

# MASTEROPPGAVE

## **Fewer Lessons, More Goals; meeting the adjusted aims of the 2013 English Subject Curriculum in Lower Secondary Schools in Norway**

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## Abstract

### *Fewer Lessons, More Goals; meeting the adjusted aims of the 2013 English Subject Curriculum in Lower Secondary Schools in Norway*

The purpose of this survey was to find out how teachers at Lower Secondary Level in Norway meet the adjusted aims in the English Subject Curriculum and to answer the following research question:

*How have the changes in the English Subject Curriculum affected ESL teaching in Norwegian Lower Secondary School?*

The Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research implemented an increased focus on oral skills in the English Subject Curriculum by dividing the Communicative competence aims into two; spoken and written communication in June 2013. My study is based on the guidelines given in the Common European Framework and the Norwegian English Subject Curriculum and their definition of communication (spoken and written), communicative competence and oral proficiency and effectiveness.

In this study, focus group interviews with a total of nine teachers in three different lower secondary schools in the south-eastern part of Norway elicited sufficient material for gaining an insight into how teachers work to meet the new, divided curricular aims. A complete transcript of the interviews can be found as appendix 8 to this thesis.

The results were divergent and revealed challenges beyond what was initially expected. Apart from establishing that the curricular changes have affected ESL teaching in Norwegian lower secondary school, the study also shed light on a challenge teachers share: not having enough time to plan, cooperate and discuss the implemented curricular changes. The interviews revealed two contrasting sets of attitudes amongst the teachers; those who supported the changes, and, surprisingly, not those who were against the changes, but who were indifferent to them. The fact that some of the participants have chosen either to ignore or give up trying to reach the new aims and continue as though nothing had changed, gives reason for concern. The many educational and pedagogical implications for the ESL classroom brought about by the division of the aims were interesting; teachers have been compelled to rethink the organisation of their classrooms and to introduce new methods in their struggle to meet the curricular aims.

On one hand, the adjusted aims have led to increased activity amongst the teachers who are well versed and knowledgeable about the curricular aims. They seem to be sincerely concerned with the quality of their teaching and are willing to rethink strategies and methods in order to meet the aims.

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On the other hand, we find teachers who prefer to base their teaching on a continuation of previous practice and ignore the changes as they do not find them beneficiary to their teaching practice. Or they simply ignore them because they cannot find the time to make the change. An already full schedule does not allow for the time consuming task of re-arranging plans or activities.

There are no recommendations in this thesis per sé, but it does point to areas which can be looked upon as new possible fields of study. Similar research on this topic was not found, and this study can thus serve as a point of departure in developing awareness of the implications curricular changes have on the people who ultimately must carry out, or try to carry out, the good intentions of the adjusted aims implemented by The Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research.

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## **Introduction**

Learning how to communicate efficiently is a central component in today's ESL classrooms and requires a broad understanding and knowledge of the English language. English has been accepted as a universal language in addition to being looked upon as a second language as opposed to a foreign language amongst a number of linguistic scholars and the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research. The latter, in recognizing the importance of being able to communicate in English, have tried to meet this need by dividing the English Subject Curriculum and specifying communication as both written and spoken. This has challenged the many teachers in the ESL classrooms in our country as the changes have opened for a new way of thinking and forced teachers to increase their focus on the pupil's oral skills.

The intentions outlined in the new divided curriculum have been subject to discussions as the number of English lessons to be taught was simultaneously reduced to make room for a less theoretical school day. New vocational studies were introduced prior to the curricular changes, and lessons were redistributed from subjects like Mathematics, Norwegian and English leaving them with fewer teaching hours than before. The practicalities concerning usage of the remaining lessons, especially for the subject English, have not been looked into or questioned. This inevitably led to the need to find out how teachers in the ESL classroom deal with the increased number of aims, faced with a decreased number of lessons. Is there time in their already very busy schedules to make sure all topics are covered during the year, in less time, without jeopardizing the quality of the teaching?

This thesis examines how teachers have adjusted to the curricular changes and how they are trying to incorporate the aims in the English Subject Curriculum with less time to do so. Using focus group interviews, my study aimed to elicit answers from the group of people the change was directed at. The answers will hopefully indicate whether the curricular changes are relevant for the teachers and whether they readily accepted them and put them into practice in the ESL classrooms. The study also seeks to make an important contribution towards understanding the complexities of language learning.

### **1.1 The topic**

The English subject curriculum states in the first two paragraphs that: "English is a universal language. To succeed in a world where English is used for international communication, it is necessary to be able to use the English language and to have knowledge of how it is used in different contexts" (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. 2013). Being able to speak English is considered advantageous and necessary in all aspects of life. The skill is essential

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in many contexts, especially when acquiring new knowledge either academically or in interpersonal relations.

During the spring of 2013, I carried out a pilot study to find out how ESL teachers incorporated oral activity in their lessons, in order to meet the aims regarding communication in the English Subject Curriculum. The study was entitled “Teaching Oral Proficiency: How and to what extent do teachers use literature to improve oral proficiency?” (Leirvaag 2013). As the title indicates, I was particularly interested in whether any of them used literary texts to help pupils develop spontaneous speech. The study showed that my colleagues felt that the aims regarding oral communication in the National Curriculum for English lacked clarity, complicating their work with oral skills. After my study was carried out, the curriculum was altered and the communicative aims have been differentiated into “oral” and “written” skills. This change seems to tie in well with what several of the teachers I interviewed indicated as desirable.

The Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research’s increased focus on the communicative skills was necessary and welcome, but has raised further questions about how this should be practically carried out in ESL classrooms in Norway. The most obvious change in the English curriculum can be seen in the division of the communicative competence aims. The main objectives in the teaching of English as a foreign language have been adjusted and “English is a universal language”, “English as a working language” and “the extended concept of text” are elements that have been emphasized. The main areas of the English Curriculum are, with the former element called communication divided in two; “Language Learning”, “Oral/direct communication”, “Written communication” and “Culture, society and literature”.

The number of lessons has changed and the change can be seen at the lower secondary level where a total of 222 lessons are to be distributed over the three years the pupils are at this level as opposed to 227 lessons previously.

The framework for basic skills has undergone a clarification of what each skill entails for the learning of English and how this skill is supposed to be developed. The wording of the Framework has been changed in the following way:

- “To be able to express oneself orally” is changed to “oral proficiency”.
- “To be able to express oneself in writing” is changed to “to be able to write”.
- “To be able to use digital tools” is changed to “digital skills”



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- “To be able to express oneself in writing and speaking” is changed to “oral skills” and “to be able to write”
- For “digital skills” the authentic texts and digital formal requirements have been clarified.

The curricular aims have thus been made clearer and presumably ensure progression through the entire ten year path of elementary schooling. There are no changes in the provisions for summative assessments. Apart from the clarifications in wording, the major change that has had an impact on the daily planning and execution of the teaching of English seems to be the division of the communicative aims and the number of lessons.

The main focus in this thesis will be on how the teachers incorporate and secure the achievement of the aims set in the new divided curriculum. What are teachers doing in order to comply with the Norwegian Ministry of Education’s clear indication of the importance of being able to communicate, and especially orally? Since the number of teaching hours has been reduced, it is obvious that teachers must work to integrate the development of oral proficiency into the other main areas of the curriculum; language learning; culture, society and literature and written communication.

## **1.2. The Common European Framework**

In 1991, the Swiss Federal Government initiated work towards common transparency and coherence in language learning in Europe. The intergovernmental Symposium concluded that the intensification of language learning and teaching in member countries is necessary in the interests of greater mobility, more effective international communities combined with respect for identity and cultural diversity, more intensive personal interaction, improved working relations and a deeper mutual understanding. They thought it desirable to develop a Common European Framework of reference for language learning in order to provide a sound basis for the mutual recognition of language qualifications throughout Europe (Common European Framework, Ch. 1, 4).

The Common European Framework (hereafter called CEF) is meant to be a guideline and overall framework and tool for schools throughout Europe. It provides a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses and for curriculum guidelines across Europe. It comprehensively describes what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop to be able to act effectively. It further provides the means for educational administrators, course designers and teachers to reflect on their current practice. Further, the CEF clearly indicates the need to communicate and that oral proficiency is a substantial part of this skill. Accordingly, “...language use comprises the actions performed by persons who as

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individuals and as social agents develop a range of competences, both in general and in particular communicative language competences...” (CEF, Ch. 2, 9). The emphasis on oral communicative competence is evident as an entire chapter has been dedicated to this and is described as existential (Ch. 2, 12). The CEF has further distinguished the personal-, occupational- and educational domains in which social life is organised as intertwining and overlapping and thus mutually influencing each other, by saying that “Progress in language learning is most clearly evident in the learner’s ability to engage in observable language activities and to operate communicative strategies” (Ch. 4, 57). Although the CEF does not exclude the importance of being able to communicate in writing, it still indicates strongly the need to learn spoken English. According to the CEF, the ability to communicate orally must be given high priority.

In order to accommodate the various countries’ need to align their reference levels, the CEF developed and validated a large set of descriptors for this use. These are often referred to as “the Common Reference Levels”. These reference levels are as far as communication is concerned divided into written and spoken communication, clearly indicating the need to split the two, even though the CEF does not indicate that one takes precedence over the other. They are both simply an important part of language knowledge and are equally important.

## **1.2 The National Curriculum**

The Norwegian Ministry of Education holds the overall responsibility for the activities that take place in every classroom all over the country throughout the academic year. The Ministry of Education also has the responsibility for how the National Curriculum is formed and for making it understandable so that all teachers are able to adhere to it. The Curriculum is revised on a regular basis, depending on the political party in power in the country.

Whenever the Curriculum is altered, the changes made have consequences for every teacher. Ideally, each teacher is expected to adhere to the curriculum and take it into account in his or her daily preparations, thoughts and lessons. Sometimes the changes are considered long over-due, some are looked upon as unrealistic and some are perhaps best forgotten. Very few teachers have the time, or the inclination to find out why decisions were made and by whom. Their time and energy is spent preparing for class and fulfilling the demands of the Curriculum to the best of their ability.

In an attempt to make Norwegian schools less theoretically orientated, new vocational subjects were introduced on the lower secondary level in 2006. As a consequence, the number of lessons per year for some of the other subjects was reduced accordingly. Simultaneously the aims in these subjects in the Curriculum were either further developed or expanded. The Norwegian National Curriculum

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for English was subject to alterations during June 2013. The changes seemed to be welcome and entailed a clarification of the previously merged learner-aims in the subject of communication. It was split into two separate curricular aims; spoken and written. This entailed an increase in the number of aims to be met by the pupils, although the number of lessons allocated to the subject was not altered. Seeing that the lessons were already filled to the brim with curricular aims, this presents a challenge/dilemma for the teachers.

The National Curriculum provides, with this new division, a decisive impetus for the teaching of oral proficiency. One of the questions, or concerns, raised in my pilot study, was whether the teachers found adequate time to teach oral proficiency with the limited number of lessons. This was raised prior to the curricular division. After the division, the aims have been clarified, although the time allotted to achieve the goals set, has not been changed.

### **1.3.1 The background for change**

The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training issued an assignment in December 2010 to The Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research to revise the national curricula for Norwegian, Social Science, Science, Mathematics and English (Appendix 1). The Directorate was asked to review the aforementioned curricula and to suggest alterations/changes which would facilitate systematic development of the framework for basic skills (oral skills, reading, writing, digital skills and numeracy) with a clear progression and in accordance with the subjects' distinctiveness. It has not been possible to ascertain what the actual reason for this request was. The last part of the assignment "General comments", number six, indicates that the correlation between the Norwegian National Curriculum and other comparable countries' levels of ambition was one reason. It is however, only based on an educated guess when I argue that the changes made in the English subject may be due to the influence of the CEF and continuous feedback voicing frustration surrounding the unclear situation of the goals set in the curriculum in Norway, led to the work concerning the alterations in the National Curriculum of English. The Norwegian results from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) can also have started the debate and the desire to revise the curricula, as the results were not as good as they should have been on an overall National level. PISA is an international comparative survey of the educational school systems in different countries. The first cycle of PISA was carried out in 2000, initiated by the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development).

The Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research issued the paper "Summary of the feedback on the hearing statement and recommendations to the changes in the English Curriculum" in April 2013 (Appendix 2). 152 authorities/agencies responded to the Directorate's suggestions for

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alterations to various parts of the curriculum for English. There is no mention of how many were asked to contribute, and the information may therefore not be complete. However, the respondents quoted in the summary have voiced opinions on issues pertaining to this research paper that are interesting. This especially applies to their concern about the number of lessons allotted contra the increased number of aims to be reached. A relatively large number of respondents commented on this point. Although there was a consensus amongst the respondents that the division into aims for written and oral communication respectively was positive, there is also a clear indication that the curricular aims are generally perceived as overwhelming and unreachable for most levels. Several discrepancies were pointed out, especially with regard to progression plans between the different levels of the educational stages and the loss of lessons to vocational programs in school. The respondents in the summary not only represented elementary schools, but also secondary education, as well as colleges and school authorities on the municipality level in Norway. However, it seems that the elementary and secondary educational level respondents were most sceptical to the increased number of aims to be reached in fewer lessons. The overall reaction and feedback from schools from elementary through to upper secondary, was that the aims were too ambitious with the current number of lessons allocated to the teaching of English in Norwegian schools. Despite this concrete feedback from teachers “in the field” the Ministry went ahead and made the changes (Appendix 3).

#### **1.4 Perspective and Research Questions**

The need for further research on how teachers work to meet the aims in the curriculum became more pressing when changes were made in June 2013. It seems that the questions and resulting research in my pilot study regarding the teachers’ ability to use literature in teaching oral proficiency have become even more topical, since teachers now have to address an increased number of aims within the same number of lessons. I was curious as to how the teachers manage to meet the aims in the altered curriculum and how the changes have affected the way they plan their lessons. I am curious about their choices of literature and the amount of time spent on language learning. I want to find out how they manage to fit everything into the number of lessons they have available without losing track of their pupils’ acquisition of English. I decided to continue the research among lower secondary teachers because English at this level is obligatory with a graded assessment of how well the pupil masters the skills/aims outlined in the curriculum at the end of their 10<sup>th</sup> year and upon completion of elementary school. In this thesis I will therefore focus on how teachers meet the demands set in the new curriculum, without having to leave something else out.

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### **1.5 My research question.**

My research question is as follows:

How have the changes in the English Subject Curriculum affected ESL teaching in Norwegian Lower Secondary School?

### **1.6 Structure of my paper.**

In the following I will define and clarify terms I use in this study. So far, no research has been carried out on how teachers adhere to curricular change in the subject of English in Norway, as far as I know. The findings and implications in my research concern the need to enhance the pupils' ability to communicate, preferably orally and how this is incorporated in the daily challenges of meeting the altered curricular aims. There has been a lot of research on communication, and aspects of this research inform my study. In the following I will review the most relevant theories. Secondly, I describe my research methodology; my study is based on questions developed for use in focus group interviews (Appendix 4, Interview Guide). I carried out focus group interviews in three different lower secondary schools in the south-eastern part of Norway to answer my research question. (See Appendix 8 for a full transcript of the interviews). Thirdly, I present and analyse the results of the interviews and discuss my research design. In the concluding section of my paper I discuss the implications of these results for English teachers and English classrooms in Norway, along with possible further research.

## **2. Literature Review**

In this section I define and clarify a number of central terms that form the basis of my study. The terms I intend to take a closer look at are communication, which in turn has been split into spoken communication and written communication; communicative competence and oral proficiency and effectiveness.

### **2.1 Communication**

“Communication: (Latin; *Communicare*; to share) the act or process of using words, sounds, signs, or behaviours to express or exchange information or to express your ideas, thoughts, feelings, etc., to someone else” (*Merriam-Webster online dictionary*).

The ever increasing need to master the act of communication is directly connected to the requirement of being able to interact with people all over the world, be it for personal reasons or on corporate or business matters. Larry Samovar, Richard Porter and Edwin McDaniel discuss and clarify the definition of communication in *Communication between cultures*. They claim that

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“Communication is a dynamic process in which people attempt to share their internal states with other people through the use of symbols” (Samovar et.al.16). Furthermore, they say that communication is contextual. The context and also the symbols used in the various contexts vary. Communication is a dynamic process in which the utterances will evoke a consequence; “...the act of sending and receiving symbols influences all the involved parties...” (Samovar et.al.20). These acts of communication produce change.

Bo Lundahl uses a simpler explanation in *Engelsk Språkdidaktikk* where he includes the variable of bodily signs (2009). This ties in with the research done by and presented in Desmond Morris' *Man-watching*, where the ultimate and universal signals humans make are the signs we convey through our bodily movements (1977, 8). In addition to communicating orally by uttering sounds and forming words and sentences, we communicate through facial expressions and bodily posture. Even though Lundahl includes body language in his definition of communication, he also refers to a communication model initially constructed by Claude Shannon in the 1940's (2009, 110) which offers a more academic view of the conveyance of messages. The source of information conveys the message through a transmitter or encoder, taking the desired oral (lingual) form, then sends it through a channel to the receiver who deciphers the message and hopefully comprehends the content. The core idea is that communication is a two-way exchange of messages and requires a certain level of mutual understanding on both sides of the communicative situation.

It is also appropriate to anchor the understanding of communication for the purpose of this thesis in the definitions given in the CEF and the Norwegian National Curriculum for English. The CEF understands communication as depending on the congruence of the models of the world and of language which have been internalised by the persons taking part (Ch. 5, 5.1.1.1 “Knowledge of the world”). The Norwegian National Curriculum for English concurs with this by stating that English is a universal language and the need to be able to use it for communicative needs is imperative. The English Subject curriculum states that; “To succeed in a world where English is used for international communication, it is necessary to be able to use the English language and to have knowledge of how it is used in different contexts. Thus, we need to develop a vocabulary and skills in using the systems of the English language, it[sic] phonology orthography, grammar and principles for sentence and text construction and to be able to adapt the language to different topics and communication situations.” These definitions tie in with my research question on how teachers teaching a foreign language, in this case English, are able to conform to the demands of the curriculum and our communicative world. Thus, communication in this thesis is understood to be a two-way interchange of messages based on a person's willingness to understand and be understood in human interaction using oral interaction. In Norway, the context of English language is usually in

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the classroom, which gives a lot of responsibility to teachers in terms of bringing in or creating authentic speaking situations in their teaching.

### 2.1.1 Spoken Communication

Language acquisition is one of the most impressive and fascinating aspects of human development. Patsy M. Lightbown and Nina Spada describe in *How languages are Learned* (2006, 2) how we listen with pleasure to the sounds made by a three-month old baby and how we laugh and answer the babblings of older babies. Language learning has attracted the attention of a multitude of linguists and psychologists for generations across the world. Researchers have described the developments from the earliest vocalizations of the cry of the baby when hungry or uncomfortable through the progress and discovery of language in the child's first three years. Lightbown and Spada found that worldwide research, irrespective of the language or culture, saw that there is a set of developmental sequences that all children go through (2) when learning to speak. This is directly tied to the cognitive development of the person, for instance children do not use the temporal adverbs such as "tomorrow" or "yesterday" until they develop an understanding of the concept of time (Lightbown & Spada 2). Reference is made to extensive research in the field of early language acquisition when they say that the lingual output may not reflect the actual stage of lingual understanding that the child has. Carefully designed procedures have produced evidence that the child's knowledge of grammatical morphemes is present but not used. By the age of four, most children have mastered the basic structure of the language(s) spoken to them in their early years (Lightbown & Spada 8). During the school years, children develop sophisticated metalinguistic awareness and when they learn to read, their understanding of the concept of words is reinforced (Lightbown & Spada 8). The purpose of being able to speak is either to achieve something or to convey a message that the conveyor finds important. It is also a way to confirm belonging and to understand identity. The human being is a social creature and by using spoken communication we interact and cooperate with each other and thus form an understandable sphere and place to be.

Jean Piaget, a Swiss psychologist who studied the development of cognitive processes from infancy through adulthood, claimed that all oral communication prior to the age of 11 or 12 is considered the same as thinking out loud as the basis for the utterances is solely egocentric. Only after the age of 12 will the cognitive development of a human being enable the person to use abstract reasoning and make mental distinctions between themselves and a considered idea. When the child has reached this stage, it can use language to express and debate abstract theoretical concepts such as those found in mathematics, philosophy or logic. Piaget believed that the stages of cognitive and

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linguistic development were universal and that no children skipped any of the stages (Thompson "Piaget's theory on language development" *Demand Media*).

The theories of Vygotsky and Piaget have been central in education for many years all over the world, and they have also been central in Norwegian education. Saul McLeod discusses and compares these theories in his article "Lev Vygotsky" (McLeod 2007) on a psychology website under developmental psychology. As McLeod explains, the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky on the other hand, believed that language develops from social interactions and for communicative purposes. Vygotsky also claimed that thought is the result of language. Vygotsky's theory differs from that of Piaget in three important ways; first Vygotsky places more emphasis on culture shaping cognitive development as opposed to Piaget's universal stages of development; he also has considerable emphasis on social factors that contribute to cognitive development in addition to the role language plays in cognitive development (McLeod 2007).

McLeod further points to that Vygotsky stressed the fundamental role social interaction plays in the development of cognition and that he believed strongly that community plays a central part in the process of "making sense". "Learning is a necessary and universal aspect of the process of developing culturally organized, specifically human psychological function" (Vygotsky, qtd in McLeod 2007). Vygotsky further believed that individual development cannot be understood without reference to the social and cultural context within which it is embedded. Higher mental processes in the individual have their origin in social processes (McLeod 2007).

However interesting these theories are with regard to the acquisition of language, the fact remains that English, as a foreign language is taught in Norwegian schools with a major focus on acquiring skills that enable spoken communication. The methodology used is based on pedagogical theories in which both Piaget and Vygotsky play a part. Perhaps the need to be aware of the processes in the human brain and the knowledge of *how* we learn is more important than before; as teachers face the predicament of a limited number of lessons and this increases the need for interdisciplinary knowledge when juggling the subjects, topics and aims of the National Curriculum. The importance of being able to take part in and make use of spoken communication is stated both in the CEF and the National Curriculum for English. This can be seen when the CEF presents their "Common Reference Levels" in chapter five where tables describe levels from the general linguistic range to details on different levels of mastering vocabulary, grammatical accuracy and phonological control through to sociolinguistic appropriateness. The National Curriculum for English also mentions areas in which spoken communication might be useful and thus desirable to master. Additionally the



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emphasis on being able to communicate is strongly emphasized in the Core Curriculum through repeated references to English as a universal language.

### **2.1.2 Written Communication**

Written communication is defined in the National Curriculum for English as one of the basic skills. In the English Subject curriculum this involves expressing oneself understandably and appropriately about different topics and communicating with others in the written mode. It is also a tool for developing thoughts in the learning process. The mastery of writing is a prerequisite for lifelong learning and for active and critical participation in civic and social life. The development of functional writing is closely connected to subject-related development. It is almost impossible to define written communication without involving reading as a prerequisite for being able to communicate in writing. Reading involves engaging in texts and it gives insight into other people's experience and knowledge, independent of time and place. We are exposed to texts everywhere and children from an early age take an interest in and develop a desire to understand what the written messages mean. The human brain will seek to interpret and gather information in order to create a comprehensible whole of the surrounding world.

Bo Lundahl (2009) discusses the importance of understanding the processes the pupils go through when trying to write. He points out that exercises in writing reveal thoughts, which is important for teachers to realize. This also ties in with the discussion of oral communication here (2.1.1), on the importance of context when learning a foreign language. Writing may be the one form of communication that enables the pupils to voice their opinions due to the limited amount of time available for English lessons at school (Lundahl 216). Lundahl refers to Anne Burns and Helen Joyce when he advocates their overview of the differences between spoken and written language (222) where he then points out that the spoken language is mainly looked upon as a communicative form risen from contemporary and immediate social situations and thus becomes a communication form which seems far from the formal and structured written language the pupils are required to produce in school. He points out however, that the distance between the two communicative forms is slightly exaggerated. By this he means that there is a need to differentiate between physical and psychological distance. When sending an e-mail or a text-message, the physical distance may be great, but the psychological distance is not. This will inevitably influence the written message and also the form of written language used. Taking into consideration the increasing use of ICT tools, both in schools and in private life, it is imperative that the pupils master both the formal form of written communication as well as the more rigid forms governing the skills outlined in both the CEF and the National Curriculum. To mirror the lingual diversity in written texts, a continuum may

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be a better way to provide clarification on how the different types of texts do not necessarily correspond to a set table, but rather move to and fro and along a line, overlapping each other as the situation requires (Lundahl 223). For the purpose of this thesis, I adopt the understanding of written communication developed in this discussion and in the formal requirements stated in the Curriculum for English.

## 2.2 Communicative competence

The definition of communicative competence is constantly changing. It is complex because it relates to a conglomerate of situations, people, ages and cultures and the constant change these factors undergo. The CEF claims that because language systems are complex and are continuously evolving in response to the exigencies of their use in communication, no user will ever completely master a system (5.2.1 Linguistic competences). Today's rapid and explosive development of ICT tools gives a dimension to the skill of communication which has an impact on all foregoing theory on the subject. This may have changed the entire outlook on communicative competence as far as earlier scholars' definitions are concerned.

Douglas Brown (2007) discusses various approaches to defining and clarifying what parts of communication are thought as necessary in defining communicative competence. He discusses the four subcategories proposed by Michael Canale and Merrill Swain which divide the use of the linguistic system into two categories that reflect the use of the system itself and two which focus on the functional aspects of communication (Brown 219-220). The first two competences are tied to the formal knowledge of a language; grammar and discourse competence, which is the ability to form a meaningful whole. The last two competences; sociolinguistic and strategic competence are tied to the functional aspects of communication. Both categories are important parts of language learning and are also reflected as parts of the English subject curriculum in Norway. Brown points to the importance of the learners' need to understand the purpose of communication, the development of awareness of what the purpose of a communication act is and how to achieve that purpose in a linguistic form (Brown 223)

He then introduces Michael Halliday, who in 1973 described seven functions of language; *the instrumental function; the regulatory function; the representational function; the interactional function; the personal function; the heuristic function (why?) and the imaginative function*. These seven functions of language are not mutually exclusive and a single sentence might incorporate many of the functions at the same time. The understanding of how to use linguistic forms to achieve these functions of language is the crux of second language learning (Brown 225). The main focus in this thesis is on how the teachers incorporate and secure the achievement of the aims set in the new

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divided curriculum. What are teachers doing in order to comply with the Norwegian Ministry of Education's clear indication of the importance of being able to communicate, and especially orally?

Further, these four subcategories and seven functions of language can be related to Naom Chomsky's linguistic theory. Vivian Cook discusses in *Second language learning and Language Teaching* (2012) how Chomsky's universal grammar theory is different from earlier ways of language acquisition (Cook 33). The basis of Chomsky's linguistic theory is that the principles underlying the structure of language are biologically determined in the human mind and hence genetically transmitted. He therefore argues that all humans share the same underlying linguistic structures, irrespective of socio-cultural difference and that learning to communicate is a natural human trait, even when learning a second language (Cook 34).

In addressing this continual linguistic development, Suresh A. Canagarajah asks where we stand today and where the development is taking us (Canagarajah 29). He claims that professional knowledge gets muddled by new movements of globalization, digital communication and World English and that these raise questions which must be answered. He goes on to argue that the paradigms of the linguistic field are changing radically and that even the notion of methodology needs to be looked at again (Canagarajah 29). Scholars in the field see a horizon full of new concerns which in turn will force an introduction of new questions on ethics, power and subjectivity. Digital communicative means are not yet distributed evenly amongst the people of the world. This means that Chomsky's linguistic theory does not hold, as the demand for digital competence is on the rise and represents a new knowhow not necessarily genetically transmitted (Canagarajah 24).

In this connection, Susan C. Herring (2004, 26) argues that it seems to be commonplace knowledge that computer-mediated communication (CMC) not only shapes communication but also social behaviour. The rapid popularization of blogging, web-boards, chatting, text-messaging on mobile phones and I-pads and face-chat have made these communication forms mundane and ordinary and has already influenced interactive human to human communication. She also points out the challenges of social and commercial gaps where censorship, online security and online shopping are some of the pitfalls of the digital world (Herring 32).

Marc Prensky qualifies these concerns when he directs attention to the fragmentation and the incremental changes in our students and how they no longer fit into the educational system in "Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants" (2001). He claims that the students' thinking patterns have changed and that their new status as digital natives makes them unable to decipher language or messages sent in a pre-digital form, which in the worst case scenario prevents them from acquiring

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the knowledge needed to understand and function in the world they live in (Prensky 2001). Digital competence is one of the basic skills in the Core curriculum in Norway. This is required in all subjects, and the ability to use and understand the conglomerate of tools available must therefore be part of the communicative competence the pupils must master.

In *An introduction to sociolinguistics*, Janet Holmes (2001, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) defines communicative competence as sociolinguistic competence (367). Because the language we use inevitably changes depending on who it is directed at, we are bound by ethnic linguistic tags as language constructs social reality (Holmes 371). She points out how we learn how to speak appropriately for our gender and age group to actively construct our social identity. Because we belong to overlapping groups we are exposed to language input which in turn enables us to understand how to speak to different people from different walks in life, when not to speak and how to use different types of language for different functions. Learning to speak appropriately in a range of contexts is important if one wants to avoid giving offence, creating hysterical laughter or embarrassing oneself or others. If language constructs social reality (Holmes 371) then language must influence cognition in addition to the structural categories in our language which influence our perception of time and place (Holmes 372).

This brings the discussion back to the realization that communicative competence comprises much more than being able to utter sounds or write stories. For the purpose of this paper, communicative competence is therefore understood as the ability to engage in both written and spoken communication in such a way that one can successfully coexist with other human beings and function in a modern society where communicative skills are paramount. And this competence partly determines your own wellbeing in that society.

The information and general theories about communication, language acquisition and how people learn their (native) language in addition to the CEF's notion of the importance of being able to communicate, which tie in with the English subject curriculum in Norway, illustrate that teaching English in the ESL classroom in Norway is a complicated and important task. Because we are members of the international community and thus part of the expanding globalization, the acknowledgement by the Norwegian authorities that English is considered to be a second language as opposed to a foreign language in Norway, seems to correlate with the aims in the curriculum. This knowledge, in addition to the altered aims in the curriculum, creates an interest in how this overwhelming task and responsibility is handled in the ESL classroom in Norway. How do the teachers meet the aims of the curriculum when these aims are generally perceived as overwhelming

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and unreachable at most levels? This leads to my research question; How have the changes in the English Subject Curriculum affected ESL teaching in Norwegian lower secondary school?

### 2.3 Oral proficiency and effectiveness

The basic aim in learning a new language is to be able to create meaning and to use this skill to interact in communication. The “Norwegian Directorate for Education and training – Framework for Basic Skills” relates oral skills to;

...creating meaning through listening and speaking. This involves mastering different linguistic and communicative activities and coordinating verbal and other partial skills. It includes being able to listen to others, to respond to others and to be conscious of the interlocutor while speaking. Oral skills are a precondition for exploring interaction in which knowledge is constructed and shared. Oral skills are a precondition for lifelong learning and for active participation in working and civic life.

We use language to express inner thoughts and emotions, make sense of complex and abstract thought, to communicate with others and to fulfil our wants and needs, as well as to establish rules and maintain our culture. Joshua A. Fishman says in “The Sociology of Language” (1997, 27) that language is “...not only means of interpersonal communication and influence nor is it merely a carrier of content, whether latent or manifest”. He goes on to say that it is itself content, an indicator of social statuses and personal relationships. He further argues that language is a marker of situations and topics and that any speech community reveals several varieties of language, all of which are different from each other (Fishman 27). Samovar, Porter and McDaniel (2009) support this idea when they define communication as the use of language as a dynamic process in which people attempt to share their internal states with other people through the use of verbal symbols (16). The functions of lingual communication are; something that allows you to gather information about other people; helps fulfil personal needs; establishes personal identities and influence others (Samovar et al. 15).

In order to understand and be able to use these concepts of communication through language, it is necessary to have knowledge of how the language, in this case English, varies and changes with time, place and communicators. Language can therefore be understood as contextual as all the functions form parts of the communicative system we use. Peter Trudgill broadens this understanding in *The Dialects of England* (1999) when he says that where we are from is an important part of our personal identity and how we speak is for many an important component of this identity (1). Language can then be understood as a defining quality for who you are and others’

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perception of where you are from. This is supported by Trudgill when he indicates that the way you speak also defines your culture, or how other people perceive it (1). Pupils in the lower secondary level of schooling in Norway are in the middle of figuring out who they are and where they belong, and it is part of their language learning to acquire a basic platform of the language which is considered to be “correct” in linguistic terms; the standard language. According to Holmes (2001), a standard variety of a language is a coded variety and is recognised through grammar books and dictionaries, which prescribe the standard form of the language (76). Eddie Ronowicz (2007) describes language as a communication tool consisting of a vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and spelling rules (4). He adds that in order to communicate effectively, one must be able to combine linguistic competence with the ability to operate within the set of cultural rules of communication of a social group using this natural language (Ronowicz & Yallop 5).

In “Language Variation” in *Language* (Eds. Kristoffersen, Simonsen, Gram and Sveen. 2005. 479-481) Rolf Theil establishes that a standard language has a certain set of prototype characteristics. The characteristics of a standard language Theil describes are; it is considered more correct and socially acceptable than other ways of speaking as it carries higher prestige than other ways of speaking; it is defined in dictionaries and grammars and it is used in the written language. The need to know a standard language and be able to have a meta-perspective on this language is important. He further claims that variation is the key to the survival of a language. Because language features like words, sounds, morphemes, meaning and grammatical constructions are fundamental elements in human language, and because every person has his or her own way of using these features, the social usage situation differs depending on where you are or who you are with. This creates variation and is again dependent on the culture you are part of at the time you use the language (Theil 469).

Laurie Bauer (2002) says that languages need to be used if they are to survive. When a language is used, she claims that in order for this specific way of speech to be called a variety, it must also be codified in widely published materials to qualify (95). One of the main aims in the English subject curriculum is to have knowledge of English speaking countries and their cultures. The CEF provides scaled descriptors for the interpretation of the different levels of proficiency which cover the areas of; range; accuracy; fluency; interaction and coherence (CEF, Ch. 3, 4) as part of the Common Reference Levels. These are reflected and are concurrent with the assessment criteria given by the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research:

- Understand and use a general vocabulary related to different topics.

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- Demonstrate the ability to distinguish positively and negatively loaded expressions referring to individuals and groups.
  - Understand the main content and details of different types of oral texts on different topics.
  - Listen to and understand variations of English from different authentic situations.
  - Express one-self fluently and coherently, suited to the purpose and situation.
  - Express and justify own opinions about different topics.
  - Introduce, maintain and terminate conversations on different topics by asking questions and following up on input.
  - Use the central patterns for pronunciation, intonation, word inflection and different types of sentences in communication.
  - Understand and use different numerical expressions and other kinds of data in communication.
- (Udir, Assessment criteria, Lower Secondary School, 2013)

In order to be able to communicate with people from various places it is therefore paramount that the language one produces is appropriate. Because English is considered universal, the standard form (RP or Received Pronunciation) is no longer dominant in terms of effective communication since regional varieties are recognized as having the same status as the original British English. Oral proficiency can thus be understood to consist of aspects of linguistic competence, pragmatic competence and sociolinguistic competence.

Norwegian pupils are supposed to acquire knowledge of the target language to fulfil the aims listed above in addition to establishing a sound basis for mastering the language in written form as well as having adequate knowledge of grammar, syntax and the phonological system. In order to be able to communicate effectively, they also need to learn about the different cultures where the target language is considered as standard. This means being able to communicate efficiently and enabling interaction to further globalisation and mutual understanding world-wide.

According to Stephen Krashen (1988) we acquire language in one way only: by being exposed to input (written or spoken language) that is comprehensible to us. Comprehensible input is the necessary but also sufficient condition for language acquisition and highlights the importance of using the target language in the classroom. Krashen further argues that according to his “input hypothesis”, language acquisition occurs when learners receive messages that they can understand. This is also known as the concept of comprehensible input. In addition, Krashen also suggests that

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this comprehensible input should be one step beyond the learner's language ability, represented as ( $i + 1$ ), in order to allow learners to continue to progress with their language development. By providing as much comprehensible input as possible, especially in situations of the ESL classrooms in Norway, the teacher is able to create a more effective opportunity for language acquisition. Krashen's input hypotheses ties in with Lev Vygotsky's "zone of proximal development" as an important concept that elaborates the dimensions of school learning.

It explores the idea that students can achieve more with social interaction than what they can do alone (Vygotsky's Zone). By providing the scaffolding for learning, the teacher can also accommodate for and provide a learning environment where the pupils are exposed to the target language both from their peers and teachers. In order to help the pupils meet the criteria of range, accuracy, fluency, interaction and coherence and be assessed accordingly, the teachers must provide comprehensible input as well as being role-models and thus create scaffolding within the pupils' proximal zone of development when learning English. It is the teacher's responsibility to provide a communication situation in the ESL classroom as authentic as possible, in other words: language immersion. Have the changes in the English Subject Curriculum affected this part of the ESL teaching? This study will seek to find out how teachers ensure acquisition of the aspects of linguistic, pragmatic and sociolinguistic competence with the time they have available to them.

### **3. Methodology and Research Design**

This research project is designed using qualitative methods for collecting data. The study consists of focus group interviews in three different lower secondary schools in the south-eastern part of Norway. The questions asked and the interview guide given to the participants can be found in Appendix 4.

Prior to scheduling the focus group interviews, it was necessary to obtain the consent of the Norwegian Social Science Data Services to carry out the study. Norwegian researchers who plan to collect data on individuals in terms of statistics, information, videos, sound files, photographs or information are required to submit an application for permission and to follow guidelines concerning the anonymity of participants. Without this permission, the research may be declared void. It was applied for accordingly and consent was given and the interviews were carried out according to the preliminary plan (Appendix 5). Furthermore, a letter of consent had to be obtained from the Principals of the respective schools. An anonymized version can be found as Appendix 6.

The results from the research have been discussed and analysed and can be found in Section 4; Findings and Analysis. In the following I will comment briefly on the data collection method and



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the reliability, validity and generalizability of the same. Then I will comment on the participants chosen for the focus group interviews based on the information given by the participants in the introductory part of the interviews.

### **3.1 Focus Group Interview**

A focus group interview is according to Sandra Lee McKay (2006) an interview form in which the participants have a chance to hear what others have to say on a topic and to offer their own views at the same time (52). The gathering is not an open discussion or problem-solving session but instead an interview in which the participants, in this case the teachers, are asked a series of pre-specified questions. There are pros and cons in using this particular method and it is important that the participants are as homogenous as possible so that the topic discussed seems familiar and that each participant feels they can contribute. John W. Creswell (2009) points out that the questions designed for the session must be neutral and not elicit any form of power structure, as group dynamics will always challenge the social norms that inevitably prevail. People have a tendency to censor their ideas in the presence of people who differ greatly from themselves (Creswell 177).

Using focus group interviews, one is able to collect a lot of information in a relatively short period of time. In addition, the participants might find it useful to be able to voice their opinions and views on particular topics. A disadvantage however, is that it is difficult to ascertain the honesty behind the answers as the teachers might adjust their answers in order to fit into the group. A danger can be that one runs the risk of having one participant dominate the interview and that the others are not able to speak as much as they might want to. Ideally, according to Sue Wilkinson (2004, 179) it is important for the person conducting the interview, also called the moderator, to have some basic interviewing skills and knowledge of group dynamics to avoid problems and to ensure that the synergistic effect of the group is at its best. Nancy Grudens-Shuck, Beverly Lundy Allen and Kathlene Larson (2004) also emphasize the moderator's ability to balance the participants' need to have their say against the need to stay focused. Because focus group interviews take place in a more neutral setting than a one-to-one interview situation, the in-group discussions can lead to a communicative process in which the participants discuss, debate and disclose thoughts and ideas that would otherwise not be voiced and that more detailed accounts are generated when the participants extend or elaborate on each other's comments. Wilkinson (2004) also points out that by virtue of the number of participants simultaneously involved, focus groups inevitably reduce the researcher's control over the interaction, making the focus group interview an egalitarian method (181). The number of participants in a focus group interview can vary from two participants (Wilkinson 178) to what McKay (52) and Creswell (181) find most appropriate; from 6 – 12 per

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session. A focus group interview should not take more than 1, 5 to two hours according to Grudens-Shuck et al. (2004, table 2, Elements of Focus Groups).

There were two major reasons for using focus group interviews in this research: to save time and to gather a relatively large amount of information in a short time. The same method was used for the pilot study and proved then to be advantageous and practical. I was aware that conducting three focus group interviews would inevitably present a larger workload than just one. Furthermore, I had not met all the participants prior to the interviews, so this was quite a different situation than that which I had experienced during the pilot study interview. It also meant that a majority of the participants had not taken part in a focus group interview before. Some of the participants in one of the schools had been part of the focus group interview for the pilot study (Leirvaag 2013). The groups were selected by the Principal at the three schools where the interviews were conducted.

Reliability and validity in a research process are according to Creswell (2009, 190) important issues that need to be addressed once the research has been carried out. Qualitative validity means that the researcher checks for the accuracy of the findings by employing certain procedures, while qualitative reliability indicates that the researcher's approach is consistent. The reliability procedures can involve checking transcripts to make sure they do not contain obvious mistakes. The consistency of the researcher's approach is here understood as asking the same questions to all the focus groups, in the same order as indicated in the interview guide (Appendix 4). Validity is one of the strengths of qualitative research (Creswell 191) and it is based on determining the accuracy of the findings from the researcher's, the participants' or the readers' viewpoint. Words that can describe validity can be authenticity, credibility and trustworthiness.

By virtue of the participants' profession and that the focus group interviews took place at the teachers' workplace, their trustworthiness is ensured: the topic at hand is directly tied to the daily work of a teacher, and one can assume that the replies given and recorded have been true and to the participants' best knowledge at the time. Reliability concerning possible errors made in the transcripts is of course debatable although one can assume that recording the interviews improves accuracy. However, transcribing recorded voices can be difficult and time consuming as well as challenging due to participants' mumbling, talking simultaneously, unexpected noise and other background disturbances such as laughter and whispering. The answers given by the participants during the interviews can only be generalized to a certain extent. The number of participants is not large enough to generalize on a large scale, since the number of schools involved in the research only represents a very small part of the total number of lower secondary schools in Norway. The three schools in the study represent only 0, 62% of all lower secondary schools in Norway. The

diversity of the participants in terms of age and teaching experience adds credibility to a research project of this format, however. The main focus of qualitative research is on participants' perceptions and experiences and the way they make sense of their lives (Creswell 195), and in this study the focus is on their perception and experience of the new divided English curriculum. Presuming that the participants are representative to a certain degree of all the teachers teaching English in Norway, the empirical material presented here may be considered adequate.

### **3.2 The participants**

The choice of participants for the interviews was based on the variety of teaching experience they represent (Creswell 178) as well as teaching English at lower secondary level and that they were willing to contribute and take part. The participants consisted of three groups, comprising a total of nine teachers. They were all female except one. The participants' ages ranged from 23 years of age to 58. There were no questions pertaining to the participants' education, but it is assumed that they all have completed Teacher Training College as a minimum. Some of the participants teach other subjects as well, which is normal at the lower secondary level. Their teaching experience ranged from one year to 25 years. The interviews took place at three different schools. For the sake of anonymity the schools are hereafter referred to as schools A, B and C here and in the transcripts. The participants have been given random numbers from one through twelve.

The difference between the youngest and oldest along with the difference in teaching experience amongst the participants as well as gender, does not qualify for homogeneity in general terms according to McKay's definition (2006, 37). They make a homogenous group in the sense that they all teach English in Norwegian lower secondary school, they are all bound by the aims in the National Curriculum and they all have experience in the field from which the research seeks answers.

### **3.4 Materials**

Materials of significance for this study and included in the thesis are the references made to the Common European Framework, The National Curriculum for English as well as the participation invitation letter (Appendix 7) and the transcribed recorded interviews (Appendix 8). The participation invitation letter contains general information as well as the purpose and aim of the study and was handed out together with the interview guide as well as being read out loud in the beginning of the focus group interviews. Letters asking the Principals for permission to carry out the interviews were sent to the respective schools along with the documents inviting the participants

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to take part and informing them about the interview. These were distributed to the individual participants.

### **3.5 Data Collection/Procedures**

Prior to my research I had applied for and was granted permission to carry out my study from the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD) (Appendix 5). In addition, close cooperation with the respective Principals was necessary, as without their consent an interview would not be allowed. I briefly informed the Principals about my research and they all gave their immediate consent. The time allotted for the interviews varied in the three schools. Two of the principals allowed the teachers to take part in the focus group interview during working hours, whereas the third did not. The latter claimed that the study was a private matter even though the research was directly connected to administrative work the teachers are supposed to discuss in lieu of the curricular changes. This Principal allowed the interview to take place on the school premises, but stipulated that it had to be carried out outside working hours. This represented a slight challenge as not all the teachers who were first invited were able to participate, due to family responsibilities and other outside work activities.

I initially planned to interview between four and six teachers at each school. Due to unforeseen circumstances for some in addition to family issues for others, the total number of participants was smaller than first anticipated. This did not seem to create any uncertainty or unwillingness amongst those who did take part in the interviews. All the teachers who participated in the interviews signed a Participation Consent Form (Appendix 9).

#### **School A**

There were four teachers participating in the interview and the recordings comprised 44 minutes. The entire interview situation lasted for an hour.

The teachers at school A had no experience with focus group interviews and were curious and eager to take part. Being served snacks and coffee during the interview seemed to ease the initial nervousness and they were also pleased that the interview was to be conducted in English rather than Norwegian. Their main argument here was that they thought it appropriate to use the target language, as it would otherwise seem unnatural and less serious. They had all looked at the questions prior to the interview.

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School B.

There were two teachers participating in the interview and the recordings comprised 32 minutes. The entire interview situation lasted for 45 minutes.

The number of participants at this school was cut down drastically as personal issues had to be prioritized. Six participants were invited and had initially agreed to attend. One had to travel abroad, one was on sick leave. Another two had to cancel due to private reasons. This left me with only two participants. One of these had experience from focus group interviews and the other did not. This seemed to create some apprehensiveness for the one who had not taken part in this type of interview before and it took some time to “warm up” to the exercise. Once it had been established that my expectations concerning their contributions were not as high as they had first imagined, their comments and opinions flowed more freely. Snacks and coffee provided a welcome “ice breaker” for the start-up of the interview. One of the participants who was not able to attend the interview, avidly wanted to take part and answer the questions that had already been handed out; she had read them and prepared answers. A separate one-to-one interview was therefore conducted later and her answers have been included in the research material and transcript. This last interview lasted for 20 minutes.

School C.

There were two teachers participating in the interview and it lasted for 32 minutes. The entire interview situation lasted for an hour.

Upon arrival at school C, one of the participants apologised for not being able to attend. One of the lessons allocated to English coincided with the interview. The teacher then said that the pupils had no time to “waste” and that they needed the time in class with their English teacher instead of a substitute. The teacher had thus decided that taking part had become impossible, because her overall responsibility was with the pupils. In addition one of the teachers who had planned to take part had fallen ill and was unable to attend. Despite this rather unsettling start, the remaining two participants were well prepared and their contributions detailed and thorough.

### **3.6 Analysis**

My focus group interviews were based on a number of pre-set questions (Appendix 4) and the data was recorded using the recording app on my mobile phone. The recording slots on the mobile phone are limited to 20 minutes. There were short breaks and pauses in between the recording slots. The interviews lasted between 50 minutes to 60 minutes. The advantage of audio recording an interview

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according to McKay, (55) is the preservation of the actual language used. The transcription of the recorded interviews took considerable time as they had to be played several times. The words the participants said were then written down verbatim. Because all the interviews were conducted in English there was no need for me to translate, except for a few outbursts in Norwegian in between. The original transcript includes fillers and other sounds I could decipher. After transcribing, I studied the transcript carefully to categorize and summarize the answers in relation to the questions asked. It was also imperative that the focus was on ascertaining whether there was any correlation between the answers from the different schools or if they concurred in any way. A cross-case analysis (McKay 57) where the focus is on the correlation with the research question and the answers from the group as a whole and not on the individuals, was then carried out. It is the experience of the teachers as representatives demonstrating how the adjusted aims of the 2013 English Subject Curriculum in lower secondary schools in Norway are being met that was the aim of this research, rather than the isolated experiences of individual teachers. The data retrieved from the focus group interviews has not been collated in a table nor has it been presented using numbers. This is one of the characteristics of qualitative research (Creswell 17).

#### **4. Findings and Analysis**

All the participants were asked all the questions from the interview guide (Appendix 4) in the same order. The Findings section has been organised so that each question is dealt with in the order it was asked covering all three schools simultaneously. I have summarized, rephrased and collated the answers given by the teachers. An overall conclusion and synopsis of the elicited outcome can be found in Section 5. Conclusion. The first part of the interviews was devoted to collecting background information about the participants. This pertained to age and years of teaching experience. A collation of this can be found in Section 3.2. The participants.

##### **4.2 Focus Group Interview**

The experience I gained in my pilot study with regard to participants' behaviour in the interview situation concurred with the behaviour displayed by the participants who took part in this study. They were all very polite and approached the task seriously. There were few digressions at any point in any of the interview situations, and the general impression was that the participants were sincere and wanted to voice their opinions on matters concerning their daily work in an orderly and appropriate manner. This made the transcription work relatively easy, and they only strayed off topic on a few occasions. I allowed these small digressions as the talk covered issues concerning the teachers' daily life in the ESL classroom. The participants did not always agree with each other, but as a whole they were quite uniform in their approach to the questions asked. I have tried to give a

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summarised record of their answers, inserting quotations where appropriate. Cases where the participants did not agree or the answers given by the different teachers were remarkably different are noted in the recap of the discussions.

*4.2.1 How do teachers work to meet the aims of the four main areas of the Curriculum (-Language learning, -written communication, -spoken communication, -culture, society and literature)?*

The answers to this question produced a multitude of methods that teachers use to meet curricular aims. Each of the teachers elaborated on what seemed to be the most important feature of language learning in general for him/her. Some of the teachers were very clear on their awareness of the four different areas whereas others were not. This produced a variety of answers that were at times hard to categorize or sort. There were however, some issues that were mentioned more often than not, or were discussed in more detail than others. They were the use of textbooks, language immersion, organising the classroom by splitting classes according to perceived lingual level, the need to bring additional material to class in order to reach the aims set in the curriculum and the technicalities of teaching grammar in an understandable way for the pupils.

Although the textbook seemed to be either loved or hated, it appeared to be the mainstay of teaching practice amongst the teachers who were interviewed. Some of the teachers thought highly of the textbook, claiming that it made the pupils behave in a more orderly fashion in addition to pointing out that it was filled with ready-made tasks for the pupils to do. The pupils' inability to keep track of hand-outs and to remember to bring them to school was also discussed. A book is more tangible and predictable when pupils are asked to do homework and reference is made to particular pages rather than hand-outs. Some teachers trust the choice of texts in the textbook and believe it contains tasks covering all four areas of the curriculum, whereas other teachers voiced a strong dislike of having to use the textbook. The latter claimed that the textbooks currently available were already outdated and due to easily accessible web-based films (YouTube among others) and webpages from the various printing houses, the textbook was considered something of the past. However, some teachers were more neutral on this topic; they use the textbook when it suits the topic they are dealing with. Teachers with little teaching experience relied on the textbook as they felt its content supported progression in their teaching. As teaching experience increases, the willingness or courage to use other sources for language teaching in the ESL classroom seems to increase as well. Several teachers mentioned that there was a definite need to use additional sources if one was to be able to cover all the aims in the curriculum.

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The participants were surprisingly honest when the discussion on language immersion, or how to create authentic communication situations, took place. Methodology ranged from pretending to have no knowledge of Norwegian during English lessons and thus demanding both understanding and forcing oral communication in the target language, to admitting that they use Norwegian to explain grammatical rules and their application and even conduct large parts of an English lesson in Norwegian. However, they all spoke about the importance of pupils hearing proper English spoken in order to provide modelling and also to enhance the pupils' listening skills at the same time. In order to train what the teachers understood to be oral skills, they would often use games, role plays, and jokes. Furthermore they help pupils understand lyrics by listening to music and perhaps singing along. They also use a computer program called "Moviemaker". There also seemed to be extensive use of films, although this started a discussion on how time consuming films are. This seemed contradictory, as they all claimed that films were good to use but in order to be able to show films they have to juggle the weekly schedule. There seemed to be a general consensus that prepared oral presentations, normally aided by a PowerPoint or Prezi programme were not sufficient in reaching the oral aims of the curriculum. In addition several of the teachers would often use the pupil's written work as a starting point for a conversation. All the teachers participating in the interviews expressed concern when the challenge of getting the pupils to speak was brought up. The pupils' lack of willingness to use the target language in class, their shyness or low self-esteem or negative peer-pressure seemed to be unsolvable problems they all struggle to eradicate.

An organisational issue that was discussed was the opportunity, or lack thereof, to split the class in two, or even three, groups according to level of lingual capability. It seemed that the teachers thought of split classes as the ultimate way of organizing the pupils when teaching grammar, because making grammar intelligible depends on how much time a teacher can spend one-on-one with the pupils. The teachers felt that this is very difficult in a full class of 28 pupils. There is simply not enough time.

Several of the participants were concerned about how content based English teaching had become. The strong focus on written communication and the ability to read a novel from start to finish elicited a multitude of comments and opinions. They all believed that reading literature enhances not only the pupils' vocabulary but also their ability to express themselves in writing as well as orally. Some of the teachers could not afford to spend time reading novels and therefore use short stories, poetry and excerpts from novels instead. This was considered unfortunate by some, but not considered an issue at all by others as they choose to do their own thing anyway.



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Despite the diversity of the comments and how varied the approaches used to work towards reaching the aims in the curriculum were, the group of teachers as a whole seemed to arrive at a common point of view. At some stage during the discussion of this question they readily admitted that meeting all the aims or integrating them all is hard, or even impossible. Being aware of all the areas and being able to cover them during the lessons available is often conceived as impossible: some of them do not have in-depth knowledge of the goals, whereas others choose to ignore some or all of them on purpose because they consider them unattainable. This finding indicates that their methodology descriptions may not have been entirely based on real practice; they perhaps described a desired situation rather than the factual state of affairs. However, the numerous, varied methods and ideas they list comes across as quite impressive, suggesting that they are well organised, competent teachers. This impression, however, seems to vanish as the time-frame does not allow for all the magnificent activities mentioned. This was openly admitted, along with their concern about it. They used a variety of activities, but these were not necessarily chosen because of the aims in the curriculum. If the activities coincided with the curricular aims, this was often merely accidental.

#### *4.2.2 Has the reduced number of lessons led to the exclusion of certain topics or reduced the focus on any of the four main areas of the curriculum? If so, which ones?*

This question elicited a number of interesting answers from the participants. Again, the responses varied greatly and the discrepancy between them at the different schools was surprising. There seemed on one hand to be a lack of knowledge about the changes and/or that some teachers chose to ignore them. One of the teachers who has several years of experience said; *“I must admit that I did not know that there was a reduced number of lessons? I didn’t know that. I thought I had three lessons all the time?”* Another teacher referred to the National Curriculum prior to the change and claimed that she was unable to contribute as she had nothing to compare with. On the other end of the spectrum there was complete awareness and knowledge about the curricular aims as well as the reduced number of lessons, and this influenced daily work and planning a lot. These teachers were clearly aware of the changes and had answers that seemed to be the result of much thought and consideration prior to the interview.

When talking about excluding topics or reducing the focus on them, some teachers mentioned that they did not think the changes had made their teaching any different as they stuck to the textbook and therefore assumed that all aims were taken care of. As one put it; *“...you just park it because there is nothing you can do about it.”* At the same time, some of the teachers who used the textbook readily admitted that time did not allow them to cover all the topics and tasks given and they therefore had to be cut back. The choices concerning which of the topics or tasks to omit or cut

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down did not seem to be systematic. In one school, where the awareness of the curricular changes was at a minimum or non-existent, the comments about which topics should be excluded seemed to correspond with their attitude to the changes as a whole. They concurred on the importance of making plans for the year, but had no qualms about deviating from these plans and doing their own thing in the classroom. When they made a deliberate choice on how to use the time available by deciding to use extra-curricular sources, because the textbook might be inadequate for that particular topic, or they thought it appropriate and fun, this deviation would take time away from the assumed planned progression of the textbook. This was stated as a fact and they did not seem worried. They did not seem concerned with the curricular aims and because they perceived them as overambitious, they simply ignored them. They focus on oral and written work, as they have always done. If they did not have time to finish the planned work, so be it. They seemed more concerned that other activities, like theatre-trips, interdisciplinary projects and “The Cultural Rucksack” from the Norwegian Arts Council were stealing time from their lessons rather than being worried about the reduced number of lessons. The vagueness of their answers seemed to correspond with their lack of knowledge about the curricular changes or the curriculum as a whole.

The teachers who were clearly aware of the changes in the curriculum were more precise when they discussed which topics or activities in their ESL classroom had to be excluded as a result of the changes. The most striking point was the expressed concern that literature suffered the most and then language learning, understood as grammar. There does not seem to be enough time for reading longer texts (books). One of the teachers said that in order to be able to meet the aims of the curriculum, a certain level of understanding, which simply does not exist, is needed. The teachers assumed that there is little focus on curricular aims in Primary School, and this was seen as problematic. It was further commented that there is too much focus on content and too little on language-learning. This then leads to grammar being excluded, as a separate topic. The reduced number of lessons also had affected the time the pupils need for text production. The teachers further claimed that because they had too little time and because the focus was primarily content-based, there was no time left to check homework or work specifically with vocabulary. Language variation and learning about dialects and English as a world language also suffered along with oral activities in class. The pupils were left to work on their own without getting feedback on their work and thus diminishing the possibility of correcting mistakes or giving explanations the pupils could learn from.

Because the answers were so strikingly divergent, it is hard to draw any simple conclusions on this point here. However, the fact that the majority of the teachers were clearly aware that they had to omit topics or areas within language-learning in order to meet the new curricular aims, indicates

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that the quality of the English lessons might be in jeopardy. Their concern about not being able to teach grammar or focus on language knowledge, such as dialects and variation, in addition to not having enough time to work with literature, was profound and honest.

#### *4.2.3 What strategies are teachers using to meet the adjusted communicative aims?*

This question seemed to create confusion amongst several of the teachers to begin with and the word “strategies” did not seem to be related to their daily work as they saw it. There was a need to explain and elaborate in order to make them understand what was wanted from them. There were not any apparent difficulties once this was done, and the participants contributed willingly. Again, it was immediately clear that the teachers who had no, or very little, knowledge of the curricular changes seemed unsure of what to say. They thought the question was difficult and concluded that they had not made any significant changes in their practice. The only detectable change was that one of the teachers had become aware of the need to increase the focus on spoken communication and “proper English” in the classroom. All in all they were not sure what they were doing now or had done in the past.

It had by now become obvious that the participants’ responses to the questions were marked by their knowledge or lack of knowledge of the curricular changes and the curriculum in general. The resulting differences in their answers has created an unexpected split and complicated my summary of the data. This question did not produce as much talk or discussion as the other questions. Some of the teachers saw it as overlapping with the other questions and felt that they had already answered it somehow. The question required an ability to take a meta-perspective and although one would have expected most of the teachers to be able to do this, some of them seemed to be too engulfed in their daily teaching and dealing with pupils to be able to take a step back and study their role and the curriculum as a whole.

On the other hand, the teachers who had prior knowledge of the curricular changes and were familiar with curricular work when planning their year or term for teaching, were more uniform in their choice of didactics when planning strategies to reach the new aims. They all had changed the way they worked with their classes. In particular, they used group work more frequently. The groups had also been subject to change and the number of pupils per group had decreased. They considered the optimal number of pupils in a group to be two or maximum three. The increased focus on communicative aims had caused them to rethink their organisation in the classroom in order to both save time and enable them to listen to and thus assess each individual pupil. One of the teachers had deliberately paired the pupils according to strengths and weaknesses in order to create a learning environment based on peer-assessment and helping each other out. The pupils

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were told why they were paired with their partner and seemed satisfied with the explanation. Because the class had pre-set pairs, there was never any bickering or arguments about whom they wanted to work with according to likes/dislikes. This saved time and after a set period of time the teacher changed the groups around, depending on what the subject/topic/plan was.

There seemed to be a general consensus that activity in the classroom had increased and that there was a definite shift from teacher-based teaching to pupil-centred teaching. This change was challenging for some teachers because the former quiet, individual work based teaching had been replaced with a more bustling, and perhaps noisier classroom situation. Some of the teachers had seen the need to split the lesson into two separate halves where one part was dedicated to text work, discussion and small talk and the other half to writing. Short cuts had also become the norm for some teachers, and using films, playing games and focusing on the teacher's language in the classroom, was part of the strategy used by one teacher.

The tools teachers used in planning had changed. Instead of using the textbook as a starting point for planning in order to meet the aims, the process was now turned around and the aims in the curriculum were the starting point for making the plan and deciding what strategy and tools to use. The teachers worked together to clarify the aims and choose which of them to focus on before choosing which tools were appropriate. This had increased the need for cooperation between the teachers and was seen as positive, but time consuming. Although these teachers had clear ideas about how they had changed their thinking-patterns and strategies to meet the aims, they still insisted that accomplishing their goal was practically impossible. The main reason was the lack of time and their frustration over having to omit topics or subjects within language learning which would affect the quality of their teaching.

*4.2.4 In what ways have the adjusted communicative aims in the curriculum affected the way you work with oral proficiency in the ESL classroom?*

This question seemed to be welcomed because all the teachers were genuinely concerned with oral proficiency and the importance of teaching the pupils the oral skills needed to be able to communicate in the real world. Again, attitudes towards the adjusted communicative aims in the curriculum were as divided as before, although there was greater correlation between the answers this time than before. The group of teachers who were familiar with the changes had welcomed the division of the communicative aims as it now had become legitimate to focus on communication more than before. The requirements in the curriculum concerning the ability to take part in small talk in addition to giving prepared oral presentations, have given the teachers a broader foundation upon which to base assessment. This means that the pupils who would otherwise only perform

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orally when required to give a presentation and who did this well, would also have to learn to communicate freely in order to get a good grade. One of the teachers said; “...*it opens up for actual talking as opposed to just writing like before or working with grammar.*” This meant that the language the pupils were learning would also have to be tested out by them in actual speech. This would ensure acquisition of the target language to a higher degree than before. Several of the teachers had increased their focus on oral activities and wanted to dedicate more time to oral proficiency in the classroom as a result of the adjusted aims.

One of the teachers said that by omitting reading literature, time had been freed to be used for talking. The division of the communication aims had changed the focus of both teachers and pupils. The importance of being able to start, take part in and understand normal conversation was welcomed. The teachers had increased the focus on everyday English and how to be understood and to understand the spoken language. In one school the division had initiated a three year plan for oral proficiency in that the requirements for the different levels (8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade) had been clarified and communicated to the pupils.

The division had also made the teachers aware of the importance of expecting the pupils to use the target language in class and that all communication should be conducted in English. Being able to justify this communicative situation had made planning activities easier it seems. The increased focus on communicative competence was a good argument for the teacher, in encouraging pupils to take part in the activities more than they had before.

One of the teachers pointed out that it was easier to expect the pupils to use the English language if the teacher had a lot of experience or had an adequate grasp/control of the language him/herself. This point had been discussed before during the other questions asked during the interviews. Because language input is important, it is essential that the teacher also speaks correct English. They also agreed that the teacher must have the competence and knowledge needed to use correct, idiomatic English as well as having detailed knowledge of the content the pupils are expected to learn. However, this did not elicit a common understanding of what happens in the real world, as several of the teachers admitted to using Norwegian quite often in lessons dedicated to English. One teacher explained that this means that the competence level of the teachers is important and that many primary school English teachers do not have the necessary competence or linguistic knowledge to use English freely in their classrooms. This will have repercussions on the level of understanding amongst the pupils when they reach lower secondary school where the aims are clear and expectations high. The teacher's use of Norwegian in the ESL classroom was therefore blamed

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on the pupils' inability to understand English because of this postulated inadequate immersion at primary level.

On the whole, the increased focus on oral proficiency has been welcomed by the majority of the teachers in this study. Whether or not they can live up to their own expectations of themselves as English teachers is hard to say. They all seemed adamant that the teacher's competence is essential if she or he is to teach English properly; they must function as role models language wise and create a classroom where pupils are immersed in English.

*4.2.5 How and to what extent do teachers integrate oral proficiency into their teaching of - Language learning, - Written communication, - Culture, society and literature?*

Because this question was understood by the teachers as not requiring detailed knowledge of the adjusted aims in the curriculum, it produced more comments and discussions than expected. Again, some teachers thought the question overlapped with the previous one but they still cooperated and answered, voicing their opinions and thoughts on the subject. It seemed clear that by this time, the participants were used to the recording unit and had lost their former timidity. Again each teacher focused on what he/she thought was best for the pupils, and did not discuss or talk about cooperating with each other or how the activities were planned. It seemed that they were now talking about something they all knew something about and felt comfortable talking about. Some teachers were concerned with methods that would make the pupils talk, irrespective of the areas mentioned in the question. Other teachers spoke about the areas in a meticulous manner in order to cover the question. The group division that appeared during the other questions was not apparent here. Only a few of the teachers showed that they were still thinking about the curricular aims and that their answers were informed by the aims.

One of the things several of the teachers used as a method to make pupils talk was to have them choose a topic they found interesting. This would encourage the pupils to take part in activities in class and help the pupil say more than they would when given a topic they knew nothing about or had no interest in. This tactic of course involved the risk of losing focus on the topics actually mentioned in the curriculum, but it seemed that this was not particularly important. The point was to make the pupils talk. Showing movies where the theme was directly tied to curricular topics like culture, history and war for instance was one of the methods used. It was considered to be an advantage if the teacher chose to omit subtitles since the pupil's listening skills would then be enhanced and that would enhance learning.

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Methods like role-play were used in all the schools, adjusted for the age of the pupils. It was a preferred method for younger pupils, since it is easier to pretend to be someone else when speaking English. This particular activity requires extensive help from the teacher and was perhaps one of the methods where the teacher could give immediate feedback on the pupil's oral proficiency. In one school this method was used in the majority of the lessons and was very much enjoyed by the pupils. They had then made it into a regular happening where the final product was enacted for the other classes.

Several of the teachers participating in the interview were committed to making sure they spoke English at all times in class. They said that in order for the pupils to develop their oral proficiency they needed to learn to use the language in everyday conversation and by hearing proper English they would be able to develop a meta-language. This was important for grammar and also discussions in class when analysing literature and talking about plot, theme and point of view. Letting the pupils use the words the teacher used, would help them develop their English further. In addition, these teachers also made sure that all assessment criteria were written in English and said that the pupils were welcome to participate in making the criteria. This was considered important as the pupils also had to carry out self-assessment and take part in peer-assessment in the target language. When the issue of content was discussed, the teachers made it clear that it was important to focus on the ability to speak freely about the various topics and not just answer written questions found in for example the textbook. On the subject of the textbook, the same discussion occurred as before and the teachers seemed to be split in their attitudes towards using it. The majority claimed that the textbook was there as a back-up and a stepping stone for finding more information from other sources. It was quite clear that the majority of the teachers used the textbook as something one could pick and choose from rather than as a recipe for the content of their lessons.

All the teachers seemed to agree that input was important for developing oral proficiency and that there must be enough time for the pupils to try out new words and expressions. This was clear when they talked about the areas mentioned in the question and related them to the curriculum. It was seen as a problem when the teachers themselves did not know the grammatical expressions in the target language, or did not have detailed knowledge of the topics to be covered. Several of the teachers mentioned that in order to teach topics properly you need to have a sound base of knowledge in English. Watching the news in English, reading English newspapers and books as well as actively using the target language with the other teachers were important ways of maintaining a minimum level of proficiency. Exchanging ideas with other teachers in English could also take teachers out of their comfort zones and this would be good for their development both as a teacher and individuals.

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In addition to talking about the methods the teachers thought would be good for their pupils, they were also concerned about the teachers' ability to use the language. Because there is an increased focus on being able to communicate, both professionally and in everyday conversation, the need to have teachers who master both seemed to create consensus amongst the participants. Some of the teachers in the interview claimed that they used English only in the classroom, whereas others admitted that they did not. This was either due to their own lack of knowledge/capacity or because they thought the pupils did not understand what they were saying when using the target language. None of the teachers commented directly on how much or to what extent they consciously tried to enhance oral proficiency in their teaching of language learning, written communication and culture, or society and literature. Again, it might be that this part of the session was looked upon as a "brainstorming-session" and that they had not given thought to what they actually had time to do. They all seemed to be aware of the need to be able to communicate about other issues than the topics covered in the curriculum, and wanted to use a variety of methods to reach the goals.

## **5. Discussion**

This section will sum up the answers to the research question:

How have the changes in the English Subject Curriculum affected ESL teaching in Norwegian Lower Secondary School?

### **5.1. Summary of findings**

After compiling the answers given during the interviews and comparing these to the new divided curricular aims and the intentions voiced in the CEF, I argue that there is reason to believe that both have had an impact on ESL teaching in Norwegian lower secondary schools to a certain degree. There seems to be a clear difference between the teachers who were familiar with the curricular changes and those who were not as to how much the division of the curricular aims has influenced teaching practice. This interesting find is further explored and discussed in Section 5.5.2 Working with and planning implementation of curricular demands.

Here is a summary of my major findings:

- There are a multitude of methods and ideas and activities that are available and known to the teachers in the ESL classroom, but time does not allow them to use them all.
- There is increased use of web-based activities, which ties in with the curricular requirement concerning ICT skills. These activities, however, steal time from the weekly lessons that would normally be used for other language learning activities according to the teachers.



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- Most of the teachers participating in the interviews had at some point used, or were still very much dependent on the textbooks that were available to them.
- The teachers' ability to produce correct oral English, thus providing the pupils with an environment where they were expected to use the target language, was seen as desirable, even though using English all the time was not always possible.
- The majority of the teachers had gained/acquired increased awareness of how the organisation of the class or group of pupils influences the learning or practice of spoken English. These organisational changes were justified with reference to the curricular aims of being able to take part in small talk and being able to communicate with others on issues pertaining to their daily lives. This increased awareness corresponds with Vygotsky's idea of scaffolding and that interaction with peers is an effective way of developing skills and strategies. According to McLeod (2014), Vygotsky suggests that teachers use cooperative learning exercises where less competent children develop with help from more skilful peers - within the zone of proximal development.
- Although the teachers agreed that there was too little time for reading/literature, it was nevertheless looked upon as an important activity that would not only give the pupils the chance to work on vocabulary and grammar, but also give them an advantage later when they themselves were to produce texts.
- There seemed to be too little time at school for the pupils' production of texts. Likewise, teachers have too little time to give comprehensive feedback and help when needed. Written communication is defined in the National Curriculum for English as one of the basic skills. In the English Subject curriculum this involves expressing oneself understandably and appropriately about different topics and communicating with others in the written mode. It is also a tool for developing thoughts in the learning process. The mastery of writing is a prerequisite for lifelong learning and for active and critical participation in civic and social life.
- Amongst the topics that had to be reduced or cut out as a consequence of the reduced number of lessons were reading literature and teaching grammar. The latter seemed to be looked upon as unfortunate as grammar was seen as fundamental knowledge and an essential part of language learning. Piaget's (2007) belief that the stages of cognitive and linguistic development were universal and in pre-set levels, tie in well here in addition to Naom Chomsky's (2012) linguistic theory that the principles underlying the structure of language are biologically determined in the human mind and hence genetically transmitted. He argues that all humans share the same underlying linguistic structures, irrespective of socio-cultural difference and that learning to

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communicate is a natural human trait, even when learning a second language (Cook 2012). According to Stephen Krashen (1988), learners acquire parts of language in a predictable order. For any given language, certain grammatical structures are acquired early while others are acquired later in the process and teachers cannot therefore change the order of a grammatical teaching sequence, nor omit it (Krashen 1988).

- Teachers had, in general, changed their teaching strategies in order to accommodate the new requirements of the curriculum. The organisation of the class and/or groups of pupils, a focus on fewer topics, and making plans that stretch over three years were among the most noticeable and common strategies. Planning for the year(s) ahead had been switched around. Instead of using the textbook as a starting point, the curriculum was now the point of departure and the tools (amongst them; the textbook) and strategies chosen were based on curricular aims, in contrast to previous practice.

- The Curriculum's increased focus on communicative competence had helped some of the teachers accomplish more with their pupils. The clarified assessment criteria for oral English had helped the teachers encourage or convince pupils to take a more active part in class discussions than before.

- The increased curricular requirements in communicative competence had however shed light on many teachers' inability to provide the pupils with adequate English input. Krashen (Krashen 1988) argues that according to his concept of comprehensible input, language acquisition occurs when learners receive messages that they can understand. Krashen also suggests that this comprehensible input should be one step beyond the learner's current language ability, in order to allow learners to continue to progress with their language development. The challenge for many teachers seemed to be the ability to express themselves with words and expressions that were idiomatic, using authentic target language. The ability to use the required meta-language in order to explain for instance grammatical structures was not common and was mentioned as an obstacle for giving the pupils what they needed.

- The expected linguistic level amongst the pupils when they reached 8<sup>th</sup> grade was seldom reached, and this was considered a challenge. Teachers, especially at primary school level, must speak and use the target language in class if the pupils are to reach a level in 10<sup>th</sup> grade corresponding with the curricular aims. This corresponds with Krashen's input hypothesis along with Vygotsky's theory on scaffolding and indicates the need for trained English teachers at primary level as well.

- The integration of oral proficiency in the teaching of language learning, written communication and culture, society and literature, did not seem to have changed much after the division of the

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curricular aims. The methods used were basically the same as before. Because the communicative aims in the curriculum were divided, assessment criteria were also changed. There is a greater focus on being able to use the language in everyday conversation, but there did not seem to be a radical change in methodology. A few teachers, who were/are genuinely concerned as well as interested in the curriculum as a guiding document, had made a conscious effort to incorporate oral communication in all the other areas.

## **5.2 Criticism of method and result**

My choice of focus group interviews in this study was based on previous experience with the method and the need to elicit a lot of information in a relatively short period of time. Conducting the interviews did not take more time than I had anticipated, but in retrospect I could have organised things slightly differently. When working with the English subject curriculum one inevitably grows narrow-minded and absorbed with technicalities and details. This is easy to forget when the focus turns towards the people who are bound by the curriculum in their daily work and when one is formulating questions for them to answer. It is especially important to communicate with them as their peer, if one wants honest and useful answers. Some of the questions that were asked during the interview either created silence at first or required further explanation. However, this varied depending on the school where the interview took place and seemed to be directly tied to the teachers' knowledge and awareness of the curricular changes. It seems that being part of a school culture where teachers had the opportunity to discuss the curriculum and its aims was a prerequisite for understanding the questions asked during the interview and for being able to answer them in an informed way. Sandra Lee McKay (2006, 54) points out that the questions designed for a session must be neutral and not elicit any form of power structure. I could perhaps have avoided the occasional silence by using simpler words in the questions. Because the questions were written in academic language, the respondents may have perceived me, the moderator as a superior and felt intimidated. This possible perception of a power structure may have been detrimental to the study and the willingness of the respondents to contribute during the interview. The participants might have found the situation too difficult, but were unwilling to admit that they did not understand the questions.

Another possible change that could have been made, in retrospect, was the number of interviews in addition to the number of participants in each interview. Because so many of the invited participants either were prohibited from taking part due to personal issues or other miscellaneous unforeseen circumstances, it would perhaps have been better if there had been more participants invited initially. Larger groups might also have worked better when looking back. On the other hand it is

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impossible to predict the future and it was therefore unrealistic to invite a relatively large number of people because one expects many of them to decline. Another solution might have been to conduct more interviews and involve more than three schools. This would perhaps have created an increased workload in addition to producing a deluge of empirical material for a study of this size. At the same time it would have increased the validity and generalizability of my study.

As it turned out, the interview transcripts provided me with ample material for this thesis. The answers were incongruous, but coherent given that the participants were all teachers. This was the aim of my research and therefore met my goals. The interviews produced a varied selection of comments and an objective version of what was said, as the language spoken was preserved through the recording (McKay 55). The behaviour of the participants may have been influenced by the presence of the recording unit which might have had an inhibitive effect (McKay 56). My role as a mediator and therefore intentionally neutral, might have been jeopardized by the fact that several of the participants knew me personally, either as a colleague or private acquaintance. I think, however, that all the participants approached the given task professionally and were sincere in their attempts to answer the question and participate in discussions.

The overall results were not as uniform as initially expected, which came as a surprise. Nevertheless, I believe that the participants' comments and opinions are quite representative for ESL teaching practice in lower secondary schools in Norway.

### **5.3 Further research**

The incongruence of the answers given by the interviewees seemed to be related to their knowledge of, or awareness of the curricular changes and the reduced number of lessons, and this made me curious about whether this was simply coincidental, suggesting future research questions. It seems clear that the findings and analysis of this research only cover parts of a complex situation. It must be extremely frustrating when teachers master a variety of methods, but do not have time to actually use them. Consequently, the motivation to make lessons interesting and informative for the pupils probably diminishes as time goes by. Groping in the darkness for guidelines for reaching the intended curricular aims saps a lot of time and energy from the teachers. When the impossibility of reaching the goals due to the lack of time dawns on some teachers, they lose momentum and revert to "old sins", ignoring the curriculum altogether. This presupposes an awareness of the curricular aims and the recent changes in the first place. Another possible study is to find out if this is applicable to more schools in Norway and if so, why?

#### **5.4 Educational implications**

The intentions in the new divided curriculum are obviously good. The question is however, whether the intentions have filtered down through the channels and made a difference, preferably a positive one, for the teachers who are bound by the curriculum and therefore will have to adjust their planning and incorporation of the aims into their otherwise full schedules. An increased focus on oral proficiency seems necessary and has been welcomed by the majority of the teachers taking part in this study. The CEF's intention of intensifying language learning and teaching by increasing the focus on communicative competence, has perhaps inspired the Norwegian authorities to revise the National Curriculum and in particular the English Subject Curriculum. In spite of the lucid feedback from several of the respondents to the initial hearing (Appendix 2), The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training chose to not revoke the number of lessons they had redistributed to the vocational subjects. The challenge of meeting the curricular aims with a reduced number of lessons has several educational implications as the results from the focus group interviews clearly indicate.

The teachers participating in the interviews are positive about the intentions of the Ministry of Education, but they simultaneously regard them as impossible to fulfil. This has created either a conscious undermining of the curricular aims in that some parts of the curriculum have been omitted in order to adhere to the new aims and focus on oral proficiency, or an attitude of indifference. It was also seen to have a negative effect as far as teaching quality was concerned in that the teachers did not have enough time to spend on topics they considered critical components of language learning like grammar and literature. Because the number of lessons was reduced, the intentions of the revised curriculum were undermined, leaving the teachers in a classic "Catch 22" situation.

This could, as a consequence, lead to future PISA results not being as good as desired after the change. The main reason is that there is not enough time to do things properly or in the desired fashion and thus the pupils do not have the learning environment needed to acquire a second language. The changes seem to be a misunderstood attempt to make the Norwegian pupils better. The core idea of communication is a two-way exchange of messages and requires a certain level of mutual understanding. The English Subject curriculum states that pupils must learn to express themselves understandably and appropriately about different topics and communicate with others in the written mode as well as orally. It seems as if the discrepancy pointed out by several of the teachers between the number of lessons available and the number of aims imposed by the Ministry of Education was not considered when the changes were implemented. Oral proficiency can be understood to consist of aspects of linguistic competence, pragmatic competence and sociolinguistic

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competence. The arena for building these forms of competence is the ESL classroom. Reducing the number of lessons unfortunately also reduces the arena for learning.

#### **5.4.1 Pedagogical implications in the ESL Classroom**

The most striking comments when discussing the pedagogical implications the curriculum division has led to concerned the need to increase the time pupils use working in small groups of two or three rather than doing individual work. The teachers found this challenging; they experienced a feeling of loss of control in the classroom and found it difficult to assess each pupil's oral production. It was difficult to observe whether or to ensure that all the pupils were using the target language as well as staying on-task. The increased use of group-work had also led to more noise in the classrooms. This was difficult to get used to and teachers were concerned that the learning environment was not as good as it had been before. The increased use of peer-assessment seemed to be another concern as it was not possible to ensure that correct English was used or mistakes were corrected when the pupils were communicating. Although one of the teachers deliberately used pairs of pupils, who would complement each other by strategically using their strengths and weaknesses, and by doing so saved time on both learning and organising, most of the respondents thought it difficult to work this way. When the pupils were engaged in individual tasks, and time did not allow for formative assessment, parents were mentioned as a possible source for help. This again was looked upon as unfortunate sometimes, as it would create a difference because not all pupils would have parents who were able to help them.

Many of the teachers who took part in the interview were concerned about the phenomenon of the "split class" which is common in lower secondary school. The class is divided into two groups and each group is then taught two different subjects. One group works with Mathematics, for instance, in the first lesson and then English in the second. The other half does the opposite. This organisational form gives the teacher more time with each pupil and the groups can be divided according to academic level for short periods of time. The way the groups are divided depends on the subject, so groups are not always the same. The two subjects more often than not, take turns dividing the pupils in as homogenous groups as possible. The teachers welcome this organisational form, but unfortunately it is subject to frequent change. When teachers are ill or are absent for various reasons, the management can reassign a teacher to be a substitute and then using the "split class" method is unviable; teachers are back to teaching full class. The planning done for the "split class" is then wasted and the teacher has to rearrange the topic or the tasks in a hurry. This is seen as unfortunate. It makes the teacher's day unpredictable and the time intended for pupils in "split-class" will be lost. Teachers no longer have time to give formative assessment to individual pupils,

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and these pupils will perhaps never be told what they need to work with. It seemed that the biggest concern was the loss of time spent with the individual pupil, which jeopardizes the quality of the learning environment.

Several of the teachers were concerned about the quality of the teaching they provided. It seemed inevitable that the lack of time would mean that the main focus would be on only a few topics. Other topics cannot be treated in-depth. This was looked upon as poor quality and made the teachers uneasy. Relying on the pupils to engage in self-study was not an option as it was thought too demanding for this age group. Some of the teachers were also concerned that teachers who do not have the necessary language competence in all the required areas (such as grammar, language variety and literature) would not make an effort to teach these topics in their lessons. The lack of time perhaps gives them an excuse to omit whatever they consider too difficult. The teachers' competence, both in lingual knowledge and capacity as well as topical knowledge was seen as essential in creating a good learning environment for the pupils, especially when time did not permit them to dwell on anything for any length of time. Teachers without sufficient subject competence and teaching experience would have a particular challenge tackling the division of the curriculum and the reduced number of lessons. This is considered detrimental for the pupil's learning and for the profession as a whole. The situation was described as "impossible" and demeaning and the resulting teaching situation was thought to have poorer quality.

As one of the teachers said, in order to be able to maintain a decent level of teaching; *"...it presupposes that the students have learned all that they need to learn in elementary school and it presupposes that they have kept that knowledge with them and can use it and what it doesn't do is taking into consideration the fact that we have, usually we have to teach the same grammar every single year in order to get them to remember it..."* This again was looked upon as a challenge, as one teacher pointed out that the elementary school teachers did not use English in their classroom and therefore made it harder for the pupils when they reached lower secondary level to live up to the expectations there. This also made it harder for the teachers to fulfil the aims in the curriculum because the pupils did not have the required language skills.

The pedagogical implications mentioned by the participants were diverse and manifested themselves in many different situations and ways. It was necessary to rethink the organisation of the classroom and to make sure the quality of the teaching ensured that a majority of the pupils reached the aims in the curriculum.

#### **5.4.2 Working with and planning implementation of curricular demands**

The comments and discussions in the interviews regarding the time spent on working with and planning implementation of curricular goals split the respondents into two groups. Most of the teachers claimed they had too little time to devote their attention to work with the curriculum, even though this was desirable. The group division was interesting; one of the groups of teachers was frustrated, but still trying very hard to meet the new curriculum requirements. They tried to find time, even outside working hours to work with them. The other group did not pay much attention to the new requirements. They simply ignored them and continued as they had before. However, all the teachers agreed that more time should be made available to them so they could plan properly, share ideas and thoughts and make a year-plan that would comprise all the aims in the curriculum.

The teachers expressed concern with what they saw as the management's lack of ability to support them in tackling the curricular changes. They pointed out that meetings concerning other issues took precedence over working with the planning of the curricular aims. This particular problem was not an issue at all the schools, however and there seemed to be a correlation between the teachers who had been given ample opportunity to work with the new curricular aims and their ability to answer the questions in the interview in an in-depth manner. The teachers who had not been given time to discuss the curricular aims or planning of the same, were more uncertain in their approach to the topic. Two of the teachers seemed unaware of the changes and also the reduced number of lessons. It seemed to be a surprise and although they readily admitted this, it causes concern. This applies not only to the teachers' unawareness of the curriculum division or the reduced number of lessons, but also to the school's management's inability to ensure that the teachers are updated on changes; nor do they give them time to familiarize themselves with the curriculum so that the pupils are provided with the learning environment they are entitled to.

A discussion on whether responsibility for being fully updated on the curriculum lies with the teachers themselves or the management would probably conclude that both are responsible. Because a teacher's day is normally filled to the brim with lessons, dealing with pupil-related issues, assessment and a multitude of other activities such as taking part in or being present at various meetings, they are probably expected to update themselves on possible changes and directives from the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. This is however, an interesting situation as it should be in the schools' leadership's interest that all the teachers are updated and conversant with the National Curriculum, the Core Curriculum and perhaps the English Subject Curriculum in particular. Being aware of and having detailed knowledge of the content of the documents that govern the profession would seem natural in most professional occupations.



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The opportunity to educate all teachers further on working with and planning implementation of curricular demands, regardless of their main subjects, would be an advantage for the school's leadership and help them ensure that the pupils are working towards the aims set. This would also result in teachers who are more confident and content.

## 6. Conclusion

This study set out to find out whether the changes in the English Subject Curriculum in 2013 have affected ESL teaching in Norwegian lower secondary schools. I conducted focus group interviews at three lower secondary schools in the south-eastern part of Norway. The empirical material collected highlights a number of points. Although it was initially hypothesized that teachers would answer uniformly, this was not the case. One can conclude that there have been changes both in the ways teachers think about and organise their ESL classrooms that are to some extent due to the curricular changes. However, the study also reveals attitudes amongst teachers towards curricular work in general as well as towards the importance of having enough time to make sure language acquisition takes place, in order to meet the curricular aims. This correlates with the title of this thesis, as all the participating teachers pointed out the frustration they felt when the number of goals was increased while the number of lessons was reduced. Even though the changes in the curriculum had not affected all the teachers' practice, all of the teachers felt more frustrated because their job had become more challenging and it was harder to meet the new curricular goals. The group split in two in the way they coped with this frustration: they either ignored the new goals, or worked harder to reach them.

Although the adjusted aims of the 2013 English Subject Curriculum have clarified the division between written and oral communication, it remains to be seen whether having more to do in less time will result in pupils who are more efficient in communicating in English. The curriculum states that good communication requires knowledge and skills in using vocabulary and idiomatic structures, pronunciation, intonation, spelling, grammar and the syntax of sentences and texts. The pupils are also supposed to learn how to adapt to the communicative situation by knowing when to use informal language and when not to. The pupils are further expected to learn and develop communicative competence which is understood as the ability to engage in both written and spoken communication in such a way that one can successfully coexist with other human beings and function in a modern society where communicative skills are paramount. The ESL classroom is the prime context for their learning activity. The question is *when* will they find time to learn all of this?

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**Appendix 1**

**The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training's assignment 42-10**



DET KONGELIGE  
KUNNSKAPSDEPARTEMENT

Utdanningsdirektoratet  
Postboks 9359 Grønland  
0135 OSLO

Deres ref

Vår ref  
201005356

Dato  
06.12.10

Oppdragsbrev nr:

42-10

Tillegg nr.

Oppdrag:

Utarbeiding av rammeverk for grunnleggende ferdigheter og revidering av læreplaner i norsk, samfunnsfag, naturfag, matematikk og engelsk

Frist for tilbakemelding:

**1) Utarbeiding av rammeverk for grunnleggende ferdigheter**

Drøftinger og vurderinger : 010411

Forslag rammeverk: 011211

**2) Revidering av gjennomgående læreplaner i norsk, samfunnsfag, naturfag, matematikk og engelsk:**

Høringsutkast norsk, samfunnsfag, naturfag, matematikk og engelsk: 011012

Forslag læreplaner norsk, samfunnsfag, naturfag, matematikk og engelsk 150213

**3) Forslag implementeringsplan: 010411**

Budsjettkap., post og prosjektnr.:

## **Bakgrunn for oppdraget:**

### **Direktoratets svar på oppdrag 22-09 A og B, justering av læreplaner i fellesfag**

#### Del A – justering av læreplaner i fellesfag i vgo

Direktoratet anbefaler at *læreplanen i norsk* gjennomgås for hele opplæringsløpet for at den skal fremstå med et tydeligere språkutviklingsperspektiv. Direktoratet peker også på at læreplanen oppfattes som svært omfattende, særlig omfanget av kompetansemål på Vg3/påbygging til generell studiekompetanse.

#### Del B – gjennomgang av læreplaner i fellesfagene i grunnskole og vgo for å sikre god sammenheng og progresjon i utvikling av elevenes grunnleggende ferdigheter

Direktoratet anbefaler at *læreplanen i norsk* revideres for å synliggjøre progresjon i kompetansemål i skrivning i samsvar med justeringene som ble foretatt for lesing i 2008. Direktoratet peker bl.a. på at gjennomgangen at *læreplanene i norsk, samfunnsfag og naturfag* viser at de skrivemålene som finnes i nåværende norskplan, har en lite presis begrepsbruk og en utydelig progresjon, samt at enkelte mål som omfatter grunnleggende ferdigheter i norskfaget, er mindre krevende enn tilsvarende mål i de andre læreplanene.

Direktoratet foreslår å revidere *læreplanen i samfunnsfag* for å synliggjøre grunnleggende lese- og skriveferdigheter. *Læreplanen i naturfag* foreslås ikke endret når det gjelder kompetansemål, men det anbefales å gjøre definisjonene av de grunnleggende ferdighetene å lese og å skrive tydeligere.

Direktoratet foreslår en helhetlig gjennomgang av læreplanene der evt. andre justeringer vurderes parallelt.

### **Direktoratets svar på oppdrag 17-10, forslag til læreplaner i fellesfag**

Det pekes bl. a. på at:

- mange høringsinstanser etterlyser en mer omfattende justering av norskplanen
- et stort antall høringsinstanser har gitt innspill til innholdselementer i naturfagplanen for grunnskolen
- mange høringsinnspill har egne justeringsforslag til samfunnsfagplanen

#### **Matematikk**

Direktoratet anbefaler at *læreplanen i matematikk* gjennomgås for å vurdere om planen har et tydelig utviklingsperspektiv på regneferdigheter på ulike nivåer gjennom hele opplæringsløpet, og at læreplanen derved gir et godt grunnlag for en helhetlig utvikling av den grunnleggende ferdigheten regning i alle fag.

#### **Grunnleggende ferdigheter**

Direktoratet viser til at det i evalueringsrapporten *Kunnskapsløftet – tung bør å bære* (2010) blir pekt på at arbeidet med de grunnleggende ferdighetene ennå ikke er blitt tatt tilstrekkelig på alvor ved skolene. Forskerne peker på svake styringssignaler når det gjelder de grunnleggende ferdighetene.



**Beskrivelse av oppdraget:**

Departementet vurderer at det er behov for å gjennomgå sentrale læreplaner slik at det legges til rette for god progresjon i utvikling av elevenes grunnleggende ferdigheter gjennom hele opplæringsløpet. Departementet ønsker derfor at læreplanrevideringen skal omfatte alle de fem grunnleggende ferdighetene; å kunne lese, skrive, uttrykke seg muntlig, regne og digitale ferdigheter i læreplanene for norsk, samfunnsfag, naturfag, matematikk og engelsk.

Departementet ber om at relevante synspunkter og innspill fra høringsinstansene som gikk utover oppdrag 17-10 om justering av fellesfagene vurderes.

**1) Rammeverk for grunnleggende ferdigheter**

Direktoratet bes drøfte utvikling av et rammeverk som på et overordnet nivå beskriver utvikling og progresjon av de fem grunnleggende ferdighetene gjennom hele opplæringsløpet. Direktoratet bes vurdere hvordan et slikt rammeverk kan brukes som verktøy og referanse for senere læreplanarbeid, i kompetanseheving og i lærerutdanningen.

Med utgangspunkt i disse vurderingene bes direktoratet utarbeide forslag til et rammeverk for grunnleggende ferdigheter.

**Frist for drøfting og vurderinger**  
**Forslag til rammeverk:**

**1. april 2011**  
**1. desember 2011**

**2) Revidering av gjennomgående læreplaner i norsk, samfunnsfag, naturfag, matematikk og engelsk**

Reviderte læreplaner skal tas i bruk skoleåret 2013 – 2014.

Departementet legger vekt på at det ikke skal utvikles helt nye læreplaner, at arbeidet med revideringen av de ulike læreplanene må ses i sammenheng og at læreplanutkastene, både enkeltvis og samlet, så langt mulig skal framstå som helhetlige samtidig som de ivaretar fagenes egenart.

**Læreplanen i norsk** ble justert i 2008, men justeringene var begrenset til lesemål for grunnskolen. Direktoratet bes foreta en gjennomgang og revidering av læreplanen i norsk, med særlig fokus på at opplæringen skal legge til rette for at alle elever kan utvikle sine grunnleggende språkferdigheter - å lese og å uttrykke seg muntlig og skriftlig - grundig og systematisk gjennom hele opplæringsløpet. Dersom det er behov for å gjøre endringer i kompetansemål som omfatter de grunnleggende ferdighetene regning og digitale ferdigheter, skal direktoratet også foreslå dette.

**Læreplanen i matematikk**

Direktoratet bes foreta en gjennomgang og eventuell revidering av læreplanen i matematikk, med særlig oppmerksomhet på at opplæringen i faget skal legge grunnlag for at alle elever kan utvikle grunnleggende regneferdigheter grundig og systematisk gjennom alle fag i hele opplæringsløpet. Dersom det er behov for å gjøre endringer i kompetansemål som omfatter de

grunnleggende ferdighetene lesing, skriving, å uttrykke seg muntlig og digitale ferdigheter, skal direktoratet også foreslå dette.

### **Læreplaner i samfunnsfag, naturfag og engelsk**

Direktoratet bes gjennomgå læreplanene i samfunnsfag, naturfag og engelsk og foreslå endringer som legger til rette for systematisk utvikling av de fem grunnleggende ferdighetene med tydelig progresjon og i samsvar med fagenes egenart.

**Frist høringsutkast læreplaner norsk, matematikk, samfunnsfag, naturfag og engelsk: 1. oktober 2012**

**Frist forslag til læreplaner norsk, matematikk, samfunnsfag, naturfag og engelsk: 15. februar 2013**

### **3) Implementering**

Departementet legger vekt på at det skal legges til rette for at de reviderte læreplanene implementeres med best mulig effekt og med et tydelig fokus på grunnleggende ferdigheter. Direktoratet bes legge fram forslag til en samlet implementeringsplan med forslag til tiltak som kan omfatte veiledningsmateriell, inkl. nettbaserte veiledninger til læreplaner, kompetanseheving og evt. andre tiltak. Implementeringsplanen skal omfatte tidsrammer og forslag til milepæler for de ulike tiltakene.

**Frist forslag implementeringsplan 1. april 2011**

### **Eventuelle føringer for hvordan oppdraget skal utføres:**

#### **Særlig om norskfaget**

Departementet har mottatt signaler om at læreplanen oppfattes som ambisiøs. Dette gjelder særlig Vg3/påbygging til generell studiekompetanse. Vi viser til oppdragsbrev 36-10 hvor direktoratet bes utrede om fordelingen av timer på trinn i norsk, engelsk og øvrige fellesfag i yrkesfaglige utdanningsprogram er hensiktsmessig. Revidering av læreplanen i norsk må ses i sammenheng med oppdrag 36-10.

Norskfaget er både et ferdighetsfag og et kulturfag, med et betydelig kunnskapsinnhold som forvalter og utvikler vår kulturarv. Selv om et hovedmål med revideringen beskrevet i dette oppdragsbrevet er en mer systematisk utvikling av de grunnleggende språkferdighetene, må den reviderte læreplanen ha en god balanse mellom dette og tilegnelse av kunnskap. Revideringen skal ikke innebære en generell svekkelse av det faglige nivået i Norge i forhold til land det er naturlig å sammenligne seg med. Direktoratet bes inkludere en sammenligning og vurdering av dette i sitt svar på oppdraget.

Direktoratet bes vurdere læreplanen i norsk inkl. vurdering i faget (standpunktvurdering og eksamen) knyttet til hovedmål og sidemål. Forslag til endringer på dette området må varsles og drøftes med departementet på et så tidlig tidspunkt som mulig.

Arbeidet med gjennomgangen av norskfaget må ses i sammenheng med oppfølgingen av

Østbergutvalgets innstilling.

Læreplanen i fellesfaget norsk ligger til grunn for opplæringen i norsk for elever med samisk eller finsk som andrespråk. Eventuelle endringer i fellesfaget norsk må gjøres kjent for Sametinget, slik at de kan vurdere om det bør få konsekvenser for læreplanene i samisk språk.

En arbeidsgruppe som har sett på fag- og timefordeling for samiske elever er i ferd med å ferdigstille sin rapport. Departementet er kjent med at rapporten vil peke på utfordringer i opplæringen i norsk for elever som har samisk som andrespråk, og ber om at direktoratet gjør seg kjent med forslagene i rapporten.

I arbeidet med revideringen av læreplanen i fellesfaget norsk, må direktoratet også utrede evt. konsekvenser for andre læreplaner i norsk.

### **Særlig om engelskfaget**

Vi viser til oppdragsbrev 36-10 om gjennomgang av fag- og timefordelingen for fellesfagene i yrkesfaglige utdanningsprogram i videregående opplæring. Revidering av læreplanen i engelsk, som også omfatter vurdering i faget (standpunktvurdering og eksamen), må ses i sammenheng med oppdrag 36-10.

### **Særlig om naturfag**

I svar på oppdragsbrev 22-09 B anbefaler direktoratet at kompetansemålene i naturfag ikke endres, men at definisjonene av de grunnleggende ferdighetene å lese og å skrive tydeliggjøres. Departementet registrerer at det er ulike synspunkter på behovet for endringer i læreplanen i naturfag. I lys av dette og at revideringsoppdraget omfatter alle de grunnleggende ferdighetene, legger departementet til grunn at det er behov for en bredere gjennomgang også av læreplanen i naturfag.

### **Generelt**

- 1) De reviderte læreplanene skal fremstå som gode eksempler på språkbruk, uavhengig av språkform. Det er viktig at innholdet i læreplanene skal kunne forstås av alle brukergrupper. Så langt mulig, og i tråd med fagenes egenart, skal læreplanene framstå med enhetlig språkføring og begrepsbruk.
- 2) Gjennomgangen av læreplanene skal ha et særlig fokus på grunnleggende ferdigheter. Det må legges vekt på god progresjon og godt samsvar i og på tvers av alle læreplanene som omfattes av dette oppdragsbrevet. Dette gjelder både kompetansemål som beskriver innlæring av bestemte ferdigheter og kompetansemål som beskriver anvendelse og videreutvikling av de samme ferdighetene.
- 3) Evt. andre endringer i læreplanene vurderes parallelt.
- 4) Evt. endringer i vurderingsordningene i fagene foreslås samtidig med evt. andre endringer i læreplanene.
- 5) Eventuelle endringer i læreplanene må også omfatte parallelle, likeverdige samiske læreplaner.
- 6) Dette oppdraget ses i sammenheng med oppdraget om å sammenlikne ambisjonsnivå i læreplaner på tvers av land, som er et ledd i arbeidet med ungdomstrinnsmeldingen og som har frist til departementet 1. januar 2011.

Departementet ønsker å bli holdt orientert underveis i arbeidsprosessen.

Oppdraget skal gjennomføres innenfor eksisterende budsjetttramme.

Med hilsen

Johan Raaum (e.f.)  
ekspedisjonssjef

Jorunn Berntzen  
seniorrådgiver

## Appendix 2

### **“Summary of feedback on the hearing statement and recommendations to the changes in the English Curriculum”**

## VEDLEGG 1

# Oppsummering av høringsuttalelsene og tilråding til endringer i læreplanen i engelsk og i læreplanen i engelsk for døve og sterkt tunghørte

### Bakgrunn

Nedenfor følger Utdanningsdirektoratets oppsummering og vurdering av høringsuttalelsene og tilråding til endringer i læreplanene i engelsk og engelsk for døve og sterkt tunghørte (avsnitt 7). Våre forslag til endrede læreplaner finner dere i vedlegg 1A engelsk, og 1B engelsk for døve og sterkt tunghørte.

### Kort oppsummering

152 instanser har levert høringsuttalelse til revidert læreplan i engelsk. 15 av disse har ingen merknader til høringen.

Høringsinstansene støtter justering av formålet, deling av hovedområdet *Kommunikasjon*, og tydeliggjøring av *mundtlige ferdigheter* og *å kunne lese*. Instansene er positive til konkretiseringen av kompetansemål på 2. og 7. trinn. Videregående skoler støtter videreføringen av én standpunkt karakter.

Innholdet i hovedområdet *Språk og språklæring* blir ikke støttet. Videre mener instansene at ambisjonsnivået er hevet etter revideringen, og de etterlyser en klarere progresjon mellom trinnene.

Vi har på bakgrunn av høringen forslag til følgende:

- gjennomgående språklige justeringer
- presisering av det utvidede tekstbegrepet og digitale formkrav
- justering og flytting av kompetansemål
- betegnelsen *Språklæring* blir beholdt som i gjeldende plan

## 1. Instansenes syn på forslag til revidert formål

### Oppsummering av høringsuttalelsene

121 instanser uttalte seg om hvorvidt endringene av ord og begreper gjør formålet mer presist. 81 % av disse støtter endringene (59 helt enig og 39 delvis enig). Instansene peker blant annet på følgende:

- Flott at *tekstbegrepet* er definert i formålet
- Fornuftig å endre *tværfaglig* til *faglig* i forbindelse med emner det kommuniseres om, noe som innebærer større fleksibilitet
- Positivt at teksten forenkles til ett samlebegrep: *engelskspråklige land*
- Positivt at de språklige presiseringene endres fra det å kunne *mestre* til å kunne *bruke* for å gi rom for ulike kompetansenivåer

3 % av instansene støtter ikke endringene i formålet, og 16 % krysser av for verken/eller. I kommentarene viser instansene til at endringene er uinteressante for yrkesfaglige elever.

Noen instanser har innvendinger til forslaget til revidert formål. Selv om instansene uttaler at formålet er tydeligere for alle brukere av læreplanen, har flere høringsinstanser forslag til omformuleringer av de to første setningene. Østfold fylkeskommune, Høgskolen i Oslo og Akershus og videregående skoler foreslår å erstatte dette med at engelsk er et *verdensspråk*.

Flere instanser mener at begrepet *mundlig tekst* er unaturlig og nytt, samtidig som andre instanser mener dette åpner opp for bredere bruk av lærestoff. Videregående skoler og grunnskoler mener det ikke er samsvar mellom høringen om muntlig eksamen og høringen om reviderte læreplaner i forbindelse med bruk av Power Point presentasjoner. I den forbindelse er flere instanser i tvil om det utvidede tekstbegrepet kommer godt nok fram i formålet.

### **Direktoratets vurdering og tilråding**

Utdanningsdirektoratet har vurdert forslag til endringer og foreslår justeringer for å gjøre formålet mer presist. Kommentarene om å endre de to første setningene finner vi hensiktsmessige da dette er i tråd med engelskspråkets stilling i verden. Videre foreslår vi å presisere det utvidede tekstbegrepet etter innspill fra instansene.

Når det gjelder begrepet *mundlig tekst*, foreslår flere instanser å bruke *mundlig presentasjon*. Utdanningsdirektoratet tilrår å benytte *mundlige tekster* i læreplanen slik det fremkommer i de beskrivende tekstene. *Mundlig tekst* er innlemmet i det utvidede tekstbegrepet for å åpne opp for utvidet bruk av digitale ressurser i språklæring, og for å inspirere til ulike typer muntlige tekster fra forskjellige kilder. Dette gir mulighet for variert og praktisk undervisning. Videre mener vi det henger sammen med å gjøre læreplanen tilgjengelig og brukbar for voksne deltagere og minoritetsspråklige.

Etter en samlet vurdering av høringsuttalelsene har vi forslag til endringer i formålet. Endringene baserer seg også på endringer foretatt i hovedområder og kompetansemål som krever endring i formålet. Dette gjør at det er sammenheng mellom formål, hovedområder og kompetansemål.

## **2. Instansenes syn på deling av hovedområdet *Kommunikasjon* Oppsummering av høringsuttalelsene**

### **2.1 Hovedområdene *Mundlig kommunikasjon* og *Skriftlig kommunikasjon***

121 instanser uttalte seg om hvorvidt deling av hovedområdet *Kommunikasjon* til *Mundlig kommunikasjon* og *Skriftlig kommunikasjon* bidrar til å tydeliggjøre grunnleggende ferdigheter i engelsk. 92 % av instansene støtter denne delingen (91 helt enig og 21 delvis enig). Under følger en sammenstilling av kommentarene:

#### Nasjonale sentre og høyskoler mener:

- Delingen i to hovedområder her er veldig bra, nyttig og nødvendig
- Det er helt klart at de grunnleggende ferdighetene som er sentrale i engelsk, kommer tydeligere fram

#### Fylkeskommuner og kommuner mener:

- Det er positivt å dele hovedområdet da mange elever har ulike forutsetninger
- Dette bidrar til mer fokus på de muntlige ferdighetene, samt sidestiller muntlig og skriftlig
- Det gis også en god beskrivelse av muntlige ferdigheter – i tråd med det europeiske rammeverket
- Skillet mellom skriftlig og muntlig kommunikasjon er viktig og riktig. Dette er bra
- Bidrar til å tydeliggjøre grunnleggende ferdigheter i engelsk. Skaper god oversikt

#### Videregående skoler og grunnskoler mener:

- Inndelingen er mye tydeligere, gjør arbeidet med å vurdere muntlig kompetanse enklere
- Muntlig blir beskrevet som vanlig muntlig engelsk, ikke nødvendigvis skriftlig engelsk lest høyt. Dette er positivt
- Delingen virker fornuftig, lettere å klargjøre for eleven hva som er knyttet til hvert hovedområde
- Dette vil gjøre ferdighetene tydeligere både for oss og elevene. Det kan også bidra til mestringfølelse for elevene som sliter skriftlig, men er flinke muntlig.

- Separate kompetansemål vi gi disse elevene mål de kan lykkes med. Forandringene gjør kompetansemålene også enklere for oss lærere - enklere å skille ferdighetene når vi planlegger
- Dette likte vi veldig godt, mer konkret, ryddig og oversiktlig
- Dette bidrar til en bevisstgjøring av begge ferdighetene

3 instanser krysser av for helt/delvis uenig, og 6 instanser for verken/eller. Kommentarene viser at instansene likevel er enige i selve delingen, men mener at språket er utydelig og at kompetansemålene er upresise. Instansene peker også på at utfordringene i engelsk ikke ligger i delingen av et hovedområde, men uttaler at så lenge det er en felles eksamen på videregående, vil ikke delingen tjene yrkesfaglige elever.

Instanser som er delvis enige eller delvis uenige, påpeker at det er språklige svakheter i tekstene som gjør budskapet utydelig, og de mener en språklig presisering er nødvendig. Fremmedspråksenteret stiller spørsmål ved om å kunne skrive er godt nok beskrevet under skriftlig kommunikasjon sammenlignet med å kunne lese.

## 2.2 Hovedområdet Språk og språklæring

I revideringen er navnet på hovedområdet *Språklæring* endret til *Språk og språklæring*. Dette var ikke et spørsmål i høringen, men ble omtalt i høringsbrevet. Noen instanser kommenterer at endringen er god, mens andre synes det er forvirrende. Flytting av kompetansemål fra gjeldende hovedområde *Kommunikasjon* til *Språk og språklæring* støttes. Samtidig opplever instansene at hovedområdet *Språk og språklæring* er blitt "en diversepost med ymse innhold". Blant annet mener de at kompetansemål som er knyttet til å kunne regne bør ligge i *Muntlig kommunikasjon*. Instansene uttaler også at kompetansemål om lytte- og talestrategier bør ligge i *Muntlig kommunikasjon*, og kompetansemål om lese- og skrivestrategier bør ligge i *Skriftlig kommunikasjon*.

### Direktoratets vurdering og tilråding

Utdanningsdirektoratet har vurdert forslag til endringer og foreslår justeringer for å gjøre hovedområdene mer presise i språk og innhold. Det er stor oppslutning om deling av hovedområdet *Kommunikasjon* som et ledd i å tydeliggjøre grunnleggende ferdigheter i engelsk. Kommentarene om språklige forbedringer og innspillene om i hvilke hovedområder enkelte kompetansemål bør plasseres, finner vi hensiktsmessige. Med nevnte justeringer og flytting av kompetansemål fra hovedområdet *Språk og språklæring* til henholdsvis *Muntlig kommunikasjon* og *Skriftlig kommunikasjon* er det ikke lenger hensiktsmessig å endre gjeldende navn på hovedområdet *Språklæring*.

Etter en samlet vurdering av høringsuttalelsene foreslår vi å justere de beskrivende tekstene i hovedområdene, flytte kompetansemål mellom hovedområdene og beholde navnet *Språklæring*. Dette gjør at det er sammenheng mellom hovedområder og kompetansemål.

## 3. Instansenes syn på forslag til reviderte tekster om grunnleggende ferdigheter

### Oppsummering av høringsuttalelsene

64 instanser uttalte seg om hvorvidt tekstene om de grunnleggende ferdighetene tydeliggjør hva dette innebærer i faget engelsk. 45 % av instansene er delvis enige, og 44 % av instansene svarer kun med kommentarer, eller krysser av for verken/eller. 6 instanser støtter ikke revideringen (3 delvis uenig og 3 helt uenig). Uavhengig av hva instansene har krysset av for, er kommentarene både støttende og kritiske til tekstene om de grunnleggende ferdighetene. Derfor følger et utvalg kommentarer fra alle svarkategorier, uavhengig av om de støtter påstanden eller ikke ved avkrysning:

#### Positiv:

Høgskoler mener:



- Det er ryddig og nyttig å ha fått med en del om "utviklingen av..." i forbindelse med alle de grunnleggende ferdighetene.

Kommuner mener:

- Tekstene synliggjør på en god måte hva grunnleggende ferdigheter innebærer i faget engelsk.

Videregående skoler mener:

- Den grunnleggende ferdigheten «å kunne lese» er styrket ved å introdusere uttrykkene «selvvalgte tekster, emner». Dette er også positivt dersom læreplanen skal være mer relevant for elevgruppene vi underviser.

**Kritisk:**

Fremmedspråksenteret mener:

- Bliir beskrivelsene for omfattende, og vil de oppleves som svært krevende for lærerne?

Videregående skoler mener:

- Tungt språk og vanskelig å oppfatte, også for lærere.
- Viktig å være konkret med tanke på felles forståelse.
- Det virker oppkonstruert og for krevende. Må forenkles.

**Både positiv og kritisk:**

Høgskoler mener:

- Det er fint at muntlige og skriftlige ferdigheter omtales hver for seg under overskriften Grunnleggende ferdigheter. Men det er IKKE bra at beskrivelsen av Å kunne skrive i engelsk kun tar for seg skriftlige ferdigheter som skal utvikles, og ikke berører skrivning som et redskap for språklæring.

Kommuner mener:

- Teksten er gjennomgående tydelig og riktig, men noen begreper kan tydeliggjøres i noen grad.

Videregående skoler mener:

- Ryddig, men det er svært ambisiøst.
- Klare og konkrete tekster - bra! Men kanskje litt stort fokus på "Å kunne regne" i forhold til kompetansemålene i faget.
- Enig, men noen uttrykk bør forenkles eller utdypes.
- God konkretisering, men gjør dem kortere og mer presise.

Grunnskoler mener:

- Tydeliggjør hvilke ferdigheter som hører hjemme hvor, bra! Den relativt omfattende teksten kan være med på å understreke betydningen av de grunnleggende ferdighetene.

Instansene er positive til at *muntlige ferdigheter* og *å kunne skrive* er beskrevet hver for seg sammenlignet med gjeldende plan hvor de er slått sammen. De uttaler at dette er ryddig, og at tekstene generelt synliggjør de grunnleggende ferdighetene på en klargjørende måte. I tillegg er instansene positive til beskrivelsen av utviklingen av ferdighetene. Samtidig uttrykker mange instanser at innholdet er utilgjengelig fordi tekstene er omfattende og tungt formulert. De mener begreper må presiseres og at språket må forenkles. Når det gjelder *å kunne regne* og *digitale ferdigheter*, påpeker instansene at de omfattende tekstene ikke er i samsvar med antall kompetansemål, hvor disse ferdighetene eksplisitt er uttrykt.

**Direktoratets vurdering og tilråding**

Utdanningsdirektoratet har vurdert innspillene og foreslår språklige justeringer og omformuleringer. Vi foreslår å forkorte teksten om *å kunne regne* slik at den presiserer hva ferdigheten skal innebære i faget engelsk. Når det gjelder *digitale ferdigheter*, mener vi det er nødvendig å beholde mengden tekst for å belyse hva ferdigheten innebærer i engelskfaget, selv om instansene påpeker at dette står i et misforhold til antall kompetansemål. Vi mener dette er underordnet siden instansene etterspør en presisering av ferdigheten og definisjon av begreper.

Etter en samlet vurdering av høringsuttalelsene har vi forslag til endringer av de beskrivende tekstene om grunnleggende ferdigheter. Endringene baserer seg på innspill fra høringsuttalelsene, og på endringer foretatt i kompetansemål og hovedområder. Dette gjør at det gjennomgående er sammenheng i læreplanen.

## 4. Instansenes syn på om kompetansemålene uttrykker tydelig progresjon i de grunnleggende ferdighetene

### 4.1 Hovedtendenser

114 instanser uttalte seg om hvorvidt kompetansemålene i engelsk uttrykker tydelig progresjon i de grunnleggende ferdighetene.

Om vi vurderer tallmaterialet isolert, mener instansene at kompetansemålene uttrykker tydelig progresjon i *muntlige ferdigheter* (70 % enige) og *å kunne lese* (67 % enige). Til sammenligning er instansene mindre fornøyde når det gjelder *å kunne skrive* (43 % enige). Det er svært få instanser som har valgt svarkategoriene helt/delvis uenig. Derimot er det mange instanser i svarkategorien verken/eller. Noen instanser kommenterer kun enkelte kompetansemål, eller enkelte ferdigheter på enkelte trinn, og instansene berører da ikke progresjonen i de grunnleggende ferdighetene i kompetansemålene.

### 4.2 Muntlige ferdigheter

#### Oppsummering av høringsuttalelsene

70 % av instansene (52 helt enig og 28 delvis enig) er enige i at kompetansemålene i engelsk uttrykker tydelig progresjon i muntlige ferdigheter. Kommentarene viser at instansene mener progresjonen er ivaretatt i denne ferdigheten.

I revisjonen av læreplanen er muntlige ferdigheter konkretisert gjennom et eget hovedområde: *Muntlig kommunikasjon*. Konsekvensen av dette er en økning av antall kompetansemål. Instansene mener dette er et forståelig grep, men foreslår samtidig å redusere antall mål ved å slå sammen tre kompetansemål til ett på 2. trinn og på Vg1 SF/Vg2 YF. Parallelt med dette har barneskoler uttrykt at kompetansemålene på 2. trinn er tydelige og gjennomførbare selv om antallet har økt, nettopp fordi målene er konkrete og presise.

#### Direktoratets vurdering og tilråding

Utdanningsdirektoratet har vurdert innspill og forslag til sammenslåing av kompetansemål. Vi er enige med instansene i at kompetansemål under *Muntlig kommunikasjon* til en viss grad overlapper hverandre, samtidig som vi mener at målene er konkrete. Vi foreslår å slå sammen to av målene på 2. trinn og Vg1 SF/Vg2 YF der innholdet likevel blir beholdt.

### 4.3 Å kunne skrive

#### Oppsummering av høringsuttalelsene

43 % av instansene (46 helt enig og 3 delvis enig) er enige i at kompetansemålene i engelsk uttrykker tydelig progresjon i *å kunne skrive*.

Hovedtendensen i alle 114 uttalelser er at progresjonen i kunnskap om grammatikk, språkets formverk og tekststruktur ønskes videreført på alle trinn. Utdanningsforbundet etterspør tydeligere krav til kompetanse når det gjelder formverket i engelsk. De peker på at dette er ivaretatt etter 4. og 7. trinn, og at progresjonen er relativt tydelig mellom disse trinnene. Etter 10. trinn og Vg1 SF/Vg2 YF finner de ikke igjen denne kompetansen. Høgskoler, fylkeskommuner, kommuner, videregående skoler og grunnskoler etterlyser samme kompetanse og progresjon.

Fremmedspråksenteret mener det mangler tydelig progresjon i *å kunne skrive* mellom 4. og 7. trinn, og mellom 10. trinn og Vg1 SF/Vg2 YF. De påpeker at den skriftlige ferdigheten uttrykkes med få kompetansemål sammenlignet med leseferdigheten.

ILS og Nasjonalt senter for skriveopplæring og skriveforskning mener at revisjonskompetanse må beskrives i teksten om *å kunne skrive* og tydeliggjøres i kompetansemål under *Skriftlig kommunikasjon*. I den reviderte læreplanen er det ett kompetansemål som fordrer revisjonskompetanse på 10. trinn og ett på Vg1 SF/Vg2 YF. Videregående skoler stiller spørsmål ved hvordan dette skal vurderes, og påpeker at lærere kun kan vurdere resultatet av læringsprosesser og læringsstrategier. De uttrykker at dette handler om metode og ønsker å stryke dette kompetansemålet. Videregående skoler med yrkesfaglig utdanningsprogram viser til at timefordelingen (3+2) gjør faget engelsk til et presset fag med sluttvurdering på Vg2. De minner om at elevene/deltakerne kan ha skiftet skole, læremidler og lærer mellom Vg1 og Vg2 i tillegg til at de er ute i praksis i Vg2. På bakgrunn av dette mener de at dette kompetansemålet ikke er gjennomførbart. Videregående skoler stiller også spørsmål ved om dette er en særskilt egenskap ved engelskfaget.

Ungdomsskoler gir tydelig uttrykk for at timetallet ikke legger til rette for prosessmetodikk. De påpeker her timeoverføringen fra ungdomstrinnet til barnetrinnet og innføring av valgfag som problematisk i gjennomføringen av faget engelsk som et eksamensfag, og som et fag med standpunktkarakterer.

#### **Direktoratets vurdering og tilråding**

Utdanningsdirektoratet har vurdert innspill og forslag til å utvide og å stryke kompetansemål. Vi foreslår å tydeliggjøre kompetansemål om språkets formverk og struktur slik at det blir progresjon fra 2. trinn til Vg1 SF/Vg2 YF. Vi foreslår justering av skriftlige ferdigheter på 4. trinn for å skape bedre progresjon til 7. trinn.

Vi fraråder å utvide revisjonskompetanse i engelsk på grunn av et allerede presset fag når det gjelder timetall og sluttvurdering. Vi tilrår å stryke målet siden dette er presisert, konkretisert og utdypet i norskfaget, og elevene/deltakerne får der en grunnleggende opplæring i, trening i og bruk av revisjonskompetanse gjennom hele skoleløpet. I tillegg mener vi at utformingen av kompetansemålene i engelskfaget ikke er til hinder for dette.

Etter en samlet vurdering av høringsuttalelsene har vi forslag til endringer og strykninger i kompetansemålene. Endringene baserer seg på innspill fra høringsuttalelsene, og på endringer foretatt i hovedområdene og i de beskrivende tekstene om grunnleggende ferdigheter. Dette gjør at det er gjennomgående sammenheng i læreplanen.

#### **4.4 Å kunne lese**

##### **Oppsummering av høringsuttalelsene**

67 % av instansene (53 helt enig og 23 delvis enig) er enige i at kompetansemålene i engelsk uttrykker tydelig progresjon i *å kunne lese*. Fremmedspråksenteret og videregående skoler mener det mangler tydelig progresjon i leseferdighet mellom 10. trinn og Vg1 SF/Vg2 YF. Nasjonalt senter for leseopplæring og leseforskning påpeker at det er et stort sprang i kompetansemålene fra 7. trinn til 10. trinn, og at videregående ikke når opp på refleksjonsnivå.

##### **Direktoratets vurdering og tilråding**

Utdanningsdirektoratet har vurdert innspill og forslag til endring av kompetansemål. Vi foreslår justeringer i kompetansemålene for å tydeliggjøre progresjonen. Justeringene baserer seg på innspill fra høringsuttalelsene, og på endringer foretatt i hovedområdene og i de beskrivende tekstene om grunnleggende ferdigheter. Dette gjør at det er gjennomgående sammenheng i læreplanen.

#### **4.5 Felles for å kunne skrive og å kunne lese**

##### **Oppsummering av høringsuttalelsene**

Alle 114 instansene ønsker spesifisering av hvilke typer tekster elevene/deltakerne skal lese/skrive, og hvilke typer sjangere som forventes. Organisasjoner, Utdanningsforbundet, fylkeskommuner, høyskoler og videregående skoler uttrykker i den forbindelse at det er problematisk og utfordrende med en felles læreplan for både studieforberevende utdanningsprogram og yrkesfaglige utdanningsprogram. Videregående skoler mener læreplanen for studieforberevende elever/deltakere er for lite ambisiøs, at den legger for svakt grunnlag for programfag i engelsk, og at den ikke bidrar til å gjøre dem studieforberevedte. For yrkesfaglige elever/deltakere uttaler videregående skoler at læreplanen er for generell og ikke forbereder dem på å kunne bruke engelsk som arbeidsspråk.

#### **Direktoratets vurdering og tilråding**

Utdanningsdirektoratet har vurdert innspill og forslag til spesifisering av tekster som skal leses og skrives. Vi er enig med instansene i at kompetansemålene slik de er utformet, kan oppleves vide, men utformingen legger til rette for ulike brukere av læreplanen og bidrar til tilpasset opplæring og metodefrihet. Instansenes forslag til kompetansemål er også begrunnet i ønsket om å presisere skjønnlitterære tekster under hovedområdet *Kultur, samfunn og litteratur* på 10. trinn og på Vg1 SF/Vg2 YF. Instansenes forslag vil være ekskluderende for enten studieforberevende eller yrkesfaglig utdanningsprogram. Så lenge det er én felles læreplan og eksamen på Vg1 SF/Vg2 YF, vil de foreslåtte, detaljerte kompetansemålene være til hinder for tilpasset opplæring og metodefrihet.

Etter en samlet vurdering av høringsuttalelsene tilrår vi ikke å endre *ulike typer tekster* til spesifikke sjangere eller lister med teksttyper på 10. trinn og Vg1 SF/Vg2 YF. Vi mener det utvidede tekstbegrepet skal inspirere til lesing/skriving av et mangfold av varierte teksttyper, og at bestemte sjangere på bestemte trinn er til hinder for tilrettelegging av undervisning, spesielt på yrkesfaglig utdanningsprogram, men også for voksne deltakere og minoritetsspråklige. Vi mener at utfordringen ikke ligger i åpne kompetansemål, men i én felles læreplan i videregående opplæring.

#### **4.6 Å kunne regne**

##### **Oppsummering av høringsuttalelsene**

54 % av instansene (43 helt enig og 18 delvis enig) er enige i at kompetansemålene i engelsk uttrykker tydelig progresjon i *å kunne regne*. Det er i denne ferdigheten vi finner flest instanser (39 %) som krysser av for verken/eller. 45 % av de videregående skolene (24 av 53 instanser) utgjør den største gruppen her.

Videregående skoler påpeker at kompetansemålene må presiseres for å få fram om elevene/deltakerne skal lære å regne i engelskfaget, eller om de skal lære ord og uttrykk som brukes i matematikk. Videre savner enkelte videregående skoler målbare kvaliteter om hva elevene/deltakerne forventes å produsere.

#### **Direktoratets vurdering og tilråding**

Utdanningsdirektoratet har vurdert innspill og forslag til endring av kompetansemål. Vi tilrår justering av kompetansemål siden vi foreslår justering av beskrivelsen av *å kunne regne* som grunnleggende ferdighet, se avsnitt 3. Dette mener vi klargjør hva det vil si å kunne regne i faget engelsk.

#### **4.7 Digitale ferdigheter**

##### **Oppsummering av høringsuttalelsene**

57 % av instansene (45 helt enig og 20 delvis enig) er enige i at kompetansemålene i engelsk uttrykker tydelig progresjon i digitale ferdigheter. Senter for IKT i utdanningen er uenig i dette. De mener den generelle beskrivelsen av digitale ferdigheter inneholder mange perspektiver, men påpeker at det mangler kompetansemål som treffer det spesielle ved det digitale engelskfaget.

De viser til Rammeverket for grunnleggende ferdigheter og foreslår kompetansemål med ordlyd derfra.

På den andre siden uttrykker høgskolene at det ikke er enkelt å se hvordan digitale ferdigheter kan være spesielt knyttet til engelskkompetanse. Utdanningsforbundet stiller spørsmål ved om det er en sentral del av faget engelsk å kjenne til personvern og opphavsrett, mens videregående skoler støtter denne utvidelsen. Noen videregående skoler mener at kompetansemålene i stor grad er utydelige på hva som menes med kompetanse når det gjelder digitale ferdigheter. Andre videregående skoler mener de digitale målene er bedre formulert enn i gjeldende plan, siden kvalitetsforskjellene trer tydeligere fram. Fremmedspråksenteret etterlyser kompetansemål som fremhever hvordan IKT kan bidra til mer kreativ utfoldelse.

Når det gjelder progresjonen i digitale ferdigheter, mener Fremmedspråksenteret og enkelte videregående skoler at dette er utydelig mellom 4. - 7. trinn og mellom 10. trinn og Vg1 SF/Vg2 YF. Fagforum Vestfold mener progresjonen kunne vært mer presis, men fremholder at læreplanen skal gi skolene et profesjonelt handlingsrom i analyse av læreplanen.

#### **Direktoratets vurdering og tilråding**

Utdanningsdirektoratet har vurdert forslag til endring og tilføyelser av kompetansemål. Vi foreslår justering av kompetansemål for å bedre progresjonen, og å føye til et mål om digitale ferdigheter som kommunikasjonsverktøy på 7. trinn. Dette vil også bedre progresjonen på 10. trinn. Andre spesifikke forslag til kompetansemål anbefaler vi ikke å innlemme, da de ligger på et for høyt nivå for faget engelsk. Når instansene henviser til Rammeverket for grunnleggende ferdigheter, er vi enige i at dette er et godt verktøy for utforming av læreplaner, men det er hensiktsmessig å justere det til nivå og type fag.

Etter en samlet vurdering av høringsuttalelsene har vi forslag til justering og tilføyelser av kompetansemål. Justeringene baserer seg på innspill fra høringsuttalelsene, og på endringer foretatt i hovedområdene og i de beskrivende tekstene om grunnleggende ferdigheter. Dette gjør at det gjennomgående er sammenheng i læreplanen.

### **5. Kompetansemål: omfang og ambisjonsnivå**

#### **Oppsummering av høringsuttalelsene**

I høringsbrevet skrev Utdanningsdirektoratet at justeringene av læreplanene i engelsk og i engelsk for døve og sterkt tunghørte fører til noen flere kompetansemål, og at læreplanen er noe mer ordrik enn gjeldende plan. Videre påpekte vi at dette ikke nødvendigvis vil innebære en økning i arbeidsmengden.

Utdanningsforbundet, StatPed og skoler er enige med Utdanningsdirektoratet i dette. Likevel mener de planen kan bli for omfattende slik at det går på bekostning av faglig fordyping og kvalitet på opplæringen. Utdanningsforbundet foreslår at kompetansemål som ikke er sentrale i engelskfaget, strykes. Utdanningsforbundet, høgskoler og skoler uttrykker at kompetansemålene oppleves som vage og generelle, og at dette åpner for ulik vurderingspraksis som ikke er likeverdig. Dette henger sammen med kommentarene om hvorvidt de grunnleggende ferdighetene er tydeliggjort i kompetansemålene, se avsnitt 4.4. Instansene stiller spørsmål ved om kompetansemålene gir en tydelig nok beskrivelse av elevenes læringsutbytte.

Generelt mener instansene at økningen av antall kompetansemål er forståelig og logisk siden hovedområdet *Kommunikasjon* er delt. Dette grepet mener instansene er nyttig, klargjørende og uproblematisk. Instansene påpeker at innholdet i kompetansemålene har ført til et økt ambisjonsnivå. Nedenfor følger et utdrag av uttalelsene:

Utdanningsforbundet:

- Mange av kompetansemålene på de lavere trinnene er for ambisiøst formulert med tanke på alderstrinnet og de ferdighetene de fleste har i engelsk på dette stadiet.

#### Fremmedspråksenteret:

- På barnetrinnet er kompetansebeskrivelsene for lesing og skriving etter 4. trinn ganske krevende.

#### Videregående skoler:

- Læreplanens formulering vil stille enda høyere krav til elevene i forhold til modenhet og refleksjon. Dette er spesielt uheldig for elever på yrkesfaglige utdanningsprogram.

#### Ungdomsskoler:

- Målene er altfor ambisiøse i forhold til elevens alder, modenhet og timetall.
- På bakgrunn av færre timer i engelsk etter 2006 og innføring av valgfag mener vi at kompetansemålene for faget er for omfattende.
- Engelsk er tross alt et eksamensfag, men det speiles ikke i timetallet, derfor er det for ambisiøst.

#### Barneskoler

- Vi synes kravene ligger generelt høyt. Derimot synes vi kompetansemålene etter 2. årstrinn er tydelig formulert og oppnåelige.

### **Direktoratets vurdering og tilråding**

Utdanningsdirektoratet har vurdert innspill og forslag til endringer i kompetansemålene. Instansene er positive til flere kompetansemål så lenge de er konkrete. Instansene er kritiske til formuleringene av kompetansemålene, og vi foreslår justeringer slik at målene blir tilpasset nivå.

## **6. Vurderingsordningen**

### **Oppsummering av høringsuttalelsene**

Vurderingsordningen var ikke ute til høring, men for videregående opplæring ble dette omtalt i høringsbrevet.

#### **6.1 Standpunkt**

Videregående skoler støtter at det fortsatt er én standpunkt karakter i sluttvurderingen. Videregående skoler og ungdomsskoler påpeker at delingen av hovedområdet *Kommunikasjon* fører til at både skriftlige og muntlige ferdigheter blir tydeliggjort. De uttrykker at dette er til hjelp i underveis- og sluttvurderingen.

Ungdomsskolene mener det er hensiktsmessig med standpunkt karakter i både muntlig og skriftlig. Derimot påpeker de at krympet timetall gjør det lite gjennomførbart å drive underveisvurdering, og at sluttvurdering med to karakterer endrer undervisningen fra læring til dokumentering.

#### **6.2 Eksamen**

Utdanningsforbundet, andre organisasjoner, fylkeskommuner og videregående skoler ønsker ulik eksamen for studieforberedende utdanningsprogram (SF) og yrkesfaglig utdanningsprogram (YF) i videregående opplæring. De mener at dagens ordning ikke er hensiktsmessig verken for SF eller YF, da en felles læreplan gir generelle eksamensoppgaver hvor ingen av utdanningsprogrammene får vist sin kompetanse.

### **Direktoratets vurdering og tilråding**

Utdanningsdirektoratet har vurdert innspillene til vurderingsordningen. Faget engelsk i grunnskolen har færre undervisningstimer enn kroppsøving, samfunnsfag og kunst og håndverk som ikke er skriftlige eksamensfag med to standpunkt karakterer. Vi foreslår å justere kompetansemål for å gjøre læreplanen gjennomførbar med dagens timefordeling.

Enkelte fylkeskommuner og flere videregående skoler etterlyser lokalt gitt skriftlig eksamen. Vi ser av denne høringen, og av høringen om fag- og timefordeling, at skolene og partene i yrkeslivet ønsker å opprettholde felles nasjonal standard på eksamen. Siden første gangs gjennomføring av felles eksamen i engelsk for YF våren 2008 er strykprosenten redusert fra 15,6 % til 8,7 % våren 2012. Det har også vært en økning i antall elever ved YF som oppnår karakteren 4 og 5, samtidig som det har vært en reduksjon i antall elever som oppnår karakteren 2. Karakteren 3 er uforandret. Utdanningsdirektoratet tilrår på bakgrunn av dette, og på bakgrunn av at det er én felles læreplan, å videreføre én standpunktkarakter, og å videreføre sentralt gitt skriftlig eksamen for videregående opplæring.

## 7. Engelsk for døve og sterkt tunghørte

Vi ber om at læreplanene i engelsk for døve og sterkt tunghørte, læreplanen i norsk for døve og sterkt tunghørte og læreplanen i tegnspråk blir behandlet sammen på bakgrunn av § 2.6 og § 3.9 i opplæringsloven.

Endringer i læreplan i engelsk er også foretatt i læreplan i engelsk for døve og sterkt tunghørte. Oppsummeringen under vil derfor kun omhandle det som er spesifikt for sistnevnte plan. Endringene er foretatt så lenge det ikke strider mot høringsuttalelsene i læreplan i engelsk for døve og sterkt tunghørte. Siden det kun er 14 instanser som har uttalt seg, kommer vår vurdering og tilråding i avsnitt 7.4 og 7.5.

### Oppsummering av høringsuttalelsene

29 instanser har levert høringsuttalelse til revidert læreplan i engelsk. 15 av disse har ingen merknader til høringen.

#### 7.1 Instansenes syn på forslag til revidert formål

9 av 9 instanser er enige i at endringene av ord og begreper gjør formålet mer presist. StatPed uttaler at formålet synliggjør de endringene som har skjedd innenfor døvekultur. De støtter endringen til *å kunne bruke* da de mener dette relateres til praktisk språkbruk og er situasjonsbetinget. De er enige i at begrepet *flerspråklighet* er et mer innarbeidet begrep og fungerer bedre i denne sammenhengen. StatPed mener det er riktig å bruke ett begrep, *engelskspråklige land*, og begrepet *tekst* mer konsekvent og gjennomgående.

#### 7.2 Instansenes syn på deling av hovedområdet *Kommunikasjon*

8 av 9 instanser er enige i at delingen av hovedområdet *Kommunikasjon* bidrar til å tydeliggjøre grunnleggende ferdigheter i engelsk. Skoler mener deling av hovedområdet tydeliggjør hva som er målet med undervisningen, og opplever målene som generelt mer presise. StatPed har de samme innvendinger mot innholdet i *Språk og språklæring* som instansene i læreplanen i engelsk. StatPed er positiv til betegnelsen *Direkte kommunikasjon* fordi dette presiserer at elevgruppen er heterogen, og at de må bruke ulike modaliteter for å kommunisere ansikt-til-ansikt. StatPed mener det er avgjørende å gi elevene ulike kommunikasjonsmuligheter, slik at de kan vise sin kunnskap og sine ferdigheter hvis talespråket ikke er den mest effektive formen for den enkelte.

1 av 9 instanser krysser av for helt uenig. I kommentaren er instansen likevel enig i selve delingen, men er uenig i betegnelsen *Direkte kommunikasjon*, og sammenligner det med læreplanen i norsk for døve og sterkt tunghørte (*Muntlig kommunikasjon*) og læreplanen i tegnspråk (*Muntlig samhandling*).

Både StatPed og den uenige instansen er enige om at det ikke er rett å basere all skriftlig kommunikasjon på det muntlige, særlig hvis elevene bruker et tegnspråk som har en annen grammatikk enn engelsk, og de stiller spørsmål ved om det kan kreves av elevene at deres skriftlige produksjon også skal vurderes i muntlig.

### 7.3 Instansenes syn på forslag til reviderte tekster om grunnleggende ferdigheter

3 av 3 instanser er delvis enige i at tekstene tydeliggjør hva grunnleggende ferdigheter innebærer i faget engelsk for døve og sterkt tunghørte. StatPed mener at læreplanen tilbyr valgmuligheter med hensyn til muntlig samhandling. De uttaler at det er positivt at muntlige ferdigheter får en egen betegnelse i planen, *direkte kommunikasjon*, siden den da omfatter alle modaliteter. De påpeker at dette må brukes konsekvent for å hindre forvirring og feiltolkning.

StatPed mener det er positivt at det under digitale ferdigheter står *bruke...digitale verktøy...kommunisere på engelsk eller på tegnspråk*. I kompetansemålene som omhandler det digitale, fremholder StatPed viktigheten av at kommunikasjonsaspektet kommer fram. De minner om at det er avgjørende for døve og sterkt tunghørte å kunne utnytte dette verktøyet i sin kommunikasjon hvor talespråklige ferdigheter ikke strekker til. De påpeker at dette bør være gjennomgående i hele planen. De mener videre det er positivt at kravet til British Sign Language (BSL) er tonet ned, og at formuleringen *å uttrykke seg muntlig kan også omfatte bidrar til valgmuligheter*.

### 7.4 Instansenes syn på om kompetansemålene uttrykker tydelig progresjon i de grunnleggende ferdighetene

9 instanser uttalte seg om hvorvidt kompetansemålene i engelsk for døve og sterkt tunghørte uttrykker tydelig progresjon i de grunnleggende ferdighetene. Svarene fordelte seg slik:

Totalt 9	Muntlig	Skrive	Lese	Regne	Digital
<b>Helt enig</b>	6	6	5	5	5
<b>Delvis enig</b>	1	1	1	2	1
<b>Delvis uenig</b>					1
<b>Kun kommentar</b>	2	2	3	2	2

Vetland skole og ressurscenter for hørselshemmede uttrykker at forslaget til ny læreplan virker tydeligere og mer konkret. De mener at grunnleggende ferdigheter beskrives tydeligere, og at progresjonen kommer klarere fram.

StatPed ser økningen i antall kompetansemål, men synes ikke det er vesentlig hvis resultatet er en tydelig plan som bidrar til at undervisningsvurdering og elevveiledning blir enklere. De påpeker videre at timetallet i faget er knapt siden det er et eksamensfag med *mindre undervisningstid enn fag som ikke er eksamensfag*.

### Direktoratets vurdering og tilråding

Utdanningsdirektoratet har vurdert innspill og forslag til læreplanen i engelsk for døve og sterkt tunghørte. Vi tilrår at navnet på hovedområdet *Direkte kommunikasjon* blir beholdt. Selv om dette er forskjellig fra læreplan i norsk for døve og sterkt tunghørte og fra læreplan i tegnspråk, mener vi det er hensiktsmessig i engelskfaget for å tydeliggjøre at elevene/deltakerne får ulike kommunikasjonsmuligheter. Videre foreslår vi justeringer slik at:

- begrepet *tekst* og *direkte kommunikasjon* blir brukt gjennomgående og konsekvent
- det blir tydelig hva som skal vurderes skriftlig og muntlig
- digitale ferdigheter trer tydeligere fram i kompetansemålene

*Endringene baserer seg på justeringer i læreplan for engelsk, og på innspill fra høringsuttalelsene til læreplan i engelsk for døve og sterkt tunghørte.*

### 7.5 Oppsummering av generelle kommentarer

#### Behov for kvalifiserte lærere

##### Språkrådet:

- Det som skiller denne planen fra den ordinære læreplanen i engelsk, er at det her er opna for at munnleg språk kan romme meir enn talespråk. Elevane kan altså sjølv velje modalitet- engelsktale, britisk eller amerikansk teiknspråk (BSL/ASL), nettpratning og andre ulike kombinasjonar. Det er ei utfordring at få skular har kompetente lærarar som



kan tilby britisk og amerikansk teiknspråk slik at elevane har eit reelt val i direkte kommunikasjon. For å kunne gjennomføre dette er det viktig at det finst nok lærarar med kompetanse. Kompetanse i engelsktale, britisk og amerikansk teiknspråk og skriftleg engelsk sikrar at denne gruppa òg får ein valfri tilgang til høgare utdanning både i Noreg og i utlandet. Dette kan bidra til auka deltaking i arbeidslivet for ei gruppe der arbeidsløysa i dag er høg. Det må òg sikrast god informasjon om denne planen i skulane, no som tre skuleavdelingar for høyrselshemma blir lagde ned i 2014.

StatPed:

- Forskning viser at færre lærere som underviser døve og sterkt tunghørte på barnetrinnet har formelle kvalifikasjoner i faget engelsk enn lærere for øvrig (Pritchard, 2004). Samtidig vet vi at engelsk kompetanse blant øvrige lærere er svært lav på barneskoletrinnene. Døve elever trenger lærere med høy kompetanse i språket engelsk, et engelskspråklig tegnspråk og didaktikk. Imidlertid er det ingen krav om formelle kvalifikasjoner for lærere som skal undervise i fagene for døve og sterkt tunghørte elever. Erfaring viser at det er svært vanskelig å få i gang videreutdanning i faget engelsk for døve og sterkt tunghørte på høyskolene fordi målgruppen er liten. Dermed tjener ikke høyskolene på å holde slike kurs. Dette gjelder også for de andre fagene for døve og sterkt tunghørte. Her må Departementet/Staten ta ansvar: skal vi ha «inkludering», må vi ha kvalifiserte lærere. Her er det snakk om språklige ferdigheter og faglig kompetanse. Det kan ikke StatPed formidle gjennom noen kortvarige kurs.

**Sluttvurdering – eksamen**

StatPed:

- Elevgruppen er svært heterogen. Noen elever oppnår over middels kompetanse i engelsk, mens for noen døve og sterkt tunghørte er engelsk et tredjespråk og endog et fjerde språk. Det er derfor viktig at elevgruppen fortsetter å få en egen eksamen som kan ta høyde for den store variasjonen.
- I dag er eksamen på ungdomstrinnet en tilrettelegging av den ordinære eksamen og eksamensformen oppleves som unødig komplisert. På det videregående trinnet er det også et problem at yrkesfaglige elever og studieforbereidende elever har samme plan og samme eksamen, siden de har ulike behov og opplever forskjellige pragmatiske situasjoner, både muntlig og skriftlig.

**Opplæring etter § 2,6 og § 3,9**

StatPed:

- Det har vært ulik praksis på grunnskolen og i videregående opplæring ift om det er obligatorisk å følge alle læreplaner for døve og sterkt tunghørte eller om det er mulig å velge fritt. Siden prinsippet om tilpasset opplæring er gjeldende, bør det være mulig å velge hvilke læreplan den enkelte skal følge i de ulike fagene. Erfaring viser at flere elever bytter læreplaner i løpet av skolekarrieren, fordi deres utvikling går i denne ene eller det andre utdanningsprogrammet – noe som er umulig å forutsi. Flexibilitet er ønskelig.
- Vi ser at det er store utfordringer for kommunale skoler som skal gjennomføre læreplanen i engelsk for døve og sterkt tunghørte å skaffe nødvendig kompetanse for å gjennomføre opplæringen. Ordningen med denne læreplanen bør tas opp til diskusjon.
- Det bør (nok en gang!) vurderes hvorvidt det må være slik at "§ 2.6-elever" må følge alle fagplanene for døve og sterkt tunghørte. Det er per i dag usikkert hvor mange av deltidslevene (§ 2.6) som faktisk følger engelskplanen for døve og tunghørte.

**Direktoratets vurdering og tilråding**

Utdanningsdirektoratet har vurdert innspillene til læreplan i engelsk for døve og sterkt tunghørte. Vi tilrår at ordningen med egen eksamen blir videreført. Vi tilrår også en vurdering av ordningen

med læreplanen i engelsk for døve og sterkt tunghørte og om hvorvidt elevene/deltakerne må følge alle læreplanene.

Når det gjelder andre innspill til høringen kan det vurderes å iverksette tiltak for å styrke tilgangen på kvalifiserte lærere, og vurderes å sette krav til formelle kvalifikasjoner for lærere som skal undervise i fagene for døve og sterkt tunghørte elever.

## **8. Andre innspill til læreplanen i engelsk**

Denne høringen handler om å tydeliggjøre progresjonen i de grunnleggende ferdighetene i engelskfaget. Instansene uttaler seg i tillegg om følgende:

### **8.1 Timefordeling for YF på Vg1 og Vg2**

Instanser melder om uheldige sider ved 3+2 modellen. De uttrykker at 2+3 vil være mer hensiktsmessig siden sluttvurderingen ligger på Vg2 for YF. Denne høringen, og høringen om fag- og timefordelingen, viser at instansene og partene i yrkeslivet ikke ønsker en reduksjon i timetall.

### **8.2 Én felles læreplan i videregående opplæring**

Utdanningsforbundet, fylkeskommuner og videregående skoler uttrykker et behov for likeverdige, men delte læreplaner for SF og YF.

### **8.3 Adskilte kompetansemål for Vg1 YF og Vg2 YF**

Instansene uttaler at ordningen med én felles læreplan vil være mer hensiktsmessig med spesifikke og adskilte mål for Vg1 YF og Vg2 YF. De mener dette vil være retningsgivende for eksamen og underveisvurdering, og til hjelp siden elevene/deltakerne bytter skole, læremidler og lærer mellom Vg1 og Vg2.

## **9. Implementering av endringer i engelsk**

Utdanningsdirektoratet har som del av oppdragsbrev 42-10 fått i oppdrag å utarbeide en plan for implementering av reviderte læreplaner i engelsk, matematikk, naturfag, norsk og samfunnsfag. Planen tar utgangspunkt i at det ikke nødvendigvis er tilstrekkelig å tydeliggjøre de grunnleggende ferdighetene i selve læreplandokumentene, men at det også må følge med tiltak som kan bidra til å styrke implementeringen.

For å sikre at skolene får støtte i sitt arbeid med å ta i bruk de reviderte læreplanene, revideres veiledningene til hvert av de aktuelle fagene. Veiledningene skal foreligge ved skolestart, samtidig med at læreplanene skal tas i bruk. Målet med veiledningen i engelskfaget er å gjøre den mer brukervennlig slik at den kan bli en reell støtte i arbeidet med reviderte planer.

De nasjonale sentrene har fått i oppdrag å sørge for å utvikle og videreutvikle pedagogisk støttemateriell til de reviderte læreplanene, og sørge for at dette er tilgjengelig på deres nettsider høsten 2013. Samme høst skal det arrangeres fylkesvise samlinger, hvor lokalt arbeid med læreplaner, grunnleggende ferdigheter og de reviderte læreplanene med kjennetegn på måloppnåelse står på dagsorden. Lokalt arbeid med læreplaner og grunnleggende ferdigheter er også tatt inn som tema i skoleutviklingsverktøyet Ståstedsanalysen. I tillegg er Veiledning i lokalt arbeid med læreplaner under revisjon for å tydeliggjøre hva det lokale arbeidet med læreplaner skal innebære. Samlet sett skal disse tiltakene bidra til å styrke implementeringen av LK06 generelt, med særskilt fokus på de reviderte læreplanene i engelsk, matematikk, naturfag, norsk og samfunnsfag.

## Appendix 3

### The changes in the National Curriculum

# Endringer i læreplanene i engelsk og engelsk for døve og sterkt tunghørte

## Formål

Formålet er justert og følgende elementer er fremhevet:

- Engelsk som verdensspråk
- Engelsk som arbeidsspråk
- Det utvidede tekstbegrepet

## Hovedområder

Hovedområdet Kommunikasjon er delt. Det er nå fire hovedområder:

- Språklæring
- Muntlig/Direkte kommunikasjon
- Skriftlig kommunikasjon
- Kultur, samfunn og litteratur

## Timetall

Timetallet er endret på ungdomstrinnet på grunn av innføring av valgfag. Timetallet er nå 222 timer på 8.-10. trinn.

## Grunnleggende ferdigheter

Tekstene om de grunnleggende ferdighetene omfatter en beskrivelse av hva hver ferdighet innebærer for engelskfaget, og hvordan ferdigheten utvikles.

- Å kunne uttrykke seg muntlig er endret til Muntlige ferdigheter
- Å kunne uttrykke seg skriftlig er endret til Å kunne skrive
- Å kunne bruke digitale verktøy er endret til Digitale ferdigheter
- Å kunne uttrykke seg skriftlig og muntlig er delt og endret til muntlige ferdigheter og å kunne skrive.
- Under Digitale ferdigheter er autentiske tekster og digitale formkrav forklart.

## Kompetansemål

De grunnleggende ferdighetene er tydeliggjort i kompetansemålene. Kompetansemålene har en sammenhengende progresjon gjennom hele opplæringsløpet.

## Vurdering

Det er ingen endringer i bestemmelser for sluttvurdering.

**Appendix 4**  
**Interview Guide**

## Interview Guide

Dear participant,

Please find below the questions I will ask you during the interview. Feel free to make notes prior to the interview and bring the notes along.

A consent-form has been attached to this interview guide. Please read it and bring it signed to the interview.

You will be notified of where and when the interview will take place.

I am very grateful for your participation and I believe that your contribution will shed light on a very interesting situation for all English teachers in Norway. I look forward to the interview and hope it goes well.

Best regards,

My Leirvaag

These are the questions I will ask during the interview:

Introduction:

Please make a brief introduction of yourself before we start:

- Age?
- Years taught?
- Level taught?

1) How do teachers work to meet the aims of the four main areas of the Curriculum? (-Language learning, -written communication, -spoken communication, -culture, society and literature)

2) Has the reduced number of lessons led to the exclusion of certain topics or reduced the focus on any of the four main areas of the curriculum? If so, which ones?

3) What strategies are teachers using to meet the adjusted communicative aims?

4) In what ways have the adjusted communicative aims in the curriculum affected the way you work with oral proficiency in the ESL classroom?

5) How and to what extent do teachers integrate oral proficiency into their teaching of - Language learning, - Written communication, - Culture, society and literature?

**Consent from the Norwegian Social Science Data Services**



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Norway  
Tel: +47 55 58 21 17  
Fax: +47 55 58 16 50  
nsd@nsd.uib.no  
www.nsd.uib.no  
Org nr: 985 921 884

Karen Knutsen

Fremmedspråksenteret (Nasjonalt senter for fremmedspråk i opplæringen) Høgskolen i Østfold

1757 HALDEN

Vår dato: 21.11.2013

Vår ref: 36269 / 2 / LT

Deres dato:

Deres ref:

## TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 11.11.2013. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

<i>36269</i>	<i>Fewer Lessons, More Goals; Meeting the adjusted aims of the 2013 English Subject Curriculum in Lower Secondary School in Norway</i>
<i>Behandlingsansvarlig</i>	<i>Høgskolen i Østfold, ved institusjonens øverste leder</i>
<i>Daglig ansvarlig</i>	<i>Karen Knutsen</i>
<i>Student</i>	<i>My Margareta Leirvaag</i>

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger er meldepliktig i henhold til personopplysningsloven § 31. Behandlingen tilfredsstiller kravene i personopplysningsloven.

Personvernombudets vurdering forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, ombudets kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, <http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/meldeplikt/skjema.html>. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, <http://pvo.nsd.no/prosjekt>.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 31.08.2014, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Vigdis Namtvedt Kvalheim

Lis Tenold

Kontaktperson: Lis Tenold tlf: 55 58 33 77

Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering

*Dokumentet er elektronisk produsert og godkjent ved NSDs rutiner for elektronisk godkjenning.*

*Avdelingskontoret / District Offices*

*OSLO: NSD, Universitetet i Oslo, Postboks 1055 Blindern, 0316 Oslo. Tel: +47 22 85 52 11. [nsd@uio.no](mailto:nsd@uio.no)*

*TRONDHEIM: NSD, Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet, 7491 Trondheim. Tel: +47 73 59 19 07. [kyrre.svarva@svt.ntnu.no](mailto:kyrre.svarva@svt.ntnu.no)*

*TROMSØ: NSD, SVE, Universitetet i Tromsø, 9037 Tromsø. Tel: +47 77 64 43 36. [nsdmaa@svt.no](mailto:nsdmaa@svt.no)*



Kopi: My Margareta Leirvaag myma@sf-nett.no

# Personvernombudet for forskning



## Prosjektvurdering - Kommentar

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Prosjektnr: 36269

Det gis skriftlig informasjon og innhentes skriftlig samtykke for deltakelse. Personvernombudet finner i utgangspunktet skrevet godt utformet, men forutsetter at følgende endres/tilføyes;

- navn og kontaktinformasjon til veileder førsteamanuensis Karen Knutsen
- dato for anonymisering av innsamlede opplysninger, her 31.08.2014

Personvernombudet legger til grunn for sin godkjenning at revidert skriv ettersendes [personvernombudet@nsd.uib.no](mailto:personvernombudet@nsd.uib.no) før det tas kontakt med utvalget (merk eposten med prosjektnummer).

Prosjektet skal avsluttes 31.08.2014 og innsamlede opplysninger skal da anonymiseres og lydopptak slettes. Anonymisering innebærer at direkte personidentifiserende opplysninger som navn/koblingsnøkkel slettes, og at indirekte personidentifiserende opplysninger (sammenstilling av bakgrunnsopplysninger som f.eks. yrke, alder, kjønn) fjernes eller grovkategoriseres slik at ingen enkeltpersoner kan gjenkjennes i materialet.



## MELDESKJEMA

Meldeskjema (versjon 1.4) for forsknings- og studentprosjekt som medfører meldeplikt eller konsesjonsplikt (jf. personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter).

<b>1. Prosjekttittel</b>		
Tittel	"Fewer Lessons, More Goals; Meeting the adjusted aims of the 2013 English Subject Curriculum in Lower Secondary School in Norway"	
<b>2. Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon</b>		
Institusjon	Høgskolen i Østfold	Velg den institusjonen du er tilknyttet. Alle nivå må oppgis. Ved studentprosjekt er det studentens tilknytning som er avgjørende. Dersom institusjonen ikke finnes på listen, vennligst ta kontakt med personvernombudet.
Avdeling/Fakultet	Fremmedspråksenteret	
Institutt		
<b>3. Daglig ansvarlig (forsker, veileder, stipendiat)</b>		
Fornavn	Karen	Før opp navnet på den som har det daglige ansvaret for prosjektet. Veileder er vanligvis daglig ansvarlig ved studentprosjekt.  Veileder og student må være tilknyttet samme institusjon. Dersom studenten har ekstern veileder, kan biveileder eller fagansvarlig ved studiestedet stå som daglig ansvarlig. Arbeidssted må være tilknyttet behandlingsansvarlig institusjon, f.eks. underavdeling, institutt etc.  NB! Det er viktig at du oppgir en e-postadresse som brukes aktivt. Vennligst gi oss beskjed dersom den endres.
Etternavn	Patrick Knutsen	
Akademisk grad	Doktorgrad	
Stilling	Assoc.Professor	
Arbeidssted	Høgskolen i Østfold	
Adresse (arb.sted)	B R A veien 4	
Postnr/sted (arb.sted)	1757 Halden	
Telefon/mobil (arb.sted)	69215000 /	
E-post	karen.s.knutsen@hiof.no	
<b>4. Student (master, bachelor)</b>		
Studentprosjekt	Ja • Nei ○	NB! Det er viktig at du oppgir en e-postadresse som brukes aktivt. Vennligst gi oss beskjed dersom den endres.
Fornavn	My Margareta	
Etternavn	Leirvaag	
Akademisk grad	Høyere grad	
Privatadresse	Langgata 58	
Postnr/sted (privatadresse)	3187 Horten	
Telefon/mobil	92800410 /	
E-post	myrna@sf-nett.no	
<b>5. Formålet med prosjektet</b>		
Formål	I forbindelse med endret læreplan i engelsk (av juni 2013) ønsker jeg å skrive en master avhandling om temaet hvordan/om lærere i ungdomsskolen har endret sitt fokus, endret timeplanen, utelatt området grunnet ny tidsnød. Jeg ønsker å gjøre dette gjennom fokus gruppe intervjuer. Min oppgave vil hete: "Fewer Lessons, More Goals; Meeting the adjusted aims of the 2013 English Subject Curriculum in Lower Secondary School in Norway". Mitt research-spørsmål vil være: "How have the changes in the English Curriculum affected ESL teaching in Norwegian Lower Secondary School?" Det foreligger ingen undersøkelser på dette området foreløpig og jeg håper at dette vil være til hjelp for lærere, utdanningsdirektoratet og utdanningsinstitusjoner.	Redegjør kort for prosjektets formål, problemstilling, forskningsspørsmål e.l.  Maks 750 tegn.

<b>6. Prosjektomfang</b>		
Velg omfang	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Enkel institusjon</li> <li>○ Nasjonalt samarbeidsprosjekt</li> <li>○ Internasjonalt samarbeidsprosjekt</li> </ul>	Med samarbeidsprosjekt menes prosjekt som gjennomføres av flere institusjoner samtidig, som har samme formål og hvor personopplysninger utveksles.
Oppgi øvrige institusjoner		
Oppgi hvordan samarbeidet foregår		
<b>7. Utvalgsbeskrivelse</b>		
Utvalget	lærere på ungdomsskolenivå som underviser i engelsk. fra tre ulike ungdomsskoler. 4-5 lærere på hver skole.	Med utvalg menes dem som deltar i undersøkelsen eller dem det innhentes opplysninger om. F.eks. et representativt utvalg av befolkningen, skoleelever med lese- og skrivevansker, pasienter, innsatte.
Rekruttering og trekking	4 - 5 av alle engelsk lærere inviteres. Om flere ønsker å delta enn det er tenkt, vil utvalget tas ut ved loddtrekning.	Beskriv hvordan utvalget trekkes eller rekrutteres og oppgi hvem som foretar den. Et utvalg kan trekkes fra registre som f.eks. Folkeregisteret, SSB-registre, pasientregistre, eller det kan rekrutteres gjennom f.eks. en bedrift, skole, idrettsmiljø, eget nettverk.
Førstegangskontakt	Førstekontakt formidles først gjennom enhetsleder. Når klarsignal gis derfra, vil den enkelte kontaktes skriftlig og senere personlig.	Beskriv hvordan førstegangskontakten opprettes og oppgi hvem som foretar den.  Les mer om dette på våre temasider.
Alder på utvalget	<input type="checkbox"/> Barn (0-15 år) <input type="checkbox"/> Ungdom (16-17 år) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Voksne (over 18 år)	
Antall personer som inngår i utvalget	12 - 15 personer	
Inkluderes det myndige personer med redusert eller manglende samtykkekompetanse?	Ja ○ Nei ●	Begrunn hvorfor det er nødvendig å inkludere myndige personer med redusert eller manglende samtykkekompetanse.
Hvis ja, begrunn		Les mer om Pasienter, brukere og personer med redusert eller manglende samtykkekompetanse
<b>8. Metode for innsamling av personopplysninger</b>		
Kryss av for hvilke datainnsamlingsmetoder og datakilder som vil benyttes	<input type="checkbox"/> Spørreskjema <input type="checkbox"/> Personlig intervju <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gruppeintervju <input type="checkbox"/> Observasjon <input type="checkbox"/> Psykologiske/pedagogiske tester <input type="checkbox"/> Medisinske undersøkelser/tester <input type="checkbox"/> Journaldata <input type="checkbox"/> Registerdata <input type="checkbox"/> Annen innsamlingsmetode	Personopplysninger kan innhentes direkte fra den registrerte f.eks. gjennom spørreskjema, intervju, tester, og/eller ulike journaler (f.eks. elevmapper, NAV, PPT, sykehus) og/eller registre (f.eks. Statistisk sentralbyrå, sentrale helseregistre).
Annen innsamlingsmetode, oppgi hvilken		
Kommentar	Det er ikke tenkt at noen av de som skal delta skal avgi noen personlige opplysninger annet enn det som fremgår av spørsmålsoppsettet. Det er kun av interesse å vite antall år man har undervist, hvilket nivå og hvor gammel man er.	
<b>9. Datamaterialets innhold</b>		
Redegjør for hvilke opplysninger som samles inn	se vedlegg	Spørreskjema, intervju-/temaguide, observasjonsbeskrivelse m.m. sendes inn sammen med meldeskjemaet.  NB! Vedleggene lastes opp til sist i meldeskjema, se punkt 16 Vedlegg.

Samles det inn direkte personidentifiserende opplysninger?	Ja <input type="radio"/> Nei <input type="radio"/>	Dersom det krysses av for ja her, se nærmere under punkt 11 Informasjonssikkerhet.
Hvis ja, hvilke?	<input type="checkbox"/> 11-sifret fødselsnummer <input type="checkbox"/> Navn, fødselsdato, adresse, e-postadresse og/eller telefonnummer	Les mer om hva personopplysninger er
Spesifiser hvilke		NB! Selv om opplysningene er anonymiserte i oppgave/rapport, må det krysses av dersom direkte og/eller indirekte personidentifiserende opplysninger innhentes/registreres i forbindelse med prosjektet.
Samles det inn indirekte personidentifiserende opplysninger?	Ja <input type="radio"/> Nei <input type="radio"/>	En person vil være indirekte identifiserbar dersom det er mulig å identifisere vedkommende gjennom bakgrunnsopplysninger som for eksempel bostedskommune eller arbeidsplass/skole kombinert med opplysninger som alder, kjønn, yrke, diagnose, etc.
Hvis ja, hvilke?		Kryss også av dersom ip-adresse registreres.
Samles det inn sensitive personopplysninger?	Ja <input type="radio"/> Nei <input type="radio"/>	
Hvis ja, hvilke?	<input type="checkbox"/> Rasemessig eller etnisk bakgrunn, eller politisk, filosofisk eller religiøs oppfatning <input type="checkbox"/> At en person har vært mistenkt, siktet, tiltalt eller dømt for en straffbar handling <input type="checkbox"/> Helseforhold <input type="checkbox"/> Seksuelle forhold <input type="checkbox"/> Medlemskap i fagforeninger	
Samles det inn opplysninger om tredjeperson?	Ja <input type="radio"/> Nei <input type="radio"/>	Med opplysninger om tredjeperson menes opplysninger som kan spores tilbake til personer som ikke inngår i utvalget. Eksempler på tredjeperson er kollega, elev, klient, familiemedlem.
Hvis ja, hvem er tredjeperson og hvilke opplysninger registreres?		
Hvordan informeres tredjeperson om behandlingen?	<input type="checkbox"/> Skriftlig <input type="checkbox"/> Muntlig <input type="checkbox"/> Informeres ikke	
Informeres ikke, begrunn		
<b>10. Informasjon og samtykke</b>		
Oppgi hvordan utvalget informeres	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Skriftlig <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Muntlig <input type="checkbox"/> Informeres ikke	Vennligst send inn informasjonsskrivet eller mal for muntlig informasjon sammen med meldeskjema.
Begrunn		NB! Vedlegg lastes opp til sist i meldeskjemaet, se punkt 16 Vedlegg.  Dersom utvalget ikke skal informeres om behandlingen av personopplysninger må det begrunnes.  Last ned vår veiledende mal til informasjonsskriv
Oppgi hvordan samtykke fra utvalget innhentes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Skriftlig <input type="checkbox"/> Muntlig <input type="checkbox"/> Innhentes ikke	Dersom det innhentes skriftlig samtykke anbefales det at samtykkeerklæringen utformes som en svarslipp eller på eget ark. Dersom det ikke skal innhentes samtykke, må det begrunnes.
Innhentes ikke, begrunn		
<b>11. Informasjonssikkerhet</b>		
Direkte personidentifiserende opplysninger erstattes med et referansenummer som viser til en atskilt navneliste (koblingsnøkkel)	Ja <input type="radio"/> Nei <input type="radio"/>	Har du krysset av for ja under punkt 9 Datamaterialets innhold må det merkes av for hvordan direkte personidentifiserende opplysninger registreres.
Hvordan oppbevares navnelisten/koblingsnøkkel og hvem har tilgang til den?		NB! Som hovedregel bør ikke direkte personidentifiserende opplysninger registreres sammen med det øvrige datamaterialet.

Direkte personidentifiserende opplysninger oppbevares sammen med det øvrige materialet	Ja <input type="radio"/> Nei <input checked="" type="radio"/>	
Hvorfor oppbevares direkte personidentifiserende opplysninger sammen med det øvrige datamaterialet?		
Oppbevares direkte personidentifiserbare opplysninger på andre måter?	Ja <input type="radio"/> Nei <input checked="" type="radio"/>	
Spesifiser		
Hvordan registreres og oppbevares datamaterialet?	<input type="checkbox"/> Fysisk isolert datamaskin tilhørende virksomheten <input type="checkbox"/> Datamaskin i nettverkssystem tilhørende virksomheten <input type="checkbox"/> Datamaskin i nettverkssystem tilknyttet Internett tilhørende virksomheten <input type="checkbox"/> Fysisk isolert privat datamaskin <input type="checkbox"/> Privat datamaskin tilknyttet Internett <input type="checkbox"/> Videoopptak/fotografi <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lydopptak <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notater/papir <input type="checkbox"/> Annen registreringsmetode	Merk av for hvilke hjelpemidler som benyttes for registrering og analyse av opplysninger.  Sett flere kryss dersom opplysningene registreres på flere måter.
Annen registreringsmetode beskriv		
Behandles lyd-/videoopptak og/eller fotografi ved hjelp av datamaskinbasert utstyr?	Ja <input checked="" type="radio"/> Nei <input type="radio"/>	Kryss av for ja dersom opptak eller foto behandles som lyd-/bildefil.  Les mer om behandling av lyd og bilde.
Hvordan er datamaterialet beskyttet mot at uvedkommende får innsyn?	innspillingene vil bli lagret på min private telefon.	Er f.eks. datamaskintilgangen beskyttet med brukernavn og passord, står datamaskinen i et låsbart rom, og hvordan sikres bærbare enheter, utskrifter og opptak?
Dersom det benyttes mobile lagringsenheter (bærbar datamaskin, minnepenn, minnekort, cd, eksternt harddisk, mobiltelefon), oppgi hvilke	mobiltelefon	NB! Mobile lagringsenheter bør ha mulighet for kryptering.
Vil medarbeidere ha tilgang til datamaterialet på lik linje med daglig ansvarlig/student?	Ja <input type="radio"/> Nei <input checked="" type="radio"/>	
Hvis ja, hvem?		
Overføres personopplysninger ved hjelp av e-post/Internett?	Ja <input type="radio"/> Nei <input checked="" type="radio"/>	F.eks. ved bruk av elektronisk spørreskjema, overføring av data til samarbeidspartner/databehandler mm.
Hvis ja, hvilke?		
Vil personopplysninger bli utlevert til andre enn prosjektgruppen?	Ja <input type="radio"/> Nei <input checked="" type="radio"/>	
Hvis ja, til hvem?		
Samles opplysningene inn/behandles av en databehandler?	Ja <input type="radio"/> Nei <input checked="" type="radio"/>	Dersom det benyttes eksterne til helt eller delvis å behandle personopplysninger, f.eks. Questback, Synovate MMI, Norfakta eller transkriberingsassistent eller tolk, er dette å betrakte som en databehandler. Slike oppdrag må kontraktsreguleres
Hvis ja, hvilken?		Les mer om databehandleravtaler her
<b>12. Vurdering/godkjenning fra andre instanser</b>		
Søkes det om dispensasjon fra taushetsplikten for å få tilgang til data?	Ja <input type="radio"/> Nei <input checked="" type="radio"/>	For å få tilgang til taushetsbelagte opplysninger fra f.eks. NAV, PPT, sykehus, må det søkes om

Kommentar		dispensasjon fra taushetsplikten. Dispensasjon søkes vanligvis fra aktuelt departement. Dispensasjon fra taushetsplikten for helseopplysninger skal for alle typer forskning søkes  Regional komité for medisinsk og helsefaglig
Søkes det godkjenning fra andre instanser?	Ja <input checked="" type="radio"/> Nei <input type="radio"/>	F.eks. søke registreier om tilgang til data, en ledelse om tilgang til forskning i virksomhet, skole, etc.
Hvis ja, hvilke?	ledelsen ved de tre skolene jeg ønsker å foreta gruppe intervjuene.	
<b>13. Prosjektperiode</b>		
Prosjektperiode	Prosjektstart:02.01.2014  Prosjektstutt:31.08.2014	Prosjektstart Vennligst oppgi tidspunktet for når førstegangskontakten med utvalget opprettes og/eller datainnsamlingen starter.  Prosjektstutt Vennligst oppgi tidspunktet for når datamaterialet enten skal anonymiseres/slettes, eller arkiveres i påvente av oppfølgingsstudier eller annet. Prosjektet anses vanligvis som avsluttet når de oppgitte analyser er ferdigstilt og resultatene publisert, eller oppgave/avhandling er innlevert og sensurert.
Hva skal skje med datamaterialet ved prosjektstutt?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Datamaterialet anonymiseres <input type="checkbox"/> Datamaterialet oppbevares med personidentifikasjon	Med anonymisering menes at datamaterialet bearbeides slik at det ikke lenger er mulig å føre opplysningene tilbake til enkeltpersoner. NB! Merk at dette omfatter både oppgave/publikasjon og rådata.  Les mer om anonymisering
Hvordan skal datamaterialet anonymiseres?	alle navn erstattes med nummer: 1, 2, 3, osv. alle navn på enheter (skoler) vil ikke bli brukt men erstattes med bokstavene x, y, z.	Hovedregelen for videre oppbevaring av data med personidentifikasjon er samtykke fra den registrerte.
Hvorfor skal datamaterialet oppbevares med personidentifikasjon?		Årsaker til oppbevaring kan være planlagte oppfølgingsstudier, undervisningsformål eller annet.
Hvor skal datamaterialet oppbevares, og hvor lenge?		Datamaterialet kan oppbevares ved egen institusjon, offentlig arkiv eller annet.  Les om arkivering hos NSD
<b>14. Finansiering</b>		
Hvordan finansieres prosjektet?	privat	
<b>15. Tilleggsopplysninger</b>		
Tilleggsopplysninger		
<b>16. Vedlegg</b>		
Antall vedlegg	4	

**Appendix 6**

**Headmasters' letter of consent**



My Leirvaag  
Langgata 58  
3187 Horten

13. november 2013

XXX Ungdomsskole  
v/Rektor XXX

Fokusgruppe Intervju i forbindelse med Mastergrad studie i engelsk.

I forbindelse med undertegnede Masteroppgave i Engelsk, Mastergrad i Fremmedspråk i Skolen, ved Høgskolen i Østfold, Universitetet i Gøteborg og Universitetet i Växjö, ber jeg herved om tillatelse til å avholde et fokusgruppe-intervju med noen av skolens engelsk lærere.

Intervjuet er planlagt å bli avholdt i løpet av januar eller februar 2014. Det vil avholdes utenfor ordinær undervisningstid. De aktuelle lærerne vil bli kontaktet av undertegnede. Alle deltakere er sikret full anonymitet.

Tema for Masteroppgaven er:

“Fewer Lessons, More Goals; meeting the adjusted aims of the 2013 English Subject Curriculum in Lower-Secondary School in Norway”

Følgende spørsmål er lagt til grunn for intervjuet:

“How have the changes in the English Subject Curriculum affected ESL teaching in Norwegian Lower-Secondary School?”

De lærere som deltar vil i tillegg få følgende spørsmål:

- 1) Has the reduced number of lessons led to the exclusion of certain topics or reduced the focus on any of the four main areas of the curriculum? If so, which ones?
- 2) How do teachers work to meet the aims of the four main areas of the Curriculum?
- 3) What strategies are teachers using to meet the adjusted communicative aims?
- 4) In what ways have the adjusted communicative aims in the curriculum affected the way you work with oral proficiency in the ESL classroom?
- 5) How and to what extent do teachers integrate oral proficiency into their teaching of
  - Language learning
  - Written communication
  - Culture, society and literature?

Med vennlig hilsen

My Leirvaag  
Mastergradsstudent

**Appendix 7**

**Participation Invitation Letter**

November 2013

## Participation Invitation

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

In connection with my Master's dissertation for the programme "*Master grad i Fremmedspråk i Skolen*" at Høgskolen i Østfold, the University of Gothenburg and the University of Växjö, I plan to execute focus group-interviews at three lower secondary schools in Norway. You have been selected to be invited to participate because you teach English at the desired level I want to do research on. My main topic is concerned with what the teachers do in their daily routines of teaching in lieu of the changes made in the National Curriculum in English.

### The Topic

In June 2013, the Ministry of Education changed the National Curriculum in English by dividing the subject "Communication" into written communication and spoken communication. Seeing that the number of lessons taught throughout a year has not changed (on the contrary), I am curious as to how the teachers at lower secondary level have adjusted to this change.

The dichotomy between the expected topics/subjects to be covered throughout the year and the number of lessons available to do so, might have pushed the teachers to reorganize their teaching. I am curious as to how this is done.

There are several studies carried out on reading, writing and speaking skills amongst pupils. Since the introduction of the altered Curriculum, there has not been any research on how teachers deal with their new situation. It will therefore be highly interesting to find out how teachers, i.e. you, have adapted to the change.

- The topic for my dissertation is:

"Fewer Lessons, More Goals; meeting the adjusted aims of the 2013 English Subject Curriculum in Lower-Secondary School in Norway"

- My research question is:

"How have the changes in the English Subject Curriculum affected ESL teaching in Norwegian Lower-Secondary School?"

I hope you find this topic interesting and that you are willing to take part in my research. Please find enclosed information about the focus group interview, the interview questions and consent form.

Best regards,

My Leirvaag  
Master grad student

## **Appendix 8**

### **The interview transcript**

**Focus Group Interview 1. School A**

Right. Eeh, oh, ough, ok.

In connection with my Master's dissertation for the programme "Mastergrad i Fremmedspråk I Skolen" at Høgskolen i Østfold, the University of Gothenburg and the University of Vaxsjø, I plan to carry out focus group interviews at three lower secondary schools in Norway. You have been selected to be invited to participate because you teach English at the desired level I want to do research on. My main topic is concerned with what the teachers do in their daily routines of teaching in lieu of the changes made in the National Curriculum in English.

The topic:

In June 2013, the Ministry of Education changed the National Curriculum in English by dividing the subject "Communication" into written communication and spoken communication. Seeing that the number of lessons taught throughout a year has not changes (on the contrary), I am curious as to how the teachers at lower secondary level have adjusted to this change.

The dichotomy between the expected topics/subjects to be covered throughout the year and the number of lessons available to do so, might have pushed the teachers to reorganize their teaching. I am curious as to how this is done.

There are several studies carried out on reading, writing and speaking skills amongst pupils. Since the introduction of the altered Curriculum, there has not been any research on how teachers deal with their new situation. It will therefore be highly interesting to find out how teachers, i.e. you, have adopted to the change.

The topic for my dissertation is:

"Fewer lessons, More Goals; meeting the adjusted aims of the 2013 English Subject Curriculum in Lower-Secondary School in Norway"

My research question is:

"How have the changes in the English Subject Curriculum affected ESL teaching in Norwegian Lower Secondary School?"

Eeh, my questions are as follows:

Aahm... how do teachers work to meet the aims of the four main areas of the curriculum, in brackets: language learning, written communication, spoken communication and culture, society and literature.

Transcript from all the interviews

Number two; has the reduced number of lessons led to the exclusion of certain topics or reduced the focus on any of the four main areas of the curriculum? If so, which ones?

Three; what strategies are teachers using to meet the adjusted communicative aims? And number four; in what ways have the adjusted communicative aims in the curriculum affected the way you work with oral proficiency in the ESL classroom? And last number five; how and to what extent do teachers integrate oral proficiency into their teaching of language learning, written communication, culture, society and literature?

I would also like to aah, express my gratefulness for your participation and that I believe that your contribution will shed light on a very interesting situation for all English teachers in Norway.

Right. So let's do, eeh, a round of presentation.

1: Yes, eemmm...how many years I have been teaching? I can't remember...chuckles...I think it is 16, yes, English all the time and I've never taught abroad, no, only here on the lower secondary level. Do I have to say my age?

M: if you want to

1: 43!!!

General laughter...

2: Great

3: yes, and I am 39 and I have taught English for 15 years on lower secondary school and I have also taught one year at the International School here in Norway, I guess that's it.

4. I am 27, this is my first year and I have not taught abroad eehm, and I teach 8th grade

2: Mmm, I've been doing this for about 25 years plus, eeh actually more 1987, I'm, my math is terrible..chuckles... help

1: couple of years

2: ja, a bit more than 25 years, always, most of the time the same level as the others but also I've done primary school about a hundred years ago and a snitch of English in Australia.

M: ok, good.

Transcript from all the interviews

Right, eehm, so that means that we can just go ahead, I just need to inform you that my eh recording, sort of slot, each slot on my phone is 20 minutes, so we'll just keep talking for 20 minutes and I will try to keep track of time and then hopefully be able to stop you, like hang-on, hang-on, right? Ok.

So, let's start, I don't know how you want to organise it, you want to take it around the table or open?

2: open

1: yeah open

3: open

M: ok, it is also in that case important that you all sort of, you know, take the opportunity to say something. Right? Ok, so let's start.

Question number one:

**How do teachers work to meet the aims of the four main areas of the curriculum? And then the four main areas are: language learning, written communication, spoken communication and culture, society and literature.**

2. Suddenly everything went quiet.

1: yeah

2: Ehm, I suppose we just ehm tag along, speak English in the classroom, 99 % of our time, ehm the only exception is some grammatical points that needs a conversion into Norwegian.

1: and I would say some difference between some classes. Some of the classes you can be talking English all the time, but then I, then again some other that I have had where that's not possible, because they don't, or are not willing to understand or they are so insecure of their English, so 90% usually but sometime not. Maybe more 50/50, I'd say talk English from the teacher.

Then again, I think that we have this, we have a book. And as many teachers we use the book, and is full organised with these different tasks is it, with text, with culture, society mixture, different culture subjects, cultural subjects and then they have grammar and tasks with that and eh written tasks and spoken communication that – the book organises that for us, doesn't it?

2: to some extent

1: to some extent, of course. And then we put something in, if we like that.

Transcript from all the interviews

4: yeah, and we listen to music ehmmm, read books, a book, a book for each year as it is stated in the curriculum.

3: I guess in terms of what you said that we do the things, we have to do other things than instead of the book, because you have to vary all the time to do different things and ehm, to cover it all you need other sources like music like, if you read about London for instance there is a piece on the topic of Oliver Twist and you need to talk about the entire novel and the themes and the characters and then maybe see the movie and do film review or something like that and go deeper into stuff, which makes the themes in the book way too many, so we have to choose.

2: mm, I suppose you know, we have to read a novel each year and combine that with also watching the movie also writing book review and then eeh...group work in terms of verbal exercises...eeh...also having verbal presentations in front of a full class. Ah, I suppose I use a lot of ah humour with the language in terms to make it not so difficult or to make it not so embarrassing to speak English because there are other Norwegians in the class. Plus the fact that I do demand English answers and English questions.

1: oh yeah, if you are able to do that you are doing well, I think. I think that is difficult. Because that depends on the classes. In my own class I can do that, they can or they try to do that, but in the other class which is not mine, I think that is very difficult because...ehm...that is...ehm...very...ehm...they are not so secure and ..ehm...in the class. Many insecure girls, they don't like it, they don't like to say anything. It is really hard, I think.

3: and they don't know you either

1: No, not like in my own class, no. Even though, because they are also shy in their group work. Or talking in pair work, or anything like that, they are even shy then, if it is not for them, I think it is really hard to talk. I think It is the hardest part of it, because they can be very good at writing and then when you can't really cope with the talking and spoken skills.

2: mmm, I think that...eh...for me as a teacher to...eh...to have fun with the language makes it a lot easier for a place, like the class I have now, I am their fourth English teacher, so the starting point for this class was not positive at all. But I've been firm and I just don't understand Norwegian, I just don't understand it. Then, I have always loved dialects and everything, so and have different intonation and you know do the Eddie Skoller thing with what did you learn in school today, like he was from India whatever, just to have fun to create some looseness in the class and they and, after six months they all, they speak. And 99% of the class are volunteering English at this moment which is something really I never thought would happen.



Transcript from all the interviews

1: that's good

2: That's really...

4: I use games, like card games or ..eh...I don't know, just games, yeah. Eehm, talking to each other, explore the language.

3: and the dialects are like brilliant, I do that too and now we make our own fairytales and they learn new words and ...ehm...we act it out and they are really eager and ask "can I be like a Japanese boy, so they want to speak English, so they like that.

2: it is a good method in terms of hiding your own fear of being..you know..of being a Norwegian that speaks English in, or.. as we say here "Holmestrand English"..and..ehm...laughter...this is quite interesting to see that they will dare try out intonation.

M: so we move on? Do you have any more comments on my question? No? let's move on. Ok,

**number two: Has the reduced number of lessons led to the exclusion of certain topics or reduced the focus on any of the four main areas of the curriculum? If so, which ones?**

4. I don't know because this is my first year so I don't have anything to compare with.

3: I guess that, in the sense that, when you have a book and I don't know if you are expected to go through every single thing, but that is impossible, like you need to pick a few and then elaborate on them. Eehm...by using other sources than the book that goes right into this little topic that you pick, so, we should not do all the things anyway.

1: I must admit that I did not know that there was a reduced number of lessons? I didn't know that. I thought I had three lessons all the time?

2: some time back we had...eh..I think four lessons per week. It is not that long ago, you just park it because there is nothing you can do about it. You just take it and do your best.

1: we do the best with it anyway with the lessons

2: but I can clearly see that you have to do ...eh...make some choices to which depths you want to dive into the different sides of the curriculum, but ehm...I think foremost English is about communication, so if I have to cut down on culture and poetry, so be it. Ah...I think the focus should be on the, on the...ehm...kids to be able to communicate in a good manner, both in writing as well as verbally.

1: so, then we think that you may be you cut down the topics or how deep you go into each topic?

Transcript from all the interviews

2: yeah

1: that is what I've been thinking. If we talk books, the book you have if that is what we are talking about...laughter....

3: We do have a plan, like what we are supposed to do, for every week in the autumn and the all the way to summer, but of course you don't do exactly what the plan says and if you find things that work, then of course let's do that. I for instance, I use this..eh..programme on the Internet called e-pal. I don't know if you know it. But it's a , when you have a class and then you register the class, all the students, and then you get another group of students from another country and you write e-mails to each other and they like that so much that it kind of want to do that a lot. But they learn very much by talking to an American class in an American city, so they learn a lot of English which is important.

2: I suppose...ehm...you know...if we, the curriculum says that I have to do every chapter in my book and...eh...that is the main aim of the curriculum...it doesn't work for me. Ah...I think what works for me is using the...the topics in the way that I find suitable, which makes my students produce language, both verbally and written. So if I do six out of eight chapters, so be it. But I don't have time to get through everything and..eh...in the way that I probably should. There is also the other limitation that there are so many other things coming into school that take away lessons. That you lose a number of lessons during the year. Not because of semester-trials whatever but you also have DKS and God knows what. So I, there are so many different things that I am sure that they are good things, but ahm...one hour here and one hour there, suddenly..ehm...you have 38 weeks, well usually you'll end up with 29. At the worst.

3: it is a good plan

2: It is a good plan

.....General laughter

4: And also, the books with the curriculum are only to help us...ehm...because we are only..ehm...we need to meet these goals in the "Kunnskapsløftet"...eh...so, if we don't...eh...go through all the topics in the book that's , it doesn't matter as long as we reach the goals.

2: the book is just a guide

1: it is for guidance, but then again, we can't just figure out lessons all the time on our own and speak all the time on our own, because that takes too much time. So we need the book. And hopefully whoever made that book have had some thought, well on what we have to meet, the demands we have

Transcript from all the interviews

to meet. Ehm, so they think and we think and then and that put together that will hopefully that will be ok.

3: that is what you do at the International School ...that is what you have to do, do all your thinking by yourself, and then the board of educations will say it is ok or it is not ok. So, there is a difference

M: I am going to stop the recording now, it has been 18 and a half minute.

**Right, question number three: what strategies are teachers using to meet the adjusted communicative aims?**

3: strategy?

2: hm

4: in what way are they adjusted? From the 1997 curriculum?

M: they were divided into spoken and written communication so the communicative aims have now been sort of specified into spoken oral language and written.

4: from the 1997 curriculum?

M: yes

4: I have only read the 1997 one

M: ok, this happened in June 2013, so last summer, and...eh...yeah.

Is it a difficult question?

3: yeah

M; would you like me to rephrase it?

All: yes

M: obviously, the aims in the curriculum are what we are supposed to strive towards and reaching, right? So, that means that prior to the divide it was up to the teacher really to decide...ehm... all oral activities as the teacher saw fit because it wasn't a separate aim, as it were. Now it is, which means that the aim...ehm...has been multiplied, there are more of them, you know, so what do you do? Because you will have to, obviously, in your teaching be more specific on the oral capacity of your pupils. So what strategies do you use, how have you changed?

Transcript from all the interviews

1: well, I must say that it is always been important to me, so maybe I did something wrong before. Because it has always been important, the oral, ehm...the talking of English, how they do that

3: and you are supposed to grade them like in both, oral and written English so you have to.

1: mhm

3: We have always done that

2: ehm... I...I don't really know what I am doing differently now from before because as you say it is a...I have always focused on the fact that in my classroom English is the only language that works. Eeh...I don't accept Norwegian questions, from anyone. Because if there is a student that has a bit of a problem, verbalising the question in English, ok, help out! They get help from the rest of the class instead of me giving the answer. So...gradually it builds up confidence, I suppose, but basically try to get every student to speak as much English as possible...ehm...during one lesson.

1: but then again, you are talking about spoken skills, right now I have a student and he talks a lot but that is really "Holmestrand English" all the time so that doesn't help anything, but he is talking English.

2: Mm

1: but he is just playing, right? So we don't want that, so then for the focus of the class, they think it is fun, then we need to focus on proper English, or the skills of English, so they know how, show them the correct answers, grammar and everything when you speak, so...ehm...so not all spoken English is...it is stupidity, it is something, we don't want that. We want proper English

2: I think that, you know, I use a lot of Australian strain...a... and they...eh... they just love it and then they start, after a period of time, they start incorporating that into their, both their spoken and written language. And then they sort of solves one code so to speak.

1: and that – yeah, that, ah, yah, you have a gift, because you have an Australian wife and you talk English a lot. So that is, maybe you think in English?

2: I don't know how much English I speak at home, I have no idea.

1: No

2: Eh...

1: Loud laughter

Transcript from all the interviews

2: both sides of... my brain is conscious, so I'm lucky that I can have two conversations going at the same time in two different languages. I am not conscious about the amount of English spoken at home

1: but we all try to do our best

2: oh yeah

1: but we are on different levels in English, teachers as well, so...

2: Well I think it is quite fun when kids start to use a strain in the correct context, because then they have sort of understood how to use the strain, in different contexts. I think that sort of makes it easier for the kids to speak. And first and foremost, okey, if you say something wrong, it is not the end of the world, it is not world war three, and also the fact that I tell my students to when, well you "BBBB, are a walking talking dictionary" I say "yes, but I am not your private one" "So I don't know, you have to look it up". So they have to make an effort to figure out what is going on. Easier said than done.

3: I guess the biggest problem is to get the pupils to talk at all because they find it embarrassing or they don't think they...now I think it is important to have the talks that they all have to do. They do them in turns. Like I have for instance the "talk of the day". The student will have to go up in front of the class and say something about the day, like today is my day, which day, like it is snowing outside, and today my classes are; and then they talk about what they have after school and, play my violin or whatever and then they have to tell it all, so they will have time to, they have 7 minutes to talk about their day.. Ehm...they all know that they all have to do it. So they all do it and there is nothing "I don't want to do it" and it is not my day and all. They do it, and I think that is good.

1: you do it every lesson?

3: Every day

1: Every day?

3: Every day I have English

General laughter in the group...

M: will that be all? Yes? Ok;

**Question four: in what ways have the adjusted communicative aims in the curriculum affected the way you work with oral proficiency in the ESL classroom?**

Transcript from all the interviews

This is obviously focusing on the curriculum, obviously thinking have you, do you carry with you the thought of the curriculum when you plan your lesson, basically – when it comes to oral proficiency?

2: I suppose...eh...I suppose on some conscious level or other you do, but...eh...from experience. But to what extent we are really conscious about it to when we plan a lesson I am not sure about that. Eeh... but I suppose you know, you focus all the time, in terms of making the students understand that their English will change in a positive way if you start using a variation of connectives and what have you. Or strain, whether it is an Australian or whatever, doesn't really matter. Aah, but start playing with the language.

3: I think that...eh...I think that yet we have experience, so – I think that a lot of this now comes with experience where you try to have variety or different things we do, so it just comes together with that. We know we have to talk, we have to have topics where they talk to each other in the classroom and to me and everything, so we just put that...it is a natural part of every topic that we work with. Well, at least it is for me.

4: I don't have that much experience but...ehm...when you're in school you learn all these things based on "kunnskapsløftet", so for me it is only natural. And I try to meet the goals for every lesson, but I don't know if it is conscious or not every time. But I try.

2: I suppose it is also...eh...a thing about...eh...setting an aim for the lesson. Okey, this lesson we're going to, be yourself as a teacher, try to incorporate the different communicative skills and then you have to make sure of that in some way. And that is usually a longer process. But if you break it down into ...eh...how to use connective, how to variate the language..eh...it's quite easy to measure that from one lesson, if you sort of narrows it down to a couple, but I think that mostly...eh...it is a number of years of experience that goes into function.

M: you are being very good, you are being very thoughtful, I think. It is very good.

**Ok, last question: How and to what extent do teachers integrate oral proficiency into their teaching of language learning, written communication, culture, society and literature?**

And here I am basically asking how specifically do you connect it? With what? You have mentioned your textbook, what else? How do you do it?

2: eh, textbook...eh...stories abridged...eh...movies, soundtracks, music...eh...me as a teacher..ehm...also letting the other pupil in class...eh...talk about something that they find interesting. They themselves can choose a topic, then I help them with ...eh...how to do it in a proficient way...eh...but

Transcript from all the interviews

3: and they love role plays and I give them and I divide them into groups and they get something they make role play out of, they love that. And often they want to perform plays and things like that and invite another class that can watch them, so they like that.

M: do you...ehm...work together? I understand you're teaching different grades as in, you know 10th grade, 9th grade, 8th grade, whatever level you're at, do you work together, like you teachers, when it comes to these things?

2: I think that...ehm...since this year, there has actually been set aside time for the English teachers at, for example year ten level...ehm...to meet regularly once a week, which is a good thing.

3: but not across the levels.

2: no

4: I think...eh...I get advice from the other teachers so...I go and ask, I think everybody has got a question from me.

1: On my team it has been a tradition that sometimes people find something fun, a good idea and they say: I did this, it was really fun, you should do that. And then we do that, we try out. So we share. At least we try to do that.

3: We teach the same level, but we are given different books, so we teach different things because we have different books and that is a problem. When we have a new book...

4: My class have a new book. We are a test class, it is not out for every school to use, yet, so there are different topics than the book J is using.

M: And you think that is a problem?

3: It might be a problem to, it is like we're planning, like bigger works, like the teaching of works that they have to work on for a longer period of time when the topics are different, so of course we can do like you do on Australia and we do something on New York, but it would be easier to have the same textbooks with the same topics. But of course we do work together.

M: how do you think the pupils react to them having different books?

4: I don't know.

3: Do they even know about the other class?

4: I don't know, I don't think they know, or think about it.

Transcript from all the interviews

1: I don't think they think about what the other class is doing. Eh...maybe the other class that I teach think about them seeing the same movies as the other class, writing the same texts like the other class, but I don't think they care about what her class is doing, or what they do.

2: I think, as a general fact, in my team, we are really good at sharing, different types of ideas in terms of getting outside of your comfort zone. Which I think is good. It is quite easy to get sucked into your own comfort zone with things you've done for a number of years. Because then you are safe, you know exactly what is going to happen, when and what, and. So I think the collaboration of...eh...fellow teachers is quite good.

1: But, are we answering the question?

M: you are side tracking, but it is ok. It is ok. It is all in the light of how you are working, with other teachers, how you cooperate, and you know and it is all in lieu of the curriculum anyway because that is our framework So, whatever thoughts and ideas and comments you like to make on the work on curricular issues are fine.

1: Maybe we can talk something about the book. Students like to have books. Because

4: something to hold on to..

1: it is something to hold on to; page this and that! Ok! Too many papers, it is confusing and you have to keep them all in order and remember them and everything and oh, so difficult. So, that is my experience. The periods when we work with the book, this chapter of this book on page so and so, they are happy, and everyone brings their book. Splendid. If you sometimes try to do other things, and you give them a lot of copies of things, you can be sure that it gets forgotten or

2:mm...another thing that I find a bit annoying actually, is the number of new English books that comes out, and it is all a bit private enterprise like,

1: The teacher's book?

2: Yeah, the teacher's book, and the book that the students get. I think the quality of the books have diminished.

M: I'll stop now and start another slot just now.

Ok; as a closing comment I am asking the participants to make, or speak up about their thoughts on how to use literature to enhance oral proficiency.



Transcript from all the interviews

1: Usually we read a book, and we read it and use it for writing maybe, but then again, if they can choose the book themselves, then they have to make a speech about the book. Present it to the class

4: reading out loud

2: I suppose, you know, we've made a choice for the students on each level that this year you are going to read that novel, and year nine that novel, and year ten we read Hungergames, which is a brick of a book. And...eh...all the students almost die, because they don't know how on earth they are going to get through it. Eeh...but most of the time, I would say 90% of the class, would say that once they just get into it, it won't let go. Because it is an interesting book. But how I think this will help in their proficiency is having the focus on the fact that the more English you read the more proficient, both your verbal and your spoken English will be. It's no doubt, and I always say to my students that every Norwegian are so good at speaking English inside the head, so when you practice your reading at home, well lock the door and read out loud. Because that's a different thing altogether. So practice makes perfect.

3: you read a novel, like I usually give them time at school where they have to sit and quietly read and then they bring the book home and they have reading for homework and they also get classes where I put them together two and two and then read a chapter to each other, and they like that a lot. To read to just another person.

4: And also when you have read a book you can print out the pictures and they have to together talk about it and put the pictures in the right order. In that way they have to speak the story out to each other.

1: and they do that in English?

4: yeah, hopefully.

2: that is one of the things that I find really challenging, is that when you form groups within a classroom and they are supposed to speak English...eh...there is a large number of these kids that switch right over to Norwegian and hope that the teacher won't hear it. So, you have to be like aware of their talk and be all over the classroom so you can enhance them and encourage them to speak. But in terms of literature, I asked a question in the class, as of now, how many of you guys read a book during Christmas. And there were three girls that did that. One of them actually read five novels...eh...but...eh...then I asked a question in general among the boys; how many of you guys have read a novel, except the one that you have to read at school in the last 12 months. None. None of them

Transcript from all the interviews

read books. Then what I do, is that I encourage them to read comics, sport magazines, I don't really care what they read as long as they read.

3: what is good about the novels that we've picked out for the different levels, they have good websites. So there are some questions after each chapter, so that when they have read a chapter I print out these questions and they sit in groups and they talk about it, and for the ones who have troubles reading and maybe fall off, they are dragged back into the chapter, because now they know. "oh, he did that" so that is what he did and then they can go on reading the next chapter without actually having finished the first one, because they still know now what happened. So I guess the books that we picked out are good books. I think so.

1: I might start that with the "boy in the striped pyjamas", like that – it is a really good, and maybe incorporate more oral activities with the novel because it is so easy to do the written work. Many questions, of course they learn a lot of language by reading, but it was the talking, that makes them better, the actual talking that make them better, so I will keep that in mind when I am working now

3: and the website helps to work orally

2: I think that one of the things that the kids don't really think about is how good they are, they don't want to believe that they're good at speaking English. And I said, well, go and ask an Englishman and ask him to speak Norwegian and see how that goes. It doesn't go very well. Eeh...so, and I think that that the American phrase to be proud of, something which is a bit alien in Norwegian society...eh.. and I use that a lot...and...in my class, especially with a girl, that really, she doesn't really want to say anything much at all. She started to open up, and I informed her "I'm proud of you" and the first time I did that she didn't know how to react. Because no one had ever told her that she needs to be proud. So, little droplets here and there to enhance their confidence. But of course reading, I think reading is really important. I am a periodic reader myself, but when I do start reading in sort of my 20 novels, then I am sick of it and then I take a break, but I suppose, you know, it's a, it's a matter of choosing, making the kids read about something that they are interested in. I mean the, the, the, all the poetry and culture in our book, which is, it is so boring for me as an adult, so what is it like for a year ten student? So, I always ask them to, I'll print out and find stuff on the internet – here go – read that for next lesson and tell me about it. And I can clearly see improvement in terms of proficiency. The danger is here of course, that they all read magazines that are more e-mail type language, slang, and that is a wee bit of a problem. Chuckle. So everything is dinkydori.

**Focus Group Interview 2 School B.**

M: Right I have started now

Welcome to this interview for my Master's dissertation. I really appreciate you showing up, you know the drill so I am going to read the questions and when we've exhausted the topic we'll move on and I'll read another question.

6: okey

M: So, please make a brief introduction of yourself before we start, like how old you are, how many years you've taught and what level you've taught at.

7: okey...eh...I'm twentythree years old and I have taught one year...eh...yeah....tenth grade and ninth grade. That's it.

6: I'm 34 years old, been teaching for four and a half years just about, ehm...mainly lower secondary. From 8th to 10th grade.

**M: question number one:**

**How do teachers work to meet the aims of the four main areas of the Curriculum? (-Language learning, -written communication, -spoken communication, -culture, society and literature)**

6: If we have the four areas and try to incorporate them into our lesson, we don't have a lot of time, so we have to take bits and pieces from all the four different areas and try to squeeze them into each lesson that we have. As far as language learning is concerned there is very little time for traditional grammar although I find that I do have to make time for it. I have to split the class in terms of levels and I have to go back and repeat things and do that very systematically and kind of oldfashionly. But mostly the language learning, we try to...eh...incorporate that into working with texts and understanding texts and looking at vocabulary within the texts and talking about them and giving them, looking at the grammar in there

7: focus on the language, and getting them to speak, I think, that is what I am focusing on, in all of them, trying to get them to speak and just get the vocabulary

6: spoken communication. And I think also, both written communication and spoken communication, it has to be integrated into when we are working with texts, by text I mean mainly, if we are working with essays or we are working with short stories or texts and the book, talking about them, discussing them, trying to find new words both in the text and new words that we need to talk about them.

Transcript from all the interviews

Eh...then kind of using what we see or the models that we have in those texts and transferring that to written communication. Getting them to understand genres,

7: mm...

6: all the while we have to talk about it, so it is spoken communication. It is hard to integrate all of it, but you try to do your best and I think the danger is that, unless you are very, very, conscious of each lesson you just end up kind of skipping over some things to get the main focus in one lesson, I don't know. Culture, society and literature, those are the texts that we use. That is the content that we have to build everything else around. I don't know if I am answering the question the way it is stated?

M: You're fine. It does not matter, because you just say whatever comes to your mind.

7: I think I actually, sort of divide them up, because I am not able to do everything at once, so I need to, in my head I need to divide them up, because...eh...the curriculum, it is so big. And there are so many areas, so I try to divide them up and I think that sometimes some things fall out and I am not able to have the main focus on each area each time.

6: I just set myself a goal that I'll do something from each, and by that I mean we are going to some listening and that is either a part of a conversation or listening to texts or listening to me, we're gonna do some talking, either as a group or in pairs, I keep them in pairs a lot, they get to talk

7: I do that as well

6: then we are going to do some writing and we are going to do some reading. As long as I can get all those four areas, in different percentages, depending on what we are concentrating on, then that is my way of trying to cover it. Mainly.

7: and I think it is, for me it has been really important to use the "goalsheets" and to work with the aims and make the aims smaller so that my students can understand them and then it is easier for me as well to use them. Some of them, I feel sometimes that they are so big that it's hard to really do everything that the aims are telling me to do.

6: To figure out what they mean first, to interpret them and then break them down, both for yourself and for the students.

7: and...eh...I think that is the biggest and most important job for me, at least, to be able to break them down and communicate them to my students.

Transcript from all the interviews

M: ok, let's carry on...let me see how much time we have, oh we have spent four minutes there, just five..yehee...good going

**Number two:**

**Have the reduced number of lessons led to the exclusion of certain topics or reduced the focus on any of the four main areas of the curriculum? If so, which ones?**

7: I don't, I haven't taught long enough, so in my time there hasn't been reduced time in lessons, then but there has been put more focus on the curriculum and the division of the communication in oral and written. It is different, but for me, I don't know. I don't have the experience.

6: It's..well...some things are bound to get excluded or get less focus and a lot of that has to do with I also think with how we interpret the aims and what we think is necessary. But with the number of lessons that we have, it is actually fairly impossible to meet the aims that they have put for us. This is what they should know and it's 10th grade and it is not a really possible and...eh...what it kinda does it presupposes that the students have learned all that they need to learn in elementary school and it presupposes that they have kept that knowledge with them and can use it and what it doesn't do is taking into consideration the fact that we have, usually we have to teach the same grammar every single year in order to get them to remember it. And we don't really have time for that. I don't know...it's...it's a constant challenge to get everything in there and which areas...

M: It's a bit like if you have a cup and it's filled, yeah? And then someone comes along and says you have to fit this, this stuff, into the cup. And you say, but it is already full. Well, then something has to give. What has to give?

6: We have to work with shorter texts. Literature has to go, which is such a pity. Ehm...I can't take the time to work with books. The time isn't there. I.e. I have to use short stories and those are the very longest texts I can work with, with the students to have any chance of fulfilling the other aims. So yeah, literature, and the whole notion of being able to sit down for a longer period of time and actually read something. Which is hugely important. It has to go because the focus is so much on content and in terms of being examined in oral exams and everything, we always have content, content, content. You have to know about these areas, and what we have started doing is shaving off a little bit in terms of content to make sure that we are not teaching social science in English and trying to focus on language. So I guess some of the content we are taking away to try and remedy the situation. But I think literature suffers, and I think grammar suffers, because grammar, we have to take that as and when we can find it.

Transcript from all the interviews

M: do you have any comments?

6: oh, vocabulary. Actually working with vocabulary, phrases and having the time to do that. We hardly have time to even check the homework, you know. And then there is testing, and we can't really do the testing that often because then we don't have time to do anything else.

7: I don't spend much time on testing because I feel I don't have the time and there are other things that are more important, so I don't do a lot of testing. I feel that I should some times, and

6: I would like to have more time to work more systematically with vocabulary and grammar but now it's like, it's a rush. So that is difficult.

M: yeah. Do you want to carry on? Unless you have any more comments?

6: we can carry on.

M: we can go back if you all of a sudden remember something that you'd like to say. Okey, so that is **number three: What strategies are teachers using to meet the adjusted communicative aims? I.e. it has been split, written and spoken.**

7: I feel that I am trying to use smaller groups. For me...eh...it's that I spend much more time on communication, for them being able to communicate and try to, yeah have the focus on communication. For me so far I think that sometimes communication takes a bit over and the written part falls a bit out...eh...and I need to work on giving them both equal amount of time. But I think for me it has been important to use smaller groups and let the students use each other.

6: what size groups do you use?

7: I think that sometimes they are two, two is the best number, or three. Sometimes I have used bigger groups..aah... but that is when I really need to do something with a certain amount of students and I don't have time or the ability to reach around, then I use groups of four or five. But I don't think that's the best way of doing it. But sometimes I don't have time to go around helping everyone, so then I need to focus on someone and then I use bigger groups. But usually I use two or sometimes three. And I am trying to do as "I" and pair the students together, which can help each other. But that's a big task, and that is difficult. I think that is difficult.

6: I mainly try to, I pair up my students according to their strengths and weaknesses, so they complement each other as best as, as best as I can. And in a group of 24, you know it is going to vary anyway and they are gonna evolve and change partners, but mainly the principal is that we have set partners every lesson, they sit together, they're on equal levels, they will do all the communicative

Transcript from all the interviews

tasks together, or they will do all the little discussings, text things that we do. You know, we read a text and then I ask questions about content or the theme or whatever and that's who they turn to, that's who they talk to and the goal of that is to eh avoid spending a lot of time on organization, because it is already set, and they know it. It also makes it a familiar situation where they know who they are going to talk to every lesson without being worried about it. It is a familiar situation and I think that is more conducive to actually being able to meet a lot of the oral communication goals. So, my main change as far as meeting the adjusted communicative aims is basically to focus on oral communication in a system to facilitate for it rather than always talking in a full class or in bigger groups. Does that answer your question, or – do you want to angle the question in any way?

M: No, I don't. Do you have any more comments on that one? No?

Let's go on to **number four: In what ways have the adjusted communicative aims in the curriculum affected the way you work with oral proficiency in the ESL classroom?** And "I", you have actually just answered that one in a way, because they sort of...

6: but it has affected it in another way I guess, well obviously the way I've arranged things now I've organized it now, that has to do with the adjusted aims, that is why I do it. But then it also gives me, you know, legitimacy to do that, you know, I can say that I am pairing them up according to ability because of this communicative aim, they have to have a conversation partner that is on an equal level to themselves, or it can be stretched for a little bit. It gives the whole communicative area more legitimacy, so that is a good thing about it. Yes, it is more work and more whatever, but in terms of "no, we are not always just sitting there writing words or doing grammar exercises, we are actually talking and communicating and playing around, we are discussing things, it is easier...eh..."

M: and you wouldn't have done that if it hadn't been for the change?

6: I would have done it, but less. And I know that because I did it before it changed and I would have had to do less of it because there was more emphasis on the written and so therefore I would have to do more of the written. And now I can have a little more room and to play around with it. It did take a bit of a back seat position before. More than what I would have liked because the limit of time.

M: But that means you have to skip the literature?

6: it means I have to skip the novels. Not literature altogether, but yeah it means that the longer

M: so, it pushes something out?

Transcript from all the interviews

6: Yeah, of course it pushes something out, because we have no more time, we have very little time and more demands and like you said in your analogy with the cup, if the cup is full and you put more in it, something spills out. That's what happens.

M: you don't have any comments on that one?

7: No, I feel that, I..eh...that I just spend much more time on it and that my main focus in many ways are oral communication in every part of the curriculum. Eh...and that they have to be able to talk about, ok, if it is written communication, ok, they have to be able to talk about that as well and be able to express what they are feeling and explain, ok what do I need help with and...I think that my focus . Eh... I have a much bigger focus on it and at least for the weakest students I think that...eh... the oral communication is really important because it helps them...eh... being able to do something, sometimes in English and that they can figure that; ok, I do know some English words as well.

6: One of the things that I found that was really good about splitting and adjusting the aims, didn't really come to light until assessing this term, because we do have an oral grade and we do have a written grade and before when everything was lumped together into the category communication, it could sometimes be hard to pick out, ok, what exactly do we assess in oral and what is it exactly we assess in terms of written, and I find that I have very, I have very clear aims, kind of to break down for the students. Now I say, you have to be able to do this for your oral grade before, because the students used to think, or they...he...they used to feel that "I do a good presentations", "I can present a subject well, and therefore I should have a really good oral grade".

And it is clearer within the new aims now that they cannot get away with only that and have a good oral grade as it says that you have to be able to start and continue and follow up in a conversation. You know, talk about both things within the subject and things outside. And that is clearer and that makes more sense actually to even grade oral performance when you have aims like that.

**M: Question number five: How and to what extent do teachers integrate oral proficiency into their teaching of - Language learning, - Written communication, - Culture, society and literature?**

6: I can only speak for myself, since do teachers, but I am going to speak for me...

M: well, you are a teacher aren't you?

6: I know, but I can't speak for everyone. Eha...eh...language learning, we've talked about it quite a few times...eh...they need to have the language to talk about language, so we have to give them a meta-language. If they are gonna have any sort of oral proficiency in terms of language learning and



Transcript from all the interviews

talking about language then they need to know the grammar terms in English, not in Norwegian. They need to know how to discuss, same for written communication, they need to know how to discuss literature and know how to analyze things like plot and setting and point of view. They have to know these expressions to be able to talk about it. And they kind of have to evaluate themselves as well. Like the goal is, or the aim is “I know how to talk about literature” and I think that in terms of written communication, and even in written communication, discussing with their partners while they are in the process of writing something, looking at each other’s texts, they’re discussing what can be done better here, what can be changed to make it shorter, that discussion is done in English. They need just everyday regular communication in the classroom should be in English. Cause that is one way to make sure that they work on their oral proficiency. Ehm...culture, society and literature. Literature I have touched on, but the whole culture, society thing is part of the problem sometimes. Cause while we have to teach them a lot about, well English cultures, British cultures, the American cultures and language, all these things, there are times when I feel that the content based teaching has taken over to a point where you are struggling to get through these different kinds of subjects, sorry – these topics that may have more to do with social science than actual language. And it can be a challenge to make sure that oral proficiency isn’t limited to them answering questions about something I have been lecturing about or they’ve just read or having as a presentation. It’s a bit of a challenge, I think content based teaching has its good points and it also has a lot to answer for in terms of eating our time in the classroom.

7: I am agreeing with I. ...ha ha ha ...sorry...

M: so, you do exactly the same as she does?

7: I think that many times I try to do the same

Laughter....thing

6: we have different classes, so in the sense of it you have to do different things.

7: Yeah, I think...eh...I try to have the same focus...and...eh...yeah...just to speak English, to be the teacher and speak in English...and for them to hear the language from me and then to try to use it themselves as well.

6: we didn’t say anything about that, did we?

7: Didn’t we?

Transcript from all the interviews

6: No, we didn't really say that, no, we haven't said that. That is a way of working on oral proficiency as well. Because we as teachers make sure that we speak English

7: Yeah

6: and the students have to speak English to us. I guess, for the culture that we have in our classrooms..

7: It's the way it should be.

6: Yeah, and we take that as a bit of a given, so maybe we should mention that, that is actually part of teaching oral proficiency.

7: yeah

6: We do that. And that is one way of trying to integrate it.

7: mm...I think that is the most important thing, that we use the language and we show them that it's not dangerous, it is useful and it can be quite fun, actually – to speak another language and I think it's, it's good for us to have the different parts of the curriculum to show them different parts of the language as well. Eh...so that they can be familiar with different things and see how many ways we can use English. And why they actually need to use it, and that it's useful, in many ways.

6: any additional points you want us to make clear?

General laughter....

M: have some chocolate... laughter...

6: what are you actually asking for?

M: no, it's ok. Just to give you an...

6: because we can pick and choose from the textbooks...

7: ...we use it at some extent, but we don't teach the textbook.

6: No, we don't at all! We have the topics and then our topics on our little "målk" as we call it, let's call it that, ehm...list of aims

M: she had a good word for it; aim-sheets.

6: aimsheets, goalsheet, whatever...we haven't decided on, we haven't decided on the English term for that, have we?

Transcript from all the interviews

M: no, and we need to.

7: I use aim-sheet or goal-sheet in class

6: anyway...that is beside the point, we...we have the main aims broken down into smaller ones there within the topic and say the topic is multicultural expressions, as we are doing now, and we cover, we pick and choose from the book and we have culture, as in cultural expressions, dance, music whatever. We have formal and informal language there, blogs, genres, we have...eh...then we take as a natural progression to that we go into immigrant literature and the text about, we use what we have, but we don't have to go through the entire textbook.

7: No,

6: But that is what I was going to say, when I started out, it has changed a little bit. I don't know if it has to with the people you work with or is it just kind of a growing awareness and just experience on my part or also has to do with this new division.

7: But I don't have the experience and I, I don't like teaching this book. I use parts of it and I pick those tasks that I like or that I think that the students will enjoy, and...

6: You see, you've had the freedom to do that now, because like I said, when we started 8th grade with this team, ehm...some different people, different culture in a way, and not this division and far more, now okey this unit and then this unit and then follow. So we followed the book to far greater extent, and it became a bit of a race because I didn't like just using the book, either, so it kinda I had to cover the book and then I wanted to take in all the really valuable stuff and there's a get the book-stuff over and done with, you know and, so we've relaxed quite a bit on that. I think that has changed

7: and I think that when I was at university, we actually had a lot of discussions on using textbooks. How to use them, could we use them, how should we teach them. And I, we sort of...yeah...I ended up with feeling that the textbook was not the right answer alone. But I like using it as, not a guide because that is the curriculum, but...

6: as a tool...

7: yeah...as a tool...and

6: I think that also in order to be able to use it fully as a tool you have to really know your textbook and that also has to do with experience. You have to kind of have been through it a couple of times to know what is worth it and what's not. I taught 10th grade with this book last year, and I am teaching 10th grade without the book this year and I am doing it totally differently. I am cutting away a bunch

Transcript from all the interviews

of stuff and picking up the stuff that I need and know that works and I am taking in other things, so...I am used to have that freedom...

Hehehe....

M: this is just a thought, and spin on it, please. I'm thinking that if you have, if you are new, yeah, and you don't have years and years of experience teaching, hrm...is there a tendency then that you will use the book more and as you achieve more experience you will let the book go? But then I am thinking does it turn around, so that when you've taught for too many years, you're fed-up, you know, making up all these fantastic things that you can do with your pupils, you revert to the book, because it is so easy?

6: Don't you create your own habits, though? A set of habits, like for me it would be hard to go back to just using the book, because I've made another habit, but definitely when I was younger.

7: I feel like the main problem that I had when I started working here, was that I felt that I didn't use the book as much, but I didn't have...eh..the...knowledge...hehe...sorry...about where to find suitable texts.

6: mm

7: where to find things that I could work with that is suitable, good enough, not too hard, not too easy. That was my main problem.

6: you have to fumble your way through that anyway, so it takes up all your time

7: And I feel that, sometimes still that is, that can be a problem. And...eh...but...I think that the way we are taught at university now is that the textbooks are not the way to go.

6: I know...

7: because we are taught that the curriculum, more and more about the curriculum and less and less about textbooks.

6: I mean, ahm...I have fairly...educated in terms of that as well...ehm...at least from the Masters, from then...ehm...and the whole textbook and yes. It is almost like we're reaching kind of the other end of the scale though, that instead of saying that, ok, textbooks are useful but...ahm...to be consulted and be tools we're kind of now moving into the "let's all nullify textbooks", as if they are all evil, you know...eh...there's a balance and they're good tools if they're good textbooks but tools, they're not recipes.

Transcript from all the interviews

7: But I think, as you said that the danger of falling back to just using the textbook after many years, I think that it's there. To some extent.

6: It's a valid concern.

7: 'Cause I think that as a teacher after many many years, you get sort of tired of finding new stuff all the time. So I think then it is really easy to just fall back on the tool that you have and the subjects that you know are there.

6: I think it's, I think

7: without....

6: more of a danger with younger and newly educated teachers to come out into a workplace where they don't have support system, where the experienced teachers around them to kind of teach them the school culture or how we work here and the different possibilities when working. And it doesn't really matter if you are taught in your education that ok, you don't need to use the textbook, if you are new in a place and you get handed a textbook, and you're told that you have to reach these aims and these aims and you are like; "aaaaa...how do I do this? How do I manage three classes and!" Like you go for the only thing that is tangible in front of you right then, because you don't know where else to go. And that is usually the textbook, and you can tend to be a little, there's a danger following a textbook because if you don't follow it you are going to miss out on something crucial and then the student will not get what they need, 'cause this has probably been planned by someone who is way smarter than what you are and you are going to miss out on a whole bunch of stuff. And so, you can get into the habit, I think from that fear, to use that textbook far more than you need to and then if that is just the way it go then,

7: I think it is much harder for me if I didn't have you guys with the experience and I am always able to ask...

6: we're the rebels...

Laughter...

7: But I think that is..

6: no, seriously, if we were to be a bigger group it would not be agreeing so much on the subject because there would also be teachers who would be deeply personally concerned about whether we could go through all the different units in the book and cover all the different subjects and then there

Transcript from all the interviews

would be others who like, I don't basically care if we cover English football or teenage interests because we need to talk about language. And I need to do that in a different way.

There are a lot of divided opinions on this issue.

### **Focus Group Interview 3. School C.**

M: Hello and welcome to this interview...ehm...please make a brief introduction of yourself before we start.

8: yes, I can start then. I am 41 years old, I think I have been teaching English for five? Four years at the lower secondary school

9: I am 33, I have taught English for eh...nine years and the last four or five years...eh...at lower secondary. I have also been at first grade, at elementary school.

**M: First question: How do teachers work to meet the aims of the four main areas of the Curriculum? I.e. Language learning, written communication, spoken communication, culture, society and literature.**

9: well first of all we use, well I use the textbook we have...eh...in certain topics we talk about, we read the texts in class and...eh...sometimes translate it but now I have 10th grade so we skip the translation in the class. And we...eh...discuss the topics in full class or in smaller groups and then I go around, circle around and listen to them. Eh...we have written assignments and sometimes we have group writing where they write in smaller groups. I find that helpful. Eh...I have some grammar teaching, but – well I have grammar teaching of course, but...eh...less than before because of the lessons. We have two lessons or classes a week now and we had three earlier. It was easier to have one grammar lesson a week. Hrm... well...eh...I try to use English as the communicative language the whole lesson...eh...maybe except when I teach grammar.

8: yeah, much the same as I do. Ehm...Oh, and I think we use retelling quite a lot. When they read a text, I teach 8th grade, and when they read texts, they, we work with kind of getting the clue, just writing keys and then try to retell to me to kind of both language learning and written and spoken communication doing it at the same time. We work quite a lot with that right now. But, we do exactly the same thing, we use some games to learn words sometimes, we have small papers with words, where we rehearse the words that learned before, but...ehm...writing processes and then they work on their writing to go and they write one sentence and then get feedback or they give feedback to each other and then write once more. And then they work with the text in groups as well.

Transcript from all the interviews

9: and we try to do some reading of literature, of course. Eh...then we have...eh...a book...eh...with a...eh...some texts, short stories, novels, extracts from novels, poems, and there are always talks that are attached to the texts, but we do a lot of discussion now on the 10th grade. I think they are comfortable, or most of them are comfortable, speaking English in class. And that is new to me! This class, they like to talk English, because that can be a problem. But...eh...and those who don't like it, they do it when I have smaller groups. And they can talk with their friends and people they are comfortable to be with. So I think the discussion part is ok in my class. I have tried to use photostory, a digital tool, ehm...yeah. What have we forgotten?

8: Moviemaker we tried. Ehm...they record themselves and their soundtracks. A way to make sure that the silent ones are heard.

M: do you co-operate you teachers, all on like grade 8? Do you work together, planning, like year plan or half year plan?

9: Yes, we have a year plan and we are now trying to make a three-year plan, all of the teachers who teach English, so we can ensure that all the goals in the curriculum are reached during the three year period. But apart from that I think we have too little time to work together.

8: Yes, absolutely, yes. It is not like, but of course each, like 8th grade teachers are kind of working, but it's really, there is no time set for doing it. You have to, it depends on the persons you are working with, actually.

9: some like to do their own thing. Yes. But...eh...some of us like to talk more together, but we have the same plan.

8: yes, but it is a challenge then when you have new plans like this year. It takes time to change, and I think most of us are not very aware of, maybe we should have changed things a bit more because there are new aims. Eh...because there is really not enough time for discussing the changes.

M: do you want to say anything else on this one or should I read number two?

8: Well I think we have covered...

9: oh but we also have oral presentations....eh...

8: and role play

9: role play, yeah, small talks – I think I said that.

Transcript from all the interviews

**M: yeah? Ok. Let me read number two, then; Have the reduced number of lessons led to the exclusion of certain topics or reduced the focus on any of the four main areas of the curriculum? If so, which ones?**

8: we have fewer lessons so there is little time for reading...ehm...novels or like they can choose what to read themselves and just then not time for reading a lot.

9: I miss the third lesson, I do.

8: so I don't know if there are certain topics that are excluded, but...excluded, sorry,...but

M: you mentioned earlier that you used to teach grammar?

9: yeah, so that must be the one that I feel, because in my earlier plans I had written lessons where we write, the focus on writing and then maybe a lesson with grammar and one lesson with oral practice. Yeah.

8: for me, I think it is more, I can still teach grammar if I think it is something they need, I could go and teach that particular thing, but I think it is too little time for them to practice using it in their own writing. To kind of, it is just something they are, we don't have enough time for that to work with and to do in their own writing. So, it is kind of the more time, you know to learn a new language you need time.

9: yes, and I have English lessons on Mondays and Fridays so I cannot give them homework for Mondays. So, only one day to give them homework, so I don't like that.

**M: ok, shall we move on? Number three: What strategies are teachers using to meet the adjusted communicative aims?**

8: well....I am not sure...hehehe

9: well, maybe you can...eh...I'm not sure what you mean.

M: that is fair enough. It is a difficult question. I am really into planning, I think the planning here is a key word and we mention that earlier on, but I'm wondering whether the strategies have changed, in the sense that we all make year plans when we plan our year for teaching, you know, and you choose your topics and you have your textbooks and do you, I'm thinking, do you leave the textbook and add new things in order to meet the aims in a different way than before? Have you been thinking about how to actually approach the aims and how to get them through to the pupils?



Transcript from all the interviews

8: I think, for me, I have always been using other things other than the textbook anyway, so it's not like we always read in the textbook. But...eh...I think, I'm more focused on talking in small groups and I go around and listening and I have my own way of...eh...eh...kind of check that they are, how well they are doing. And I am more focused on that they are kind of active and take turns and how they are doing in small groups instead of maybe having or using a lot of lessons having them talk in front of class. Because it helps me quite little, it gives me...eh...little information about some of the aims, which is more like how well are you doing when you are having a conversation and, yes – so that might have changed. Something like that. I am sorry if this is...

M: no, no, no that is so right to the point.

8: that is because of the change in the aims, maybe.

9: and also when we are making this three-year plan, we...eh...start with the aims from the, what do you call it in English anyway...?

M: well, you can just call it the curriculum...

9: ok, and I think...ehm...we didn't do that earlier. Or, the first years of teaching, maybe the book was the first thing we looked at and we divided the year into which chapter we were going through. But now we are starting with the goals and then we find most of the...eh...well...eh...the things we will use, we find in the textbook maybe, but we also use other sources of course. Ja. So, we are more aware of the aims I think, now. And I have to split my lessons, so I have half an hour with...eh...going through texts, discussions and oral activity and then we do some written activities to vary the methods.

M: do you want to say something more?

8: no, I think we've covered it by talking about both written and spoken communication.

**M: good. Question number four: In what ways have the adjusted communicative aims in the curriculum affected the way you work with oral proficiency in the ESL classroom?**

Silence....

8: I think it must be some of the same things as I said for the previous question. I am more focused on students being active, checking out that they are able to do the, to....I mean, I don't need them in front of the classroom and talking about something they have prepared for a long time, I actually need them to check that if we read a text and they have had some words that they, that I'd like them to learn. I need them to use it in a kind of, not authentic, but kind of, I need them to check that they are able to

Transcript from all the interviews

use...eh...to use it to kind of be in a conversation and to kind of more than before, because, before, I...eh...earlier I think I liked to prepare something and tell them...he he he...

9: it was all about presentations, and that was...eh...the...how we graded the oral...

8: yeah...

9: eh...grades. We graded them orally, yeah. So, but now it's more , we are more focused on the communication between students and teachers and that they can communicate...

8: yeah and ah...

9: in different situations

8: yeah and we have one aim for all the stages that you, like in 8th grade you are supposed to be able to have a small talk together with another person for three minutes and then five minutes and then to really to be able to just talk about a topic for and use words that you are supposed to know.

Laughter....

So that has changed.

9: yes, absolutely. And it is not just to read through the texts and answer questions, but discuss more.

M: shall we go on?

8: 9: yeah

**M: Number five: How and to what extent do teachers integrate oral proficiency into their teaching of - Language learning, - Written communication, - Culture, society and literature?**

And seriously, this question is detailed in the sense that I would like you to tell me exactly what do you do, how do you do it and what do you do?

9: okey....

M: I can come up with an example; if you are going to read a text, which has to do with reading skills and understanding text and learning words, how do you integrate oral activity into that? Do you, and if you do, how?

8: like, for...like I think when we, I try to do all things in the same setting, I think. Because we work with all of the things when reading one text. As I said before, ah... both language learning and written communication and culture and society, would be in the same thing. For language learning we can go

Transcript from all the interviews

and have a look at how to start the sentences, how to build a text, or how to use...and words...ehm...vocabulary...and...eh...the vocabulary and I could ask them to write...eh...to write like four key sentences or something like that and they could even, they need to use some of the words, some new words, some difficult words. When they write the key sentences and if, and at the same time the key sentences will have to do with the culture or whatever the theme or the topic would be. That is one way of working with it, I think.

M: what language do you use in the classroom?

8: English

M: only?

8: yeah...no, no, no not only. I'm teaching 8th graders and I have sometimes when I am giving important messages, which of course I often do, I have to speak Norwegian as well. And when I am teaching grammar, as you said, I switch to Norwegian.

**M: do you expect the pupils to ask questions in English or answer you when you ask them in English?**

8: Yes, actually I do that, but I know that a lot of them would never ask if they had to use English asking. Because they don't have the language or...eh...the vocabulary for doing that, so not always when we are in full class, they might ask in Norwegian. But we have a kind of saying that sometimes if I hear a Norwegian word or something, I then snap my fingers at them, and pretend I am writing their names down, putting their name there, I heard a Norwegian word....but that is more when they very often work in small groups or two and two together and then they have to speak English. No Norwegian at all. They say, if they don't find a word they have to try to explain in other ways, so I think we xxxx Norwegian words.

9: My aim is to talk English the whole lesson...eh...both me and the students. Ehm...and when they work in groups when they are working on oral presentations or I try to make them speak English, but of course they are more comfortable speaking Norwegian, so it's quite difficult to make them. For when we have discussions in class, in full class, we talk English. But our grammar book is written in Norwegian. So...eh...we...eh...have grammar lessons in Norwegian. Well I write well when I teach for instance I write the word noun in English, but when I talk about it, I talk Norwegian. So, I don't know if that is the right thing to do, but most of the time...eh...we speak English. And I have 10th grade so it is easier now, than with 8th grade. They are not used to that from elementary school, I think.

Transcript from all the interviews

8: yeah they , I've got...eh...I got feedback that it was too difficult and I even write English on their lesson plan and for the week I always write in English and that causes a lot of frustration, they didn't understand and I had like four students that are really on the lowest level and they are kind of starters in English and I have students who are native speakers as well, so you know, with two lessons a week and two grades to set, so it is, so I have to do both, to speak Norwegian as well. But I think that they are starting to get happier with using English as a classroom language, they say it is getting easier now.

9: So my aim is to make it a kind of culture, you know, so it is a...eh...that they will do it without thinking about it. When English class starts and I start talking English they will automatically speak English themselves, so that is the aim. But it is...ah...easier said than done, but I think it is fun to teach now because this class I am having now, they like to talk English. And also they do it, so that is great. I think it is very important to talk English the whole lesson because I have a couple of students that say it is too difficult, then they are frustrated but I think that if they don't hear English they will never learn it, so...hehe...they have to. I think they will pick up on it eventually.

8: I try to...ehm...do stationwork. Yeah...

M: okey

8: where I had all these things, it was two weeks ago or something, we were supposed to be two teachers, but we were not, so I had to handle it myself, but it works great and then we had all these things covered in one lesson and they had to work, I used the clever, the bright, the best student, he had his own kind of station and, so he were one, he ran one of them and...eh...and...eh...they were prepared, they had prepared a text, they were supposed to know a text quite well before we had the station work, and my station was supposed to discuss in a group, in a small group, what is important with this text we've read, what...ehm...and kind of prepare to retell in front of me. Well, I heard the whole session though, so I could, you know, take these aims and..hehehe... I was surprised myself. Because during this one lesson I had groups of four or five students coming the whole, so I had actually covered all the students in one lesson and I think it was like two students that didn't participate at all, they did not talk, so they were kind of, and it was so easy to, "what do you think, what do you think about that?" I could really, so that was...eh...hm...hehehe...I was very surprised! Yeah, so it is possible to, to cover it all.

9: Yeah, you just have to endure the loudness when we have...hehe...because we like, well I like, classes that are silent and I can talk and they listen, but I don't think they learn so much then. So I have to accept that they are kids, more noise in my classroom and everyone's participating. And you don't have to work on that you are not in control of every single thing because that is difficult.

Transcript from all the interviews

8: But they are, often they are very happy about the lesson and they say that they learn more and if you have a check then to where you ask them to write down four things that you learned or something, to just have a check then they, seems like they actually do well instead of sleeping when I am talking.

Chuckle....

9: yes.

**M: good! That's it. Do you have any other comments on the curriculum or the change or the number of lessons as a final comment?**

8: I just think it is very unfair that we have two lessons a week and that we have to set two grades. Eh...it's...ehm...it's really too much and I am teaching Norwegian as well and it is exactly the same, I have 2 and a half hour a week, so I am setting four grades in to, I think it is supposed to a kind of examination subject, I mean we should have more time for working with it and we get students from primary school that really, they are really doing worse at the National tests, so...eh...to kind of raise the level and I think it is unfair with so few lessons, really. You have to...eh...it's actually...eh...it is what they do in their spare time that is important for how well they are doing in English at school. I think.

9: yes, how much English they are supposed to do in their spare time

M: what's that noise? (ringing noise in the background)

9: School bell!

M: oh, of course – hum, hum...sorry....we haven't go one at my school...

9: Well in, I find it that is a bit on the side but, there are no English, well English are not...ah...I don't remember the word...but you don't have to have English when you are studying for...eh...to be a teacher. And I think that is strange. That is not correct.

M: you mean it is not compulsory?

9: No, so it is not compulsory. So...eh...more English, the more competent English teachers in elementary school maybe. I think there are a lot of good teachers in elementary school, that is not what I meant, but I think a lot of them don't have the....hehehe

M: they don't have the skills? To teach English?

9: I don't think they speak English in classroom, at elementary school. I don't think they do.

Transcript from all the interviews

**M: Do you think if the elementary school pupils had had teachers who spoke English in class you would have had an easier job in meeting the aims?**

9: I think so

8: mmm, yes, probably. And I also they tend to take students out of class, especially English lessons I think that, the less proficient students are, are working in smaller groups with other students that are struggling, and instead of being in class, I have now three students who are in such groups for three years and they really don't know the basic, so as I mean it is something wrong with how they do that, do things in. It must be that, concerning English I think it is not good to be taken out of class. It is better to be in class and to be kind of just to listen yeah and to pick things, cause you know you don't learn a new language by writing I am I am I am, I was I was I was ten thousand times. Still they can't really, still they are writing I were. You just need to be exposed to and to listen and to be, and I think there must be something wrong with how we do it. And they say that, they like better being in class, just listening trying to cope with what we are doing. So it might be easier for them that way. Yes.

#### **Focus Group Interview 4. School B**

Ok, ehm...welcome to the interview. I am very happy that you are doing this for me, so let's try with a tiny little testrun...ehm...hrm...and make a brief introduction of yourself before we start.

Ok, my name is XXX and I work at XXX Ungomsskole, I am 58 years old and I have been teaching for 15 years. Eeh...mainly English and social science in Lower Secondary School.

**M: Ok, question number one: how do teachers work to meet the aims, or you as a teacher work to meet the aims of the four main areas of the curriculum, language learning, written communication, spoken communication and culture, society and literature?**

12: Eh, I think you have to..eh.. be very versatile to get them all included in the way you perform your lessons. Eh, language learning is something I find very important and I find the focus on form of course very important, the grammar. Eeh, more so than I think a lot of teachers do today, the linguistic features of the language are very important to me. Ehm, I...if I get divided lessons where you have half a class it is much easier to try to...eh...you know, meet the aims of the curriculum when it comes to language learning, I think. So, written communication ...ehm...I think that is what we emphasize on more than anything else with all our, our, you know the midterm tests, all five-paragraph essays and all

Transcript from all the interviews

that we...well... that's very important to us in Norwegian schools, but I am not quite sure if you can do that very well without having the spoken communication included in your lessons. By communicating in English with the pupils and get them to communicate back, I think that is very important to, sort of...eh...well, get the written and the spoken communication associated to each other, even though they are apart in the curriculum now. I don't think that you can do one without the other. And, I am very happy that they divided it, because it's much easier to, eh... to have to focus on oral communication. I think that has been done far too little before in the classroom in the lower secondary schools in Norway. I think a lot of teachers don't speak English with the students and they don't expect them to speak English back.

My main...eh...seeing I am a social science teacher, I...you know...culture, society and literature is sort of my main thing...ehm...I think it is very important to learn about society, but I think a lot of our books that we use in the classroom are emphasizing maybe too much on social science. Perhaps we should pick it apart and perhaps we should use more English literature...eh...and...ehm...you know...eh...I think you always associate English with the social science like history, ehm I am not quite sure if that's the way to go always, you know?

So some of my tasks, they try to emphasize more on literature than on the social science bits. Yeah.

M: Ok, should we go on?

12: yeah

**M: Number two: has the reduced number of lessons led to exclusion of certain topics or reduced focus on any of the four main areas of the curriculum? If so, which ones?**

12: yes, yes. Ahm...definitely. The reduced number of lessons, they've led to exclusion of topics, yes. Especially coming to oral English, because we haven't got enough lessons to differentiate the way we speak to pupils and they have not got a, you know they haven't got the guts to speak to us in a big setting. If you had the chance to have more lessons and more divided lessons, we could go on teaching them oral English much more and so I think that, and also ...eh...linguistic learning...ah... focus on interpretation of language, focus on dialects for example also has been diminished a lot. I think we now just have to try and get through the main areas, you know. And that's it. So, I am not quite sure if I am very happy about with the reduced number of lessons, I think we should have the same numbers of lessons as they have in Upper Secondary School. Five lessons, perhaps, a week. Because, at least in 10<sup>th</sup> grade. Because it is very important to get a good foundation and today's...I think it is very difficult.

Transcript from all the interviews

M: But you say, you know, that it is the spoken or the spoken communication that is sort of being pushed aside, yet the divide have sort of underlined the importance of oral communication, so how does that work then?

12: I think it is contradictory in a way.

M: must be

12: It is because...eh...you try to emphasize on that in the divided lessons but in so many cases, you don't get the divided lessons because of the pressure because...eh...the lessons get thrown together and you get a whole class anyway, you get 30 pupils after all because...perhaps, I mean, during this last six months that I have been teaching English, I think I have had three of four lessons out of the lessons I was supposed to have in differentiated or in divided class. So, it's not enough teachers in school, or...eh...there is something structurally wrong that makes us unable to have these divided lessons and also that we're not able to focus more on the oral English. There must be many reasons to it.

M: this leads me to...ehm...this number three. Like, because there's been a reduction in the number of lessons, and because some of the stuff will have to give, then I am wondering **what strategies are you then using to meet the adjusted communicative aims?** How are you going to do that, then because you haven't got enough lessons and you are saying that like oral communication will have to go, amongst other things, then...how, what strategies are you using then to meet the communicative aims?

12: I don't think you can meet them. I think it is very hard, you are left with a bad conscience because you think that the children or the pupils they don't get used to speaking English, even though they...eh...I mean you try to use short-cuts. You try to use gaming, you try to use films, you...and you try to focus on speaking English in the classroom, but the response you get is mainly, or nearly always from the students that are good at oral English from before. So you don't get a chance to get all of the students included, so that most times you don't even know how half the class are able to speak English. Even though you think that they might be able to because of the gaming, because of you know all they do on the social media and all that. But when it comes to the crunch, you know, they are not as good as all that anyway. So, you...strategies, you try to use a number of strategies that you're used to using as a teacher, but you do not meet communicative aims.

M: it is too overwhelming then obviously. Yeah, ok. **Right, number four; in what ways have the adjusted communicative aims in the curriculum affected the way you work with oral proficiency in the ESL classroom?**



Transcript from all the interviews

12: Yes, I have put much more emphasis on speaking English with the students. I have focused a lot more on expecting them to speak English back to me and I have focused much more on having a...eh...what should you say...eh...communication that is sort of ongoing. I mean it is not only that you speak English in between, you try to have it as an ongoing process to make kids learn more and more words that you expand their orthography and their dictionary...eh...you know. So, I think that most teachers today would have to think about that...eh...and would have to try to be very well aware of the expectations that are there. We are supposed to speak English with the students and they are supposed to learn English...ehm...communicate in English. Not only write English.

M: how far down in the levels, you know in the schoolsystem would you go? With only, like if you say you are only going to speak English, in the classroom, in class?

12: I think you should do it from the very beginning. Then they will get used to it. You just adjust your, you know...your language with your students. I think anyone can do that. So if you, you know, I mean, if you have an English speaking person, a person that originates from an English speaking country, they would speak English as a teacher in the classroom from the very beginning and the kids would understand. So why not do it? It'd be good.

M: it is so interesting. Hm.Ehm, ok, number five: This is going really nice and quickly, hey?

12 & M: general laughter

**M: How and to what extent do teachers integrate oral proficiency into their teaching of language learning, written communication, culture, society and literature?,**

Which really, to a certain extent has been covered by the previous four questions, but then on the other hand, this is specifically on oral proficiency, although I know you mentioned it before.

12: Eh...I try to do it as much as I can, but oral proficiency – I, I am not quite sure if perhaps we should try to help teachers to become better at their oral English themselves.

M: Do you think that is the problem?

12: yes, definitely. And I also think that a lot of teachers haven't got the linguistic ability to transfer their knowledge into a natural sort of oral communication.

M: oh, ok.

12: Eh...I think also that it's hard for them, a lot of them, to make tasks that are English sounding. It is the way they think that makes that, I mean I would like a focus to, to be a focus on giving teachers a

Transcript from all the interviews

chance to learn more English themselves. Before teaching in the classroom. Ah..not only doing a degree or something like that, but communication. So,

M: but that would cover the language learning, right? I am just thinking question five, that you are talking about, language learning, I mean, you are just saying that teachers will have to know how to speak

12: yeah, but when it comes to language learning it is also important that...eh...all ye..when you, that you, have the time to teach grammar, and when you teach grammar that you use the linguistic features of English and all the terminology within grammar. And I don't think that is being done, because I experienced this all the time that they even don't know what..eh...present continuous is, you know. And they can't even write the word. So, that is something one should start with much earlier as well. Bringing the oral..

M: do you think that is because the teachers don't know?

12: definitely

~~M: Do they know in Norwegian? In their mothertongue?~~

12: I suppose most do, but they can't transfer into English.

M: okey, I am just thinking that, you know, like the verb tense. If you don't know what they are in Norwegian and you are teaching English, you've got a problem, then?

12: yeah, you have a problem, then. Eh...but they might know it in, or might know it in Norwegian and we might try to our best in English, but of course if you don't know the terminology it is very hard to, you know? That's what the kids should know. From the beginning, I say.

M: how do you integrate oral proficiency in written communication?

12: yes. That is...eh...that is something that I often do with talking about their products after they have written something

M: ok, yeah.

12: So, I use a lot of , so I try communication with the kids about their, whatever they've written. I think that is more important than just giving them a mark.

M: but do they say anything then? Or are they just listening to you?

Transcript from all the interviews

12: well, yes...eh...the strange thing is that if you are together with two or three of them or just one of them, to talk about their product, they will speak English back to you and they will be much more self-assured expressing themselves than they are in the classroom, of course. So, they are struggling a lot to try and express it in English to say what they, how they might defend their

M: work

12: flaws or their...yeah, yeah.

M: ok

12: I think it is important to use oral communication into discussing a written product .

M: that goes back to what you said initially, like when you are supposed to speak English when you teach English..

12: that's right, yeah

M: How about the culture and society and literature. I know that you are a social science teacher, so obviously it would be easy for you. But if you weren't, how would you...ehm...tell another teacher who is not a social science teacher how to integrate oral proficiency into that type or this part of the curriculum, how would you suggest that to be done?

12:Eh...I think that you'd have to have a very sound knowledge of what you are going to teach. You have to have knowledge of it with a...eh...with English language, in English language. I mean, if you are going to tell students about the cold war, you'll have to know a fair bit about the cold war in English, so to speak. And I also think that to include society and talk about society, and especially society today, which is quite complex, you will have to know about society in English yourself, you have to read English news, understand English speaking society all over the world, really. You know. Ehm...and I think that is perhaps difficult for a lot of teachers, I think.

M: so it requires a lot of work?

12: well, eh...

M: in a way

12: Yes it does, but I think that we as teachers should have more time to sit together and expand our knowledge within our group as teachers in the school. In our school.

M: as part of our work-time?

Transcript from all the interviews

12: yes, so we don't enough time to do just that. Which is very important to stimulate each other and to expand our knowledge and to dare to use English among each other as well. You know.

M: Do you have any other comments on like either...eh...the timeframe that we work within or the new divided curriculum, you know?

12: I think that perhaps we should get time to work together much more. We should, there are a lot of really unimportant issues that we are supposed to be enduring on. The thing that are supposed to do aren't really important in our work as teachers. So I think if we

M: it takes the focus away?

12: it takes the focus away. So we should have more time to do...eh...preparation together...ehm...to become more confident in what we are doing, in a practical sense. Eh... and I also think that we should have had the time to go through the curriculum and what it expects of us, as a divided curriculum.

M: Because that wasn't done. The information was just given. This is the way it is going to be and figure it out yourselves.

12: I think a lot of teachers know that it is there, but they don't know how to meet it. They don't know how to, how it is expected to be done, by them.

M: which is why it should be, might be the reason why you were asked what I meant with strategies. Yes, it falls back to that, doesn't it?

12: yeah. Probably. Yeah.

M. yeah, it makes sense now with what you just said. It ties in with that one. Anything else you want to say, or you are good?

12: I think it was very interesting to participate in this. And I think you are doing a great job because it is going to have practical value for teachers

M: hopefully. Do you think it would have been different if you had been in a group interview than like now one on one? You wouldn't know?

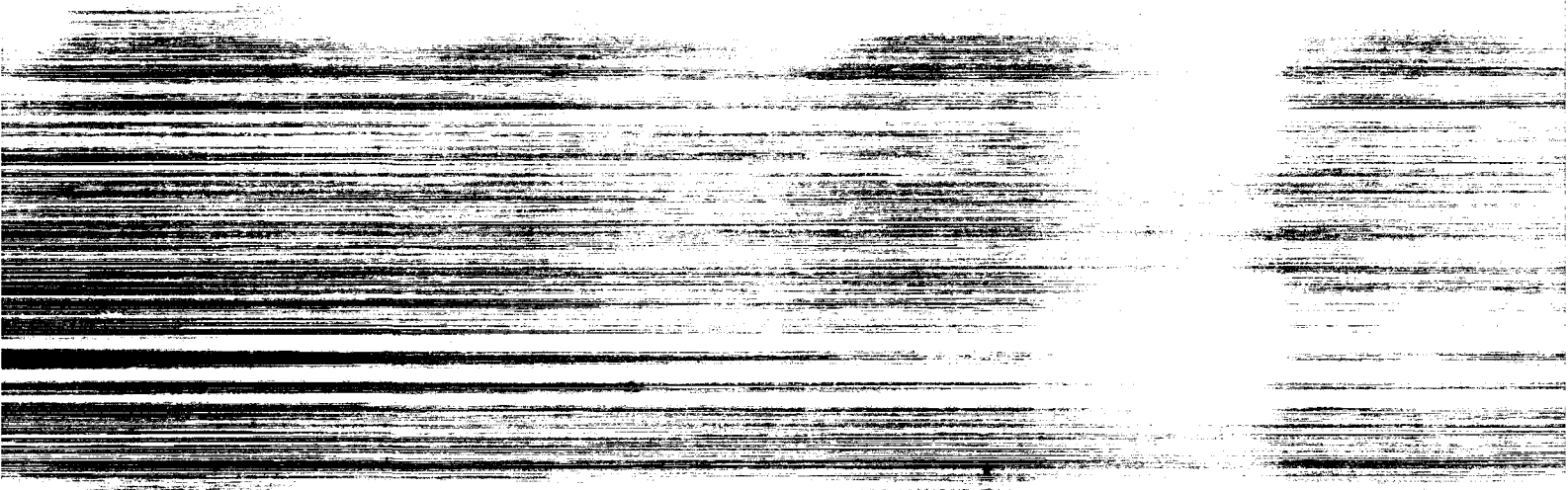
12: Well, we could be imposed on by each other, I suppose. Influenced on, opinions and meanings, but I guess I would have said just about the same

M: that is good to know. Okey, well thank you very much.

12: you are very welcome!

**Appendix 9**

**Participation Consent Form**



## Participation Consent Form

Participant number: \_\_\_\_\_

In connection with my Master's Dissertation at Høgskolen i Østfold, the University of Gothenburg and the University of Lâksjô, I am inviting you to take part in a focus group interview. You have been selected as a participant in this project because you are a teacher of English at lower secondary school level.

The focus group interview will be conducted together with three or four of your colleagues, also teaching English. I consider this type of interview as the best tool to get as much information as possible. A focus group interview might seem less like an interview and more like a conversation or discussion, which may make it less awkward. The interview will be recorded.

I anticipate that one meeting will suffice, with a timeframe of approximately 1-2 hours. In the process you may be challenged on your opinions or feel exposed for the way your teaching is organized. However, this offers an opportunity to discuss topics which perhaps is not prioritized as much as desired during normal working hours. Apart from this, I cannot guarantee that you will receive any benefits from this study.

Any information that is obtained in connection with the interview will be confidential. Upon signing this document you will give consent to the usage of any information that you may give during the interview. Any information that may lead to disclosure of you as a person will be made anonymous.

The interview's transcript will be used as empirical evidence in my Master's dissertation. Please find enclosed the topic for my dissertation along with the questions I will ask during the interview.

If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time.

You will be given a copy of this form.

YOU ARE MAKING A DECISION WHETHER OR NOT TO PARTICIPATE. YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES THAT YOU HAVE DECIDED TO PARTICIPATE, HAVING READ THE INFORMATION ABOVE.

Please bring this paper, signed, when you come to the interview.

Date:

Signature:

Signature of Researcher: