaries, more than 10 instructions/directions, 35 information texts/reports/articles/arguments/interviews and 15 (!) extracts from novels.

Crossroads A + B contain 10 poems/songs, 0 plays/musicals, between 5 and 10 examples of short stories/fairy tales/myths/fables, fewer than 5 e-mails/letters/cards/diaries, no instructions or directions, all of Book A consists of information texts/ reports/ articles/ arguments and interviews, and 2 extracts from novels.

Flight contains more than 30 poems/songs, 0 plays/musicals, 5-10 short stories/fairy tales/myths/fables, 5-10 e-mails/letters/cards/diaries, 0 instructions/directions, 10-15 information texts/reports/articles/arguments/interviews, and 3 extracts from novels.

New Flight contains more than 25 poems/songs, 0 plays/musicals, 10-15 short stories/fairy tales/myths/fables, fewer than 10 e-mails/letters/cards/diaries, 0 instructions/ directions, more than 25 information texts/reports/articles/arguments/interviews, and 1 extract from a novel.

Search contains more than 50 poems/songs, 5-10 plays/musicals, more than 15 short stories/fairy tales/myths/fables, 10 e-mails/letters/cards/diaries, 0 instructions/directions, more than 45 information texts/reports/articles/arguments/interviews, and 3 extracts from novels.

Searching contains more than 25 poems/songs, 1 play/musical, 15 examples of short stories/fairy tales/myths/fables, 5-10 e-mails/letters/cards/diaries, 1 text containing instructions/directions, more than 25 information texts/reports/articles/arguments/interviews, and 5-10 extracts from novels.

Key English contains 5-10 poems/songs, 0 plays/musicals, fewer than 5 short stories/fairy tales/myths/fables, 5-10 e-mails/letters/cards/diaries, fewer than 5 instructions/directions, 20 information texts/reports/articles/arguments/interviews, and 4 extracts from novels.

We can conclude that the textbooks represented here contain a varied selection of texts, both in terms of genre and length. The main difference is perhaps in the number of extracts from novels, where *Voices in Time* and *Searching* lead with 15 and 10 extracts respectively, and the other textbooks contain fewer than 5 extracts each. The presence of novels and extracts from novels is significant for extensive reading and reading for pleasure, which is the reason I mention them in particular. It is interesting to note that the textbooks published before 2006 (LK06), *Flight* and *Search*, have many more songs and poems than the other textbooks. Information texts of different kinds are numerous in most of the textbooks.

4.2.2 Reading Methods Applied

After analyzing the genres represented in the textbooks, I investigated which reading methods were applied explicitly: skimming, scanning, super-reading, photo-reading, quick reading and reflective reading.

Voices in Time has several examples of skimming, scanning and reflective reading.

Crossroads contains scanning (one occurrence) and several examples of reflective reading. There is ONE explicit mention of scanning: “*Scan through the text and look for the sentences that support the following statement...*” (34)

Flight has no explicit mention of scanning, but it is represented implicitly in the type of after reading exercises given in the textbook. Furthermore, it has several examples of reflective reading.

New Flight has many examples of reflective reading.

Search has scanning, but present only implicitly; pupils are often asked to read a text to find specific information. Otherwise, there are many examples of reflective reading.

Searching has several examples of reflective reading.

Key English has MANY examples of skimming, scanning and reflective reading.

I found that reflective reading is the reading method represented in all of the textbooks. This rhymes well with the teachers reporting in the survey that they often check the reading comprehension of their pupils. Another finding in the survey is that the teachers said that they seldom use methods like super-reading, photo-reading and quick reading. My rough analysis shows that none of the textbooks contains these methods at all, which certainly does not make it easier for the teachers to use them. What surprises me the most is that of all the textbooks published after 2006 that are represented in this analysis; only two have a very clear, explicit focus on teaching reading, namely *Voices in Time* and *Key English*.

4.2.3 Types of Reading Exercises

In this section I give an overview of the types of reading exercises, categorized according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: reading for general orientation, reading for information, reading and following instructions and reading for pleasure. For the sake of clarity in this overview I did not count how many times the different types of reading tasks occur. Instead I simply registered whether they occur or not. Since all these textbooks contain reading tasks in the first three categories (for general orientation, for information and following instructions), I shall only comment on whether the textbooks contain any “reading for pleasure” activities and texts. Reading for pleasure is an important part of the extensive reading concept, and therefore I put a lot of weight on texts and activities designed solely for this purpose.

Voices in Time: Several texts in the textbook are labelled with the heading “Read for Pleasure”.

Crossroads: This textbook consists of two books, 9A and 9B. A whole section in book 9B (more than 100 pages) is dedicated to individual reading and second (longer) versions of texts from 9A. This textbook has a clear focus on reading for pleasure, since this section is called “Enjoy Reading”.

Flight has no specific focus on reading for pleasure, apart from a sentence in the publisher’s introduction: “[...] *some of the texts can be read in class simply for your pleasure and information*” (4).

New Flight is the LK06 issue of *Flight*, but without any significant changes. It has no specific focus on reading for pleasure, apart from the same sentence in the publisher's introduction: "[...] *some of the texts can be read in class simply for your pleasure and information*" (5).

Search: There is a separate section in the book called "Individual reading" containing longer and/or original versions of the texts in the book. There is no explicit emphasis on extensive reading, nor any mention of reading for pleasure.

Searching: Like *New Flight*, *Searching* is the new edition of *Search*, published in connection with the appearance of the new curriculum in 2006. Unlike *New Flight*, the publishers of *Searching* chose to introduce some changes in the book. One of these is more focus on reading as a skill, although it is not as explicit as in *Voices in Time* or *Key English*. The textbook has, similarly to *Search*, a separate section intended for individual reading (12 texts) and a new section called "Reading to enjoy", containing 6 texts.

Key English has very little focus on reading for pleasure or extensive reading. On the other hand, it focuses extensively on strategic reading, as will be shown in the following subsection.

We can see from this analysis that the textbooks are very different in terms of focus on reading for pleasure. Some do it to a large extent and others not at all. *New Flight* is a source of major disappointment in this subsection; it is an example of a textbook that has basically been reprinted. Very few changes were made to this "new" version of *Flight*. There is no explicit focus on reading as a skill in general, on strategies or on extensive reading. This textbook is almost the same as its last edition published in the days of the curriculum from 1997, with the exception of a few new texts and the appearance of "targets" called *Culture* and *Literature* in the beginning of each chapter.

4.2.4 Reading Strategies Involved

Before moving on to the discussion of how reading as a skill is presented in each textbook, here is an overview of the reading strategies involved. The reading strategies are roughly divided into three types: pre-reading strategies, while reading strategies and after reading strategies.

Voices in Time contains many exercises involving pre-reading and after reading strategies. It even has some while reading exercises, e.g.: "*Write down words you don't understand*" or "*Search for the [...] words while you read. How many can you find?*" In addition to one more of the textbooks below, *Voices in Time* focuses explicitly on reading strategies. The Workbook consists of four parts; two of them are relevant for teaching reading and reading strategies: "Study skills" and "Tools". These involve definitions of reading strategies and different tools (in the introductory section), as well as plenty of exercises for the pupils to practice these on (rest of the workbook). Each unit has several

tasks involving use of different strategies. Pupils learn how to use different tools and when they can use them thanks to detailed descriptions and explanations.

Crossroads contains no pre-reading nor while reading exercises. On the other hand, it has many after reading tasks, mainly factual questions designed for comprehension check. There is a task bank at the end of each chapter, and there are creative writing tasks in the reading section.

Flight has a few pre-reading exercises. Most of them are questions meant to create interest in the topic in question, like “*Imagine what happens*” or “*What do you think will be the theme?*” I have not managed to locate any while reading exercises. The majority of reading exercises involves after reading strategies like these: retell, summarise, dramatise, discuss, translate, expressing opinions, describe and draw. Many of the after reading exercises are designed in order to check reading comprehension, starting with questions like who, what, when, where, how and why.

New Flight includes some pre-reading exercises, mostly containing questions before each chapter and text, in order to create interest and activate previous knowledge, like: “*Imagine...*”, “*What do you think/know?*” I have not managed to trace any while reading exercises in this textbook either. There are many after reading tasks, grouped under the titles “Let’s talk about” and “Work with words”.

Search contains quite a few pre-reading tasks, mostly questions about the topic, “Think about”, “Imagine”, “What do you know?” It also has some while-exercises, but these are mostly connected to listening tasks, e.g.: “Listen to the text and fill in the missing words”. The majority of the reading exercises in this textbook involves after reading strategies made for comprehension check and reflection.

Searching has very few pre-reading exercises; these are mostly “Imagine” tasks, lists of important or unknown words and “Look at the pictures” type of preparations. As in *Search*, there are very few while listening exercises, like “Fill in the missing words while you listen”. The majority of after reading exercises involves after reading tasks and strategies: retell in your own words or from another point of view, summarise, dramatise, describe/draw, expressing opinions and comprehension check through questions starting with who, what, when, how etc.

Key English has pre-reading sections called “Ready! Steady! Go!” in each unit, containing texts and tasks leading into the theme and topics. I have not managed to register any while reading tasks in this textbook. After each text, there are “Carry On” and “Working with the text” after reading tasks, designed in order to help pupils understand the texts better. There is a clear focus on strategic reading in this book. It is one of the best textbooks in my selection regarding teaching reading strategies to pupils. Each unit in this book contains a section called “Learning to learn”. Here, examples are given of different strategies, with a detailed description – a recipe, of how pupils should

work. For example: learn how to pick out key words, how to read a text more closely, how to memorize, make definition charts, make a mind map as a tool to better understand and remember a text, use different reading strategies, reading for different purposes and so on (for more details, see Appendix VI).

When it comes to reading strategies, there are great differences between the books in this selection. There are only two textbooks that show a clear and explicit focus on reading strategies, *Voices in Time* and *Key English*. Having this in mind it makes sense that teaching reading strategies can be a difficult task if the teacher does not have a fair command of these tools. It is also a pity that there exist books with no pre-reading tasks involving strategies that motivate, create interest and prepare pupils for the text or topic they are about to work with. We can only hope that teachers invent their own tasks which can serve this purpose.

4.2.5 Focus on Reading in General

To conclude, I briefly describe how reading as a skill is displayed in the textbooks. It was very interesting to investigate whether any focus on reading in general shines through the textbook, and whether the focus on reading strategies is explicit or implicit.

Voices in Time focuses explicitly on both reading and reading strategies. Two sections in the Workbook are relevant for teaching reading and reading strategies, i.e. “Study skills” and “Tools”, because they involve definitions of reading strategies and different tools. Each unit has several tasks involving the use of different strategies, with detailed descriptions and definitions, so that pupils can learn how and when they can use different tools. This textbook also focuses on reading for pleasure, as described above.

Crossroads focuses on reading in general and explicitly on reading for pleasure in book 9B. There is also some focus on learning to learn. There is no explicit explanation of how to read a certain type of text step by step, but the book explicitly underlines the importance of reading in the beginning of the grammar section in 9B.

Flight displays no other focus on reading in general than what is mentioned in the introduction. There is no explicit mention of reading strategies.

New Flight, similarly to *Flight*, displays no explicit focus on reading as a skill, or on reading strategies/extensive reading.

Search does not focus explicitly on reading as a skill, but it displays an implicit focus on reading through after reading exercises. Though there is a separate section in the book with texts meant for individual reading, there is no explicit emphasis on extensive reading. There are no explicit explanations of different reading strategies. At the end of the book (p. 303), there is a short list of

things that pupils can do when they have read a text in order to work on their comprehension and understand a text better, such as writing a summary, making questions, continuing the story, writing a different beginning/ending, changing the genre, but this does not qualify as a good learning tool because it is not self-explanatory.

Searching has no specific focus on reading as a skill. Like its predecessor *Search*, it has an implicit focus on reading through after reading exercises. There is no explicit emphasis on extensive reading, but there is a separate section in the book with texts meant for reading for pleasure. Reading strategies are not mentioned or explicitly explained. The book focuses on genres at the end of each chapter.

Key English has a very clear and explicit focus on reading as a skill and strategic reading. It treats different reading strategies in great detail and seems very convincing in its project of teaching reading strategies to pupils. Each unit starts with an explicit statement of the goals and targets of reading and learning, and ends with an evaluation part where pupils' achievement is formulated in "can do" statements and related to the goals. All the examples of reading strategies in this textbook come in the form of recipes, with clear instructions to the pupils. *Key English* has very little focus on reading for pleasure. The users of *Crossroads* and *Key English* seem to be rather pleased with the way these textbooks help them cover reading strategies, as may be seen if we examine some of the individual answers on the first question in the survey (see section 4.1.2).

4.3 Summary of Major Findings and Their Implications

4.3.1 Major Findings

The major findings in this study confirm some of my hypotheses to a certain degree. English teachers do rely primarily on textbooks in their teaching, although many of them do not allow it to limit their reading material choices altogether. Some of the teachers in the survey supply their pupils with alternative reading texts. But when it comes to strategic reading, which is the main focus of my investigation, it becomes clear that reading strategies are taught rather seldom. The textbooks vary widely in the way they explicitly or implicitly employ reading strategies. Many of the textbooks do not have any explicit focus on reading or reading strategies, leaving it to teachers to design their own way of explaining the matter to their pupils, not making the task of teaching strategies easily achievable for the teachers. It would seem that the subject of teaching reading strategies depends very much on each teacher's competence.

Many teachers use a considerable amount of time in their English lessons on reading, but would, in spite of this, like to use even more time. Some work on reading and reading strategies, but

the respondents would like to have had more time to focus on these activities. Deciding on which goals to work with at which point in time and for how long is and will always be one of the difficult aspects of being a teacher. Teachers and pupils are usually short of time, so when all the goals and skills in the curriculum are interpreted as equally important, some teachers distribute the time spent on each of the goals according to what is going to be tested. Despite this, the general opinion of my respondents seems to be that reaching all the goals in the English curriculum with their pupils is a fairly achievable task.

Most of the teachers reported that they used textbooks in their teaching. It would thus seem that the lower secondary teachers of English participating in this survey generally rely on the textbook in their choice of reading material. Therefore it was relevant to analyze what the textbooks had to offer with regard to reading and strategies. The textbooks represented here contain a varied selection of texts, both in terms of genre and length. Surprisingly enough, of all the textbooks published after LK06 that are represented in this analysis (namely five), only two have a very clear, explicit focus on teaching reading. The analysis also shows that some of these textbooks focus on reading for pleasure to a large extent, and others not at all.

Summing up all the findings, we can conclude that:

- There are serious flaws in reading education at lower secondary level
- There is a relatively limited degree of reading in schools
- There is a lack of focus on reading (owing to limited insight into the importance of reading and reading strategies and/or the lack of knowledge)
- There is a lack of time

It seems that most of the textbook authors regard reading strategies and a specific focus on (strategic) reading as belonging to the realm of the teacher's pedagogical tool box. Only three of seven analyzed textbooks have reading strategies explicitly on the agenda. Once more, I would like to emphasize that my focus is on reading and reading strategies; although some textbooks might have received a fair amount of criticism here because of their lack of focus on reading, they might have other aspects that are commendable.

Several recent studies take up the issue of reading and teaching of reading strategies (see Faye-Schjøll 2009, Bakke 2010, Merchán 2010), revealing that Norwegian lower and upper secondary school pupils read too little and are not being instructed in reading strategies. This results in poor reading proficiency, so poor that it will inhibit the students from learning when they meet the challenges of higher academic education. The pupils' ability to choose a reading strategy that matches the intention with their reading seems to have some influence on the quality of their reading skills. The

fact that poor reading skills will hinder students from being successful in higher academic education is particularly emphasized by Hellekjær (“Acid Test” 234). “Since being able to read English is one of the basic skills stipulated in LK06, implementing the curriculum, he [Hellekjær] says, actually demands systematic instruction in reading strategies; reading a lot of varied texts in addition to the textbooks will result in vocabulary acquisition and greater literary competence” (Wauthier 35). Therefore we can spend some time in our schools arguing in favour of reintroducing extensive reading in the classroom!

I have now examined how lower secondary English teachers teach reading and reading strategies by discussing the results from my teacher survey and my textbook survey. In the last subchapters of this section I analyze some of the implications these findings may have for classroom teaching. The scope of this thesis does not allow an in-depth analysis of all the implications, but some observations and results deserve closer attention.

4.3.2 Cutting out Extensive Reading

Although the results of my survey and textbook analysis have previously been discussed in connection with the presentation of the results above, the discussion of some other aspects of my findings continues here. As mentioned in section 2, the dilemma facing teachers regarding the importance of extensive reading and the lack of time to employ it in the English classroom (among other things) will be addressed here.

Most of the reading skills are trained by studying short texts. But others (such as discerning relationships between the various parts of a longer text and the contribution made by each to the plot), require the use of longer texts; including complete books (cf. Nuttall 39). These two approaches are traditionally described as intensive and extensive reading respectively. Nuttall underlines that they are not just contrasting ways of reading but a variety of overlapping strategies; intensive and extensive reading are complementary and equally necessary (38). Naturally, given the number of English lesson units at the lower secondary level in Norway (76 per year), extensive reading seldom gets much attention in class during the school year, but it “cannot be ignored if students are to become competent readers” (ibid. 39). Since class time is in short supply and “the amount of reading needed to achieve fluency and efficiency is very great – much greater than most students will undertake if left to themselves” (ibid.), teachers have to promote reading out of class. My survey indicates that most pupils do not spend much time reading English at home, and consequently need some kind of “reading plan or programme” organized by their teachers. As pupils no longer are required by the curriculum to read at least one longer text (such as the novel) after the appearance of LK06, this has probably influenced some teachers to cut this activity out of their teaching plans.

Developing good reading skills is easier said than done. How do we motivate pupils to read? How can we change someone's reading attitudes from negative/indifferent to positive? Motivation includes pleasure. Teachers can try to make reading a pleasurable activity, which means that pupils have to read without having to do any after-reading tasks. Not everything we do in school needs to involve assessment. One can make more use of the (school) library. Parents should be encouraged to read to their children at an early age; creating the reading habit in children is the best way to ensure they will be readers when they grow up. Pupils should be encouraged to read fun and compelling books that really grip them and keep them going. Even if a text is not a literary masterpiece, as long as it makes pupils want to read, one should let them. After they have cultivated the reading habit, they can move on to more difficult texts, but by then, why not let them go for the fun and gripping books? Allow pupils to realize that reading is highly enjoyable, if they have a good book. Berit Blå and Karin Dahlberg Pettersen focus on extensive reading as an equally important activity as strategic reading (56). Extensive reading is connected to pleasure and good reading experiences; the more one reads, the better reader one becomes, which will eventually result in better reading proficiency and perhaps also higher motivation for reading.

Extensive reading is the most important source for a large, rich vocabulary (Hellekjær, "Lesing"). It is necessary to teach reading strategies in order to develop and maintain reading skills. In higher classes, this has to be combined with training on source criticism and learning strategies. One has to keep in mind that the textbook is not enough. Teachers should use easy readers, books in different genres, even novels, together with texts on the Internet and other written sources. This means that schools need to invest in reading material, books and magazines, even audio books. Since reading is important for development of a large vocabulary, pupils ought to read more than one book a year in addition to the textbook. They should also use the Internet actively. Hellekjær advises against excessive use of dictionaries, as it slows down the reading process. Pupils need to develop a certain tolerance of not understanding each word of what they read (ibid.). Finally, teachers should use books and texts that pupils like. They should be allowed to choose from a varied compilation of reading materials. Some pupils choose magazines; others are interested in biographies or exciting crime novels. Getting familiar with the literary canon should of course be one of the aims, but not at all times. The most important thing is that pupils read as much as possible.

4.3.3 The Backlash Effect of PISA and National Tests – Reading for the Test

In their *Aftenposten* article "A change in the fundamental values of schools", Trond Welstad and Henning Jakhelln shed light on some important consequences of the increasing focus on testing in

Norwegian schools. When teachers spend an increasing amount of time on training their students for the national tests, the authors argue that some fundamental values disappear from Norwegian classrooms. The diversity of subjects in Norwegian schools is endangered because the PISA results have been the focus of the political establishment in this country for a long time now. There is a danger of a qualitative change in the school system in Norway, away from the diversity of subjects and in the direction of a few, prestigious subjects tested by the PISA tests, a change described as moving “from diversity towards simplicity”. In addition, the authors of the article fear that the principle of differentiation will eventually disappear, in spite of the fact that it is an essential principle in school legislation.

Student achievement is only one of the products of learning. As Hattie notes, “[...] there are many outcomes of schooling, such as attitudes, physical outcomes, belongingness, respect, citizenship, and the love of learning” (17). Anne Kristine Øgreid, one of the teacher educators at the University College in Oslo, claims that there are other sources than the official documents such as the national curriculum, the CEFR and *Make Space for Reading*, which guide the teachers’ focus on reading. In her lecture on reading held for the teachers in Nittedal municipality in August 2011, she referred to the NIFU STEP report No. 42/2009, which reveals the grim truth about the implementation of the five basic skills after the Quality Reform in 2006. The material that the report is based on indicates that the curriculum guidelines regarding the basic skills have not yet led to any changes at the school level (Møller et al. 14). Several measures pertaining to reading were introduced on the basis of the *Make Space for Reading* plan, but basically, none of the measures were new after the Quality Reform. These results are, in Øgreid’s opinion, discouraging. Teachers are influenced in their stance toward teaching reading by national tests and other forms of testing, such as PISA, among other things. Øgreid claims that the knowledge about basic skills is not communicated explicitly enough in the curriculum, which means that teachers should read background documents in order to understand what basic skills are all about. This is something we cannot expect of the majority of teachers.

Naturally, no teacher wants to hinder his or her pupils from learning. However, there are some widespread misconceptions about which procedures are helpful. In many reading lessons, the teacher does too much of the work, by for example conducting classroom activities that are better labelled as testing than teaching (Nuttall 34-35). If the activity is primarily intended to find out what the students can do, the teacher is not doing his or her main task, according to Nuttall, which is to bring about learning, and only later to check that the learning has taken place. The same is valid for the national tests and PISA; many schools choose to see these tests as a goal in themselves, spending a lot of time in school preparing their pupils for the tests.

4.3.4 The Role of Textbooks in Teaching Reading and Reading Strategies in Lower Secondary School

Most of the teachers in my survey population report that they need more reading material in English in their schools. This might imply that teaching reading in English by using other material than a textbook has a rather low priority in these schools. Most teachers in the survey reported that they make their own learning and reading materials, or use texts from other books, newspapers and the Internet, which is excellent. But, when asked about how the reading strategies are taught, most of them seem to depend on their English textbook. As we have seen from the textbook analyses, there are only three of the textbooks that focus on reading strategies and have good explanations and exercises for the pupils. Others seem to count on teachers' competence regarding reading strategies, leaving the matter out of the textbook altogether. This is both good and bad; having enough knowledge about teaching reading strategies belongs to the realm of the teacher's professional tool box. What we need to do when this tool box is missing some of the tools, is to supplement it. Allowing teachers to raise their competence through various courses and further studies is an important task for the municipalities and head teachers in this country.

The importance of teachers for the learning outcome of pupils is emphasized by John Hattie in his extensive study published in 2009. This study emphasizes that the most effective strategy for improving education appears to be raising the quality of student-teacher interaction. Hattie's report seems to suggest that students, when given the opportunity to reflect on their progress, develop a good understanding of what they need to do next and do not need excessive testing. A major message within his book seems to be that "[...] what works best for students is similar to what works best for teachers. This includes an attention to setting challenging learning intentions, being clear about what success means, and an attention to learning strategies for developing conceptual understanding about what teachers and students know and understand" (2). Teachers have to realise that their actions are the most important part of the environment for language learning and acquisition. They represent the role models whom pupils may choose to follow in their future use of the language.

5. Concluding Remarks

I started off this study driven by curiosity about what happens behind closed doors in the English classrooms in Norway. The main aim of my investigation was to find out how reading and reading strategies are taught to pupils in lower secondary school in Norway. I applied a two-pronged approach. The first was a survey about reading, aimed at a small, varied group of English teachers in lower secondary school, consisting of questions regarding how they teach reading, which methods they use and which attitudes they have towards reading. The second approach was a textbook analysis of the English textbooks these teachers used in their classes. The textbooks were explored in terms of genres, the types of reading strategies and exercises involved, and the way that the general focus on reading was displayed.

Both of my investigations were based on the theoretical findings of recent research on reading and teaching reading strategies on one hand, combined with the directives from the important documents which guide English teachers in their everyday work, such as the English curriculum, the Common European Framework of Reference, and the European Language Portfolio on the other. This study does not claim that English teachers in Norway are below par, or that the profession is terrible. For most teachers, teaching is a private matter, something that occurs behind a closed classroom door. It is therefore necessary to challenge and question what is being done behind closed doors. Only then can we learn and adjust our practice.

This study should be followed up by a large scale survey of a sufficient sample size to draw more general conclusions. Such a large survey would give clearer answers as to how schools can ensure that their pupils receive the reading training that they need and are entitled to. Reading is on the agenda without any answers to what teaching reading is, and how teachers can train their pupils in the classroom. There has been an upsurge in conferences and seminars on reading strategies so that teachers are now being offered training in teaching reading strategies. This is true for several of the municipalities involved in this study. Although some schools in Norway are focusing on this, it is difficult to say that this is a general tendency without investigating the matter more closely.

The teaching of reading skills and strategies has to be strengthened and practised through all levels of our educational system. All teachers should be reading teachers who know how to train and develop pupils' reading skills. The factors that have negatively influenced Norwegian pupils' reading skills are many and complex. Reading achievements are influenced by societal and cultural factors, pupils' home background, and factors related to their school and learning environment. Good strategy plans for reading are perhaps not enough in a society where books and newspapers are strongly challenged by digital media.

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Appendices

Appendix I. Survey – Original (Norwegian) version

Appendix II. Survey – English version

Appendix III. Survey Results – Summary

Appendix IV. Teachers' comments

Appendix V. (Survey) Cover Letter

Appendix VI. Textbook Analyses 1-7