

## Master's thesis

“I want to start from zero, because if I do that, I can be better.”

English teaching for newly arrived minority language students in upper secondary school in Norway.

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*Avdeling for økonomi, språk og samfunnsfag.*



## ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates how newly arrived minority language students (NA students) in Norway experience being students of English in upper secondary school, and how teachers experience teaching English to this diverse student group. Furthermore, it aims at finding out what students and teachers need to obtain the best possible teaching and learning situation, and ultimately, the best learning results, in the subject of English.

The data have been gathered through questionnaires answered by teachers, and interviews with students. The results show that the meeting with a new school system represents a huge challenge to many NA students. In the English subject, both students and teachers experience the situation particularly challenging for students with little English competence when arriving in Norway. In addition to the challenges in the process of adapting to Norwegian culture and learning Norwegian, these students must cope with the expectations of knowledge and skills set upon them by the English curriculum. The study shows that the expectations of the English curriculum and the level of the English teaching are too demanding for many NA students, and that they are not able to follow the ordinary teaching. Consequently, teaching English to NA students demands a high degree of differentiation and adaptation of the teaching. Further, it is necessary for teachers to have awareness, knowledge and understanding of how different cultural and educational backgrounds may affect learning. In addition, teachers need competence in teaching English as L3.

The main conclusions of the thesis are, first, that mapping and assessment of the students' knowledge in English when starting their education in Norway, and other factors in their background that may affect their learning, is crucial and needs to be done early to ensure the right adaptation of the teaching. Second, many NA students need basic English training/English for beginners. Third, teachers need, and ask for, necessary training and resources to be able to provide the right adapted teaching. A fourth conclusion is that the students' first languages (L1) and their competence in Norwegian (L2) play an important part in their learning and need to be given the necessary focus.

**Keywords:** Newly arrived minority language student (NA student), the English curriculum (ENG1-03), mapping/assessment, adapted teaching, L1, L2, L3

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

For nearly 50 decades, waves of immigrants have crossed the Norwegian border, from many parts of the world. At the end of 2018, immigrants constituted 14.4 percent of the population (Statistics Norway, 2019). People come to Norway for a variety of reasons. Predominantly they are refugees and asylum seekers, work immigrants or work immigrants' family members. In addition, there are immigrants who are in Norway on a more temporary basis, such as students. As a result of immigration, many Norwegian upper secondary schools have developed into multicultural institutions with a multitude of languages represented. In 2018, about 19 percent of the students in upper secondary education in Norway were immigrants or children of immigrants (Thorud, 2019, p. 56).

The focus in this study will be on newly arrived students from minority languages (NA students)<sup>1</sup>. They come to school with qualifications which differ in many respects. Some of them have completed higher education and have fluency in many languages, while others have little or no formal education. Many NA students have had only occasional schooling in their countries of origin. Some are even illiterate (Hilt, 2018; Thorud, 2019, p. 48).

Schools are important arenas for inclusion and participation in Norwegian society. What is more, education is of the highest importance to develop a rich and well-functioning multicultural society and to ensure the citizens meaningful lives. Nonetheless, for many NA students the meeting with the Norwegian educational system means facing tough challenges. Many of them have had their earlier education in school systems with other prioritizations in educational policy and pedagogy than they meet in the Norwegian system.

One of the most crucial factors deciding how successful the students will be in their schoolwork, and how successful their teachers will be as their supervisors and instructors, is language. Students come with a variety of first languages, and in order to have a possibility to understand and be understood, competence in languages shared with the majority of the students, first and foremost Norwegian, but also English, is of the highest importance. In addition, there is a need for the individual student to express and develop their individual identities, and this is also to great extent dependent on language (The Norwegian Directorate

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<sup>1</sup> "Newly arrived students from minority languages" in my context means students who have lived a maximum of six years in Norway, and who have other first languages than Norwegian and Sami (see 2.1.1).

for Education and Training, 2019). Besides being an important factor in the students' communication with others, and in their personal expression of identity, competence in languages from other parts of the world is important for society. This need is created by migration and globalization and makes students with multilingual competence a resource that contribute to strengthening of cooperation and understanding in work life and society in general. This implies that minority language students must be given a chance to further development of competence in their mother tongues (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020). NA students' rights are safeguarded through the Norwegian legislation. Section 3-12 in the Education Act establishes the right to native language teaching, bilingual teaching, or both (Ministry of Education and Research, 1998). The same section ensures minority language learners the right to adapted education in Norwegian "until they are sufficiently proficient in Norwegian to attend the normal instruction offered" (ibid.)

NA students face a situation where they in theory can be learners of three languages at the same time: their first language (L1), Norwegian (L2) and English (L3). In the English teaching in upper secondary school, it is important that the students have a certain foundation of knowledge and skills to be able to follow the teaching, which in the first year of upper secondary education builds on the skills and knowledge gained through ten years of English teaching in Norwegian primary and lower secondary education. Many NA students lack such foundation in English. The situation is also challenging for the teachers, with the demand for adaptation of their teaching in groups with huge differences in school backgrounds and possible communication problems with students with first languages unknown to them. Teaching multilingual students represents extra challenges for teachers not least because many of them are not prepared for teaching English as L3. A major reason for this is that teaching English as L3 is not given enough focus in teacher training programmes in Norway (Surkalovic, 2014, in Dahl & Krulatz, 2016, p. 5).

There is little research on English teaching of NA students in upper secondary schools in Norway. The need for such research cannot be overestimated, taking into consideration the importance knowledge of English has in our globalized world and its importance and central position as a school subject in Norway (Burner & Carlsen, 2020). The research that does exist focuses for the most part on minority language students' situations in the English classroom from a teacher perspective. There is now a need for research that considers this topic from a student perspective (Iversen, 2017, p. 39).

Without losing sight of such need for focus on students, I have chosen to include a teacher perspective in my study. The overriding aim is, through both perspectives, to seek input that sheds light on what the learners need to achieve the best possible learning situation and results. I attempt finding important information concerning English teaching to NA students in upper secondary school, both about its content, factors influencing it, and the learners' needs. Simultaneously, I want to investigate how English teachers experience the teaching, and what they need in their work with NA students. My aim is that the inclusion of both teachers' and students' experiences, attitudes and needs will paint a broad, and hopefully clear, picture of the situation for NA students in the subject of English and add to a fuller understanding of the students' needs.

The participants in the interviews are in the first and second year of vocational programmes. I have conducted interviews with seven learners from five different countries. They are attending ordinary classes in three schools within the same county in Norway. I have interviewed them about their language backgrounds and school backgrounds, and their experiences of English teaching in their countries of origin and in Norway. Furthermore, I have gathered data via a questionnaire from eight teachers from five different upper secondary schools, in three different counties in Norway. Through the data collected from the questionnaire I wanted to shed light on important factors in the teaching of NA students: how teachers experience it, and which methods, materials and organization that are useful and which are not. I was also interested in finding out something about what the teachers miss, and ask for, to be able to do a satisfactory job with NA students. The prevailing aim of my investigation was to learn something about what the students and teachers need to obtain the best possible learning results.

I have formulated the following two research questions:

- **Research question 1:**

**How do newly arrived minority language students experience English teaching in Norwegian upper secondary school? What do they need to achieve the best possible learning outcome?**

- **Research question 2:**



## **How do teachers experience teaching English to newly arrived minority language students in Norwegian upper secondary school? What do they need to be able to provide the best possible learning outcome?**

The thesis consists of the following chapters: Following the introduction is chapter 2 where I present the theoretical background for my study. The chapter is divided into five parts: First, I give definitions of important terminology. Second, I present relevant laws and regulations. Third is a presentation of examples of competence aims in the English subject curriculum (ENG1-03), and fourth is a section on NA students: different backgrounds, different foundations in English and their right to adapted teaching. Fifth, there is a section on teaching English in multilingual classrooms, including access to teaching resources and teachers' needs.

Chapter 3 describes the methodology and is divided into three parts: a presentation of the participants, materials and procedures respectively.

Following this are chapter 4, which is combination of presentation of findings and an analysis and discussion of these, and chapter 5, the sum-up. Finally, in chapter 6, is the conclusion.

## **2.0 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

Here I will define important terms and present the theoretical background for the study.

### **2.1 Definition of important terms**

#### **2.1.1 Newly arrived minority language student (NA student)**

The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (2016, p. 3) states that the term “newly arrived” should not be fixed in numbers of years, but that the term implies a certain limitation of time. The definition of the term “newly arrived” can be seen as a near equivalent of the Norwegian term “med kort botid” (with short stay, my translation), which in several instances is defined to less than six years (Thorshaug & Svendsen, 2014, p. 24). In agreement with this, I have decided to restrict the term “newly arrived” to a maximum of six years' stay in Norway.

The definition of minority language student used in this thesis is “students with another first language than Norwegian or Sami” (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2016). I choose to use the term purely based on the important fact that it is *language* teaching that is the central aspect of my study, and that the learners I investigate all have first languages that are spoken by fewer people in Norway than those who speak Norwegian.

### **2.1.2 Some terms for the Norwegian school system**

I will use the term “lower secondary school” for 8th to 10th grade and “upper secondary school” for the following two and three years: two years for vocational education programmes and three years for programmes for general studies. For the three grades of upper secondary education I choose to use the Norwegian terms: videregående 1 (VG1), videregående 2 (VG2) and videregående 3 (VG3). In addition, I have chosen the term “introduction class” for the full-time qualification programmes for NA students intended as education in basic competence in Norwegian, and as motivation to start training or education (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2016, pp. 6-7).

## **2.2 Laws and regulations**

Section 3-1 in the Education Act states the right to upper secondary education for young people between 16 and 24:

Young people who have completed primary and lower secondary education or the equivalent have, on application, the right to three years' full-time upper secondary education and training. This also applies to those who have completed upper secondary education in another country, but whose education cannot be used for admission to universities and university colleges or as vocational qualifications in Norway (Ministry of Education and Research, 1998).

It is a presupposition that the applicant is granted legal stay, and that it is reasonable that he/she will stay in Norway for more than three months (*ibid.*).

The right to attend introduction classes is stated in sections 2-8 and 3-12 in the Education Act (Ministry of Education and Research, 1998). Introduction classes are municipality-run and

designed to give the participants insight into the Norwegian society. They are intended to ensure inclusion and a good learning environment, and the content of the programmes should be adapted to each participant's needs.

The organization of introduction classes can be in separate groups, classes or schools (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2016, p. 6).

Section 3-12 (Ministry of Education and Research, 1998) states that students in upper secondary education with another mother tongue than Norwegian or Sami have the right to special Norwegian language training until they have attained sufficient competence to follow the ordinary teaching. In addition, if necessary, these students also have a right to teaching in their first language and/or bilingual teaching. If bilingual teachers or assistants are unavailable, the students must be granted other adaptation.

## **2.3 The English subject curriculum (ENG1-03)**

The English subject curriculum (ENG1-03) for programmes for VG1 general studies and VG2 vocational education programmes is based on knowledge and skills developed during ten years of English education in the Norwegian school system (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2006). In the period 2020-2022 a new curriculum will be introduced. However, since the data for this thesis were collected during ENG1-03, examples of competence aims from this, now obsolete curriculum, will be presented to illustrate some of the requirements set for the learner.

ENG1-03 is divided into four main areas: *language learning*, *oral communication*, *written communication* and *culture, society and literature* (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2006).

I have chosen to present examples of competence aims from all four areas for VG1 general studies and VG2 vocational programme (table 1) to illustrate what is expected of students in the English subject, and to shed light on challenges that these expectations represent for NA students who lack sufficient foundation in English.

Area	Competence aims
Language learning	“evaluate and use different situations, working methods and learning strategies to further develop one’s English-language skills”
Oral communication	“understand and use a wide general vocabulary and an academic vocabulary related to his/her own education programme”
Written communication	“use patterns for orthography, word inflection and varied sentence and text construction to produce texts”
Culture, society and literature	“discuss and elaborate on different types of English language literary texts from different parts of the world”

Table 1: *Examples of competence aims in English for VG1 general studies and VG2 vocational programmes. (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2006)*

Competence expressed through terminology such as “understand and use a wide general vocabulary and academic vocabulary”, “produce texts”, “discuss and elaborate” demands a certain foundation in English. One must assume that NA students starting upper secondary education in Norway with little English education from their countries of origin do not have the necessary competence to be able to cope with aims such as these in the English curriculum.

## 2.4 The NA student

### 2.4.1 Different school backgrounds

NA students' educational backgrounds are diverse due to variations in school systems, educational politics and pedagogy in their countries of origin. In addition, some of the NA learners have only occasional schooling and training because of conflicts and war. Some might even lack schooling all together. Some of the immigrants have been on the run and have breaks in their education because of this (Hilt, 2018). Differences in experiences such as these make NA students a multifaceted group regarding both educational and psychosocial needs.

Burner and Carlsen (2020) have studied English teaching in introduction classes in Norway and found that the differences are huge in variables like the length of the students' stay in Norway, their age and their competence in English. There can be several years in age difference among the learners in the same class. Furthermore, their stay in Norway can have lasted from months up to years, and their competence in English can vary from being highly competent to not having any competence at all (ibid.).

Differences in the educational systems in Norway and the societies the students come from might create intercultural problems. These may lead to culture clashes between the NA students' school backgrounds and the expectations, organization and teaching that they meet in Norwegian schools. The differences might imply different ways of relating and thinking, different expectations to the educational processes and to the roles of the students and teachers. One example of differences is the relationship between teachers and students. Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010, pp. 69-70) point at major differences in the relationship between teachers and students between large-power-distance and small-power-distance cultures. In large-power-distance cultures, teachers are treated with respect, and in some instances, even feared. The teaching is highly teacher-oriented, and all communication is regulated by the teacher (ibid.). In Norwegian classrooms, learners with minority language background meet a situation with small power-distance, where students and teachers are basically seen as equals. Typical of small-power-distance cultures is that education is student-centred, with expectations of students to be active and to initiate communication, and with an acceptance of disagreement and invitation to co-decision (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010, pp. 69-70).

In addition to differences in power structures, NA learners might meet challenges related to different pedagogy and didactics in the Norwegian classroom. One significant challenge is digital resources. Many NA students are not familiar with the use of computers and the internet in the teaching in their countries of origin. Adapting to the Norwegian school system demands digital skills, since information and knowledge technology plays such an important role in the teaching and learning from early stages in education in Norway. A project conducted by Proba research in collaboration with Agenda Kaupang (Thorbjørnsrud, El-Amrani & Stenstadvold, 2019) surveyed asylum seekers' access to and use of digital channels and platforms. They found extensive variation in their digital competence. The variation was related to the educational level, first and foremost, and to some extent also to age and national background (Thorbjørnsrud, El-Amrani & Stenstadvold, 2019, pp. 6-7). The study found that immigrants with little or no schooling often have poor skills in using the computer, and their ability to search for information online is limited, whereas immigrants with higher education usually have high digital skills and are experienced in searching for information online.

More recent findings point in the same direction, showing that many NA students do not have sufficient competence in using their computers to master situations such as for example the one that occurred with the Covid-19 pandemic, where exclusively digital learning was the solution for schools in Norway (Skjold & Fagerheim, in Harnes, 2020). Skjold and Fagerheim experienced that many NA students have technical difficulties with using their computers, and that they had to instruct them in how to use their computers in the digital classroom.

NA students' meeting with Norwegian society and school is demanding in many areas. In addition to, and often because of, challenges related to a new school culture, teachers need to be particularly aware of mental health issues produced by acculturative stress. Similarly, teachers need to be aware of traumas and extreme situations that the students may have experienced before starting their new lives in Norway. Sadness and trauma-related psychological problems will affect the learning processes and create demands for special adaptation and psychosocial support measures (Loona, 2016). A study performed by the committee (2018) shows that a higher percentage of NA students than majority language students drop out of upper secondary school (Ministry of Education and Research, 2018, p. 184). In the group of minority students who drop out, boys are overrepresented. Reasons for the high number of NA student dropouts from upper secondary school are, according to the study, lack of skills in the Norwegian language and psychological and social factors linked to the situation as refugees/immigrants (*ibid.*).

Despite challenges as those described above, many NA students have a great drive towards education, as shown in a study performed by Oslo Met/Centre for Welfare and Labour Research (Bakken & Hyggen, 2018). The study shows that such drive towards and motivation for learning and education is a general tendency across ethnic background in the minority group, with no significant difference in length of residence in the country. Contrary to this, school results **are** dependent on length of residence in Norway, with NA students obtaining significantly lower results than majority language students and NA students with longer residence in the country (Bakken & Hyggen, 2018).

### **2.4.2 Different foundations in English**

It is basic knowledge in pedagogy that teachers should build on the learners' existing knowledge (Özerk, 2011, p.73). Dale and Wærness (2003, p. 80) present a model of seven basic categories for differentiation, the first one being to investigate and get to know the learners' potential and abilities. The implication this has for teachers and students is that the NA students' potential for learning and their achieved competence must be mapped, and then be the starting point for the teaching. Bunar and Bouakaz (in Bunar, 2015, pp. 277-278) emphasize the importance of strategies for thorough and systematic mapping of each learner's knowledge, skills and needs when starting, and in the pathway of, upper secondary education. For NA students with low competence in Norwegian and English, it is important to use the learners' L1 as a resource when coming to terms with their prior knowledge, since it is through their L1 that their knowledge and skills have been developed (Glømmen, 2015). Consequently, an interpreter needs to be introduced in the assessment of the NA students' competence (Bounar & Bouakaz, in Bunar, 2015, p. 281).

Mapping of NA students' psychosocial background and prior knowledge in English is key in gaining information about their skills and potential for learning and deciding what adaptation measures are needed in the English subject (Bunar, in Nilsson, 2015).

### **2.4.3 Adapted teaching**

Mapping of prior knowledge and adaptation and differentiation of the teaching are linked. Dale and Wærness (2003, pp. 52-53) underscore that adapted teaching needs to have the

individual learner's prerequisites and needs at its centre. To find out what these prerequisites and needs are, mapping is of uttermost importance, and subsequently it is the teachers' task to differentiate their teaching to include variation in the use of tasks, materials, work methods and organization. The purpose must be to compensate for lack of knowledge and skills and to adapt teaching to every individual's prerequisites (ibid.). This is in accordance with section 1-3 in the Education Act, which states that "education must be adapted to the abilities and aptitudes of the individual pupil, apprentice, candidate for certificate of practice and training candidate" (Ministry of Education and Research, 1998).

Özerk (2011, pp. 24-27, 36) points at a connection between adapted teaching and differentiation and presents a division of pedagogical differentiation which implies differentiation in content, tempo and methods, and organizational differentiation that involves organization of differentiation in separate, physical rooms. Hauge (in Selj & Ryen, 2008, pp. 278-280) claims, on the one hand, that NA students probably would benefit the most from an intensive period with adapted education in a separate group. On the other hand, she sees the advantage of an organization with NA learners being placed in classes with the majority language students, with the opportunities of interaction that offers. Such direct integration might, however, also result in feelings of being isolated. Direct integration where the thought is to have the learners "bathe in language" has not always been a success, due to it being too challenging for the learners to follow the teaching in a language they do not understand. Loneliness, isolation and problems coping with the subject have been results of this methodology (Hauge, in Selj & Ryen, 2008, pp. 278-280). The most useful model would be to find solutions that safeguard natural learning situations where the NA students are included in a class community with both majority language students and other minority language students. Such organizational measures need to be combined with adapted support to each individual student (Hauge, in Selj & Ryen, 2008, p. 282).

## **2.5 Teaching English to NA students**

### **2.5.1 A somewhat different pedagogy**

Many Norwegian upper secondary classrooms consist of students who are studying English as their L2 and students for whom English is their L3, at the same time. There are qualitative differences between L2 and L3 acquisition (Cenoz, 2003; Jessner, 2008; Hofer, 2017, in



Krulatz, Dahl & Flognfeldt, 2018, p.78). Teaching English as an L3 demands a somewhat different pedagogy than teaching it as an L2 due to a slightly different set of skills that multilinguals operate with than similarly aged monolinguals (Dahl & Krulatz, 2016, p. 4). Bilingual and multilingual learners have access to and can operate a greater amount of strategies when learning languages. It is important that teachers teaching NA students in English have knowledge about these strategies, and that they make use of these strategies in their teaching. Dahl and Krulatz (2016, p. 15) claim that teachers in Norway are not properly prepared for teaching English to multilingual students. Their findings indicate that the teachers to some extent feel motivated and prepared for working in multilingual classrooms. However, they have little specific training in teaching English as L3, and consequently, teachers report a need for more competence in the field.

One central theory that underpins the idea of a different pedagogy for teaching L3, is the common underlying language proficiency model presented by Cummins (2000, in Krulatz et al., 2018, pp. 78-79). This model explains how the individual's linguistic repertoire consists of languages that interact with and influence each other. For many NA students the situation will be that, for example, languages learned later in life such as Norwegian (L2) and English (L3) interact with the language learned as a little child (L1). Due to such processes one can never say that one has achieved a final state in language acquisition. Contrary to this, many teachers seem to think that having to cope with more than one language is likely to create confusion for the learners (DeAngelis, 2011, in Krulatz et al., 2018, p. 80). Such a view may be argued to be incorrect, as the **number** of languages itself does not affect language learning. Researchers have found that independently of number, positive transfer of abilities takes place between languages (Cenoz, 2003; Hofer, 2017, in Krulatz et al., 2018, p. 80). Multilinguals benefit from such processes through becoming aware of important similarities and differences between languages. To facilitate such beneficial language learning processes achieved through multilingual competence, it is adamant that classroom practice is inclusive, with teachers who value all languages. Their role will be to help the students valuing and maintaining their L1s while at the same time developing skills in the language of the community (Norwegian) and additional languages such as English (Krulatz et al., 2018, pp. 84-85).

### 2.5.2 Teaching and learning resources for NA students

Teaching English in multilingual environments represents a challenge for various reasons. One reason is the lack of suitable and adapted teaching resources (Dahl & Krulatz, 2016, pp. 11-12). Even if useful resources do exist, these can be difficult to find or be inaccessible due to language barriers. Skjold and Fagerheim (2017) have experienced that teachers strive to find adequate teaching materials for the NA students in the Norwegian subject. They point at the fact that teaching material for adapted Norwegian education is often not age adequate in its content. Age adequate teaching materials tend to be too demanding. There is no reason to believe that the situation is different for adapted English education. In upper secondary school, the lack of adapted teaching resources often leads to use of materials aimed at younger learners, with content, examples and illustrations that can be demotivating and with texts lacking academic weight (Skjold & Fagerheim, 2017). In agreement with Skjold and Fagerheim's findings, Thorshaug and Svendsen (2014, p. 71) point at the need for textbooks with satisfactory relevance and meaning in all subjects for upper secondary and adult minority language students.

The Rambøll report with the title *Evaluation and study of teaching resources with state support* presents data showing that there is a scarcity of dictionaries and word lists for learners with minority language background who are learning Norwegian (Holmesland & Halmrast, 2015, p. 45). It is relevant to compare the situation with resources in adapted Norwegian training to the situation in the English subject. One can assume that there is a similar situation with scarcity of dictionaries and word lists for NA students of English. Besides, English teachers report a need for level-differentiated textbooks and recordings of textbook texts. Other needs reported for English are easy readers and topic-based teaching materials (Holmesland & Halmrast, 2015, p. 63). In all subjects, including English, many teachers create their own teaching and learning resources by printing material from various textbooks. It is common among teachers to use the textbook and other materials also in combination with digital teaching resources, in addition to interactive net resources like games, films, YouTube-videos, digital dictionaries and picture dictionaries. Further, e-book versions of textbooks are widely in use. Digital resources demand digital skills, and when these are present, they offer possibilities of differentiation in the form of for example tools for translation into a variety of learners' mother tongues (Holmesland & Halmrast, 2015, p. 59).

### **2.5.3 Important qualities in English teachers working with NA students**

Some of the important communicator qualities that teachers need to possess, according to Samovar, Porter, McDaniel and Roy (2013, p. 325), are immediacy and empathy. Immediacy implies friendliness, openness, responsiveness and it enhances physical and psychological closeness between teacher and student, thus promoting learning and positive school results. Empathy enhances the learning environment in the multicultural classroom, and takes place both between learners, and the teacher and the learners (Samovar et al., 2013, pp. 325-326). It involves understanding and evaluation of the minority language learners. An empathic teacher understands the importance of having the learners use their own cultural resources in the learning processes (Samovar et al., 2013, p. 326).

Further, the elements of immediacy and empathy are important qualities in what Özerk presents as the cultural sensitivity principle (2011, pp. 76-77). This implies recognition of and respect for the presence of learners with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds in schools. Teachers are central in the project of coping with and handling cultural diversity. Having cultural sensitivity requires that teachers adapt their teaching in its content, work methods and progression to the learners' needs and learning objectives, and to their cultural backgrounds (ibid, p.77).

### **2.5.4 Other needs reported by teachers**

Studies of English teachers in primary and lower secondary education in Norway show that there is a need, in all subjects, for competence in teaching NA students. Many teachers want more knowledge about teaching strategies and methods that will enable them to adapt the teaching in multilingual classrooms (Dahl & Krulatz, 2016, pp. 9-11, 15). Moreover, teachers need specific competence in basic language acquisition, special needs pedagogy and migration pedagogy (Thorshaug & Svendsen, 2014, p. 10). This is also the case for teachers in upper secondary school. Teachers often lack knowledge about special challenges and strategies for teaching NA students with little school background from the countries of origin. Both school leaders and teachers have detected a great need for increased focus on minority student perspectives in teacher training and an increased demand for supplementary teacher training (ibid.). Supplementary teacher training is, in fact, embodied in the Education Act, section 10-8 (Ministry of Education and Research, 1998). Here, the school owner's

responsibility of ensuring the necessary competence in the workforce is enshrined. The school owner must have a system that offers staff and school management sufficient development of competence to ensure new and expanded knowledge in matters related to the school subjects and pedagogy. Consequently, teachers working with NA students need to be given necessary courses and supplementary teacher training. In addition to development of competence inside the school, there is a need for networks between schools consisting of teachers and other staff involved in work with NA students (Hauge, in Selj & Ryen, 2008, p. 281).

For schools to be able to offer NA students bilingual teaching and teaching in their L1, there is an urgent need for teachers and assistants with other mother tongues than Norwegian. Not least because L1 support plays an important role for minority language students' motivation for and engagement in their schoolwork (Thorshaug & Svendsen, 2014, pp. 31-32).

### **3.0 METHODOLOGY**

In this chapter I will give a description of the methods I have used, and my deliberations connected to these, following the structure presented by McKay in *Researching second language classrooms* (2006, pp. 156-159).

First, I will present information about my undertakings with finding participants in the study. Second, I will present the participants. Following this is a presentation of the materials; first, the interview guide for the interview with the learners, and next, the teacher questionnaire. The last section presents the procedures, including a description of the preparation for the interviews, the execution of the interviews and the collection of the answers from the teachers.

I am not searching for generalizable data, being such a small-scale study as it is, and no general conclusions will be possible to draw from the material. What I am aiming at, is to find information that will be of enough interest as to merit further research.

#### **3.1 Participants**

I here give a description of the main characteristics of the participants and at the same time protect their anonymity in agreement with important ethical principles (McKay, 2006, p. 156).

### 3.1.1 Learners

Three schools were selected for student participants. Two of them were within easy travelling distance. Letters to the school administrators (appendix I) received positive answers and they provided me with a list of English teachers. Three teachers answered and suggested names of students. I had pre-interviews to determine what language to use in the project, and eventually I ended up with seven student participants from backgrounds in Syria, Russia, Thailand, Sudan and Somalia. All seven were stronger in Norwegian than in English. There are three girls and four boys among the learner respondents, and I refer to them as students 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7, respectively. The learners have between three and eleven years of schooling from their country of origin, and they all have studied English there, for a period lasting from one to eleven years. Two of them have had breaks in their education in their country of origin. All of them can speak their mother tongue, as well as read and write it. Since all the students were stronger in Norwegian than in English, I decided that this would be the language for the interview. I considered using an interpreter but assumed that different L1s would demand more than one interpreter, and that this would be difficult to find and arrange for.

Table 2 below shows the students' gender, country of origin, grade and years with English in their country of origin.

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Ethnic origin</b>	<b>L1</b>	<b>VG1 / VG2</b>	<b>Years with English before arriving in Norway</b>
male	Syria	Arabic/ Turkish	VG1	8
male	Somalia	Somali	VG2	3,5
male	Sudan	Arabic/local language	VG2	1
male	Syria	Arabic	VG2	8
female	Russia	Russian/ Chechen	VG1	3
female	Thailand	Thai	VG2	11
female	Syria	Arabic	VG1	3

*Table 2. Formalities of the learners*

### **3.1.2 Teachers**

Four schools were selected for teacher participants. Letters to the school administrators received positive answers and they provided me with a list of English teachers. Five teachers

from three of the schools volunteered to participate in the survey. Finding the number somewhat small, I asked teachers on a Facebook-page for master students and managed to find three participants more, from three schools.

I refer to the teachers as teacher A, B, C, D, E, F, G and H. Three of the respondents teach introduction classes. The other five teach ordinary classes, thus not including introductory classes set up for NA students. The students they use as examples attend the first and second year of upper secondary education.

There are three men and five women among the respondents. They have worked from half a year up to 36 years in upper secondary education and have from 30 to more than 220 credits in English. All teachers have majority language background.

Table 3 below offer information about both the teachers' gender, age, credits in English, length of teacher practice and type of class. Following this is a presentation of the students they have chosen as examples: their gender, country of origin, L1 and background in English (table 4).

<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age group</b>	<b>Credits</b>	<b>Practice</b>	<b>Class</b>
<b>A</b>	female	30-40	60	6,5 years	Ordinary class
<b>B</b>	female	30-40	90	0,5 years	Introduction class
<b>C</b>	female	30-40	70	13 years	Ordinary class
<b>D</b>	male	20-30	60	6,5 years	Ordinary class
<b>E</b>	female	40-50	more than 220	12 years	Ordinary class
<b>F</b>	male	30-40	80	3 years	Ordinary class
<b>G</b>	female	60-70	150	36 years	Introduction class
<b>H</b>	female	30-40	60	0,5 years	Introduction class

*Table 3. Formalities of the teachers*



Gender	Country of origin	L1	Background in English <sup>2</sup>
Male	Eritrea	Tigrinya	2 years
Male	No information <sup>3</sup>	No information	No information
Male	Syria	Arabic	None
Female	Eritrea	Not certain	Not certain
Male	Afghanistan	Pashto/Dari	None
Female	Thailand	Thai	2-3 years
Male	Afghanistan	Pashto	Not certain
Male	Brazil	Portuguese	None

*Table 4. Formalities of the students used as examples*

### 3.2 Materials

The research instruments consisted of an interview guide for the interview with the students, and a questionnaire for the teachers. A qualitative interview guide approach enabled me to cover the same content with all participants, but at the same time this method offered some freedom regarding the phrasing and ordering of the questions (McKay, 2006, p. 52). This was important, considering that there might be communication challenges due to language problems, and a need for rephrasing and explanation of questions.

Surveys in the form of questionnaires with close-ended and open-ended questions were chosen for the teachers. Surveys are useful in studying the nature of language learning, and

<sup>2</sup> Number of years with English before starting in the teacher's class

<sup>3</sup> The teacher has not answered this.

can provide factual information, behavioural information and attitudinal information, all of which was the focus of interest (Dornyei, 2003, in McKay, 2006, p. 35).

I drew on research instruments developed by Holm-Olsen (2017). This choice is based on the similarity between the topics for research. Both studies focus on learners with minority language background and their experience of the English teaching in Norway, and on English teachers' experience of teaching these learners. There are also clear differences in focus. Holm-Olsen's overriding goal was to establish whether there is a need for more focus on English as an L3 in Norwegian upper elementary school, while this study focuses on upper secondary school and aims at investigating what NA students and teachers working with these students need in order to have the best possible learning outcome in the English. The differences made adaptation of the interview questions necessary. I chose to use the full version of Holm Olsen's questionnaire, seeing that many of the questions would offer information that would be helpful in answering research question 2.

The research instruments are to be found in appendices II (questions to learners) and III (teachers' questionnaire).

### **3.2.1 The interview**

The interview was conducted in Norwegian and consisted of 27 questions. The questions are a combination of multiple-choice questions with possibility of adding comments, and open-ended questions. The interview was divided into three parts. The first part was a mapping of the participants' formalities. In the second part, questions 1-8, the participants' backgrounds were mapped through questions about previous schooling, including backgrounds in English. The third part, questions 9-27, is a reflection on teaching and learning, with questions about current English teaching, homework, use of English outside school, feedback and assessment, and other aspects that the students consider important in their English learning.

### **3.2.2 The questionnaire**

The questionnaire for the teachers consisted of 25 questions. The questions were in Norwegian, and the respondents answered them in Norwegian. My choice of language was

purely based on a decision to use Holm-Olsen's survey in its original form, thinking that this would be time saving. The questionnaire consists of a combination of multiple-choice questions with possibility of adding comments, and open-ended questions. The first part consists of questions 1-5 and covers formalities about the teachers. Part 2 contains questions 6-12 and focuses on information about the learner the teachers have chosen to refer to. Part 3, questions 13-22, focuses on the teachers and investigates the current English teaching, including possible advantages and disadvantages of being a NA student in English, assessment, methods of adaptation of the teaching, language used in the English class, preferred teaching resources, and successful and not so success teaching methods. The last questions, 23-25, cover advice to other teachers and information about the teachers' needs for support.

### **3.3 Procedures**

In this part I will give a description of my undertakings with the collection of data.

#### **3.3.1 Conducting interviews**

The interviews were conducted individually to ensure that each participant was free from any influence from other students during the interviews. All the participants were 18 years old or older, so there was no need to send requests for parents' approvals. As it would be difficult to find time for interviews in between classes for the students, their English teachers were contacted about permission to take the students out of class when necessary. They were given my interview plan and set up alternative times for when to meet the students. For the two last students, appointments were made for Skype-interviews.

The interviews took place over a period of two weeks in February 2019. All lasted around 40 minutes and were executed in rooms where we could be undisturbed. I took notes by hand.

The interviews conducted through real life meetings at the schools went smoothly. With the two interviews done via Skype there were some technical problems, which made it necessary to have a person in the room with the students to assist when needed. The head of department sat attending his own work in a corner of the room, but was ready to step in, in case of technical difficulties. A couple of time the picture froze, and this made it necessary for me to

stop and wait until things were fixed, and then repeat what I had said and continue where we had been interrupted.

A couple of factors can have affected these two Skype-interviews. The first was due to language, as one of the participants had problems understanding my questions, and I had to rephrase several times. Some of his answers showed that he did not understand what he was asked. The other factor was that an authority person from their own school was present in the room. This might have affected the students' answers.

Additionally, with all seven interviews, I had to bear in mind the inequitable relationship between me and the student. A teacher is in a position of power (McKay, 2006, pp. 54-55). To reduce the bias, the interview was started with a thorough explanation of the reason for the interview and how the information would be used. I also explained in what way this interview would benefit the students: that it would aim at improving their situation as English students. Furthermore, I was careful during the interviews to be sensitive towards the participants' potential language difficulties or nervousness (*ibid.*, p. 55). With NA students coming from large-power-distance cultures it is particularly important to take the factor of power relationships into account, when teaching in a small-power-distance culture, and be aware that the respect they might feel towards the interviewer as an authority figure could affect the responses (Hofstede et al., 2010, pp. 69-70). This would be particularly significant to have in mind when analysing the results.

The learners' responses from the interviews have been summarized in English, and quotations that are particularly informative have been included. The complete summaries of the learner responses can be found in appendix IV.

### **3.3.2 Sending and receiving the questionnaires**

Since my work draws closely on Holm-Olsen's master thesis (2017), it was deemed unnecessary to test the questionnaires before distribution.

The questionnaires were sent to the teachers via email. Within two weeks, six had been answered. A reminder was sent to the two teachers who had not returned their answers, and within a week also these had been sent in return. There were clear differences as to the

amount of information from the teachers. Some had only given short answers, whereas others had spent more time on the questionnaire, elaborating and exemplifying.

There are complete summaries of the teachers' responses in appendix V.

## 4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter consists of a presentation of the results from the learner interviews, and a discussion of these. Following this, the results from the teacher questionnaires are presented and discussed. Examples of student and teacher answers have been adapted and translated into English.

### 4.1 Learners

In my investigation of the learners, I addressed research question 1:

How do newly arrived minority language students experience English teaching in Norwegian upper secondary school? What do they need to achieve the best possible learning outcome?

In connection with research question 1, I will present data and discuss the following topics that have been investigated in the interviews:

- Different foundations in English
- Different teaching methods
- What the learners need

#### 4.1.1 Different foundations in English

The answers to the interview questions from the section **school background** will be presented in translated and adapted form and discussed here. I group questions that are particularly connected.

**Question 1: *Did you study English in your country of origin?*****Question 2: *How long did you study English?***

All respondents have studied English in their country of origin. The length of the studies varies from three to eleven years.

**Question 3: *Were there any breaks in your education before starting your schooling in Norway?***

Three of the students have experienced breaks in their studies. One had a break of four years after leaving his country of origin, before starting with English in Norway. This led to forgetting much of what she had learnt. The second student also experienced a break in his English teaching after leaving his country of origin, but there is no information about the length of it. During the first period in Norway he learnt only Norwegian. The third student had a break in his education between 7th and 8th grade, when his school was closed because of war. He felt that his English suffered severely due to three years with intensive Norwegian training and little English after arriving in Norway.

**Question 4: *Have you learnt to talk/read/write English?***

Most of the students report limited reading and speaking skills in English. The competence varies, as the examples below show: some students report having very little oral competence, whereas others report being able to take part in communication. Their skills vary, as can be seen in the following four examples of answers:

I did not learn to talk in sentences.

I can read English. I can, eh (hesitates), talk a tiny bit.

Eh...Yes, I can read a little. We read in groups. I can talk a little, communicate a little with others.

Yes, I can talk a little. I can talk to tourists who visit our district in the summer.

Most of the respondents report very limited writing skills. Here too, the competence varies. The answers reveal a variation from not being able to write at all, through being able to chat with friends, to being able to write coherent texts. The following five examples illustrate this:

I cannot write English. We had many tasks where we could choose the right word.

I learnt the alphabet. I can write some words; ‘boy’, ‘girl’, things like that.

We did not write long texts.

I chat a lot in English. Quite much, in fact. Chatting is easier, I do not have to be perfect, only make myself understood. I have learnt to write a little.

I have learnt to write English. I can write texts in English.

## Summary and discussion

All learners have had English training, but of very varied length. Some of the students have had breaks in their English education, either in their country of origin, or in Norway when they started to learn Norwegian. Consequences reported are forgetting gained knowledge and mixing Norwegian and English. The results are congruent with the results of studies conducted by Hilt (2018) and Burner and Carlsen (2020) which show that NA students arrive in Norway with huge differences in schooling and training, both in content and length.

The learners have some skills in oral English, but these vary from very low to medium. The lack of oral skills reported represents a problem when taking into consideration the competence aims after VG1 programmes for general studies and VG2 vocational education programmes. Two examples of what is expected of the students in the curriculum for English in the area **oral communication** are

“...understand and use a wide general vocabulary and an academic vocabulary related to his/her own education programme”

and

“...express oneself fluently and coherently in a detailed and precise manner suited to the purpose and situation”

(The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2006).

The two examples, containing descriptions of competence with words such as “academic“, “fluently“, “coherently” and “precise” illustrate expectations of skills far beyond what can be expected of NA students lacking a necessary foundation in English from their countries of origin.

None of the learners, except one, reports being capable of writing longer texts. On the contrary, most of the students report that they have very poor writing skills. The challenges they meet in trying to cope with the expected writing competence in their current teaching is clear when looking at the competence aims connected to the area **written communication**. One of the aims is to “write different types of texts with structure and coherence suited to the purpose and situation” (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2006). Coping with this aim represents a huge challenge to learners with little practice in writing texts and scarce knowledge of how to write sentences and coherent sequences in English.

#### **4.1.2 Different teaching methods**

The data on earlier English teaching are gathered through questions from the section “previous education” in the interview guide, whereas the data on the current English teaching have been gathered through questions from the section “reflection on teaching and learning”.

##### **Question 5: *Can you describe the English teaching in your country of origin?***

The students share many similar experiences from the teaching of English in their home countries, regarding organization, teaching methods and teaching materials. One of the respondents describes the teaching like this:

We used the textbook and an exercise book. We read to each other from the textbook.  
We had no computers. The teacher did not use films. We did not listen to sound files.  
We read for the others in class.

What becomes clear from the data is that the English teaching was highly textbook-based, and that digital resources and technical tools were seldom used. Only two respondents mention the use of recordings of the textbook texts. The teacher lectured in front of the blackboard and used a textbook. All students but one had a textbook and wrote in notebooks. There was no adapted teaching or teaching for students with special needs. Digital tools and computers were not used. It was not common to write long texts. Instead, grammar and vocabulary tasks of the type cloze tests and multiple-choice exercises were common. The students had homework, and the teachers checked that they had done it. Films and videos were not used in class. The blackboard was used frequently, both in connection with the teacher’s lecturing and for students to write on. One of the respondents reports that she had to stand up next to her desk when answering questions in class. It was the teacher who decided who should answer. The



most common oral activity was reading in the textbook in pairs and groups. A couple of the respondents experienced little oral activity.

**Question 13. *Can you describe your current English teaching?***

The present English teaching for the different respondents has some commonalities. These are reading texts and answering tasks to these. In addition, several of the students mention watching films, TV programmes and video clips. Writing texts, for example film analysis, is common. Two of the students say this about writing activities:

We write much, the students must write a lot. Texts, sentences. I have never done that in [..]<sup>4</sup>, such long texts. In [...] we worked much with verbs. More film in Norway. In [...], no films.

I find it a bit too difficult. I have not written that type of text in [...], such big texts, you know.

Other activities mentioned by the students are listening to recordings of texts in the textbook, and class discussions. They also report pair and group work in addition to individual work. Several of them mention computers, and Google Translate and the spell check as tools and programmes they frequently use. One respondent describes activities where group cooperation and digital tools are combined:

Sometimes we work in groups, two and three. We get a task, and we must find information on the internet and such. Then each person must talk about what they have found, for the class.

**Question 11: *What language does the teacher use in the English class?***

**Question 12: *What language do you prefer that the teacher uses in your English class?***

The overall tendency is that the teacher uses English, and translates into Norwegian to ensure understanding, and on request from students. Most of the students prefer that the teacher uses both English and Norwegian.

**16. What do you think about the level of the teaching?**

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<sup>4</sup> Name of country of origin

Half the learners report that they do not find the level too demanding. Two of these students give somewhat contradictory answers: One comments that she needs English for beginners, but later comments that the level of the teaching suits her well. Another student answers that he started with English training in Norway only having learnt the alphabet in English and a few English words. Despite this, his response to the question about the level of the teaching is “I think it is fine. It is not too difficult. Not too easy.”

## **Summary and discussion**

The organization of the teaching, teaching methods and teaching materials which the students experienced in their countries of origin have many similarities. Firstly, all learners report that the teacher usually lectured in front of the blackboard and administered all class activity.

What is described in these responses are typical teacher-oriented teaching situations, where the classroom communication is regulated by the teacher. These are patterns that are typical of large-power-distance societies. Large-power-distance school environments are characterized by teacher-student inequality, with students considering the teachers as authority figures who must be met with much respect (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010, pp. 69-70). This is a contrast to student-centred teaching in the small-power-distance situations typical in Norwegian schools. The respondents all come from countries with larger power distance than Norway. As newcomers they are unfamiliar with the situation in Norwegian classrooms where teachers are supposed to treat their students as equals, and where teachers show acceptance of for example interventions from the students’ and even disagreement.

All respondents report that digital tools were not a part of the teaching in the countries of origin. In Norway, however, the situation is that most of the upper secondary school learners use computers, and information technology and digital tools are important parts of their school lives and private lives (Jama, 2018, p. 55). Based on the information that the NA learners in this study have not used computers in their learning before arriving in Norway, it is reasonable to believe that they meet a challenge with so much of their studies taking place on digital platforms and with the computer as one of the most important tools in their learning. None of the learners mentions challenges and problems with this. On the contrary, some of them mention that they find computers, Google translate and spell check programmes

useful. These are surprising findings. Since reading and writing skills are a prerequisite for making use of, for example, the internet (Hvistendahl & Roe, 2009, pp. 380-381), it seems reasonable to believe that NA students with low Norwegian and English competence, and little experience with computers in their school background, face other, and maybe bigger, challenges with digital learning than the majority language students. The interview did not focus on the use of computers, however, and the matter was not investigated further. Due to the central position digital tools have in teaching in Norway, NA students' use of digital resources is a topic worthy of further study.

The most evident difference between teaching activities and methods in the students' countries of origin and in Norway is, in addition to the use of digital and technical tools, the writing activities (long texts in particular). Besides demanding skills in written English, writing tasks also frequently ask for independent discussion and elaboration of viewpoints. Tasks like these represent a contrast to what many minority language students are used to in school cultures where the teaching is very teacher oriented. In teacher-oriented school cultures, teachers "outline the intellectual path to be followed" (Hofstede et al., 2010, pp. 69-70). Quite different requirements meet NA students in Norwegian schools. In student-oriented school cultures, such as Norwegian school culture, students are supposed to "find their own intellectual paths", be independent and show ability to analyse and express their own opinions (ibid.). With requirements like these plus expectations of writing skills far beyond their competence, it is understandable that most of the learners report a non-preference and even a dislike for writing activities. Despite this, and differences in school culture, it is interesting, and unexpected, to notice that half of the respondents answer that they find the level of the teaching suitable. The explanation is not given. It might be that they are met with well-adapted teaching and for that reason experience that they cope with the demands in English in their current English classes. Another explanation might be that they give the answer they feel are expected of them and which seems respectful towards the interviewer, the teacher and school, in accordance with expectations of students' behaviour in teacher-oriented school cultures. It would be interesting to investigate what kind of adapted teaching in English each of them received, to see if the answer lies there.

### 4.1.3 What do learners need?

The data presented here have been collected through the questions in the part “reflection on teaching and learning”.

#### **Question 14: *What is useful for you in your English teaching?***

Several the students mention vocabulary work as useful and consider listening to recorded texts or listening to the teacher talking as activities that promote learning of new vocabulary. One student says: “I learn words and expressions in class when the teacher talks and explains.”

Several students answer that it is important that the teachers also translate what they say into Norwegian to allow them to learn new words in both languages. One respondent expresses it like this: “I learn something from everything. Some words, too. Because I translate, but I like that the teacher translates words, and then I remember.”

Some students see oral activities in class as beneficial not only for learning new words, but also for learning to talk in sentences and in longer sequences. In this context, some of the students consider activities like pair, group, and class discussions useful. The following comment from one of the students is representative for several of the answers: “I learn sentences when I listen to others talking English and answering questions. In [...]<sup>5</sup> we did not hear long sentences.”

A couple of the students find it extra beneficial for their learning of terms and phrases to work in groups with students sharing their L1. One student responds like this:

It is useful to work in pairs and groups with other students from [...]. This is good. If I understand a word that the others do not, I can help them with the [...]<sup>6</sup> word for it. It is also the other way. If they understand words, and I do not, they can explain in [...].

#### **Question 15. *What is not so useful for you in your English teaching?***

Several the respondents do not see any use in watching films and writing texts afterwards. Altogether, writing longer texts is not a preferred activity.

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<sup>5</sup> his/her country of origin

<sup>6</sup> his/her L1

Many of the respondents find most of the teaching useful, and one of them expresses it like this: “I cannot think of anything that I don't find useful in the English lessons.”

**Question 25. *What assessment and feedback are the most useful for you in your English teaching?***

Most of the respondents need assessment that informs them about their level, what they master and what they need to do better. Some of them mention that they need to learn pronunciation of words, and others that they need the teacher to show them the correct answers, words and sentences in writing. Most of the students prefer oral assessment, some of them in addition to written assessment. A majority want the assessment also translated into Norwegian.

**Question 27. *Can you think of other things that are important to you in the English teaching?***

More than half the respondents need basic English training, or “English for beginners”, as one of them puts it. Another student expressed her need like this: “I want to start from zero, because if I do that, then I can be better.”

One of the students is quite clear about his need for adapted teaching and easier tests and tasks. He further needs thorough information about what it takes to pass in English, and what is demanded of him on tests and hand-ins. Some of the respondents would like their teacher to speak more English in class, but then also translate into Norwegian. Besides, a part of the students want help with translation of tasks and instructions into Norwegian.

**Summary and discussion:**

Most of the learners report poor writing skills, and a preference for oral activities. This preference is understandable, taking their reported skills into account, with many of them being able to say at least a little in English, but with little or no competence in writing. Their preference for oral activities is further expressed in the responses that show that several of them consider pronunciation practice, teacher talks and group discussions motivating and helpful.

Little is said specifically about preferred activities that involve writing, except for some students' comments that writing texts is not useful. With a limited vocabulary and little practice with writing (and talking) in longer sequences, it is easy to understand that the students express a need for learning basic English terminology and basic grammar before text writing.

Some of the responses are quite explicit regarding a need for English for beginners ("start from zero"). However, Norwegian school politics is to adapt, and not at all about pushing students back. The answers mentioning a need for basic English training underpin a need for adaptation of the English teaching for those with the poorest competence. Simultaneously it is important to differentiate the teaching so that the students with higher competence are not held back in their learning processes. In other words, it is of highest importance that **all** students in the same group have access to teaching that fits their level and needs.

The need expressed in the student interviews for learning basic English additionally links to the answers about the use that some of the learners see in computers, where they have the spell check programme at hand, and Google Translate which enables translation to a variety of first languages.

It is noteworthy that only two of the respondents mention L1. The explanation can be that the participants rely on Norwegian as the support language in their English teaching. As newly arrived students, however, their competence in Norwegian is limited. Hence one can assume that it is only functional as a support language only up to a certain level, depending on their competence in Norwegian. Another explanation to why little is said about L1 can be in agreement with Burner and Carlsen's theory saying that multilingualism is a topic that teachers rarely present to their students (Burner & Carlsen, 2020). If the teachers leave the minority language learners' L1s out of their teaching, the signal will easily be that L1s are not important and have little value in English teaching in Norway. This view is contrary to the status L1 is given in the new curriculum for VG1 general studies and vocational programmes which states that the student should be able to

use knowledge about connections between English and other languages that the learner knows in the English acquisition

(The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, my translation).

The new curriculum which will take effect from 2020 will demand a change of practice for teachers in upper secondary school who not yet have not implemented L1 in their teaching of English. In fact, one would expect L1 to be implemented in the English teaching already, based on the right to bilingual teaching stated in section 3-12 in the Education Act (Ministry of Education and Research, 1998). Also, when asked about assessment of their English skills, the respondents do not comment on a need for this in their L1, even though this would be a comprehensible requirement considering the right to bilingual teaching. A considerable number of the students report a need for formative assessment communicated orally in a combination of Norwegian and English. Formative assessment focuses on the individual learner's specific strengths, weaknesses and needs (Özerk, 2011, p.181; Krulatz et al., 2018, pp. 252-253). Having such important information communicated in a language that one has limited competence in must necessarily limit the outcome that such assessment has for the minority language student.

## **4.2 Teachers**

In this part I address research question 2:

How do teachers experience teaching English to newly arrived minority language students in Norwegian upper secondary school? What do they need to be able to provide the best possible learning outcome?

In connection with research question 2, I will present data and discuss the following topics that have been investigated in the teacher questionnaires:

- Different foundations in English
- Different teaching methods
- What teachers need, and what teachers see as important for the learners

### **4.2.1 Different foundations in English**

The data have been gathered from the answers to questions 8-12 in the teachers' questionnaires, which cover the teachers' information about the students. I choose to report

the answers to all five questions together, since the data are connected closely. All questions and answers have been translated and adapted.

**Question 8.** *Had the learner studied English in Norway earlier (before starting in your class)?*

**Question 9.** *For how long had the learner studied English in Norway?*

**Question 10.** *Has the learner passed English in lower secondary school?*

**Question 11.** *Had the learner studied English in his/her country of origin?*

**Question 12.** *For how long had the learner studied English in his/her country of origin?*

In the teachers answers about formalities it became clear that there was some variation in the amount of information they had about their students. Four students had studied English in Norway, from one to two years. Only two students had studied English before arriving in Norway, both for a period of one to two years. One student's background in English is not known. Another student has no schooling at all before arriving in Norway and is practically illiterate. There is no information about passing lower secondary school in Norway for any of the students.

## **Discussion:**

The teachers have all chosen NA students who started in their English classes with none or little foundation in English. Three of the learners attend introduction classes, which implies that they had not yet obtained the necessary skills in Norwegian. I choose to present their data together with the data for the other five learners, as introduction classes can only be attended for a maximum of two years which means that the students will soon be attending ordinary classes with similar teaching and learning situations as the rest of the student respondents. None of the students have more than three to four years' stay in Norway. This implies that there will most likely exist an additional challenge of poor competence in Norwegian that will influence their learning situation.

Özerk (2010, pp. 133-134) claims that there are two important processes in teachers' approaches to teaching methodology. The first is activating the learners' existing knowledge.



The students need to be supported in the process of remembering their prior knowledge and skills with relevance for the topic to be taught (*ibid.*). The second process is an expansion process; a creation of a network of knowledge founded on old and expanded by new learning (Özerk, 2010, pp. 133-134). Several theories within pedagogy see knowledge of the learners' already existing competence and skills as the foundation upon which teaching takes place. The theory of scaffolding introduced by Vygotsky fits in this picture by highlighting the importance of the learners' nearest development zone (Vygotsky, 1988, in Özerk, 2011, p. 66). Teachers need to help their students in stretching toward their development zone by offering support and implementing activities and materials that lie a little ahead of the learner's development, but within reach for them. Özerk underscores the need for this help to come in early, to ensure the right adaptation (Özerk, 2011, pp. 65-66).

Looking at the data, it becomes clear that one of the teachers had no information about the learner. This serves as an example of how lack of information about already existing knowledge will make teaching extremely challenging. All students that the teachers refer to have little competence in English, and it is critical for the teachers to know about this at an early stage, since such lack of knowledge demands extensive differentiation and adaptation. To gain such crucial insight and information regarding the learners' potential and abilities, an important strategy is systematic assessment of the learners' knowledge, skills and needs at the start of upper secondary education, and of their school background including school culture and pedagogy (Bunar & Bouakaz, 2015, in Bunar, 2015, pp. 277-278, 285). To help teachers assess newly arrived minority students, The National Centre for Multilingual Training has developed an assessment tool for several subjects, among them English. The assessment tool covers three parts. First, there is a part mapping personal information including language skills, previous schooling and work experience. Second, the assessment tool assesses skills in various school subjects, among them, English. Third, there is a mapping of reading and writing skills (The National Centre for Multilingual Training, 2009). It is specified in the instructions that the assessment must be executed in a language the learner knows well, preferably his/her L1. A bilingual teacher should be present, and if this is not possible, an interpreter should be introduced.

### **4.2.2 Teaching methods**

The data in this part are based on the answers to questions 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21 and 22 in the questionnaire:

**Question 15. *Do/did you experience that the competence aims in English were too demanding for your student?***

**Question 16. *If yes, in what way do/did you adjust your teaching?***

All teachers find the competence aims too challenging for their students, and regard adaptation of the teaching to be of the highest importance. The most common adjustment is simplification of tasks, a high degree of teacher support and a high degree of cooperation with other students. Some teachers also simplify and adapt texts and give thorough and frequent feedback.

**Question 17. *Do/did you use the target language with the learner?***

Most of the teachers use both English and Norwegian with their students. Some of them use English in class, mostly with excessive translation into Norwegian, but only Norwegian in one to one communication with the students.

**Question 19. *Which teaching and learning resources do/did you use, and how do you think these serve/served your purpose?***

A general tendency is that the teachers see the ordinary textbooks as too demanding for the students. The texts are too dense, and the teachers choose various methods to adapt their materials and find alternatives to textbooks. First, some teachers simplify texts in the textbook. Next, some teachers use basic versions instead, or books meant for younger students. To supplement textbooks, teachers use various digital resources, apps, videos, films

and tasks on the internet. One teacher responds that she uses resources and materials in the student's L1, if available.

**Question 20. *Which teaching methods do/did you find useful?***

The teachers report a rich variety of teaching and learning methods. They stress that variation in methods is key, and present a significant amount of resources, methods and activities that have been used with success. Examples are:

1. Instruction videos where topics are explained in the student's L1, as for example YouTube-videos in various languages on different topics, for example verb conjugation, or sentence construction.
2. Tasks in various textbooks for children, for example cloze tests, multiple-choice exercises and word matching tasks.
3. Process writing, which gives the teacher a chance to follow the student closely in the writing process and secures a high degree of teacher support. Process writing offers a possibility of increasing the vocabulary on various topics when working independently, but with close teacher support, on a text.
4. Thorough explanations, step by step, preferably with visual help (PowerPoint, illustrations and others) - and often in combination with digital tools.
5. Grammar tasks, both traditional tasks in exercise books and interactive tasks.
6. Escape rooms, films production, presentations, brainstorming, cooperation partners, films and literature.

**Question 21. *Which teaching methods do /did you experience as not useful?***

Several of the teachers do not see much learning outcome for the student in teaching in front of the blackboard and giving traditional teacher lectures. Other teacher-governed teaching, like the traditional "read and answer questions" is mentioned as one of the less beneficial methods. Some teachers report that writing tasks, independent reading or other individual work are not of much use. Also, many teachers claim that traditional, non-adapted teaching materials are of little use. A common activity used by many teachers is film and film work. Showing films in the class does not work well unless they have Norwegian subtitling. Film

work such as writing analyses or reports is too demanding for many of these students who often lack competence in writing English.

**Question 22. *What type of feedback do/did you give your student, and why?***

Most of the teachers give feedback and assessment in both Norwegian and English, both oral and written. In oral assessment it is possible for the teacher to ask control questions to check understanding. A couple of the teachers are not sure whether the student understands the feedback or take any notice of it, whatsoever.

**Summary and discussion:**

All teachers find the competence aims to be too challenging for their NA students. The gap between the learning objectives in the English curriculum and the students' competence is substantial, and these students' need for differentiation and adaptation measures is critical. The teachers call for extensive support and help in their work with NA students. They point at a common situation with an insurmountable gap between the skills these students have in English and the expectations in the subject of English in Norwegian upper secondary school.

The teachers use ordinary textbooks, but with much adaptation and simplification of tasks and texts. The tendency is that the teachers choose texts from various textbooks available. Some adapted learning resources exist, such as *Core English* (Cappelen) and *Basic SKILLS* (Gyldendal), and are used. Digital resources such as apps, games, video clips and Google translate are also mentioned. In addition, some teachers report using tasks and texts aimed at lower secondary school, and texts from children's books. One teacher specifically comments on the quality of textbooks and claims that they are not adapted to NA students. The content is too far from these students' background. Skjold and Fagerheim (2017) share the experience with difficulties in finding suited teaching material that is motivating and carry the necessary academic weight for this group of students. Moreover, textbooks for younger students often lack relevance and meaning for minority language students in upper secondary school (Thorshaug & Svendsen, 2014, p. 71). The need for adapted learning and teaching material and resources for minority language learners is highlighted in the report *Evaluation and needs survey of teaching and learning resources with state support* (Holmesland & Halmrast, 2015, my translation of the title). The report concludes that few of the resources meet the demand

for linguistic adaptation. For minority learners with little education from their country of origin, several of the teaching resources in Norwegian have too much text focus and too little focus on oral activity (Holmesland & Halmrast, 2015, p. 45). The teachers give answers which confirm that this is also the situation for the subject of English.

The results further show that a majority of the teachers in this study find it necessary to use much Norwegian with the learners. The reason can be that the learners' competence in Norwegian is stronger than in English. Another reason might be that the teachers consider it important that the students learn the majority language properly first, before learning English. Studies show that many teachers think that learning different languages should be done step-by-step, and not simultaneously, to avoid that the students become confused and mix the languages (Burner & Carlsen, 2020; DeAngelis, 2011, in Krulatz et al., 2018, p. 80). However, my investigation has not found any research indicating that using much Norwegian when teaching English is beneficial for the NA student, even though it seems reasonable to assume that Norwegian would serve an important function as a mediator language for those with very low English competence. This would be worth of investigation in future research.

Burner and Carlsen (2020) have studied multilingual classrooms and found that an environment where different languages are spoken is extremely beneficial for language learning. They observed a lot of spontaneous code-switching taking place in the classroom, with students speaking different languages helping each other with words and phrases. Their findings are supported by other research, showing that positive transfer of abilities takes place between languages (Cenoz, 2003; Hofer, 2017, in Krulatz et al., 2018, p. 80). In multilingual classrooms where all languages are valued, the teachers' role will be to help the students valuing and maintaining their L1s while at the same time developing their skills in their L2 (Krulatz et al., 2018, pp. 84-85). None of the teachers using Norwegian and English in their English teaching mention code switching or transfer of abilities between languages, but they might nevertheless make conscientious choice of bilingual teaching based on knowledge of such processes, without referring specifically to them in the survey.

The teachers use much Norwegian also in their feedback and assessment. In that context, it is noteworthy that two of the teachers do not know whether their students understand and see any use in their assessment and feedback at all. With no explanation offered, one must assume that it is language problems that create communication difficulties in situations when assessment is given, and that there is an urgent call for bilingual assistance. Only two teachers

report implementing L1 in their teaching. Learners' right to bilingual teaching according to the Education Act (Ministry of Education and Research, 1998) covers all parts of teaching, therefore also the feedback and assessment practice. Giving assessment in a language that the learner has limited competence in, as is the case with Norwegian (and for many students, even more so with English) implies that the outcome and effect of the assessment will be limited.

The data show comprehensive adaptation of the teaching by all the teachers. They report a wide selection of methods, activities and materials that are adapted to the students' needs. One teacher finds, for example, instruction videos in the student's L1 to be useful. Two of the teachers point at the use of sitting with the learner and helping him/her one-to-one. Furthermore, several of the teachers ensure a high degree of teacher support, and frequent cooperation with other students. Frequent and thorough assessment is also mentioned by several of the teachers.

Differentiation and adaptation can be a challenge, as one teacher points out; a high degree of teacher guidance and support is not possible in many cases in classes with many students. Often there are several minority language students present in the class, with a variety of first languages, in addition to students with other types of differentiation and adaptation needs.

### **4.2.3 What do teachers need?**

The data in this part are based on the answers to questions 22-24 in the questionnaire.

#### ***22. What advice would you give other English teachers working with newly arrived minority language students?***

The teachers present a variety of suggestions. The most common suggestion is to start with basic English. Some of the respondents specifically mention teaching basic English in separate groups, and one respondent claims that the teaching in such smaller, more homogenous groups should involve individual plans and a separate curriculum and examination.

Several respondents mention the importance of realistic expectations, both on the learners' and the teachers' side. One respondent stresses the teachers' task in helping NA students to

realistic expectations and a healthy reality orientation about their level and what is possible to achieve. On the one hand, students must be assisted in coming to terms with the demands in the subject of English. On the other hand, teachers must have realistic ambitions for the students.

Other advice that is linked to teachers' expectations and attitudes is giving feedback and support, helping the students, step by step, in an adapted tempo, giving tasks that the students can master, and aiming at a level within reach.

One respondent finds it important that teachers use L1 for all it is worth and teach the students how to use it in the processes of learning English. A final suggestion is that teachers and staff working with minority language students in the same school have interdisciplinary cooperation.

***23. What support and help have you experienced in your work with NA students in English?***

The overall tendency is that the teachers miss support in their work with NA students. For several of the teachers the situation is that they receive none, or little help. A few of them report that they can ask colleagues for help about things such as planning the teaching and discussing situations in the classroom, but there is no organized cooperation. Work with these students is to a high degree left to the individual teacher's effort, both regarding plans for the school year, bilingual assistance, and not least, adapted teaching and learning materials and resources.

***24. What support do/did you need to do a good job in your work NA students?***

The support that is repeatedly listed is primarily connected to teaching resources and materials, teacher cooperation, supplementary training and recognition of the work teachers do with minority language students. Firstly, teachers need a rich and varied supply of adapted resources. Financial means must be granted for teaching and learning resources and materials. In addition, there is a need for training in the use of the resources at hand. In the organization of the teaching, class size must be taken into consideration. In addition, there must be an assistant available. One teacher points at the need for bilingual assistance.

Secondly, there is a demand for organized cooperation and networks/forums/groups for teachers and staff working with NA students. Furthermore, teachers need courses and supplementary education to be qualified to work with this student group.

Finally, there is a call for more focus on NA students, and recognition for the work and all it implies from the school management and the authorities. There is a desperate need among teachers for more support from the management levels.

## **Summary and discussion**

The two most frequently reported needs are access to adapted teaching and learning resources, and cooperation with other teachers who work with newly arrived minority language students. In addition, useful resources need to be distributed between schools.

First, individual teachers should not be left to themselves with finding suited teaching resources and materials, but rather be supported in this by a school management who prioritizes such materials and resources.

Next, teachers working with NA students need forums and networks where they can discuss matters connected to the teaching with other teachers who have experience with NA students.

In addition to this, the answers reveal a clear demand for competence development for teachers and other pedagogical staff, who must be offered supplementary training and courses in teaching and supporting this student group. Research and reports support this need, showing that English teachers generally lack necessary competence for work with multilingual students (Dahl & Krulatz, 2016, p. 2, 13).

Differentiation and adaptation must be safeguarded through both pedagogical and organizational measures (Özerk, 2011, pp. 25-27, 36-38). Pedagogical differentiation that may be necessary, and which many of the teachers point at, is variation in methods and activities. Tempo adaptation is one important measure. A step by step orientation is recommended, where the minority learners progress at their own pace.

Another pedagogical differentiation measure with NA students is connected to language. L1-support is essential in both teaching and assessment, and it is noteworthy that none of the teachers mention having L1 support in the form of bilingual teacher or assistant. What they do say about language in their English teaching, is that they use a combination of English and



Norwegian when teaching English to NA students. However, a couple of the teachers do see the importance of L1 and comment that it should be used “for all its worth” in the English classes. Examples of implementation of L1 are teaching resources such as dictionaries and YouTube videos in various L1s. That only a few of the teachers mention L1 is not exceptional. Research shows that learners’ language repertoires are rarely used in the classroom, and that their L1 often is ignored when it is not the L1 of the majority in the country (Burner & Carlsen, 2020; Iversen, 2017, p. 45).

Among important organizational differentiation measures is group size. A couple of the teachers comment on the connection between group size and teacher support to students. To be able to offer a high degree of support to each student, it is essential that the groups are not too large.

Related to groups size is the use of assistants. Some of the teachers report that there is a need for bilingual language assistance introduced as early as possible, but none of the teachers report that they in fact have a bilingual assistant in their English classes.

Several respondents suggest basic English courses, or English for beginners, for the learners who start with little competence in English. These courses should be held in small groups. For learners arriving late in the pathway of education it is pivotal to fill in possible holes in their knowledge so that they can acquire new knowledge and skills. A focus on basic skills will be an important strategy for the students’ mastery of further education (Jama, 2018). Burner and Carlsen (2020) claim that strengthened English teaching in separate groups for those who lack English competence would be the right measure for multilingual students. This view is not shared by Bunar (2015, p. 16). He sees organization of the teaching as less important and claims that both separate groups and direct integration in classes with majority students can work well, or not at all, and students can be physically integrated, but socially excluded (ibid.). What is important for teaching of NA students, is a thorough mapping of knowledge and skills, study supervision in the student's L1, access to all subjects as soon as possible and not the least, cooperation between all parts that work with the students to ensure a shared view, transfer of important information and a shared responsibility for the entire school staff (Bunar, 2015, p. 16). To take this idea further; it is crucial that transfer of information and cooperation also take place between schools, for example in the transition between lower and upper secondary education.

Several of the teachers consider frequent feedback and positive support essential in the work with NA students, and they express attitudes of openness, interest, empathy and a will to understand the students' need. Such qualities in teachers are key in promoting learning and positive school results (Samovar et al., 2013, pp. 325-326). Empathy and understanding are important qualities not least because a substantial number of NA students start in Norwegian school with trauma-related mental problems that influence their capacity for learning (Loona, 2016). One of the teachers points at the importance of taking this type of challenges seriously. Teachers need to be aware of their important role in psychosocial matters and be able to do primary preventive work through cooperation with environmental workers, the Educational-Psychological Service (OT/PPT) and public health nurses, to mention some of the instances that can offer their assistance and competence (Loona, 2016). Another important point is that close contact and cooperation with the learners' relatives is necessary to be able to give the students the best possible school situation (ibid.).

## 5.0 SUM-UP

Based on 7 qualitative interviews with NA students from three different upper secondary schools in Norway, this study has examined the following question:

- How do newly arrived minority language students experience English teaching in Norwegian upper secondary school? What do they need to achieve the best possible learning outcome?

Further, based on the answers in eight questionnaires to teachers working in five different upper secondary schools in Norway, the study examines the following question:

- How do teachers experience teaching English to newly arrived minority language students in Norwegian upper secondary school? What do they need to be able to provide the best possible learning outcome?

In chapter 2, **Theoretical background**, the content was as follows:

First there was an introduction and explanation of important terms, and a presentation of relevant laws and regulation and the English subject curriculum (ENG1-03).

Second, research on the following topics were introduced:

- Implications that different school backgrounds have for NA students starting in upper secondary education in Norway (Hilt, 2018; Burner & Carlsen, 2020).
- Challenges NA students meet in the English teaching due to inadequate or lacking foundation in English (Burner & Carlsen, 2020).
- Trauma-related learning difficulties and the need for psychosocial help and support which many NA students experience (Loona, 2016).
- Different foundations in English: the importance of prior knowledge, and mapping of the learners' knowledge, skills and potential for learning (Özerk, 2011; Bunar, 2015; Dale & Wærness, 2003, pp. 79-80).
- Differentiation and adaptation (Hauge, in Selj & Ryen, 2008, pp. 278 - 282; Özerk, 2011, pp. 24-27, 36; Bunar, 2015).
- Language acquisition with a focus on teachers' role in supporting the students in developing new language skills at the same time as maintaining their L1s (Krulatz et al., 2018, pp. 84-86).
- Challenges with finding useful and adapted teaching and learning resources (Dahl & Krulatz, 2016, p.11; Burner & Carlsen, 2020; Skjold & Fagerheim, 2017).
- Important qualities and competence needed by teachers who work with NA students in English (Heggernes, 2018, pp. 37-38; Özerk, 2011, pp. 76-77).
- Support teachers who work with this student group need (Thorshaug & Svendsen, 2014, p. 10; Hauge, in Selj & Ryen, 2008, p. 281).

In chapter 3; **Methodology**, there first was a presentation of the undertakings of finding participants, and information about the participants. Next followed a presentation of the materials for the student interviews and the teacher questionnaires before a description of the procedures. The procedures included the preparation for the student interviews, the execution of the interviews and the collection of the data from the teachers.

In chapter 4; **Results and discussion**, the findings were presented and discussed. Although my material is too limited for any general conclusions, it still yields information which can be valuable for the teaching of English to NA students in the future.

In the sum-up of the findings, let me start with the learners. First, the learners expressed little discontent with their current English teaching despite obvious challenges and difficulties. The most evident challenge for most of the learners was that they lacked the necessary foundation

in English. More than half of them expressed a need for teaching of basic English, and a majority reported that they had little competence in writing English.

Second, only a few of the learners mentioned activities or teaching resources where their L1 was involved, when describing their current English teaching. In addition, few of them said anything about a need for bilingual support. Regarding other adaptation of the teaching, only one of the students was specific when expressing what he needed. One can ask whether the students have received enough information about their rights as students in general, and as minority language students in particular. Bunar (2015, s. 16) claims that the most important procedures for schools receiving minority language learners are immediate mapping of knowledge, skills and needs, cooperation with parents and student counselling in the student's mother tongue. Through such mapping, important information can be obtained that will be guidelines for the choice of methods and materials used in the teaching. Further, through school-parent cooperation with an interpreter present, and student counselling in the students' L1, important information can be exchanged about school matters, and relevant personal matters. Not the least is this a possibility to inform NA students and their parents about students' rights.

Continuing with the data collected from the teachers, one important finding was that all eight teachers had chosen NA student who had very low English competence when starting in their classes. The fact that all the students presented were lacking necessary foundation in English indicates that it is a common experience shared by teachers to meet NA students who need basic English training, and that it is common among teachers to be occupied with challenges involved in teaching these students. The data gathered from the teachers raise the following questions: Is it at all possible to do a satisfactory job with students who come to upper secondary school almost without competence in English? Is it possible to offer each individual NA student the necessary adaptation and support in classes with students from a variety of countries of origin, speaking a variety of languages? The answers are dependent on some very essential factors. The first factor is procedures for mapping and assessment. The results of the mapping will then form the basis for the second factor: starting with the right adapted teaching as early as possible. In pedagogical adaptation, resources play an important role, and teachers need access to quality teaching resources adapted to NA learners of English. This is the third crucial factor. The fourth is teacher competence. Teachers call for supplementary teacher training and courses which qualify them to work with students with minority language background, including competence in teaching English as L3.

Furthermore, teachers call for arenas for cooperation where competence, advice and experience can be shared.

The last factor is group size and support to teachers. This is also linked to differentiation and adaptation. Many of the teachers answered that offering a high degree of teacher support was key in their work with their NA students. To be able to offer such support, the class size must be adapted so the teacher is able to offer each student support, or the teacher must have an assistant who is competent in working with students with minority background. There should also be bilingual support for those who need it.

To summarize, the findings show both differences and commonalities in NA students' and their teachers' experiences and needs in the subject of English. One difference is that the students express a more positive attitude towards the teaching than the teachers do, and mention relatively few areas of improvement, whereas the teachers point at a wider range of challenges and difficulties. A clear similarity is that both students and teachers consider the curriculum in English too demanding for many NA students and suggest basic English courses for NA students with low competence. Except this, students' and teachers' contributions in answering what exact measures are needed, differ. The teachers suggest a much wider range of measures that would meet important needs, than the students do. This can be explained by the fact that the students are, first of all not educators, and second, in the middle of a demanding situation as learners with the challenges a new language and a new school culture set upon them. Hence it is not to be expected that they have a clear insight into what support and help it is possible to suggest or ask for. The teachers, on their side, are, by virtue of their profession, able to express what they need as teachers, and what should be improved in the situation for NA students of English. A clear challenge which teachers are occupied with is the demands the English curriculum sets, and which teachers should be able to fulfill. There is a huge discrepancy between the demands of the curriculum and what many of the students want to go back to- level zero. The key question is how exactly the demands of the English curriculum can be met in ways that ensure inclusion, regard for cultural and linguistic background, and possibilities for learning and academic growth for **all** students, independent of academic level. Two essential questions to ask are: How can we ensure that the need for basic English training for those who need this is met without exposing other students in the group to academic set-back? And how can basic English training be carried out at the same time as inclusion and integration are attended to?

## 6.0 CONCLUSION

The results of my study show that the answer to the overriding question “What do NA students and their English teachers need to have the best learning results?” is multifaceted and not possible to answer in a simple manner. Two central elements seem nonetheless to crystallize. These are elements that are tightly connected: mapping/assessment and differentiation and adaptation of the teaching. The purpose of mapping/assessment is to provide information about the student's potential for learning, prior knowledge and possible obstacles that exist. This information will in turn form the basis for differentiation and adaptation measures, meant to facilitate the learning processes for the individual student and secure a sense of achievement.

My study has given rich information about experiences NA learners and their teachers have in the multilingual classroom, and different needs that grow out of these experiences. Based on the findings and other research presented in this thesis, one can conclude that there is an indisputable need for more research on NA students in upper secondary school. The most evident areas in need of more study are the procedures schools have for mapping NA students and adapting their teaching to NA students' needs, and the implementation of differentiation and adaptation measures for these students in the English subject. A question that is particularly challenging and important to find answers to, is how to adapt the teaching to NA students with very low to no competence in English. In addition, it would be worth studying the role Norwegian competence plays in the English teaching and learning. Not least, the use of L1 in English teaching and learning would be worthy of research. The reason is the important role L1 plays in language acquisition, and the finding that few students and teachers seemed occupied with this topic in their answers.

On the one hand it is a good thing that the students seem relatively content with their teaching. On the other hand, when learning about the challenges which they actually face in their English classes, it is now time to take a close look at the routines Norwegian upper secondary schools have for receiving NA students, and for meeting NA students' rights and needs.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX I

Request to school administrators

#### **Til skolens ledelse.**

Jeg søker respondenter til en spørreundersøkelse i forbindelse med avsluttende oppgave ved Master i Fremmedspråk i Skolen ved Høgskolen i Østfold.

Spørreundersøkelsen dreier seg om hvordan minoritetsspråklige elever med kort botid og deres lærere opplever engelskundervisningen i norsk videregående skole, og hva de trenger for å oppnå best mulig læringsutbytte.

Jeg er søker etter lærere som underviser minoritetsspråklige med kort botid i engelsk, og ber med dette om tillatelse til å spørre lærere i lærerstaben ved skolen deres. Er det mulig å be dere om å sende meg navnene på aktuelle lærere, og telefonnummer/e-postadresser? Det ville være til stor hjelp.

Vennlig hilsen

Unni Digranes

Tlf. 99 58 64 05

Epost:

diu036otmail.com

## APPENDIX II

### Questions to learners

#### FORMALITIES

Gutt/jente \_\_\_\_\_

Alder \_\_\_\_\_

Trinn \_\_\_\_\_

Hjemland \_\_\_\_\_

Morsmål \_\_\_\_\_

#### SKOLEBAKGRUNN

1. Har du gått på skole i hjemlandet?
2. Hvor lenge gikk du?
3. Hadde du engelsk undervisning?
4. Hvor hvor mange år hadde du engelskundervisning i hjemlandet ditt?
5. Var det opphold på skolegangen fra du flyttet fra hjemlandet til du startet i norsk skole?  
(Hvor langt opphold?)
6. Har du lært å
  - a. Snakke engelsk?
  - b. Lese engelsk?
  - c. Skrive engelsk?
7. Hvordan foregikk engelskundervisningen?
8. Hvor lenge har du hatt engelskundervisning i Norge?

#### REFLEKSJON OVER UNDERVISNING OG LÆRING

9. Hvilket språk mestrer du best av engelsk og norsk?

10. Hvordan er det for deg å lære flere språk på en gang? (norsk og engelsk)?
11. Hvilket språk bruker lærer i engelskklassen?
12. Hvilket språk er det best for deg at lærer bruker, engelsk eller norsk?
13. Hvordan foregår engelskundervisningen?
14. Av det dere gjør i engelskundervisningen, hva synes du at du lærer du mest av?
15. Hva synes du ikke at du lærer så mye av i engelskundervisningen?
16. Hva synes du om nivået på engelskundervisningen?
17. Som flerspråklig, har du noen fordeler i engelskfaget?
18. Som flerspråklig, har du noen ulemper i engelskfaget?
19. Hvordan liker du å jobbe sammen med andre elever? Forklar litt.
20. Hvordan jobber du med engelskfaget hjemme?
21. Får du hjelp til å gjøre engelsklekser av noen hjemme (søsken, foreldre, andre)?
22. Leser du bøker eller andre ting på engelsk?
23. Ser du engelskspråklige programmer/filmer?
24. Lytter du til engelsk på fritiden?
25. Hva slags tilbakemelding er best for deg å få i engelskundervisningen? Forklar litt.
26. Hva er målsettingen din i engelskfaget?
27. Er det noe, knyttet til temaet engelskundervisning, utenom det vi har snakket om hittil, som er viktig for din læring? (Er det noe du trenger for å lære bedre?)

## APPENDIX III

### Teachers' questionnaire

Tusen takk for at du tar deg tid til å svare på spørsmålene i denne undersøkelsen.

Spørreskjemaet er en del av en masteroppgave ved *Masterprogrammet for fremmedspråk i skolen med fordypning i engelsk* ved Høgskolen i Østfold.

Undersøkelsen tar for seg undervisning i engelsk av minoritetspråklige elever i videregående skole.

**Jeg er interessert i å høre om elever du har undervist eller underviser med kort oppholdstid i Norge, nærmere bestemt mindre enn 6 års opphold da du begynte å undervise dem.**

Svar på spørsmålene så langt det er mulig. Dersom du ikke vet eller er usikker kan du skrive det, eller la spørsmålet stå åpent. Jeg har satt av linjer til kommentarer som kan fylles ut dersom du vil legge til noe. **Undersøkelsen er anonym.**

Vennlig hilsen

Unni Digranes (Tlf. 99 58 64 05)

#### 1. Kjønn

- Kvinne
- Mann

#### 2. Alder

- 20-30
- 30-40
- 40-50
- 50-60
- 60-70

#### 3. Utdannelse (eventuelt flere alternativer)

- Lærerhøyskole
- Universitet
- Praktisk pedagogisk utdanning
- Ufaglært



- Annet \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Hvor mange studiepoeng har du i engelsk? \_\_\_\_\_**

**5. Hvor mange år har du undervist i skolen?**

- Barneskole \_\_\_ år
- Ungdomsskole \_\_\_ år
- Videregående skole \_\_\_ år
- Voksenopplæring \_\_\_ år
- Annet \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Nå vil jeg be deg tenke på en elev som du bruker som referanse når du svarer på resten av undersøkelsen.**

- Jente
- Gutt

Morsmål: \_\_\_\_\_

Nasjonalitet: \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Hvor lenge hadde eleven bodd i Norge da han/hun startet engelskundervisningen i din klasse?**

- Mindre enn ett år
- 1-2 år
- 3-4 år
- 4-6 år
- Vet ikke

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**8. Hadde eleven hatt engelskundervisning i norsk skole tidligere (før oppstart ved din skole/ i din klasse)?**

- Ja, i innføringsklasse
- Ja, engelskundervisning i ordinær klasse i grunnskolen
- Spesialundervisning eller tilpasset undervisning i mindre gruppe i grunnskolen
- Vet ikke

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**9. Hvor lenge har/hadde eleven hatt engelskundervisning i norsk skole tidligere?**

- Mindre enn ett år
- 1-2 år
- 3-4 år
- 4-6 år
- Vet ikke

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**10. Har/Hadde eleven resultatet bestått i engelsk fra ungdomsskolen?**

- Ja
- Nei
- Hadde ikke karakter i faget
- Vet ikke

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**11. Har/hadde eleven hatt engelskundervisning før han/hun kom til Norge?**

- Ja
- Nei
- Vet ikke

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**12. Hvor mange år med engelskundervisning har/hadde eleven hatt før han/hun kom til Norge?**

- Mindre enn 1 år
- 1 - 2 år
- 2 - 3 år
- 3 - 4 år
- 4 - 6 år
- Mer enn 6 år

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**13. Kan du si noe om fordeler eleven har/hadde som minoritetsspråklig i engelskfaget?**

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**14. Kan du si noe om ulemper som eleven har/hadde som minoritetsspråklig i engelskfaget?**

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**15. Opplever/opplevde du at kravene i kompetansemålene i engelsk var for høye for denne eleven?**

- Ja
- Nei

**16. Hvis ja, hvordan tilpasser/tilpasset du undervisningen for elevene? Kryss av på punktene som passer.**

- Jeg sørger/sørget for høy grad av lærerstøtte
- Jeg sørger/sørget for å gi eleven hyppige og grundige tilbakemeldinger
- Jeg sørger/sørget for høy grad av samhandling med medelever
- Jeg forenkler/forenklet innholdet i oppgavene
- Jeg har ikke tilpasset undervisningen til denne eleven

Kommentarer til eller begrunnelser for strategiene mine:

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**17. Bruker/brukte du målspråket (engelsk) med eleven?**

- Stort sett
- Både og
- Stort sett ikke

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**18. Opplever/opplevde du at eleven foretrekker/foretrakk å bruke engelsk fremfor norsk med medelever?**

- Ja
- Nei
- Vet ikke

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**19. Hvilke læringsressurser bruker/brukte du, og hvordan synes du disse fungerer/fungerte?**

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**20 Hvilke undervisningsmetoder opplever/opplevde du fungerer/fungerte?**





**24. Hvilken støtte og hjelp opplever du/har du opplevd i ditt arbeid når det gjelder å undervise i engelsk for elever med minoritetsspråklig bakgrunn?**

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**25.**

**Hvilken hjelp og støtte trenger/trengte du for å kunne gjøre en god jobb i engelskundervisning med minoritetsspråklige elever?**

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**Hjertelig tusen takk for at du ville ta deg tid til å svare! :)**



## APPENDIX IV

### Summaries of student answers

#### Student 1

##### School background

She says she has good writing skills in her L1 and sees herself as more competent in Norwegian than in English. Outside school, she uses Norwegian and her L1.

Before she came to Norway, she attended school for seven years in her home country. She had English for three years. These were not the three last years she lived in the country, due to it being a break in her education when her family moved to a safer place. She had English for two years in one place, and one year in another. She adds that this is the reason she is “bad at talking English”. She sees moving, and changing English teacher, as reasons for her lack of skills in English.

The teaching took place in ordinary classes with one teacher. The teaching methods were teachers’ lectures including the use of the blackboard. He/she also checked their homework and gave writing tasks in class like writing sentences about things they did after school. They had to stand next to the desk and answer question, at the teacher’s command. The students sat in groups of three in the classroom. They wrote with pencil on paper, had a textbook and sometimes had to write sentences on the blackboard in front of the other students. Films and TV programmes were not used, but recordings of texts in the textbook were played for them. Vocabulary work was quite common. No one received special help or adapted teaching methods or material when they found the subject difficult. The teaching was the same for everybody, and all had the same tests and exams.

After leaving [...], she did not start with English right away. In fact, there was a four-year break, resulting in her forgetting a lot of the English she had learnt. If she had continued her education in [...], she would have been able to speak English now, she says.

When assessing her competence in English, she says that she can read English, but speak truly little<sup>7</sup>. She can only write simple sentences and not coherent texts<sup>8</sup>.

### **Reflection on the current teaching and learning of English**

She has attended school for two years in Norway.

She considers the level of English as too advanced for her and needs to start on a much simpler level<sup>9</sup>. For instance, she has never written long, coherent texts in [...]. They were beginners, she underlines. They have worked on verbs and simple sentences, but not on text writing. When she started her education in Norway, she was expected to write texts right away, and she was not able to do that.

She prefers using the computer when writing and finds it useful to listen to English and write afterwards based on what she heard<sup>10</sup>. Watching films and writing texts about it does not involve much learning, she claims. She feels she forgets a lot after watching the film, and before writing texts about the film.

The computer is a useful tool. She uses it with the spell check and finds that helpful. She learns from doing vocabulary work and listening exercises. She would prefer more of the teaching to be as she is used to in her country of origin.

She further claims that learning Norwegian before starting with English has been disturbing to her English. She points at the challenge she experiences involved in learning two different languages at the same time.

She likes best to work individually, even though it sometimes can be fine to work with a partner. She does not learn anything, she claims, from group work because she is used to individual study.

She rarely listens to English in her spare time. She sometimes watches English language movies but uses subtitles in her L1. She does not get any help at home with English homework, because nobody has such competence.

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<sup>7</sup>I can read English. I can, eh (hesitates), talk a tiny bit (my translation)

<sup>8</sup> We did not write long texts (my translation and adaptation)

<sup>9</sup> I want to start from zero, because if I do that, then I can be better (my translation and adaptation).

<sup>10</sup> I learn sentences when I listen to others talk English and answer questions. In [...] we did not hear long sentences (my translation and adaptation).

She prefers oral assessment because she finds this easier to understand. She needs feedback showing her level in English, and what she can do to develop her competence.

Homework involving writing text is not suited for her, she says. She does not learn anything from working like that and considers vocabulary work and text reading more useful.

## **Student 2.**

### **School background**

She has nine years of education before she arrived in Norway, including three years with English. This is her second year in the Norwegian school system.

All in all, she has five years with English, her time in the Norwegian school system included.

She uses Norwegian with Norwegian friends, and L1 with friends from her country of origin. The teaching of English in [...] is not good, she says. The teacher stood in front of the class and lectured. They got good marks based on saying only a few words in English.

They did not have computers, and the teacher did not use it either. Both the teacher and the students used the blackboard quite extensively. They had textbooks. The group was big, consisting of around 29 students, all of them working with the same material and following the same teaching. There was no differentiation based on level, and no special needs support. Films were not used in class, but sound files were. They listened to recordings of texts in the textbook. They did not write longer, coherent texts.

### **Reflection on the current teaching and learning of English**

The teacher uses English and Norwegian. She prefers English but likes that the teacher translates into Norwegian to make it easier to understand.

Learning activities that are frequent now are writing texts, watching TV programmes, video clips and films. They read and listen to English. She thinks that things go well and finds most of the things they do useful<sup>11</sup>. She learns something from most of what they do, such as words and expressions. She likes that the teacher translates what they read and hear, because then

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<sup>11</sup> I learn something from everything. Some words, too. Because I translate, but I like that the teacher translates words, and then I remember (my translation).

she understands the words and remembers them. She learns words and terms in class when the teacher talks and explains. The teaching is not too advanced for her.

Having [...] as a mother tongue gives no benefits, it is rather a negative thing. It only helps when she translates, otherwise not. She thinks that her Norwegian also improves when she listens to the teacher translating what she says or reads in class to Norwegian.

Working with others is not always useful. Working with students with low competence in English does not help her in her learning. She prefers individual work, because this makes it easier to concentrate and to focus on what she needs to work on to develop her competence. She spends maybe one hour each day on her English homework. Then she reads and uses an English - L1 dictionary. Her brother is better than her and can help her with her English homework.

She does not read books in English but watches films and tries to listen to the English. She has subtitles in her L1.

She also listens to music with lyrics in English; rap and rock, mostly. She understands more of the lyrics after she came to Norway and started learning English here.

The assessment she needs is the teacher telling her what is wrong, and what she needs to do to improve.

She wants to know how to pronounce words.

Marks are important to her, and she is hoping to get a 3.

She points at a need for basic training in English, wishing that the school had offered a course starting from zero ("I want to start from zero, because if I do that, then I can be better." (my translation and adaptation)). The reason she gives is that the teaching in [...] was lacking in quality, and she feels that she needs to start from scratch.

### **Student 3**

#### **School background**

Student 3 has been in Norway for two-three years. She had half a year in lower secondary school in Norway before starting her upper secondary education. She uses only Norwegian with friends outside school, and she says her competence is better in Norwegian than in English.

She had 11 years of education in [...], including English. She is not sure with regard to how many years she has had English but thinks it might have been in all her school years.

The English classes took place in an ordinary classroom, with 25 - 30 students. They used a textbook, notebook, and no computer. When she was around 14, she changed to a new school. They were introduced to games, for example with illustrations, in addition to more traditional teacher lectures. There was one teacher in the classroom, and no students received special or adapted training.

She hesitates when asked if she learnt to write English and goes from answering that she has learnt a little to not having learnt to write English<sup>12</sup>. She adds that the teacher progressed fast, and that not all students were able to keep up with her teaching. They did mainly multiple choices tasks. The student says that she can read a little, but also here she is hesitant. They used to read in groups<sup>13</sup>. They never wrote long and coherent texts. They had more grammar tasks, and many of these were on verbs. There was not much oral student activity. Mainly they had to do writing tasks and listen to the teacher<sup>14</sup>. Oral student activity, where the students are supposed to be active and show that they want to take part in communication by raising their hand in class, is new to her.

It was common to copy written work done by a clever student. The assessment was based mainly on hand-ins, not on oral work.

She says she can talk a little English, and that she has some competence in communication with others. She adds that she was better at talking English in [...] than in Norway. Learning Norwegian led to her forgetting some of the oral English she knew.

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<sup>12</sup> I cannot write English. We had many tasks where we could choose the right word (my translation and adaptation).

<sup>13</sup> Eh... Yes, I can read a little. We read in groups. I can talk a little, communicate a little with others (my translation).

<sup>14</sup> “We write much, the students must write a lot. Texts, sentences. I have never done that in [...], such long texts. In [...] we worked much with verbs. More film in Norway. In [...], no films. I find it a bit too difficult. I have not written that type of text in [...], such big texts, you know.” (my translation)

**Reflection on the current teaching and learning of English**

Her current English teacher uses both Norwegian and English in her teaching. This suits the student well and makes it possible for her to understand better. There are many written assignments and tasks. This is new to her, and so is the use of films.

One teaching method that this student finds useful is watching films where she listens to spoken English. In addition are the class discussions after the film are important because she can listen to the students talking English and that way learn new words and expressions. Her preference is to use games in her learning. She does not prefer long texts. (Here it is unclear whether she meant reading or writing long texts.) She prefers to do cloze tests (tasks where she is supposed to fill in the right word in a sentence).

She does not think learning English and Norwegian at the same time is a problem. On the contrary, she feels that not having a break from any of these languages ensures that she does not forget any of them. Despite this, she comments that she mixes English and Norwegian when reading and writing.

Things she finds difficult in the English teaching is that she meets lots of words that she does not understand. She needs to work on vocabulary. She is not good at writing long sentences and needs to get examples of how to write texts and sentences.

She thinks the competence aims are too demanding for her, and that her minority language background is a drawback to her since she has not learnt much English earlier, despite many years with English at school.

She likes cooperating with other students, but it is challenging because they might not understand her.

She works a lot on homework and receives some help from her younger sister.

She does not read books in English, but sometimes watches films in English. She listens sometimes to English language videos on YouTube.

She prefers written feedback in Norwegian, and that the teacher corrects her mistakes so that she sees what is correct.

Her aim is to pass English, and she is willing to work hard to achieve this.

As a final comment on things she finds important for her learning, she says that she needs the teacher not only to say things, but to use the blackboard also, so that she can see how words are written. Only listening is difficult because she often does not understand what is being

said. She also wants the teacher to write in capital letters, so she can understand the letters and the words better.

## **Student 4**

### **School background**

Student 4 has attended school in his country of origin for eight years. He had English throughout all his school years.

There was a break between seventh and eighth grade, when his school was closed because of war.

He has been three years in Norway; one year in an introduction class, one year in a folk high school and last year he spent a year doing lower secondary subjects in a class for immigrants at a lower secondary school.

He says his competence is better in Norwegian than in English, both spoken and written. He uses mainly Norwegian outside school now, but earlier he used both his L1 and Norwegian.

The teacher was not so competent, the students claims. There were many students in the class, and much of the time was used on the alphabet, and on grammar. They worked on learning single words, mainly. The teacher did not communicate with the class in English. They had textbooks, and no computers. There was no use of films, and no sound files were played. They used the English book, and the notebook. The teacher wrote on the blackboard, and the studies copied this. There were many tests in written English, but not much oral English was taught.

The student answers that he has some knowledge of how to write in English, but that he has forgotten most of it because of three years with intensive Norwegian course. During the period in the introduction class and folk high school before upper secondary school, they were advised to only use Norwegian, even to think in Norwegian.

To the question if he can read English, he answers that he thinks so. Sometimes he cannot pronounce words correctly, he adds, and says that he discovered that he was able to

communicate in English when he talked with Italians in the summer holiday in 2017. He<sup>15</sup> found out that the Italian tourists he met were on the same level as him in English. He also chats a lot in English. In fact, he says, he finds chatting much easier than writing texts in class, since the point is to be understood, and not write or talk perfect English<sup>16</sup>.

### **Reflection on the current teaching and learning of English**

The teacher this year uses much English and translates some of it into Norwegian for them. The student finds this good, saying that he expects to hear and see much English in an English class, and that it helps him that the teacher also translates and explains in Norwegian. The activities in class are varied, with tasks on the computer, reading in the textbook, talking in pairs, giving presentations, reading and answering questions alone with the teacher, watching films or programmes, answering questions to these, working on vocabulary and doing grammar tasks.

The student has, in addition to the ordinary English classes, one extra period of adapted English every week out with the teacher in a small group. He finds this helpful. The student finds that the adapted teaching methods used out in the small group suits him best. Here they practise reading and working on easier texts, and work on simpler tasks. The questions to the texts can here be explained more thoroughly.

He cannot think of anything that does not work for him in the English class. When comparing English in Norway to the English teaching in his country of origin, he finds that it is better in Norway.

The level of the teaching is too high in many cases, even though he sometimes also finds it OK.

He thinks it is fine to learn both Norwegian and English, because many words are similar between the two languages. His L1 is hugely different from English, and therefore it is not of much help when learning English.

He likes working in pairs, but not working with more than one student. He likes when the teacher asks them to discuss things in pairs.

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<sup>15</sup> Yes, I can talk a little. I can talk to tourists who visit our district in the summer. (my translation and adaptation).

<sup>16</sup> I chat a lot in English. Quite much, in fact. Chatting is easier, I do not have to be perfect, only make myself understood. I have learnt to write a little (my translation and adaptation)



At home, he uses Google Translate much when working with homework. He does not work much with English, since he has a lot of other subjects to focus on also. He has no family in Norway, and therefore no help at home with English homework.

He does not read books in English, but he reads English on the internet; news, articles, different things that he finds interesting.

He quite often watches English language films in the weekends. Then he uses subtitles in his L1, but he pays attention to the English spoken in the film.

He listens to music like rap and pop and understands some of the lyrics.

The feedback he appreciates the most is that the teacher talks about his work and what he could have done better.

His goal is to become better at pronunciation and to pass the English course. He works in a pharmacy in his work placement and has problems with pronouncing English names on medicines. He would like to be better at this.

As a final remark he says that he needs to have more information about what it takes to pass the English exam, and what he needs to work on to become better in English. He also points at a need for some extra help from the teacher before tests, and after reading texts. He needs more time to learn things properly before being tested, and to get information and explanations before and after tests so that he feels ready for the test and knows what needs to be better.

He also needs adapted tests. He mentions a test that he recently had, where it was possible to choose an adapted and simpler text with tasks and where it would be possible to get maximum 3. This is a good idea, in his opinion, and he would prefer to have this option on more tests.

## **Student 5**

### **School background**

Student 5 has ten years with education from his country of origin and has studied English from second grade.

He has one year from the adult education before starting in upper secondary school and is now in his third year in Norway.

Earlier he felt that he was stronger in English than Norwegian, but now it has turned the other way around. He uses Norwegian in most of his spare time, with English as his second most used language.

The teaching was mainly using textbook and exercise book. The students read to each other. There was no use of films or sound files, and no computers. They also read loud in class<sup>17</sup>. The teachers, he says, were not particularly good, and the students found English difficult. He says he can write a little English, and that his reading skills are medium. He can speak in simple sentences.

### **Reflection on the current teaching and learning of English**

They have texts with tasks, and they work on formal/informal language. There is no reading loud, but they watch videos and films and write texts to that. One type of task is film analysis. What is useful to him is practising the language through speaking and discussing topics that he finds interesting<sup>18</sup>.

He thinks most of what they do in the English lessons is useful, and finds the teaching varied, that it covers all levels (I cannot think of anything that I don't find useful in the English lessons (my translation and adaptation)).

The English teacher uses mostly Norwegian, and some English. He would have preferred more English.

He has forgotten a lot of English, due to lack of practise. There was little use of English in the society in his country of origin.

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<sup>17</sup> We used the textbook and an exercise book. We read to each other from the textbook. We had no computers. The teacher did not use films. We did not listen to sound files. We read for the others in class (my translation and adaptation).

<sup>18</sup> I learn words and expressions in class when the teacher talks and explains (my translation and adaptation).

He finds Norwegian to have similarities with English, and therefore learning both languages at the same time can be helpful.

He prefers working alone, because not all the students take part in the group work and discussions in a serious manner.

He does not do much homework in English but prioritizes other subjects. He does not read books in English, but watches films, though only on rare occasions. He listens to music with lyrics in English.

He prefers oral feedback and advice for further work instead of written like he now gets. He prefers it in English. His goal for the subject is to get 4.

His final comment when asked if he wants to add something that is important for his learning other than what is already covered, he says that he would prefer the teacher to communicate in English because now the mixture of Norwegian and English is confusing.

## **Student 6**

### **School background**

He has no education from [...] but has attended school in neighbouring country where he started in 2012 and continued until 2015. He had English in these three years.

He had English during his two years of lower secondary education, before starting in upper secondary school. This means that he has 3,5 years with English in Norway, and 6,5 years all in all. The student is more competent in Norwegian than in English now.

The teaching in his country of origin consisted mainly of conversation practice, and the teaching in Ethiopia consisted of basic English training. First, they learnt the letters. The teacher used a textbook. In the second year they started to write more and talk with the others in class in English. He had three days with this, and two days with communication training. There were no computers, only the English book. The teacher used the blackboard and the students wrote in a notebook. No sound files were played. The teacher read for them in the beginning of every class.

There was a break in the English education when he arrived in Norway. He started Norwegian training and had no English the first year.

He has learnt to read and write, too. He can write coherent text, he claims<sup>19</sup>.

### **Reflection on current teaching and learning of English**

The teacher uses both Norwegian and English in the English lessons. He prefers English, even though he sometimes does not understand words. He needs translation sometimes, and the teacher usually translates parts of what she says to the class. The student asks the teacher to translate when needed.

The most useful teaching and work methods are that the teacher reads a text for them, and they can ask if there are words that they do not understand. Afterwards they answer control questions. Also, they watch films and write film reviews. He likes both things but reading and answering questions are the best.

He finds the level fine for him<sup>20</sup>. Being multilingual is positive, he says, but clearly misunderstands the question and says that the reason is that he can use Google Translate.

When asked if he finds it challenging to learn both Norwegian and English at the same time, he answers that he found it difficult in the beginning. He mixed Norwegian and English when trying to talk English. He did not mix like this when talking Norwegian.

Now he is more able to separate the two languages, both when writing and speaking, but on some occasions, he mixes words. He answers that when he cannot use Norwegian or English, he can make use of his L1 and use Google Translate.

When he does not understand Norwegian, he uses Google translate, and when it is hard to find words in his L1 he uses English.

He sometimes cooperates in class with two other students from his country of origin, and it is helpful because they can help each other. Maybe one of them knows something that the others do not.

(It is useful to work in pairs and groups with other students from [...]. This is good. If I understand a word that the others do not, I can help them with the [...] word for it. It is also

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<sup>19</sup> I have learnt to write English. I can write texts in English (my translation and adaptation).

<sup>20</sup> I think it is fine. It is not too difficult. Not too easy (my translation).

the other way around. If they understand words, and I do not, they can explain in [...]. (my translation and adaptation)).

They have homework, and he does not find it difficult. He can do it himself mostly, and when he needs help, he has a brother who can help him. He is older and more competent in English. The student works as a taxi driver and uses English with taxi customers from the airport.

Except from this, he uses little English in his spare time.

He reads English on Facebook, for example humorous entries about politicians from countries on his continent. Sometimes he chats in English.

He watches Netflix, but with Norwegian subtitles. He understands around 80 percent of the spoken English. He listens mostly to music from his country of origin, but some English language music too.

He prefers his feedback and assessment in English. He needs the teacher to correct by showing the right answer. He needs to see it written correct. He needs to know what is good, and what he needs to improve. He often has comments about commas, for example.

His goal is to get a 5, and to get this he needs to learn more about punctuation. Also, he needs to hand in all tasks. He has forgotten one hand-in, he says.

Advice to teachers would be to translate into Norwegian, so the students understand. Also to let the students use Google translate.

He finds the computer useful. He only writes on the computer. He can send the task right away. Sometimes he uses the spell check. He has no technical problems with using the computer.

## **Student 7**

### **School background**

He says he is much better in Norwegian than in English. First, he learnt only Norwegian. He has attended one and a half years of lower secondary school in Norway and had English in

this period. After that, he has studied English for one and a half years in upper secondary school. All in all, he has studied English for 4 years.

He attended school for 8 years in his country of origin. Only one year of these included English. The only thing they learnt was the alphabet<sup>21</sup>. They did not have a textbook. The teacher used the blackboard. It was only the teacher who had a textbook. They did not learn to speak. They only learnt some simple words. He was not able to talk in sentences, and he could not have a conversation with anybody in English<sup>22</sup>.

He had a break in his English teaching after leaving [...] and starting with English in Norway.

### **Reflection on current teaching and learning**

Learning two languages at the same time, English and Norwegian, is a bit difficult, but he manages it. He sometimes mixes the two languages.

The teacher uses mostly English and translates if students do not understand. He needs quite a lot of help with translation. In the English lessons, they sometimes work in groups. They work on tasks, discuss the points and find information. Afterwards, they present this in class<sup>23</sup>.

They use a textbook. The teacher uses recordings, films and video clips. They use a computer for text writing on some occasions. He finds writing coherent texts challenging because he lacks words. He finds that he learns the best from watching videos and writing tasks. He uses Arabic on Google translate to understand words.

He thinks the level is OK for him, and that he receives enough help and support from the teacher.

He finds it to be a good thing to be multilingual, because some words are similar in English and Norwegian (NB! This question was difficult for him. It seems he does not fully understand what I ask for here).

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<sup>21</sup> I learnt the alphabet. I can write some words; ‘boy’, ‘girl’, things like that (my translation and adaptation).

<sup>22</sup> I did not learn to talk in sentences (my translation and adaptation).

<sup>23</sup> Sometimes we work in groups, two and three. We get a task, and we must find information on the internet and such. Then each person must talk about what they have found, for the class (my translation and adaptation).

He sometimes works with other students in the class. Sometimes with Norwegian students, other times with minority students.

He goes to the library in Bergen twice a week where the Red Cross offers help with homework. Nobody at home can help him with English.

He reads a little English when watching films. Then he has subtitles in English. He also watches an American TV-programme. Then he pays attention to the English and has subtitles in his L1.

He watches some YouTube-videos, such as instruction videos, for example on English grammar. He finds them himself.

He needs feedback and assessment that tells him what is good, and what is not so good. He prefers that both in English and Norwegian, but the teacher does it in writing, in English. The teacher helps him understand this, but he translates it mostly himself.

His goal for the subject: He misunderstands this, and answers that he needs English in his future and wants to learn it. He needs to work a lot to achieve more than a 3.

His advice to English teachers is to give texts in a group of students and let them write about this. Then the students can read their text/answers to the teachers.

## APPENDIX V

### Summaries of the answers to the teachers' questionnaire

#### Teacher A

Teacher A is a woman in the age group 30- 40 years old, with 60 credits in English. She has been a teacher for three years in lower secondary school, and three and a half years in upper secondary school.

She gives no information about the learner she has chosen as an example regarding ethnic background or first language.

The teacher does not know how long this student has been in Norway, nor does she know if he has studied English in a Norwegian school before she started teaching him. He came into the class in the first year. No information has been given other than that he is going to have ordinary English teaching. The teacher has got no information regarding whether this student has passed in English in lower secondary school, or if he was assessed with grades there. The teacher does not know whether the student has had English before he came to Norway. She thinks she remembers him talking about having had some English but is uncertain whether this is really so.

An advantage she mentions of being minority language student is that he is familiar with Google translate, and uses it a lot. A disadvantage is that he understands little of both Norwegian and English.

She experiences the competence aims to be too challenging for this student and adjusts her teaching by making simpler tasks. Lack of time makes it not always possible to adjust the teaching. He is in a group with 22 other students, and many of them struggle with the subject of English.



The teacher uses both English and Norwegian with the class. She has not experienced that the student prefers using English before Norwegian with other students.

The textbook they use is Tracks 2. The teacher is not satisfied with it, and she makes use of different internet tasks, in addition to the book. She thinks that they are OK.

Methods she sees are useful are cloze tests but is uncertain about the learning effect of these. She sees not much learning outcome for the student in using the blackboard, writing tasks, independent work or reading.

She gives assessment and feedback in English, both written and spoken. The student says he understands what teacher says, but teacher is uncertain if this is the fact.

Teacher 1's advice to other teachers who teach English to minority students is that the class should not be too big, and an interpreter should be introduced as fast as possible. Teachers should ask if the students need to talk to health workers. This is important to uncover other difficulties/traumas. Also, making use of a bilingual assistant is a must.

In addition, she recommends that the teachers make sure that the students understand/have come to terms with what is demanded in upper secondary school in the different subjects, and that they have realistic expectations and understanding of their own level.

Teachers need education and courses, and the school management must show understanding of the work and challenges involved in the teaching of such groups. Understanding must be shown for the amount of work, and that it is mentally challenging for teachers to teach such groups.

### **Teacher B**

Teacher 2 is a woman in the age group 30-40 years. She has marked for the category practical pedagogical education and is in the middle of her first year as a teacher. Her student is a Syrian boy with Arabic as L1, who had lived in Norway for less than one year when he started in her introduction class. The student has no English exam from lower secondary school. As a matter of fact, he had not studied English before arriving in Norway. The teacher does not see any advantages with being a minority language student. A disadvantage, on the

other hand, is that the student does not understand much Norwegian. Furthermore, he has even less competence in English. Learning English without a common language, Norwegian, is challenging. The teacher sees that the competence aims are too demanding for this student. To adapt her teaching, she ensures a high degree of teacher support, and simplified tasks. She searches for educational videos in Arabic on for ex. YouTube about topics she teaches. This can be topics like for example nouns, pronouns etc.

The teacher reports that she uses little English with the student, and she has not experienced that the student prefers English before Norwegian with other students.

Teaching resources that the teacher mentions as useful are various internet pages with grammar tasks, for example *podium.gyldendal.no*, books like *First Contact* (Aschehoug) and *Core English* (Cappelen). She also mentions that she uses various English books for children. When asked about what teaching methods she has found useful, she says she has not discovered many. Watching videos where topics are explained in Arabic has been quite effective. Also working on tasks in various children's English books, for example cloze tests, "match words", etc.

Teaching methods that she does not find useful are using the blackboard and showing videos.

The teacher gives feedback and assessment in Norwegian, and mainly Norwegian, to be sure that the student understands it.

As advice to other teachers she suggests that one starts with basic English/English for beginners, such as word classes, vocabulary etc.

She can ask colleagues for help, but there is no organized cooperation or common programme between teachers. They miss this. Overall, little focus is given these special groups.

## **Teacher C**

Teacher C is a woman in the age group 30-40 with 70 credits in English. She has worked two years in lower secondary school, ten years in upper secondary school and one year in adult education. The student she has in mind is a girl from Thailand with Thai as her L1. She has lived in Norway three-four years before starting in the teacher's class. She has attended an introductory programme and has one-two years with English in Norway before starting as this teacher's student. The student has no English exam from lower secondary school in Norway, but she has had English for two-three years in her country of origin. Being minority language student has some advantages, the teacher thinks, as it serves the student's learning of English to know something about linguistic structures and language symbols and variation in these. A disadvantage is that the student does not have the same cultural and linguistic background as the majority students, and that she does not come with the necessary knowledge or level to start in a Norwegian upper secondary class. The textbooks generally are not adapted to this type of student. The topics that are often far from minority students' background. The teacher sees that the competence aims are too demanding for the student.

To adapt the teaching to this student, the teacher ensures that she gets a high degree of teacher support, that she is given thorough and frequent feedback, a high degree of cooperation with other students and simplified text and tasks.

The textbook is not adapted to the student's level in English, so it was no alternative to use it. The student had a good friend in the class who was stronger in the subject, and these two had a fruitful cooperation. The student who needs much help got important support and help from her friend, and the other one also developed her competence through explaining and supporting her. Nevertheless, the teacher had to be there and offer much help and support, too.

The teacher uses both Norwegian and English in class. She first talks and explains in English, then in Norwegian. She cannot see that the student preferred talking English to friends in class before Norwegian.

Regarding learning resources, the teacher had to adapt and simplify texts, or only use excerpts from them. Alternatively, she finds more suited texts in other textbooks.

She also makes use of various digital resources, apps, videos, films and tasks on the internet, for example. The students vary in their preferences regarding these digital resources.

Reading an easy reader was good for the student. Students seem to like using other books than the textbook, and reading a good story is something else and offers variation from reading factual text.

Teaching methods that this teacher found useful can be divided into three: process writing, varied grammar tasks and varied learning and working methods.

Process writing has turned out to be quite a success because it gives a chance of increasing the vocabulary when working with new topics and working independently, but with close teacher support.

When working on grammar tasks, it is a good method to start working with pen and paper, and as the students gain more competence, they can go over to digital resources. This makes it possible to work at different pace. The aim is that the students become more and more able to understand and correct their own mistakes.

Variation in working methods are important, and methods this teacher has used are escape rooms, making films, making presentations, brainstorming, reading together and alone afterwards, cooperation partners, and films and books.

She has experienced that too one-sided teaching, like the traditional “read and answer questions”, and the new type of digital teaching, is not a success.

When it comes to feedback and assessment, she gives both oral and written in both Norwegian and English. As an example, she gives short comments in English in the text when doing process writing, but gives the final assessment on it, and feedback, in Norwegian. As the students become more competent in English, the teacher uses more English in all aspects of her work with them.

The teacher has the following advice (dos and don'ts) to other teachers who work with minority language students: Give them lots of positive feedback and recognize what they can

much more than what they cannot. Give them possibilities to master. Use their L1 for all its worth. Introduce good strategies for how they can understand English by thinking in their own language.

The teacher experiences support in her work from colleagues who help her with planning her teaching and with whom she can have talks about situations in the classroom. They have interdisciplinary cooperation and make each other better.

The administration supports her by offering her to take part in courses and education that is directed towards this student group.

She expresses a wish that the Directorate for Education and Training had more focus on teaching of minority language students.

### **Teacher D**

This is a male teacher aged between 20 and 30 with 60 credits in English. He has taught in upper secondary school for six and a half years. The boy he has chosen comes from [...] and has [...] as his L1. He has had English in Norway for one year. This was a year with basic English in an introductory programme. The student came to Norway with no English in his background. In fact, he is to be considered illiterate.

An advantage the teacher sees for this boy is that he sees English with “fresh eyes” and is not influenced by previous knowledge in for example Norwegian. The consequence is that he understands grammar easier and other things that are related to English due to him not being governed by prior knowledge in Norwegian. A disadvantage of his minority background is the lack of general knowledge and general competence which makes the general part of the subject of English difficult to understand. The competence aims are too demanding for this student. To adapt the teaching, the teacher ensures a high degree of cooperation with other students, and simplification of the tasks. In addition, the student has some teacher support, and there is an assistant available some classes per week. The teacher would have liked to be able to give more support, but with only two periods per week with English, and a huge group with students who all need special adaptation, it is not possible to give this one student more

attention than already is the case. Besides, this student show low competence in English and the tasks and teaching material must be “broken down”.

The teacher uses little English with the boy.

The student prefers using Norwegian with his classmates. He uses simple Norwegian, and some L1 with other minority students.

Teaching resources that this teacher made use of were *SKILLS Basic* (Gyldendal), an internet resource with simplified tasks and material to the textbook the class use- *SKILLS*. In addition, he uses tasks copied from other textbooks, for ex. books from lower secondary school.

Teaching methods that were useful were thorough explanations, step by step, preferably with visual help (PP, illustrations etc.), and in combination with digital tools.

Traditional, non-adapted teaching materials were of little use. Films do not work well unless they have Norwegian subtitling.

Feedback and assessment is given in Norwegian, both oral and in writing. The written assessment is given first, then explained afterwards.

His advice to other teachers working with minority language students is to accept that they have lower competence and will perhaps not be able to have the same progress as the rest. Be realistic in your expectations. This will benefit both the teacher and the students. Be prepared for slower progress, support the student step by step up to a level within reach. Do not have too high ambitions and too long-term plans.

The teacher has received little help in his work with this type of students. He comments that there are few resources for this work, and the resources that exist are distributed on many students. In this respect, the subject of English is not prioritized. He has got lots of materials and much advice, but few concrete measures are taken. To do a good job with newly arrived minority students it needs to be considered that the group is not homogenous, first of all.

Then, with students with as low competence as the one he uses as his example, teaching in an ordinary class is almost a waste of time and resources. This type of students would almost need the teacher alone in a separate room where they could be taught individually according

to own individual plans. For students who are stronger in English, audiobooks and digital resources are of much value.

### **Teacher E**

Teacher 5 is a woman between 40 and 50. She has worked as a teacher in upper secondary school for twelve years. The student she is referring to is a girl from Eritrea. The teacher is not certain of her L1, but comments that there is no digital dictionary for her language. The student had lived one-two years in Norway when starting in her class. She attended both an introductory programme and a year in a vocational programme in another school before starting in her class. This implies that she has two years of English teaching in Norway. She has not attended English in lower secondary school in Norway but had English in her country of origin.

The teacher finds it hard to see any advantages this girl might have as a minority language student in English. She has little competence in Norwegian, and none in English.

Disadvantages are easier to spot. The student needs basic training in English. Now she is supposed to follow a teaching plan with competence aims aimed at students with ten years of English before starting upper secondary education. She will be learning without the possibility of using her L1, but rather Norwegian that she has very low competence in. No digital resources to use in English teaching are to be found in her L1, and there exists no Google Translate for her L1. The teacher experiences the competence aims in English as too demanding for her. To support her, the teacher ensures a high degree of cooperation with other students, and simpler texts and tasks. The teacher sees a high degree of teacher support as a relative term since there are only two periods of English per week. She simplifies tasks, and adapts texts, to a basic level. She experiences that the student is not able to make use of these materials herself. Consequently, she placed the student in a group with other students, to make sure that she can get help and support from them. The teacher sits next to the student and helps her when there is time for this. She also tries to encourage her to work with words in cases where there is something she does not understand, and to use digital tools for help.

The student is rather introverted and passive and does not take an active part in the learning activities.

The teacher uses mainly Norwegian with the student. The girl reads texts in English, and the teacher speaks English in class, but uses Norwegian in conversations with her. The student does not prefer English before Norwegian in communication with other students.

All the students have the textbook, but it is too advanced for this student. Therefore, the teacher has adapted texts and tasks to as simple level as possible. Nevertheless, she struggles with understanding and working on them. The teacher has searched for material meant for adult beginners in English, but these are mainly to be found on English language internet pages which demand some explanation before being used. So far, the teacher has not found any resources that are systematic enough to function.

The best teaching method with the student is sitting next to her and explaining words, reminding her that she already knows some simple words like “is” and “are” and some other everyday words. Reading texts, writing texts, giving teacher lectures, watching films - all this has not been useful with the student.

Feedback and assessment are given in Norwegian, both in writing and oral. Despite this, the student frequently does not understand the feedback, and does often not take notice of it.

The advice this teacher would give other teachers working with minority language students with little competence in English is to have small student groups, offer basic English courses where they learn to make use of dictionaries, internet resources etc. Also, it is important to make them understand that it is not possible to weigh up for the ten years of English that the majority language students have without working hard. This would also include homework. Even then, it will be difficult.

A continuous dialogue with the student is necessary.

The teacher has received little or no help with the work with newly arrived minority students. She has had to search for, and find, learning materials and resources herself. The need for assistants is not met until the situation is critical. No plans for the school year and how to meet and help these students are made in advance. Everything is left to the individual



teacher's effort and will to fight. Students who have received special support one year, do not necessarily get it the next, even if the need for such a continuation is obvious. The solution tends to be "give them 1".

The teacher sees small groups with basic English training as a solution, in combination with systematic and adapted learning materials and resources. Students who have not had English earlier should have a right to English for beginners based on a plan and an exam adapted to that.

### **Teacher F**

Teacher 6 is a man in the age group 30-40, with 80 credits in English. He has taught in upper secondary school for three years. He is referring to a boy from Eritrea with Tigrinya as L1. He had lived less than a year when starting in the teacher's English class. The student had no English from the Norwegian school system earlier but studied English for one-two years in his country of origin.

An advantage that the teacher can see connected to being a minority language student is that pronunciation of some sounds might be easier since they exist in his L1, f. ex. the sounds in words like "the", "think", "zero" that many Norwegian English speakers have problems with. What separated him the most from the majority students was the lack of understanding when he listened to English.

To support the student, the teacher gives a high degree of teacher support and he simplifies the tasks. He uses mainly English with him but has not experienced that the student prefers communicating in English before Norwegian with other students.

Regarding learning materials, the teacher has used the textbooks *Tracks* (Cappelen) and *SKILLS* (Cappelen), but none of these have been a success. The student needs basic English training.

He does not know what teaching methods are good but experienced that work that demands autonomous effort was of little use.

The feedback and assessment are only oral, and in both Norwegian and English. It is easier to sit with the student and point at things that are good/not so good than trying to write feedback that he will understand. The teacher then can ask control questions to ensure that he understands.

In his advice to other teachers he recommend that they are realistic in their expectations of the students' level in English. As a teacher, it does not take long until you understand if it will be possible for the student to pass or not. If passing is out of the question, it is pointless for the student to follow the programme that the rest of the class follows. In such cases, one should rather give basic teaching in English (English for beginners) with a textbook and materials that serve this purpose.

The teacher does not feel he has received much help in his work with minority language students, but he has not asked for much help, either. The only thing he has asked for is help in finding a suited textbook for basic teaching of English.

In his opinion, there should be an assistant in big groups. It is also important that the school buys teaching and learning resources meant for beginners in English. Searching for relevant materials on the internet is time- consuming.

### **Teacher G**

Teacher 7 is a woman in the age group 60-70. She has taught in lower secondary school for one year, and in upper secondary for 36 years. In addition, she has two years as an environmental therapist. Her student is from Brazil with Portuguese as L1. He has spent less than one year in Norway and came straight into the introductory programme a little into the autumn term. He has had no English in Norway or in Brazil before this.

The teacher sees it as a disadvantage that the student must learn both Norwegian and English. She finds the competence aims in English too challenging for him.

To adapt her teaching, she ensures a high degree of teacher support and cooperation with other student as well as thorough and frequent feedback, and simplified texts and tasks.

There are only two students in this group, so she finds adapting her teaching easy. She uses both Norwegian and English with the student and does not experience that he prefers English before Norwegian when communicating.

The textbooks she is using are *Intro* (Cappelen) and *Stairs* (Cappelen). *Intro* is fine for adults, whereas *Stairs* has good web pages, but they are a bit childish.

Her feedback/assessment is given in Norwegian, both in writing and oral. She does not explain this choice.

The only help she mentions that she has got in her work is the curriculum for the introductory programme.

She mentions money when asked what is needed to do a good job with newly arrived minority students, and a forum where she can discuss things with other teachers.

### **Teacher H**

Teacher H is a woman in the age group 30-40, with 60 credits in English. She has half a year of practice in upper secondary school. Her student is a boy from Afghanistan, with Pashto as his L1. The boy had lived in Norway for three-four years when starting in her class. She has four different first languages in her class and says that this involves challenges for her.

The introductory programme for the student is over two years, and the student has had one-two years with English teaching in Norwegian school. The teacher does not know if the student has passed lower secondary exams. She is certain he has not done this in Norwegian lower secondary school. He has studied English in his country of origin, but the teacher is not certain about the length of these studies. She experiences learning two languages at the same time as challenging for the student.

The teacher does not see that the student's minority background brings any advantages, but there is a clear disadvantage. This is the focus the student needs to have on learning two languages at the same time; Norwegian and English. When the competence in Norwegian is rather low, it is difficult to use this as a language of reference.

The teacher sees the competence aims in English as too demanding for the student. To adapt the teaching, she ensures a high degree of support from the teacher, frequent and thorough feedback and simplification of the tasks.

In class, she mainly uses English, and the students use both English and Norwegian. If resources in the students' L1 are available, they use these as well.

The teacher does not experience a preference for using English rather than Norwegian among her students.

She comments on the difficulty of finding materials that fits her group. She uses Britannica, an interactive encyclopaedia where the texts are on different levels so the students can choose the level that suits best. She also comments that many of the textbooks the school can offer have texts that are too dense and demanding for her students.

She offers tasks that are adapted to different levels, where the students can start with step one and continue to step two and so on.

She does not see that writing frames are of much use, and neither is teacher lectures and class discussions.

She gives oral assessment and feedback in Norwegian, and written feedback in English. She explains it in Norwegian when necessary.

She has the following advice to offer teachers with this type of students: Listen to them. This, she comments, is a cliché, but it will offer useful insight. Also, work at a slow pace. NA students have a lot to learn fast, so everything that can be done in a more suitable tempo is good.

Concerning help and support she has access to, she answers that there should be a forum where teachers could discuss teaching resources, didactics and pedagogy for NA students.

Unni Digranes

August 2020

Fremmedspråk i skolen-engelsk.

*Avdeling for økonomi, språk og samfunnsfag.*

## REFLECTION NOTES

Writing this thesis has been a demanding, but educational process. Many years as a teacher have led to a special interest in students who need a high degree of adaptation, a topic which in my opinion is one of the most challenging teachers meet.

Among students who need a high degree of adaptation, we find many newly arrived minority language students (NA students), who I chose to be my focus of interest in the thesis.

I set out with a rather ambitious goal: to find information about important factors in the situation in English for both NA students and their teachers. I discovered, as I progressed with the thesis, that a challenge with my choice of research questions is that they opened for an extremely broad investigation territory. The thesis covers many areas, and I discovered that I would have preferred to dig deeper into a more limited field.

In the school where I work, most of the NA students attend vocational programmes. When contacting schools for student participants, it was interesting to notice that the students who were suggested for the interviews were all students attending vocational education programmes. It would have been interesting to know if it is a tendency that NA students in upper secondary school in Norway choose vocational programmes. Adding questions in the interview and questionnaire to investigate choice of education programme would possibly have provided information that would shed light on where challenges connected to NA students are most common, and where the need to introduce the right measures are most urgent.

When evaluating my data gathering process, I see that it would have been useful to provide more information about the students' current situation in English to get deeper insight into pros and cons of the teaching they experience now. It would have been particularly interesting to know more about the students' experience of adapted teaching. I also would have chosen to add questions about the use of L1 in the English classes. Further, during the interviews, I experienced hindrances connected to language that could, as I now see it, have been reduced

by introducing an interpreter. Several of the students spoke Arabic, if not as L1 then as L2, so it would have been helpful with an interpreter with competence in Arabic.

Regarding the teacher questionnaires, I realized when working on the data that some of the questions in Holm-Olsen's questionnaire were not relevant for my investigation. In addition, what I thought was time saving; keeping the questions in Norwegian, ended up with being time consuming when I had to translate all the responses.

Despite these viewpoints, my main thought is that I am content with having covered important topics and gaining insight that can be of use in my work with NA students. Many of the findings are relevant for other subjects than English, as well. I also feel confident that my study has provided information and insight that can be valuable for school owners, school administrators and teachers. Not the least, I am satisfied with giving attention to a group of students whose voices are often not heard.