

Valid and Reliable?

A Critical Analysis of the Final Written Exam in English in the Upper
Secondary School

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SAMMENDRAG

Denne studien fokuserer på hvilke kompetansemål som faktisk blir målt i ENG1002/1003 eksamen, samt VG1/VG2 elevers forståelse av oppgavene og tekstene i eksamenssettene. Engelsk er et obligatorisk fellesfag for VG1 SF elever i videregående skole. På yrkesfaglige studieprogram er faget også obligatorisk, men faget går der over to år, og elevene har ikke eksamen før i VG2. Eksamen er sentralt gitt og utarbeides av Utdanningsdirektoratet.

Studien er basert på analyser av seks eksamens-sett fra vår 2010 til høst 2013, samt spørreundersøkelser og intervju med elever fra både studieforbereidende og yrkesfaglige studieprogram (bygg og anlegg). I tillegg til å se på hvilke kompetansemål som blir testet, har også fokus vært på å finne ut i hvilken grad elever forstår tekstene og oppgavene som blir gitt, slik at de får vist kompetansen sin, samt om validiteten og reliabiliteten i ENG1002/1003 eksamen er god nok.

Analysen av eksamensoppgavene viste at det i eksamenssettene var stor forskjell på hvor mange og hvilke kompetansemål som ble testet. Elever som er oppe til samme eksamen blir ikke målt i de samme kompetansemålene. Hva som blir målt avhenger av hvilken oppgave eleven velger, innholdet i teksten de skriver og om de skjønner hva de burde skrive om for å vise kompetansen sin.

Funnene viste videre at det er stor forskjell på elevers motivasjon for engelskfaget. Yrkesfaglige elever er lite motivert for å lese tekstene i forberedelsesheftet. Flertallet syntes tekstene var vanskelige, kjedelige og lite relaterte til deres studieretning. Elevene fra studiespesialiserende studieprogram var mer positivt innstilt til teksteheftet og så nytten av det. Når det gjelder selve eksamensoppgavene, var yrkesfagelevne generelt flinkere til å velge skriveoppgaver som passet deres studieretning og der de fikk vist sin kompetanse.

Studien konkluderer med at ENG1002/1003 eksamen måler for få kompetansemål i forhold til det den burde gjøre. Kompetansemålene er komplekse og vanskelige å måle. Tekstene i forberedelsesheftet er ikke like interessante og nyttige for alle elever, oppgavelyden er lite presis og oppgavetekstene lite konkrete. Dette resulterer i at eksamen er lite valid og reliabel.

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Preface

During my years as a teacher in the Norwegian School System, I have always taught English. When I first started working in Upper Secondary School five years ago, I had sixteen years of experience from Lower Secondary School. So, although the subject was not new to me, the academic demands on the students were higher, the competence aims were different and the exam was novel. At the end of my first year, as springtime approached, my fellow colleagues started to speculate on what would be the topic of the exam this time. Would it be better this year than last year? Would the students be able to show their competence? Would they do well? Would the exam grade be in accordance with the grade awarded for classwork? I thought: "Why is it that so many of the teachers of the English Foundation course in Upper Secondary Schools feel so insecure about the exam and experience such a gap between the competence aims for the subject and what is actually tested in the exam"? Is the exam really *that* unpredictable?

The day of the exam arrived. I read through the exam set, and I finally understood what my colleagues had been concerned with. That is when my interest in the ENG1002/1003 exam started. Therefore, there was no question in my mind what my Master's thesis would be about. I was going to analyse the ENG1002/1003 exam and investigate to what extent the competence aims were tested.

Acknowledgements

Several people have helped me on my way to this final product.

First and foremost Sigrid Ørevik, my supervisor, for constructive and thorough feedback.

My friends and family for putting up with my absentmindedness and less than sociable behaviour. I feel like I have been living in my own little 'research bubble' for quite some time.

The students from VG1 SF and VG2 YF who participated in my study and took the time to answer the questionnaires and partake in the interviews, giving me valuable insight by sharing their thoughts on the ENG1002/1003 exam.

Finally, my employer and colleagues for their support, and allowing me time to study while working.

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Hanne Christina Mürer

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE BACKDROP OF THIS STUDY

Before I started to work on this thesis, my main concern was to find a topic which interested me, was relevant for my work, my colleagues and my current and future English students. Since English is a core subject in Norwegian schools, the exam and its form affects and has an impact on many young adults.

At the school where I teach, we chose not to use textbooks in the VG1 English foundation course in the Programme for General Studies from 2004-2011. During that period, we actively used the competence aims in the English curriculum in our teaching, thinking that we would be well prepared for the exam at the end of the year. Nevertheless, many of the English teachers still experienced an uncertainty about the exam and a gap between the competence aims for the subject and what is actually tested in the exam.

In their article from 2009, *Defining washback: An overview of the field*, Ellingsund and Hellekjær discuss the washback effect of 'the new exam' which came with the introduction of LK06¹. They state that '[...] the study also revealed that there is great uncertainty about the exam, which must be ascribed to its relatively newness' (2009, p. 20). This was said about the exam in 2009. In 2015 one can no longer call an exam form implemented in 2006 'new', so why is there still uncertainty about the exam? There should be no reason for this. According to the Education Act, the exam must be in accordance with LK06² - that is with the basic skills and the competence aims for English.

So - why the conundrum? It should be quite clear. The competence aims are there and they are to be tested in the exam.

With the quote above as a backdrop, I believe my question about the conundrum of the exams is extremely relevant and the reason why I regard my analysis of the ENG1002/03 exams highly significant.

¹ LK06 is the most recent educational reform in Norway and was implemented in the fall 2006.

² LK06 is short for *The National Curriculum for Knowledge Promotion in Primary and Secondary Education and Training*.

1.2 EARLIER STUDIES AND RELATED RESEARCH

I have two main objectives in this thesis. One is to carry out a critical analysis of the written exam in the English foundation course in Norwegian Upper Secondary Schools (ENG1002/1003) in terms of which competence aims that are actually tested. The other to investigate to which extent the students understand the texts in the preparation booklet and the exam tasks so that they can write in such a way that the examiners can assess a broad spectrum of competence aims. A vast amount of literature is already written on the subject of summative assessment and language testing, but to my knowledge, nothing is written recently on neither assessment criteria, nor the students' understanding of the written English Exam in Norwegian Upper Secondary Schools.

Several Master theses have been written with a critical view on written exams. In 2001, Pettersen wrote "The Foundation Course in English: Some Aspects of the Written Exam". In this thesis she looks at the development of the written exam over a period of twenty-five years and three different curricula – the last being the one of R'94. Her conclusion is that the exam tasks in this period became less fixed and more unpredictable, which she believed would force teachers to plan their teaching according to the syllabus (Pettersen, 2001).

Other theses have also been written on critical analysis of written exams, but they are either related to vocational studies (Thorenfeldt, 2005), outdated curricula or the 10th grade exam in the lower secondary school (Reisjø, 2006). The most recent study, has been carried out by Ellingsund in her thesis from 2009: "Washback in EFL instruction in Norwegian Upper Secondary School: Has the new ENG1002/03 exam led to positive effects in EFL instruction on the English foundation course?" Her focus in this thesis is the *washback effect* the relatively new ENG1002/03 exam has had on the teaching of EFL. Interviews with EFL teachers revealed that they believed the syllabus to be comprehensive, ambitious and vague and that the exam tasks were narrow and unpredictable. The teachers were also worried about the vocational students who have to sit for the same exam as the students in the Programme for General Studies. Ellingsund concludes that "[..] due to the infancy of the LK06 syllabus and exams, it would also be interesting to repeat the study after a number of years when the LK06 curriculum has been thoroughly settled. By then,

the exam would probably be more familiar to the teachers, and all would potentially have had their pupils sitting for it” (Ellingsund A. E., 2009, p. 131).

Related research has been done on the topic of the ENG1002/1003 exam. Ørevik’s article “From ‘essay’ to ‘personal text’: The role of genre in Norwegian EFL exam papers 1996-2011” criticizes a somewhat vague approach to genre in texts for production in the Norwegian EFL exams in upper secondary schools. The author proposes further discussion and research into the topic (Ørevik, 2012). In 2014 Berg followed this up in her master thesis “What Factors Affect Students’ Selection of Prompts?” In addition to motivation, comprehension and the expected outcome, she found that genre and topic were important factors in the students’ choice of writing prompts (Berg, 2014).

1.3 THE ENG 1002/03 EXAM

The ENG1002/1003 is a written exam for the first year students in the Programme for General Studies, or for the second year students of the Vocational Courses. It is a five hour exam with a preparation booklet given out 24 hours prior to the exam. This booklet presents the topic of the exam. The topics of the booklets vary from year to year, but the lay-out and the instructions are similar. Each exam booklet has an information page for the student with instructions and details concerning the exam.

The written examination is prepared, and graded centrally by the Norwegian Directorate for Education. The Education Act §3-25 describes the construct of the exam the following way: The exam should

Be in accordance with the curriculum. [...] what is to be measured is the candidate’s or the external candidate’s competence in the subject in accordance to the competence aims [...]. The competence aims are the basis of the assessment and what is relevant is the candidate’s or the external candidate’s proficiency according to the competence aims in question.

(The Education Act, 2011)

Students may also be chosen for an oral exam. These are prepared and graded locally. In theory, all of the competence aims for the subject are to be tested in the examinations.

Attendance is compulsory on the preparation day and the students may cooperate with their peers and receive instruction and guidance from their teacher. On the day of the exam

the students may use all aids except for translation software and communication with others.

1.4 CHANGES IN THE COURSE OF THE STUDY

In 2011, when I started my study, the national Curriculum from 2010 still applied. Since my study was part time and spanned over the course of four years, there were bound to be changes, and so there were. In 2013, there was a revision of the Curriculum. After several parties had had their say in a hearing, *The Norwegian Directorate for Education* passed a resolution to revise and change some of the competence aims. This change came into force 01.08.2013. I will comment on the revision in 6.1.9., although the revised competence aims are not part of my study.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This thesis sets out to investigate:

1. Whether and to what extent the students understand the texts in the preparation booklet and the tasks given in the ENG1002/1003 exam so that they can write in such a way that an ample number of competence aims can be assessed.
2. Whether and to what extent the ENG1002/1003 English Foundation Course exam measures a broad spectrum of competence aims.

1.5.1 Whether and to what extent the students understand the texts in the preparation booklet and the tasks given in the ENG1002/1003 exam so that they can write in such a way that an ample number of competence aims can be assessed.

To seek information about the students' understanding may seem strange, and *may* be difficult to obtain facts about. The idea behind the query is to try to find out whether or not the students understand

- a) the texts in the preparation booklet
- b) the usefulness of the booklet and the information given there
- c) the *extent* and the *intentions* of the writing tasks.

Are the students well enough acquainted with the competence aims? If not, they might choose the *wrong* task in the sense that they are not able to show their total competence in their written texts.

1.5.2 Whether and to what extent the ENG1002/1003 English Foundation Course exam measures a broad spectrum of competence aim

The competence aims in the subject curriculum are numerous and extensive. In the main area *Language learning* there are four, in *Communication* there are thirteen and in *Culture, Society and literature* there are five. Even so, *The Assessment Guideline* of 2013 claims that:

*“The exam tasks are designed based on the competence aims in the subject curriculum. The exam tasks as a whole test the students’ overall competence in the main areas **language learning, communication, and culture, society and literature.** There are two parts, Task 1 and Task 2. The purpose of the partition of Task 1 and Task 2 is that the students should have the opportunity to show different sides of their written competence.”³ (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2013, p. 2)*

What does «measure a broad spectrum» really mean? What is reasonable to expect? The quote above clearly states that the tasks are designed in order to test the students’ overall competence in all three main areas. Since the subject area *Communication* is the most extensive one, I would expect more competence aims from this area to be tested than from *Language learning* which only has four and *Culture, Society and Literature* which has five. It would be reasonable if one competence aim from *Language Learning* and at least two from *Culture, Society and Literature* were measured. I would also expect the same competence aims to be tested regardless of which part of Task 1 (a or b) or Task 2 (a,b,c or d) the student chooses.

³ My translation

2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter presents the theory on which this study is based. The first part deals with the Norwegian Curriculum LK06 and the ideas behind it, *communicative language teaching* (CLT), based on *The Common European Framework*. The second part relates to language assessment and testing.

2.1 AIMS AND TARGETS OF LK06

In 2006 there was a curriculum reform in Norway. The Knowledge Promotion Curriculum (LK06) replaced L97 and R94. L97 was a separate curriculum for primary and lower secondary education. R94 was the curriculum for upper secondary education. One of the main changes the LK06 reform brought about was the discontinuation of these separate curricula. The intentions of the former national curricula were that they should be so detailed that students could change schools and not miss out on anything within the different subjects. The idea was to give all students common knowledge and common skills. The plans were very particular and content oriented. L97 was detailed and systematic, R94 required certain topics and genres to be studied. They both had minimum requirements of interdisciplinary projects per year. LK06, on the other hand, is based on competence aims and leaves the teacher to make choices concerning content, activities and working methods, which in a best possible way develops the students' communicative competence and skills. Progression, basic skills, link between primary and lower secondary and upper secondary education and training and technical expertise are important key words in this national curriculum. In LK06, emphasis is on basic skills, because these skills are considered important in today's society. Teachers in all subjects are to help students in their work on these skills:

- Oral skills, both productive (speaking) and receptive (listening)
- Reading, being able to create meaning from text
- Writing, "Writing involves expressing oneself understandably and appropriately about different topics and communicating with others in the written mode. [...] This includes being able to plan, construct, and revise texts relevant to content, purpose and audience" (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2012, p. 10).
- Digital skills, being able to use digital tools

- Numeracy, being able to apply mathematics in different situations

All of these basic skills are of course relevant, but as this thesis focuses on the English written exam for vg1/2 the centre of attention is naturally on writing skills and the reason why the above quote from the *Framework for Basic Skills* was included.

2.2 COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN A BRIEF HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Throughout history, there have been several views and theories on language learning and teaching. In this chapter, I have opted to include only an overview of the approach known as *communicative language teaching (CLT)* as this view of language was one of the important cornerstones in the making of the Norwegian national curriculum guidelines of 2006, LK06.

In the late 50's the American linguist Noam Chomsky's theory of linguistics was concerned with the linguistic competence rather than the actual performance of the language user. His idea of *competence* was an idealized capacity to form grammatically correct sentences. His view of *performance* was the production of actual utterances (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

The term communicative competence emerged in the mid-1970s. The term was coined by Dell H. Hymes, and his aim was to develop the learner's communicative competences and to include sociolinguistic and sociocultural factors into learning. He thought Chomsky's view of competence as to just including knowledge of language and being able to "produce and understand an indefinitely large number of grammatically well-formed sentences" (Skulstad, 2009, p.257) was too narrow. In addition, he believed Chomsky's "focus of linguistic theory was to characterize the abstract abilities speakers possess that enable them to produce grammatically correct sentences in language." (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 159) to be too limited. Hymes considered Chomsky's linguistic theory to be abstract and have an ideal view of language. He believed communication was more than that. According to Hymes communicative competence also included *knowledge* and *ability* for language use.

In 1980, Canale and Swain identified three dimensions of communicative competence: grammatical, sociolinguistic and strategic competence. In more accessible terms: Being

able use a language, and having a knowledge and understanding of the social context of communication and knowing when and where to say what. Three years later Canale added discourse competence (being able to produce coherent text, either oral or written) and in 1986 van Ek attached sociocultural competence and social competence. This means being able to perceive differences in register, dialects or follow politeness conventions and act according to what is appropriate and expected in different social settings (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

2.2.1 The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

In *The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR), The Council of Europe describes competences necessary for communication and the correlating knowledge and skills. The importance is to use a language for communicative purposes. The European Framework is a basis for syllabuses across Europe and focuses on the cultural aspect of language learning as well as the linguistic aspect. The competences are divided into two main areas, *general competences* and *communicative language competences*.

2.2.2 General Competences

Declarative knowledge (*savoir*) is divided into several aspects. *Knowledge of the world* which learners acquire through experience and education for instance, *Sociocultural Knowledge*, which implies that the learners know something about other countries' societies and cultures. This may include values and beliefs, how and what they eat and drink, social conventions, body language and behavior. *Intercultural awareness* 'covers an awareness of how each community appears from the perspective of the other, often in the form of national stereotypes' (Council of Europe, 2001,p.103).

Skills and know-how (*savoir-faire*) includes *Practical skills and know-how* and *Intercultural skills and know-how*. These imply that the L2 learner has to have practical skills, sensitivity and respect towards other cultures to avoid intercultural misunderstanding.

'Existential' competence (*savoir-être*) includes the L2 learner's *cognitive styles, motivation* and *attitude* towards learning. *Personality factors* are also among the features which affect learning.

Ability to learn (*savoir-apprendre*) has several elements. *Language and communication awareness* indicates that the L2 learner knows and understands how the target language is used and organized. *General phonetic awareness and skills* means that the student needs to be aware of different sound systems and phonological elements in their mother tongue and in their target language. *Study skills* indicate the ability to learn effectively and be aware of one's strengths and weaknesses and to formulate goal for one's own learning. Finally, *heuristic skills*, which basically means that the learner is able to come to terms with their new experience and make use of their knowledge.

2.2.3 Communicative language competences

Like the *general competences*, the *communicative language competences* cover a wide range of skills, but these are specifically language related.

Linguistic competences are defined by the Council of Europe as 'knowledge of, and ability to use, the formal resources from which well-formed, meaningful messages may be assembled and formulated' (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 109) They distinguish between lexical, grammatical, semantic, phonological, orthographic, and orthoepic⁴ competence. Except for phonological and orthoepic competence, which are more relevant to oral communication, all of these competences are tested in the English vg1 written exam.

Sociolinguistic competence is closely related to the general competences described above and include the learner's ability to recognize *linguistic markers of social relations, politeness conventions, expressions of folk wisdom* (proverbs, idioms, expressions), *register differences* and *dialect and accent*.

Pragmatic competences involve *discourse competence* and *functional competence*. *Discourse competence* implies that the learner is able to effectively structure and organize a text, using coherent, relevant language which communicates. *Functional competence* is concerned with the learner's fluency and propositional precision (Council of Europe, p.108-130)

The 'The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages' (CEFR) has had a strong influence in the making of LK06 and our way of teaching EFL in Norway. It is easy to

⁴ The standard pronunciation of a language.

recognize the Framework's competences in the English Competence Aims for vg1. The English Curriculum is divided into three main areas:

a) *language learning* where focus is on the student's L2 knowledge, ability to use the target language and his or her own language learning strategies. The general competences from the European Framework: *savoir-être*, which include personal identity factors like attitudes, motivations and values and *savoir-apprendre*, the ability to learn, are clearly visible in the curriculum.

- *assess and comment on his/her progress in learning English*
- *exploit and assess various situations, working methods and strategies for learning English*

b) *communication* focuses on the L2 student's ability to use the target language to communicate *well* and show his or her knowledge and skills concerning vocabulary and spelling, idiomatic structures, grammar and syntax of sentences and texts. The two following competence aims from the main area *communication* reflect the European Framework's communicative language competences:

- *understand and use a wide general vocabulary and an academic vocabulary related to his/her own education programme*
- *express him/herself in writing and orally in a varied, differentiated and precise manner, with good progression and coherence*

In the following aim, also from the main area *communication*, linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences are present:

- *Select and use appropriate writing and speaking strategies that are adapted to a purpose, situation and genre*

c) *Savoir* (from the European Framework), which is divided into knowledge of the world and sociocultural knowledge, is very much present in the third main area *culture, society and literature* which focuses on cultural understanding, and on topics related to culture, society and literature in English speaking countries. The

communicative language competences from the European Framework also permeates the competence aims in the this third main area

- *Discuss social and cultural conditions and values from a number of English-speaking countries*
- *Present and discuss international news topics and current events*⁵

2.2.4 Communicative language teaching (CLT)

CLT is a theory of learning based on the following principles:

- Learners learn a language through using it to communicate.
- Authentic and meaningful communication should be a goal of classroom activities.
- Fluency is an important dimension of communication.
- Communication involves the integration of different language skills.
- Learning is a process of creative construction and involves trial and error.

(Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 172)

CLT is not considered a method, but a set of approaches. Since the idea is to learn to *communicate*, the L2 learner's needs in the areas of reading, writing, listening and speaking have to be in focus. Richards and Rodgers claim that this entails that the role of the L2 learner is active and the role of the teacher is more of a counselor/needs analyst/group process manager. (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p.167-168)

The main teaching principle in Norwegian schools today, is the communicative approach. This is very clear in LK06 as there is no mention of method in the document, but the overall aim in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching is clearly to develop the students' communicative competence. The basic skills mentioned in the English curriculum, are undeniably influenced by the principles of CLT – focus is on communication on all levels, as is seen in the following competence aims:

⁵ Utdanningsdirektoratet

- *take the initiative to begin, end and keep a conversation going*
- *express him/herself in writing and orally in a varied, differentiated and precise manner, with good progression and coherence*
- *discuss social and cultural conditions and values from a number of English-speaking countries*

(Utdanningsdirektoratet, 15.10.2012)

2.3 WRITING COMPETENCE, LITERACY OR WRITING ABILITY?

The concepts above might seem to be different words for the same thing, but there are some slight differences. In the following, I will attempt to explain the differences based on Sandvik (2012) and Weigle(2002) supporting my views.

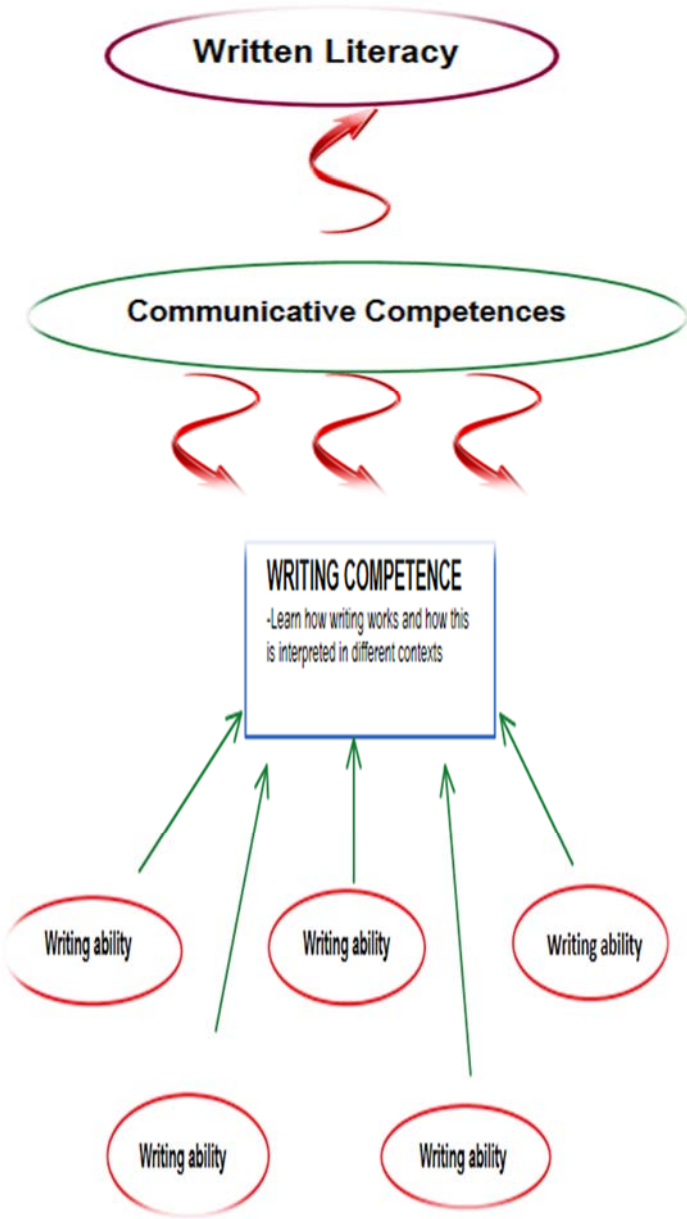
Simply speaking, one can say that *writing ability* is dynamic and changes with age, education and culture. Writing is not just about learning new words, writing grammatically correct sentences or learning a specific genre. It can be looked at like a spiral where new writing skills are added all the time (Sandvik, 2012). In figure 1 below, I have illustrated this with the different writing ability clouds. Each represents a certain writing ability or a level of writing ability – i.e. being able to form complete sentences, being able to write a coherent text, being able to write an article, being able to use quotes correctly and so on. As one gets older, and has acquired many different abilities and experienced these, one can say that one has gained a certain level of written competence. The five basic skills were introduced in the 2006 reform and were to be included in all subject curricula. Being *able to write* is one of the five basic skills in the document Framework for Basic Skills, which the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training developed in 2012. The Framework was developed in order to aid the subject curricula groups to develop and revise national Subject Curricula. The Framework states that ‘Mastering writing is a prerequisite for lifelong learning and for active and critical participation in civic and social life’ (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2012, p. 10). Writing also includes ‘being able to plan, construct, and revise texts relevant to content, purpose and audience’ (2012, p.10). This definition of writing ability is a little extended and resembles Sandvik’s description of *writing competence*. She claims that a joint action between language competence and

strategic competence yields *writing competence* (Sandvik, 2012). In my illustration below (read from the bottom up), I have chosen to include all the communicative competences because I believe they are all important for the total concept of the term *literacy*.

Literacy is considered a basic competence in our society and until a few years ago it just

Figure 1

Written literacy = writing abilities + writing competence + communicative competence, my illustration



meant that one could read and write, but as can be seen from the quote below, it entails more than just knowing the alphabet and putting words down on paper. A novel definition from the PISA programme defines *literacy* as a ‘concept concerned with the capacity of students to analyse, reason and communicate effectively as they pose, solve and interpret problems in a variety of subject matter areas’ (DeSeCo 2005:3, cited in Smidt, 2009, p. 22).

As my research is concerned with the written English exam in upper secondary school where students are tested on several competences, the above definition covers what is required by the examinee and includes both writing ability and writing competence.

2.4 ASSESSMENT AND TESTING OF EFL

Testing and assessment is a huge field on which a considerable amount of literature has been written and research done: Bachman & Palmer, *Language Assessment in Practice*, 2013, Weigle, *Assessing Writing*, 2002, Fulcher & Davidson, *Language Testing and Assessment an advanced resource book*, 2007, McNamara, *Language Testing*, 2000 and Green, *Exploring Language Assessment and Testing*, 2014 just to mention a few. However, my study is concerned with written EFL assessment and testing of English in the Norwegian School System and here little research on the subject is done lately. Except for the master theses referred to in the introduction, several articles have been written. The one most relevant to this study is Hellekjær's *Erfaringer med eksamen i engelsk* (2011) in which he claims that the making of good, fair exam tasks in vg1/vg2 is complicated by the English curriculum in its present form (2011).

In the following, I will attempt to define the different concepts in use in the testing of EFL in general and specifically in the Norwegian school system.

2.4.1 Validity and reliability

One cannot talk about assessment without mentioning validity and reliability. The validity of a test is a question of to what extent the test measures what it is intended to measure. (Brindley, 2001) In classical language assessment, a distinction was made between construct validity, content validity and criterion validity. Recently, however construct validity is 'seen as embracing all forms of validity evidence' (Green, 2014, p. 81). In the following the term 'validity' will be used to cover all the above forms.

McNamara (2000) compares language testing to a trial. In language testing one uses data to establish evidence of learning, in a trial one uses evidence to conclude whether or not an accused is guilty. In both cases the judge and jury or the external assessors must make *inferences*. The inferences that are made might be a threat to the test validity. McNamara points to three possible problem areas: The test content, the test method and the test construct. (McNamara, 2000, p. 50)

Ideally, the ENG1002/1003 exam should be able to cover the full range of the content of the competence aims. However, in general, test developers are only able just to include a

fraction of the knowledge, skills and abilities that should be tested. It is a challenge to make the content relevant for all the students sitting for the ENG1002/1003 exam, because there are so many fields of study in Upper Secondary School. (See 2.5.1.2)

Another problem area can be the test method, which Bachman & Palmer, 2013 also call the *task* or the *characteristics* of the test. In Norway the timed impromptu writing test is the most frequently used exam form in both L1 testing and L2 testing. Questions have been raised since the beginning of the 1980s, however, about the validity of this method of testing (Weigle, 2002, p. 59). Weigle maintains that there are several factors which affect test scores and thus the validity of the test. In addition to the context of the exam: the writing task(s), the student's written text itself, the rating scale, the rater and the writer. (Weigle, 2002, p. 60) All of these variables interact with each other in multiple ways, something that will be discussed fully in the analysis of the ENG21002/1003 exams in Chapter 6.

Reliability of a test is closely linked to validity. For a test to be reliable, it must show consistency as a test instrument. This basically means that an examinee should be awarded the same grade by both the external assessors of the ENG1002/1003 exam for the reliability to be high. Unfortunately, this is not always the case as in the words of Green 'there is no generally accepted 'gold standard' measure of language ability' (Green, 2014, p. 65). Measurement error is therefore highly probable. Weigle's above mentioned factors that threaten validity can be the same ones which threaten reliability.

Green has seven suggestions, based on Hughes (2003), Brown (2005) and Douglas (2010) as to how one can implement reliability into assessment design: clear and unambiguous tasks, more assessments or tasks, limit the scope of what is assessed, standardise conditions, control scoring, more raters and assess learners with a wide range of abilities. (Green, 2014)

Validity and reliability will permeate the rest of this thesis, as they constitute an essential, highly relevant part of answering the research question: *Whether and to what extent the ENG1002/1003 English Foundation Course exam measures a broad spectrum of competence aims.*

In chapter 5, I will further discuss the threats to validity and what influences reliability in the ENG1002/1003 written exam, and elaborate on the suggestions mentioned by Green.

2.4.2 Norwegian regulations

The Norwegian Ministry of Education issues regulations concerning school subjects and educational objectives in the form of the national curriculum and its competence aims. The same applies to assessment. Throughout the school year teachers assess students with the aim of improving, motivating and guiding them in their learning process. This type of assessment is called *formative assessment*, but is not part of my study therefore I will not elaborate on this. Teachers are also to give the students *overall achievement grades* at the end of the school year. Where the English foundation course is concerned, this mark shows the student's competence in both oral and written English combined into one mark awarded for classwork. An elaboration of different types of assessment is to be found later in this chapter.

The Education Act states that:

The basis of assessment in a subject, are the total competence aims in the syllabus of the subject as they are stated in the national curriculum, § 1-1 or § 1-3. (The Education Act, 2011, pp. 290, my translation)

and

When the teacher is to evaluate the student's competence it is important for the evaluation to be based on as broad a foundation as possible, because the mark awarded for classwork is to show the student's total competence in the subject. As mentioned in the comments to §3-3 first part, one has to consider all the competence aims in relation to each other. One does not have the opportunity to assess the student's competence on the basis of just a selection of certain competence aims.⁶

In upper secondary school, final exams are criterion-referenced, which means that the learner's performance is measured by certain criteria, which in this case are the

⁶ <http://www.udir.no/Regelverk/Rundskriv/20101/Udir-1-2010-Individuell-vurdering/III-Sluttvurdering-/>, my translation

competences in the curriculum. The assessment, should be holistic, and reflect the examinees level of knowledge and skills related to the criteria in the curriculum. See 2.4.5 and 2.5.2 for elaboration on criterion-referenced- and holistic assessment.

2.4.3 Proficiency assessment vs. assessment of achievement

One distinguishes between *proficiency assessment* and *assessment of achievement*. Proficiency testing is usually carried out as standardised tests, such as the IELTS or the Norwegian *kartleggingsprøver*, national mapping tests. These are independent of a course taken and the aim is to assess the L2 learner's general language ability.

'Assessment of achievement aims to establish what a student has learned in relation to a particular course or curriculum' (Brindley, 2001, p. 137) This can be done several times during a school year and when the aim is to improve the student's learning process the assessment is *formative*. This is what in Norwegian is called *underveisvurdering*⁷. The aim is to give the student an idea of what they have achieved so far and an indication of what needs to be worked on based on the course objectives. Overall achievement grades awarded at the end of the year and the grade the student receives on the exam are both part of *summative assessment*. The idea behind summative assessment is to measure what the student has learned based on course objectives – the competence aims in the curriculum. (Brindley, 2001, p. 137) In Norway, teachers are required by law to give both formative and summative assessment. Both formative and summative assessment are *criterion-referenced*.

2.4.4 Norm-referenced and criterion-referenced assessment

There is also a distinction between *norm-referenced* and *criterion referenced* assessment. Norm reference refers to assessment where students are compared to each other and the idea that most scores will be around the average. "Language tests which involve multiple items (hence a range of possible total scores) generate such distributions, and so norm-referenced approaches are more typically associated with comprehension tests, or tests of grammar and vocabulary" (McNamara, 2000, p. 64). Norm referenced assessment does not apply to the ENG1002/1003 English Foundation Course written exam. When it comes to

⁷ Formative assessment

summative assessment in the Norwegian school system, students are measured by competence aims in the English Curriculum. These competence aims constitute the criteria. Therefore, I would say that in the Norwegian School system, both formative and summative assessment is criterion-referenced.

2.5 DESIGNING WRITING ASSIGNMENT TASKS

The ENG1002/1003 English Foundation Course written exam can be described as a large scaled, standardised *direct test* of writing. In this form of test, test takers produce a continuous text in a limited time frame on a usually unknown topic (Weigle, 2002, p. 58). In this exam, however, the topic is given in the preparation booklet 24 hours prior to the actual exam day. The examinees are then given a set of instructions and have to answer the tasks given. They are then judged on rating scales by two raters and given a grade from 1-6. 6 shows a high level of competence, whereas 1 is a failing grade showing little or no competence.

As previously mentioned in 2.2, the basic skills stated in the English curriculum are undeniably influenced by the principles of CLT – focus is on communication on all levels. This is also reflected in the way of testing. Integrative tests where students write longer texts showing different kinds of competence reflect the CLT principles. The question is whether one long text to test overall ability gives an accurate picture of a student's overall achievement. Is this the best possible and valid way, of testing a student's competence, or are different assessment procedures called for?

2.5.1 How to test in order to glean valuable information?

«The term **test construct** refers to those aspects of knowledge or skill possessed by the candidate which are being measured” (McNamara, 2000, p. 13). With regard to the Norwegian School system, one can say that the construct of the ENG1002/1003 Exam are the competence aims, because that is what is being assessed.

In the article *En gyldig vurdering av elevers skrivekompetanse?*⁸ Evensen claims that there are several aspects to assessment of written texts, which makes evaluation a complex process. This is a threat to validity. He also questions the use of the competence aims to

⁸ Valid assessment of students' written competence? My translation

measure the student's knowledge, skills and abilities, because the aims are extensive and formulated in a way which make them unmeasurable. (Evensen, 2010) A relevant question in this respect then: Is the current exam form the best possible way of testing the students' competence?

2.5.1.1 *Task design*

In *Assessing Writing* (2002) Weigle dedicates a whole chapter to the topic of designing writing assessment tasks. A detailed description of the process of test design will not be elaborated on here. What is important in respect to this thesis, and the ENG1002/1003 exam, is that in designing the test, the test designers have to make sure both topical knowledge and language ability are tested. In the words of Weigle: 'an overarching concern in designing writing tasks is ensuring that the task allows us to make appropriate inferences about the specific ability that we are interested in' (Weigle, 2002, p. 107).

2.5.1.2 *Considerations in task design*

Weigle claims that there are several issues that have to be considered in task design, but that there are four words that sum up the minimum requirements: *Clarity*, *validity*, *reliability* and the fact that the tasks must be *interesting*. Clarity of the prompt is important in order to avoid misunderstanding and for the examinees to be able to choose the correct task in order to show their total competence. This will be discussed in chapter 4 where I present the findings from the questionnaires and the interviews. Validity, as discussed in 2.4.1., is always important, but in test task design it is essential to make prompts that allow writers of all levels to show their abilities and knowledge and to be tested in what is supposed to be tested. Good writing prompts are flexible in order to give the examinees opportunity to use their background and experience in answering the task. However, if the prompt is *too* flexible it may be a threat to reliability, because the task leaves the examinee with too many options as to what to write about which makes it difficult for the raters to assess the text. A further threat to reliability is the design of the scoring⁹ rubric. The wording must be so precise and unambiguous that there is no room for the raters to interpret and score differently. In the case of the EFL exams the wording is not very specific and leaves much room for interpretation. This will be discussed further in chapter 6.1.6.

⁹ 'Score' refers to the concept of giving grades as well as getting grades

Finally, making the tasks interesting, might prove to be one of the most challenging parts of test design in an English vg1/vg2 test designer's perspective. As Hellekjær has mentioned in his article on the experience with the ENG1002/1003 exam, it is difficult to accommodate the prompts to all the fields of study, because there are so many. There are 53 vocational programme areas, 22 vocational special paths in vg2 and 7 programmes for general studies. This makes it difficult not only to find good prompts, but to find topics which interest all of these different fields of study as well (Hellekjær, 2011). Should the topic be personal or more general? The advantage with personal topics might be that it accommodates most examinees. The pitfall is that they might not be able to show any topical knowledge. In addition, it could be difficult for the raters to score, because of too much personal information –which again threatens reliability. By choosing a more general topic, the examinees might not have the relevant background knowledge, because of the numerous fields of study in Upper Secondary School. Consequently, the students will not be able to show their competence in the aims related to “his/her own education programme” (Utdanningsdirektoratet)

One way of perhaps making the prompts *interesting*, is to include stimulus material. The exam sets that are part of this study have all included source material in different genres. Some of the texts are authentic, others have been written by the Directorate specifically for the exam. There are several reasons for using source material. One is that it gives all the candidates a common platform, which is an advantage for the ENG1002/1003 examinees who come from different study programmes. Another advantage is that they can easily show their competence to ‘*select and use content from different sources independently, critically and responsibly*’ (Utdanningsdirektoratet) even if they have not brought any source material from their preparation day. The drawback of using source material might be that some of the weaker students may find the texts difficult to read. They may also ‘borrow’ text from the source material when they are asked to produce their ‘own’ text.

2.5.2 Rating scales

The rating scale or scoring rubric, which is used in order to assess the Norwegian EFL Upper Secondary students, can best be described as a *multiple trait scoring rubric*. This type of rating scale contains level descriptors which enable the rater to score several facets of the

examinee's text. Firstly, *content*, which includes language learning, communication and culture, society and literature from the curriculum. Secondly, *written communication*, which includes language competence and the textual competence. Multiple trait scoring is a form of analytic scoring, but it does not focus on small parts of the text such as grammar and spelling. Performances are complex and the advantages of this type of scoring is that it visualizes the examinee's strengths and weaknesses in the different parts of text writing. As opposed to *holistic scoring*, where the rater subjectively assigns the essay a single score, more or less on a 'gut feeling', analytic scoring is more objective and thus more a more reliable form of assessment (Hamp-Lyons cited in Fulcher & Davidson, 2007). Weigle argues, however that experienced raters may read holistically and adjust their analytic rating to 'fit' their impression (Weigle, 2002, p. 121), which makes analytic scoring just as subjective as holistic.

Holistic scoring must not be confused with the Norwegian expression 'helhetsinntrykk' which means to view the test as a whole. The ENG1002/1003 exam is divided into two parts – task 1 where the examinee is asked to write one or two short texts and task 2 which asks for a longer text. Each part tests different competence aims. In assessing the exam, the examination guidelines state that:

'the rater has to find the student's total competence based on the specific task requirements and the scoring guide, and give an overall assessment of the competence the student has shown on the exam. This means that the assessment should be based on the total judgement of the student's total competence' (Utdanningsdirektoratet , 2013a, p. 4, my translation).

Based on the above, I assert that in assessing the exam papers, the assessors use analytic scoring, but that they have to assess the paper *as a whole*, to evaluate the *overall competence* of the student.

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The aim of this chapter is to present the methods used in my research project. Initially I just wanted to look at the exam sets and tasks given there. Obvious qualitative method, I concluded. However, as I was working, I thought that by asking students to write a previously given exam, handing out a short questionnaire and then interview them on their views of that particular exam and the tasks they chose, would give my data and results a higher level of reliability and validity.

Therefore, this thesis will employ three different data collection methods – a small questionnaire, a semi-structured interview and an analysis of six written exam sets. Focus will be on the analysis of the written exam assignments, but by using a questionnaire, I was able to collect more background information from a larger group of respondents than what the ten interviews I carried out would give. The interviews provided in depth data about the respondents and their views on the written exam. I believe that using corpus material from both a test angle and a response angle in addition to the interviews enhances the validity of my study.

In December 2013 I gave the S2013 exam set to one vg1 General Studies class and one vg2 Vocational class in order to explore their responses. I wanted to look into which tasks the students chose in order to enquire into which competence aims their responses measure. Since I would not be able to conduct the interviews until February, I thought it would be wise to hand out a short questionnaire with the exam set, for the students to answer right away. That would give us a point of departure for the interviews. In addition it would also hopefully help the students I chose to interview remember what this was all about. I selected to interview ten students – five from the General Studies Programme and five from the Vocational Courses – on their opinion of the Preparation Booklet and the Exam. Since I aim to find out whether the students understand the tasks given so that they can write in such a way the external examiner(s) can assess an ample number of competence aims, it was important to interview an equal number of students from each study path. Another goal was to interview just as many boys as girls. This proved to be difficult. In the vocational class, there was just one girl and she did not want to participate. In the General Studies class more girls were eager to partake, but since I also wanted a spread in the

English overall achievement grade, just two of the girls met my requirements. Eventually my team of interviewees counted eight boys and two girls.

I found that maximum variation samples were necessary. Even though this group of students is homogenous in the sense that they attend the same school and take the same English course, they are of maximum variation because of motivation, the study path they are taking (vocational/general studies), their English grade for overall achievement and their interest in English as a subject and its usefulness.

Although I have used a questionnaire in my research, it was primarily to get an overview and an indication of what kinds of information I would get during my interviews. I will not be able to generalise based on the results of the questionnaire. The sample population of 39 students was too small in order to do so. Since my approach is predominantly qualitative, the focus will be on the interviews with the ten students and the analysis of the six written exam sets. The questionnaire will just be used as a sidebar.

3.1 QUALITATIVE, QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH OR MIXED METHODS?

According to Christoffersen and Johannessen, the main distinction between qualitative and quantitative methods is that the former is generally more flexible. In qualitative research the researcher aims to investigate the experience and views of a limited number of informants. In interviews the questions are open ended, and can vary from informant to informant. The researcher may not be able to compare the results. Data, which mainly consists of texts, sound or pictures, have to be analysed and interpreted. The relationship between the researcher and the informants is less formal than in quantitative research and the researcher has the opportunity to get more detailed descriptions. (Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2012, p 17-19) The method is inductive. The researcher does not have a hypothesis to test. The research question can therefore be formulated in a more general way, in order to mirror the informants' views and experiences. The researcher is very much present in this method, which makes it more subjective than the quantitative method.

In quantitative research the researcher wants to collect numeric data from a large number of people in order to generalize and measure. "The larger the number of individuals studied, the stronger the case for applying the results to a large number of people."

(Creswell, 2012, p.14) This is usually done in the form of surveys, structured observations or structured interviews- the key word being structured. The questions asked must be narrow and measurable in order to test the researcher's hypothesis (or hypotheses). The method is deductive and the results are based on literature and previous studies with the aim of testing a theory.

Mixed methods research combines qualitative- and quantitative methods. One can use both methods equally or give more weight to one or the other. Either way the researcher gains the 'best from both worlds' so to speak. So why was this not an obvious choice when I started? According to Creswell mixed methods research is time consuming and requires that the researcher has a good grasp of both qualitative and quantitative approaches (Creswell, 2003). Having neither a lot of time at my disposal nor being an experienced researcher I at first discarded using this method. Then I started collecting data. Questionnaires with both open-ended and closed-ended questions turned into numeric data and visual pictures, semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Creswell states that "In general, you conduct a mixed methods study when you have both quantitative and qualitative data and both types of data together, provide a better understanding of your research problem than either type by itself." (Creswell, 2012, p. 535) And so I had to rethink my supposedly qualitative approach. The present research project focuses on the analysis of six ENG1002/03 English Exams and interviews of ten students and is thus predominantly qualitative. The questionnaires are a smaller part of my study, but contributes to a better understanding of my findings. My aim is not to prove or test a theory, but rather to gain deeper understanding of my research project. Consequently, based on the above, I can say that I conducted a mixed methods study.

3.2 THE STEPS IN THE PROCESS OF RESEARCH

3.2.1 Getting permission and informing participants

Research studies have to be carried out within the guidelines given by the government and *some* need to be approved by the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD). After conferring with my counsellor, taking the NSD's online 'test' in addition to contacting them several times, it was concluded that I did not have to send in an application. My study was completely anonymous and did not include personal information of any kind. Answers could not in any way be traced back to any of the participants, so even though I recorded the interviews in order to be able to transcribe them in detail, authorization by NSD was not necessary.

In order to carry out interviews, a researcher needs interviewees. Since my questions were 'harmless' in the sense that they did not cover any difficult ethical issues, it was not difficult to acquire volunteers. Prior to the written test on December 13th, 2013, a letter was sent home to all the parents and students in the two classes with full disclosure of my research purpose and intentions. In addition, they were informed that this project was completely anonymous and that participation was voluntary. According to NSD, students who are 15 years or older do not need parental consent as long as the information acquired is not sensitive. (NSD Personvernombudet for forskning, 2014)

Oral consent was given by the ten participants and the interviews were carried out. The written information given to the participants and their parents is to be found in appendix 1.

3.3 DESIGNING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Designing a questionnaire turned out to be quite a challenge. The most difficult part was to try to pose questions and give the respondents alternatives that I wanted answers to and were related to my research question, *without* leading them in a certain direction. I decided on a questionnaire with twelve questions and two parts. The first part was related to the preparation booklet and the preparation day, and the second part was related to the exam booklet and test day.

Nine of the questions are closed-ended multiple choice questions, two of them open-ended questions and one where the students were asked to circle words which they thought best

described the preparation booklet. According to Dörnyei the more response options a questionnaire has the more precise answers will be submitted. On the other hand, reliable information can also be given with yes/no options. (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 106) Hence, in designing the questionnaire, I tried to vary the questions as much as possible. In order to ensure a high level of reliability and avoid misunderstanding, I chose to use Norwegian in the questionnaire, as the students' English competence varied. The questionnaire is to be found in appendices 2 and 3.

3.4 DESIGNING THE INTERVIEW

As Sollid (2013) states, an interview guide can be made in several ways. (Sollid, 2013, p. 128) However, the guide is closely linked to what kind of interview the researcher chooses. According to Hatch's *Doing qualitative research in education settings*, there are three types of qualitative interviews: *informal, formal, and standardized interviews*. (Hatch, 2002, pp. 92-96) Since I wanted the interview to be more like a conversation where the participants were able to convey their thoughts and perspectives on the written exam, I chose an informal interview. Making the setting as informal and comfortable as possible I was hoping to avoid the teacher-student scenario, in which the student feels more like he/she is in an oral presentation situation, and has to come up with the 'right' answer.

Therefore, in designing the interview guide for an informal interview, I didn't have to plan every question down to the smallest detail and make sure I posed them in the same order using exactly the same words in all the interviews as I would have in conducting a standardised interview (Hatch, 2002, pp. 92-96). However, I was afraid that if I just noted down the themes and a few keywords, I would not be well enough prepared and forget important points. Consequently I prepared a few questions similar to those in the questionnaire in order to be on the safe side.

The two themes included in the interview guide were also similar to the ones in the questionnaire: 1) the preparation day and the preparation booklet and 2) the examination booklet and the tasks.

In order to ensure reliability and avoid misunderstanding the interviews were conducted in Norwegian. Transcriptions have also been done in Norwegian, again to ensure that nothing

gets lost in translation. The interview guide and the transcripts are included in appendices 4-15.

3.5 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS – THE EXAM SETS AND THE GUIDELINES

In the following, I will describe the documents used in this analysis. Firstly the exam sets and secondly the examiner's guidelines.

3.5.1 The Exam sets

The ENG1002/1003 written exams and the preparation booklets from spring 2010 to fall 2013 are my primary sources. The reason for this choice was that the first three exams, S2010, S2011 and S2012 were part in of pilot study that I conducted related to my ENGMAU643 exam in December 2012. For my Master thesis I had to expand the material and chose the three next exam sets, F2012, S2013 and F2013. The intent is to find out how many of the competence aims are measured in each exam. In addition, I have studied the LK06 syllabus and the guidelines¹⁰. Even though the competence aims are numerous, I have opted to use them all as criteria for analysis. The pitfall might be that the analysis will be too shallow, but I found it necessary to do so in order to get an overview. The Education Act §§ 3-3 and 4-3 and the assessment guidelines for the ENG1002/1003 and ENG1005/1006 state that:

“The rationale behind the students’ assessment of the exam paper is the competence aims in the subject curriculum.”¹¹

My approach has been as follows:

First, I looked at the six exam sets and the belonging preparation booklets separately, describing both the preparation booklets and the tasks. I found this presentation necessary in order to get an understanding of the different texts given and the genres and types of tasks given each year. This part relates to my first research question – the students’

¹⁰ Prior to 2013 the guidelines were just intended for the raters and were called *examiner's guidelines*. From 2013, they are called *assessment guidelines* and are open for the students to see.

¹¹ Vurderingsveiledning, 26.05.2010. Oslo: Utdanningsdirektoratet, p.6, my translation

understanding of the exam booklets and tasks. I chose the descriptions *positive* and *negative* in describing the sets. The parameters used were:

- the texts in the preparation booklets are useful for all study programmes and the writing tasks are interesting
- the writing instructions are clear
- the use of bullet points in the writing prompts and the ‘text’-concept (lack of genre)
- all students are able to bring out their best abilities or whether the test favours certain students
- correlation between the task instructions and the raters’ scoring instructions

Secondly, all the competence aims were labeled. This was done in order to save space so as to fit them into a chart. Since the English Subject Curriculum is divided into three main subject areas it seemed logical to use: Lla= language learning a, COMb=communication b and CSLc= culture, society and literature, competence aim c. This way I could use the competence aims as criteria for my analysis like they are used as criteria for students’ assessment.

Lla	<i>exploit and assess various situations, working methods and strategies for learning English</i>
COMb	<i>understand oral and written presentations about general and specialised themes related to his/her own education programme</i>
CSLc	<i>give an account of the use of English as a universal world language</i>

Instead of numbering the competence aims, I chose to use letters. Using numbers could be confused with task numbers like 1b, 2b etc. This second part is related to my second research question – to what extent the exam sets measure a broad range of competence – and the grid described below is an attempt to get an overview of which competences that are.

In chapter 5, I will give a more detailed description of the competence aims in relation to the exam tasks.

To make my study easier to grasp, I made a chart (see figure 1 below). Read horizontally, one can see how many times each competence aim is tested in each of the six exams. Read vertically, one can find out which competence aims assessed in each of the tasks.

The aim of my study is to find out how many of the competence aims are actually tested in the six exam sets, and preferably which ones. The chart below is a segment of the chart used in order to sum up my findings as briefly as possible before discussing and analysing the texts.

Table 1

An example of the grid used in order to get an overview over which competence aims that are measured in the exam sets

COMPETENCE AIMS	HOW TO LEARN ENGLISH S2010									CAREERS AND CAREER PLANNING S2011				READING FOR INFORMATION, LEARNING AND ENJOYMENT S2012					
LANGUAGE LEARNING																			
	1a	1b	2a	2b	3a	3b	3c	1a	1b	2a	2b	2c	2d	1a	1b	2a	2b	2c	2d
2e																			
L1a																			
L1b																			
COMMUNICATION																			
	1a	1b	2a	2b	3a	3b	3c	1a	1b	2a	2b	2c	2d	1a	1b	2a	2b	2c	2d
2e																			
COMa																			
COMb																			
CULTURE, SOCIETY AND LITERATURE																			
	1a	1b	2a	2b	3a	3b	3c	1a	1b	2a	2b	2c	2d	1a	1b	2a	2b	2c	2d
2e																			
CSLa																			
CSLb																			

The exams I have chosen to look at are:

- S2010 How to learn English
- S2011 Careers and Career Planning
- S2012 Reading for information, learning and enjoyment
- F2012 English at home and abroad
- S2013 Roles and Expectations
- F2013 People who have made a difference

Chapter 4 will give a detailed description and analysis of the above mentioned exam sets.

3.5.2 The Guidelines

Preceding the exams each year, the Norwegian Directorate for Education prepares an evaluation guideline. Prior to 2013, the examiner's guideline, *sensorveiledning*¹², was just intended for the raters and included information about each task and what was expected by the students to include in the response in order to achieve the different grades. As shown in the example below, these were specifically made for each exam and were very confidential, because they included specific information about the tasks which were to come, examples of how to solve them and instructions for the external examiner on what to look for and assess the tasks.

Oppgave 1a

- Jess uses two slang expressions: "gone ballistic" and "chilled out".
- There are also a number of informal words and expressions: "kids", "miles better" and "true enough".
- There are two contractions: "would've" and "couldn't".

In a very good response, the examinee has been able to identify and categorize different informal expressions as shown above.

An average response, includes three examples, but of the same category (for example two "contractions").

A response showing low competence includes wrong examples and show poor understanding of the task.¹³

(Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2010b, p. 2)

In the 'new' assessment guideline, *eksamensveiledning*¹⁴, which is available to raters, students and parents online weeks prior to the exam, there are descriptions of what is to be tested and how it is done. Compared to the examiner's guidelines the information is general. The idea behind the new assessment guideline is that both the examinees and the raters are to get the same information about what is being rated. This guideline has information about how the exam is organized, what kind of aids the students can use during the exam, use of sources, grades and the scoring rubric which will be used by the assessors.

¹² Examiner's Guideline

¹³ My translation

¹⁴ Assessment guideline

The two guidelines have the scoring rubric in common. The scoring rubric shows the distinctive features of goal attainment¹⁵, definitions of the skills the test is intended to measure, but does not specifically include any of the competence aims.

¹⁵ Kjennetegn for måloppnåelse

4 FINDINGS

In this chapter, the findings in the questionnaires and the interviews will be presented. Section 4.1 will deal with the responses in the questionnaire and section 4.2 will cover the interviews. Since many of the responses in the interviews elaborate on the replies in the questionnaire, I will summarize both the findings in the questionnaire and the interviews in section 4.3.

4.1 FINDINGS IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE

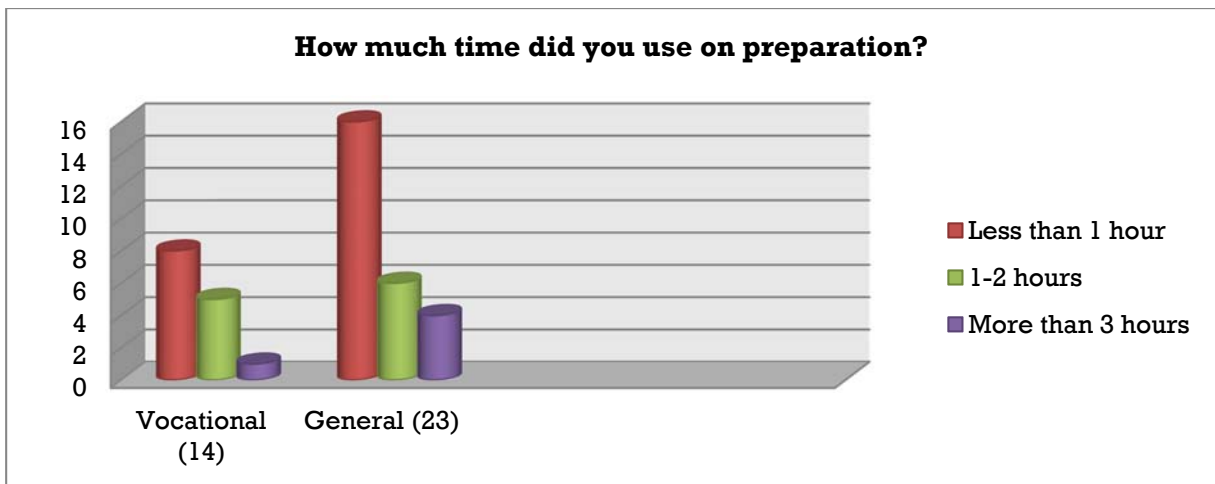
The typical questionnaire usually starts off with some 'safe' questions on the background of the respondents. I had no need for background information in my study, since this was not relevant to the research question. I had one gender question at the end, but in retrospect it was superfluous.

The first three questions are related to the preparation day and how the students used the preparation booklet.

In looking at the following diagrams, it should be noted that the vocational studies class is much smaller (14 students) than the general studies class (23 students). The diagrams are therefore, complemented by a description of the findings in percent.

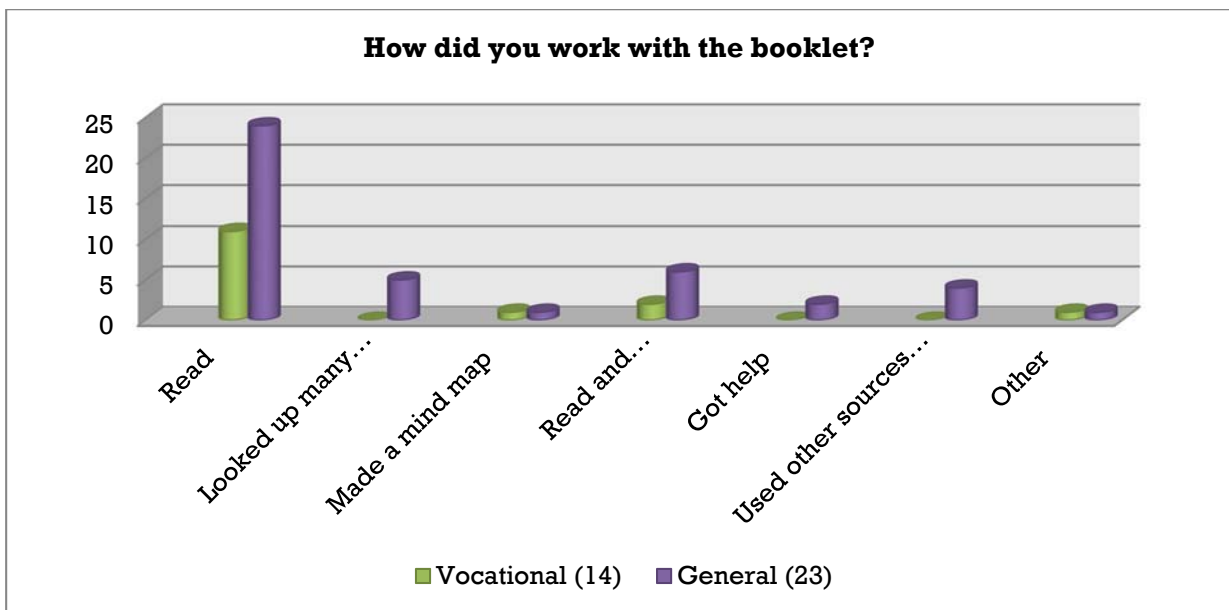
Two of the students in the vocational class did not respond to questions 4-12 which were on the second page of the questionnaire. That is the reason why two students might seem to be 'missing' in this part of the questionnaire.

Figure 2: Question 1 in the questionnaire



From the replies to this first question, it is possible to say something about *motivation* and the students' *attitude* towards learning English. The diagram above shows that a majority of the students from both study programs (V-57%, G-69.5%) spent less than one hour on the preparation booklet. 36% of the vocational students and 26% of the general studies students used between one and two hours on the preparation booklet. 7% of the vocational students and 17.4% of the general studies students, answered that they used more than three hours on preparation. This was of course not the actual exam, but a 'normal test'. The students may take an actual exam more seriously and put some more effort into preparation.

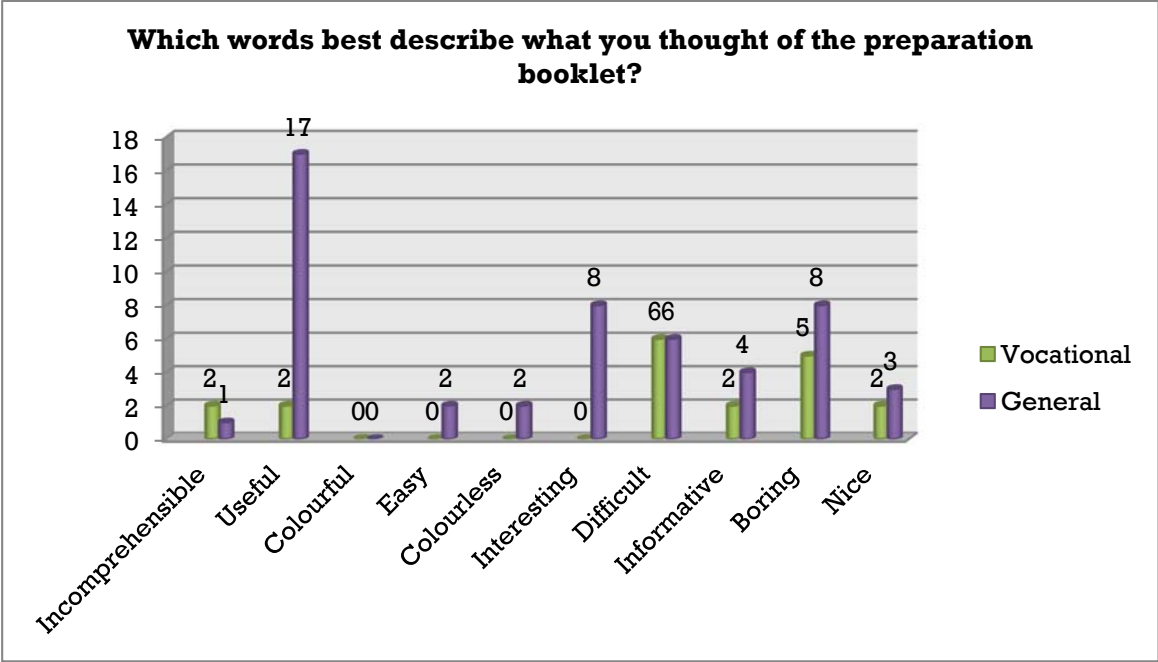
Figure 3: Question 2 in the questionnaire



In this second question, as seen in figure 2, the respondents could choose more than one alternative. A line was left open next to the 'other' box, prompting the respondents to specify. One general studies student said that he/she “[f]ound words and expressions” and one from vocational studies explained that he/she was not at school on the preparation day, but “leafed through the preparation booklet on It’s Learning”. Apart from these, there were no other specifications.

All of the general studies students read the booklet, five of these also looked up many words in a dictionary and five of them translated the texts. Of the vocational students, 78.5% read the booklet, one student made a mind map and two students read and translated the texts.

Figure 4: Question 3 in the questionnaire



The above words were given in the form of a 'word cloud' and the respondents were asked to circle the words that they thought best described their impression of the preparation booklet. I tried to choose words that were both related to the lay-out of the booklet, the level of difficulty and its usefulness. From the words



chosen, it may be possible to say something about the students' motivation for and approach to the exam.

Overall, it seems that the general studies students have a more positive approach to the preparation booklet, than the vocational students: 73.9% found the booklet useful. In comparison, only 14% of the vocational students circled the word *useful*. It appears a bit strange that so many students have circled the words *difficult* and *incomprehensible*, since so few answered that they had used a dictionary to look up difficult words in the previous question. This could show a lack of motivation, a laid-back approach to the test or a resignation – the texts are so difficult or boring that the students just give up.

The next questions were related to the examination booklet and the writing prompts. By asking the students these questions in the questionnaire, I got an idea of what to focus on in the following interviews.

Figure 5: Question 4 in the questionnaire

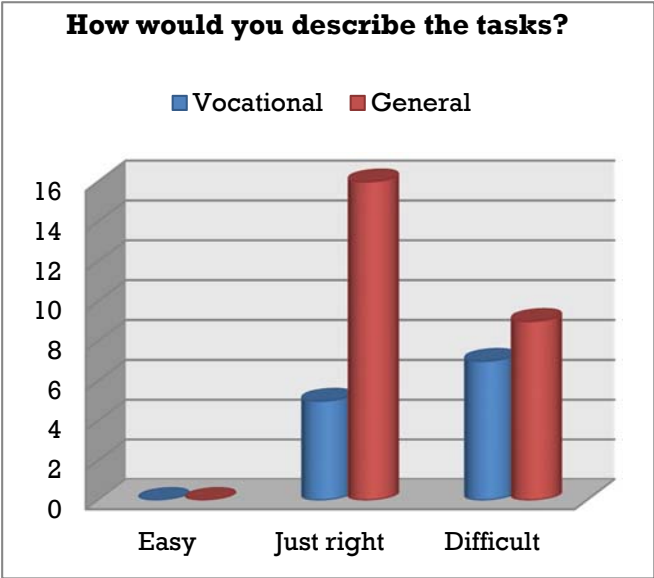
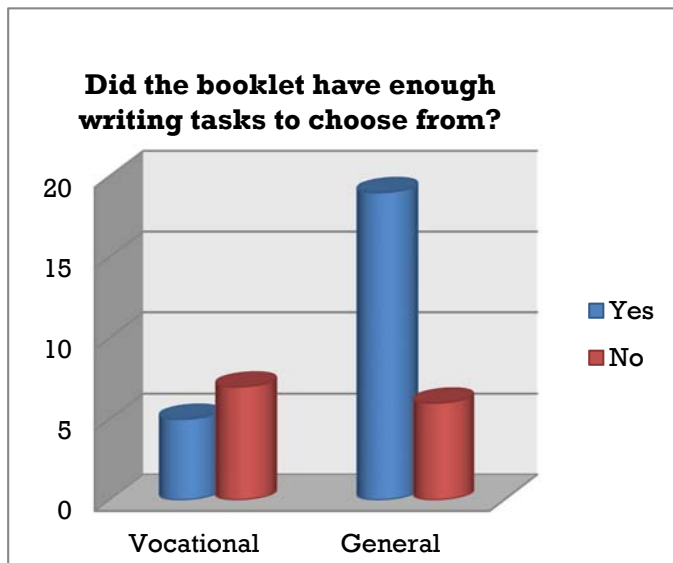


Figure 4 shows that 35.5% of the vocational students and 69.5% of the general studies students thought that the level of difficulty of the tasks given in the S2013 exam were 'just right', while 50% of the vocational students describe them as 'difficult'. Of the general studies students, 39% thought the tasks were difficult.

Figure 6: Question 5 in the questionnaire

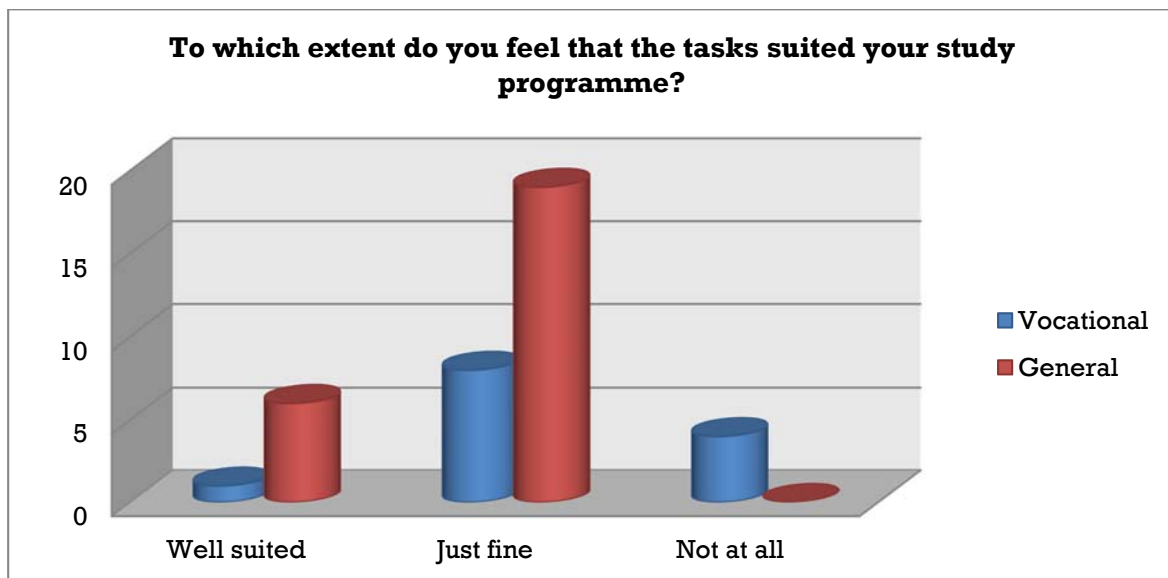


When asked whether the booklet had enough writing tasks (prompts) to choose from 37.7% of the vocational students thought so, compared to 82.6 % of the general studies students.

50% of the vocational students would have liked more prompts to choose from, whereas 26% of the

general studies students thought the same.

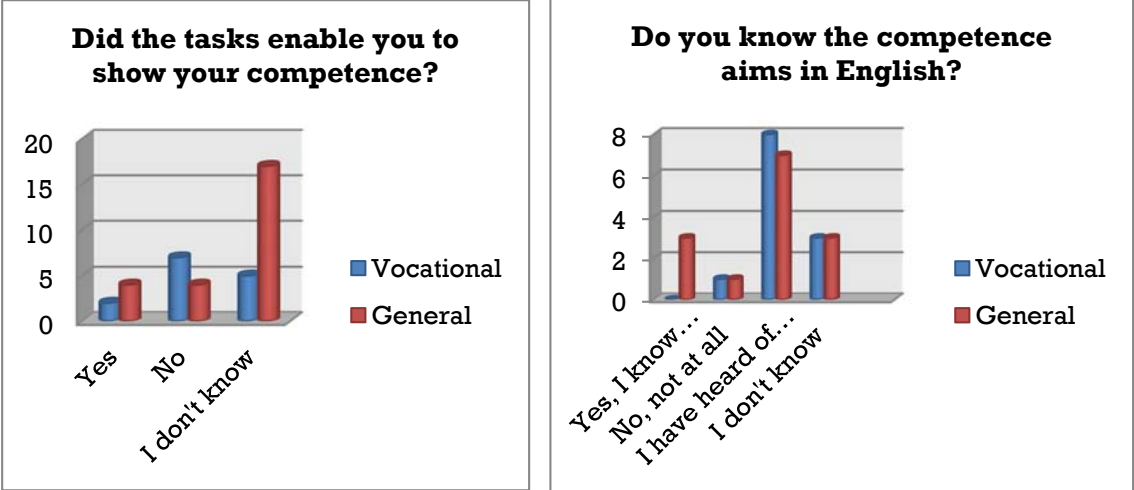
Figure 7: Question 6 in the questionnaire



Question 6 was related to the type of tasks in the examination booklet. The replies show how the students felt the tasks were suited for their study programme. Not surprisingly, more vocational students (26.6%) did *not* think the tasks suited their study programme, than the general studies students (0%). The majority of students from both study

programmes thought they suited 'just fine'. None of the general studies students thought that the tasks did *not* suit their study programme at all, compared to 28.5% of the vocational students.

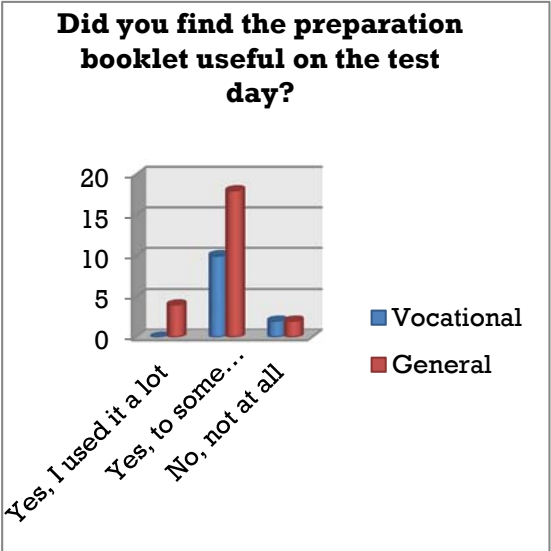
Figure 8: Questions 8 and 9 in the questionnaire



Questions 8 and 9 are related to competence and the competence aims. When asked *Did the tasks enable you to show your competence?* only 14.3% of the vocational students thought they did, compared to 17.4% of the general studies students. It is questionable that as many as 73.9% of the general studies students *don't know*.

85.7% of the vocational students and 47.8% of the general studies students answered *no, not at all, I have heard of them or I don't know*, when asked if they knew the competence aims in English.

Figure 9: Question 11 in the questionnaire

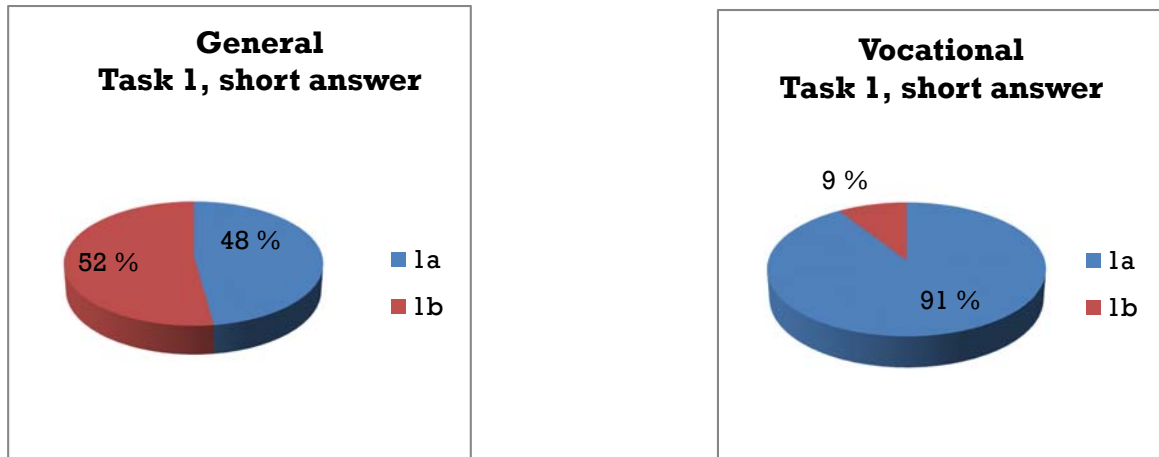


When asked *Did you find the preparation booklet useful on the test day?* The majority of the students in both study programmes answered that they used it to some extent (71.4% and 78.3%).

14.3% of the vocational studies students and 8.7% of the general studies students did not use the booklet at all on the test day, while

none of the vocational students and 17.4% of the general studies students *used it a lot*.

Figure 10: Question 10 in the questionnaire - Which two tasks did you choose?



In figure 9, the first two diagrams give an overview over which short answer tasks that were chosen by the students from the two study programmes. 1A is the task aimed at the vocational students asking them to write a short text on what to include if they were to make a promotional film about their workplace. 1B was to write a short text about stereotypes. Surprisingly many of the general studies students chose the 'wrong' task in the sense that it was the one intended for the vocational students. The vocational students seemed to be better at choosing the 'right' task.

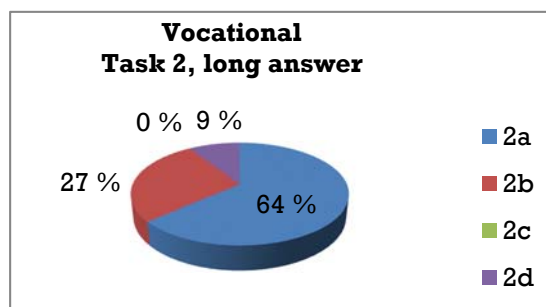
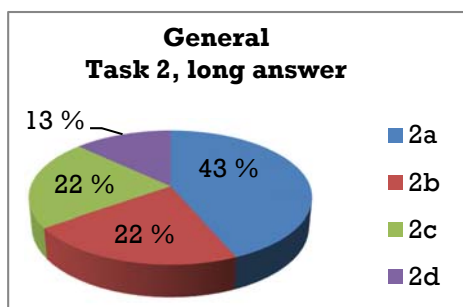


Table 2: The table shows a more detailed description of the prompts, the percentage of students who chose the prompt and my comments

Description of the prompts	GS ¹⁶	VS ¹⁷	Comment
2A The first task asks for a <i>text</i> in which the students are asked to write about challenges of starting in a workplace of their choice. The task is obviously intended for the vocational studies students.	43%	64%	As in the short answer, as many as 43% of the general studies students chose the task intended for the vocational students.
2B In the second task the students are asked to compare and contrast a character from a text they have read or a character from a film they have seen with one of the people from appendices 1, 2 and 4.	22%	27%	This seemed to be a task which appealed to the students of both study programmes. The task is fairly open and the fact that the examinee can choose a character from a film may make the task more attractive to the vocational students, because films are usually something they can relate to.
2C In this third task the students are asked to write a <i>short story</i> titled ‘Lovely cover, lousy book’. The bullet points give clear criteria as to what the short story <i>must</i> include – like ‘set in an English-speaking country, conflicting roles social norms and values, dialogue, surprising and/or humorous ending’.	22%	0%	According to Berg’s study on which factors affect the choice of prompts, she found that the majority of girls preferred task C – writing a short story. (Berg, 2014) This could be an explanation as to why none of the students from the vocational studies class chose this task. There was only one girl in this particular class. The criteria that clarify the prompt with instructions of what the text must include, may throw some students off, thinking it is difficult to include all of the elements.
2D The final task in this exam set is based on the excerpt from <i>American Dervish</i> in appendix 4. The examinee is asked to write a text about adapting to a new role or situation. The bullet points steer the examinee in a certain direction with words like: introduction, explanation, discussion reflections and a conclusion. The task, however, just asks for a <i>text</i> .	13%	9%	<i>Mina’s Story</i> , and excerpt from <i>American Dervish</i> , was the longest text in the preparation booklet. Many of the interviewees did not read the whole booklet and especially not the longer texts. It is therefore not surprising that so few chose this prompt.

¹⁶ GS= General studies

¹⁷ VS= Vocational studies

4.2 FINDINGS IN THE INTERVIEWS

There was a pronounced difference between the responses from the general studies students (GS) and the vocational students (VS).

- The majority of the VS students thought the preparation booklet represented an additional burden and did not help them preparing for the exam. They thought it was difficult and did not read all of the texts. The majority of the GS students, on the other hand, thought of the booklet as an asset and read the texts for preparation and they also used it as an aid while writing the following day.
- All but one of my VS interviewees thought the booklet was difficult and gave up before they even started reading. They thought the language was inaccessible and the texts uninteresting and ill-suited for their study programme.
- Only two students from GS had negative comments on the lay-out of the booklet; the fact that it was a bit boring with no illustrations or pictures to give them associations. In this exam set there was just one illustration and that was in connection with the text about stereotypes. Apart from that, the comments were positive on the font size, it was 'readable' and the instructions were useful.
- The VS students were generally better at choosing the 'right' tasks – the tasks made for their study programme - than were the GS students. Many GS students (43%) chose task 2A; to write about a profession even though few of those students have any experience from one, except for the occasional part time job. In retrospect, one student who chose task 2A, said that he should have chosen a different writing task, because he saw that he had not been able to show his competence.
- Students in both study programmes desired tasks that asked for *a specific genre*. The majority of the VS students would have liked more *factual texts* – like logs, operating instructions and manuals- related to their particular study programme. One wanted 'stories and texts about something I know' (interviewee D from VS) The GS students on the other hand wished for *fictional and factional texts* such as short stories and personal essays. Students from both study programmes thought that fictional texts were easier to write.

- The bullet points in the task instructions were most useful to the stronger English students – The higher the grade, the better use of the instructions. As one student said:

'I know that the person correcting this will check to see if I have included the points, so... I have to try to use them. Also, it helps the content because then I have something to stick to so that I don't wander off.' (Interviewee G from GS, my translation)

The weaker students seemed to be confused by them. One student said he did not understand them.

- One of the VS students wrote 12 sentences in part two. He was also the one who gave up when he saw the amount of text in the preparation booklet and thought that *'this would be difficult'*. (Interviewee C from VS)

4.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

There was a profound difference between the vocational students and the general studies students as to how they viewed the preparation booklet and the exam prompts. The general studies students were generally more pleased with the preparation booklet and thought of it as an asset which they found useful on the test day. The vocational students mostly thought the texts were difficult and uninteresting. Many resigned and did not read the whole booklet. Just a few worked with it thoroughly and looked up difficult words. The vocational students would have liked easier texts which were more related to their study programme. In the S2013 booklet, which was used, there were no texts connected to any of the vocational programmes at all.

Where the prompts and the choice of prompts are concerned a majority of students from both study programmes missed clear genre instructions. They generally thought that fictional texts were easier to write, and many preferred those. Some of the vocational students wanted prompts where they could show their competence in using language for specific purposes.

5 ANALYSIS OF THE EXAM SETS

Chapter 5 aims to describe and analyse the six exam sets and the corresponding guidelines. The terms *weaker* and *stronger* students will be used. These terms relate to the students' competence of the English language, not to any other abilities. The concepts *positive* and *negative* aspects of the exam are related to the research questions:

- Whether and to what extent the students understand the texts in the preparation booklet and the tasks given so that they can write in such a way that an ample number of competence aims can be assessed.
- Whether and to what extent the ENG1002/1003 English Foundation Course exam measures a broad spectrum of competence aims.

Section 5.1 relates to the first research question and section 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3 to the second research question. A summary of the analysis is presented in section 5.4.

In analysing the exam sets, the terms *positive* and *negative* are linked to whether or not:

- the texts in the preparation booklets and the writing tasks are interesting
- the writing instructions are clear
- the test is valid
- all students are able to bring out their best abilities or whether the test favours certain students
- the test is reliable
- the scoring rubric is clear and concise and secures inter-rater reliability

5.1.1 How to learn English –ENG1002/1003 2010(S2010)

5.1.1.1 *The Preparation Booklet*

The topic and the focus of the 2010 exam was on the student's own L2 learning –'How to learn English'. The booklet has eight pages. Most of them contain practical information on how to use the preparation period. The students are given seven points to reflect on:

- *'How you learn new words and expressions*
- *How important reading, e.g. literature, newspapers and magazines, is for learning English*
- *How important music, films and TV are for learning English*

- *How important your English classes are for your learning*
- *The kinds of English you think will be most useful in your future, e.g. vocational or general, spoken or written, formal or informal*
- *Reasons why different methods and strategies have or have not helped you improve your English’ (Førebuing/forberedelse, 25.05.2010. Oslo:Utdanningsdirektoratet)*

Four competence aims from the subject curriculum are mentioned in this preparation booklet.

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Exploit and assess various situations, work methods and strategies for learning English</i> ○ <i>Describe and assess [your] own progress when learning English</i> ○ <i>Write formal and informal texts with good structure and coherence on personal, interdisciplinary and social topics</i> ○ <i>Select and use content from different sources independently, critically and responsibly</i> |
|---|

(Utdanningsdirektoratet, English Subject Curriculum)

There is only one appended text – ‘ICT in school’. It is a text about the usage of using computers in the classroom. The text is written by *Utdanningsdirektoratet* in 2010, has six paragraphs and is a fairly informal text with quotes by teachers and students on the topic.

5.1.1.2 The Exam tasks

The first pages of the exam booklet include useful information about the exam and the assessment. For each task there is an explanation of what is expected of the students in order to show his or her competence.

The exam is divided into two parts. In part 1 there are three short tasks to be completed. The tasks are related to the text ‘*ICT in school*’. The students are asked to answer both 1a **and** 1b in addition to choosing either 2a **or** 2b. In task 1a they are asked to give examples from the text showing the difference between formal and informal language. Task 1b asks for the students to complete the final paragraph in ‘*ICT in school*’ which begins like this: ‘*So the conclusion seems to be...*’ It is clear that the aim of this task is to see whether the student is able to use language adapted to a situation and to recognize a genre.

Task 2a has nothing to do with the ICT article at all, and seems to be aimed at the vocational education programmes. The students are asked to comment on some important points of an occupation of their choice. In task 2b a journalist has taken notes from an interview with

a teacher. The students are to use all the information in the notes and rewrite them in complete sentences using the same style as the one used in the first paragraph in the ICT article – indirectly asking the students to write an article using formal language.

In part two there are three writing prompts to choose between, all related to ‘*How to learn English*’ and also linked to the seven points the students were asked to reflect on during their preparation. In all three tasks the students are asked to give their texts a suitable title.

3A	The first task asks for a <i>text</i> in which the student discusses the need to learn English for working life. The structure of the text is given in the form of four bullet points suggesting the content – introduction, discussion, examples and conclusion.
3B	The second task asks the students for an <i>article</i> giving their views on the advantages and challenges of using ICT in the classroom. Again, the structure is given.
3C	In the final task, a statement is given and the students are asked to write an <i>article</i> discussing the statement. Also here, a structure with bullet points on what the article <i>should</i> include is suggested.

5.1.1.3 The S2010 guideline

This guideline is very detailed. It is divided into two parts. Part one has no introduction, but goes straight to task 1 and the key or a proposed key. It also includes descriptions on what should be expected of the texts on different levels. The guideline claims that there is no correct answer to task 2b, however it gives two possible solutions. The introduction to part two is extensive. It gives information on how to assess the students’ texts. It emphasizes that each part is equally important because each task measures different competence aims. (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2010) It further includes comments on what to expect concerning receptive skills, content, structure and language. For the three writing prompts there are also descriptions of what should be expected of the texts on different levels. The two last pages of the guideline consist of a scoring rubric and a grid for the assessor’s personal comments.

5.1.1.4 Analysis

The positive features of this exam set:

- a) The preparation booklet has reference to four competence aims.
- b) The seven points the students are asked to reflect on during their preparation time give them something specific to work with instead of wasting valuable time groping in the dark.
- c) There is only one text to read in the preparation booklet, which is an advantage for the poor readers. This is supported by my findings in both the questionnaires and the interviews, where especially some of the vocational students either did not read the preparation booklet at all or just the shorter texts in the beginning before they gave up.
- d) The topic of the text, *ICT in school*, is quite neutral and one which students from all study programmes should be able to relate to.
- e) The information page in the exam booklet informs the examinee of what is assessed in each task “*a good response to task 1a shows that you can use your competence about formal and informal language [..], and in 1b that you can write a text adapted to the situation.*”¹⁸ (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 26.05.2010) Clear instructions are important, and here the examinees do not have to guess what the examiners are looking for.
- f) There are three short tasks and one long task to complete. As each task measures different competence aims, more tasks means that the student is able to show a broader spectrum of competence.
- g) The examiner’s guideline is very detailed. This is an advantage in order to ensure reliability of the test. The more detailed instructions for the examiners, the easier it is for them to adhere to the instructions and to avoid subjective judgements.

The negative aspects of this exam set:

- a) There is only one text to read in the preparation booklet. Although this is an advantage for the poor readers, one text is a meagre platform when it comes to an

¹⁸ My translation

exam. “Read texts from different genres and with different objectives” is one of the competence aims. By including different text genres in the preparation booklet, and giving tasks where the examinee should *discuss* these texts, one would not only be able to test the examinee’s receptive skills, but also be able to assess more of the competence aims. In addition, it would give the students a common platform regardless of their study programme.

- b) There are no illustrations in neither of the booklets.
- c) The writing prompts are very similar. The bullet points, which are meant to be a help in structuring the students’ texts ask for nearly the same, although two of the prompts ask for *articles* and the third for a *text*. From my findings in the interviews, some of the weaker students found these bullet points difficult and confusing. They were not able to put them to good use. The task which is intended for the vocational students to write, is quite extensive and difficult in my opinion. They are not only asked to ‘*discuss the need to learn English for working life*’ but also ‘*suggest ways of leaning the language skills necessary for your future occupation*’.
(Utdanningsdirektoratet, 26.05.2010, p. 7)

5.1.2 Careers and Career Planning – ENG1002/1003 2011(S2011)

5.1.2.1 *The Preparation Booklet*

In May 2011, focus was on careers and career planning. In this preparation booklet, there is no reference to any competence aims but in the information section they refer to the assessment guide at www.utdanningsdirektoratet.no. The booklet has eleven pages of text.

The texts in this preparation booklet are:

1. ‘The Building Blocks of Career Planning’ (edited), a one and a half page long text with advice on career planning.
2. ‘Preparing for interviews’ (edited) includes *do’s and don’ts* and tips for interviews.
3. ‘Personal Statements’ (edited) is a short text about what a personal statement is and what it should include.

4. 'Who's Who', a poem by W.H Auden (1907-1973), a short poem of two stanzas. Definitions of *a shilling life, honours and potter around the garden* are given.

These are work-related factual texts, except for the poem.

5.1.2.2 *The Exam tasks*

The structure of the 2011 exam is similar to that of 2010, but there are only two tasks to answer, one short and one long. On the instruction page there is no reference to what is expected of the students in each task, just a reference to www.utdanningsdirektoratet.no and the assessment criteria there.

The examinees can chose either task 1a **or** 1b for the short task. In 1a a short text is presented. The text describes Personnel Manager Janice's conversation with a colleague, giving an account of an interview with the last candidate, Tony. The students are asked to comment on Tony's performance in the interview, give examples of Janice's informal language and write a short text giving Tony's version of the interview. In my opinion, this is a well designed task, which gives the student the opportunity to show his or her knowledge of the target language.

In 1b, two advertisements are given, one for volunteers for the London Olympics and one from Brighton Metropolitan College. The examinees are asked to write a personal statement to go with an application for either of these.

As in the previous exam set, all the tasks in part two contain the structure of the essay in the form of bullet points with the instruction "*Your text should include:*"

The students are free to choose their own title in all the essay tasks.

2A	Task 2a wants the examinee to write a <i>speech</i> informing visiting English-speaking students about his or her education programme.
2B	Task 2b asks for a <i>text</i> discussing qualities, skills and knowledge needed to succeed in a chosen occupation. The bullet points include words like: introduction, presentation, discussion and conclusion.
2C	Tasks 2c and 2d uses the poem “Who’s Who” from the preparation booklet. Task 2c invites the examinee to write an <i>article</i> discussing the relationship between public and private life and to use own literature experience to support his or her views. The bullet points in this task are almost identical to those in the previous prompt.
2D	Task 2d asks the students to make the poem into a <i>biographical text</i> .

5.1.2.3 The S2011 guideline

This examiner’s guideline is not as detailed as the one from S2010. It does however, include some examples of what the examinee should include in his or her response. A suggested key is given in 1Ab). The guideline also includes descriptions on what should be expected of the texts on different levels. The two last pages of the guideline consist of a scoring rubric and a grid for the assessor’s personal comments.

5.1.2.4 Analysis

The positive features of this exam set:

- a) The texts in this preparation booklet seem to accommodate the vocational students better than the previous year’s. They are closer to planning a career or have already chosen one, than the general studies students who are more likely to continue their education.
- b) Three texts are from real web sites, and although they are edited, they are authentic. The poem is also authentic.
- c) Four texts are included. The language is not very difficult.
- d) In the introduction to the preparation booklet, four points to reflect on are included.

The negative aspects of this exam set:

- a) There are no illustrations in neither of the booklets.

- b) The information page in the exam booklet does not inform the examinee of what is assessed in each task. Reference is just made to the assessment guideline at www.utdanningsdirektoratet.no.
- c) Too much focus on factual texts in the writing prompts.
- d) The bullet points create a genre confusion. The instructions are the same whether the students are to write articles or texts.

5.1.3 Reading for information, learning and enjoyment – ENG1002/1003 2012 (S2012)

5.1.3.1 *The Preparation Booklet*

In May 2012 the topic was reading in different genres – quite a few short texts to read, but the genres ought to appeal to a majority of students. As in the previous preparation booklets the first pages include useful instructions and tips on how to use the booklet and the preparation day. Again, no reference to competence aims nor what is required in each task. The booklet has twelve pages and eight appended texts.

1. Apple Ipad Manual

This first text seems to be a ‘print screen’ of a page from an Apple iPad Manual. The text instructs the reader on how to customize the home screen. It does not have a headline. The text is authentic.

2. Phillip Pullman: Using the Internet is like looking at a landscape through a keyhole

If the above line is the title of the second text, it is not very clear. The first line introduces the text as: ‘This is a text by the author Philip Pullmann on [...]’ (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 22.05.2012, p. 6)

3. Authors raise doubts over Gove’s 50-book challenge

4. Six rules for reading in school

5. Homer Simpson on reading books

6. Literacy fears as four million children don’t own a single book

7. Functionally illiterate?

8. From a blogger

5.1.3.2 The Exam tasks

The lay-out of the S2012 exam is identical to the one in 2011 with one short and one long answer.

In task 1a, the examinee is asked to write a short text to the English teacher answering questions about the use of *factual texts* in language learning.

In task 1b, an extract from 'Fahrenheit 451' by Ray Bradbury is given. The student is asked to read between the lines and answer two questions. This is an example of task design which is not very clear and in my opinion does not work very well.

There are five tasks to choose from in part two. All of which are related to the texts in the preparation booklet. All the tasks have bullet points giving the student the structure of the text and asking him or her to choose a suitable title.

2A	In this first task the examinee is asked to write a <i>text</i> in in which he or she discusses the various uses for reading English. The structure of the text is given in the form of bullet points and steers the examinee into including topics like improving his or her own reading and the use of English in working life. The verb <i>discuss</i> is used prompting the student to write a non-fictional text.
2B	The student is asked to write a <i>text</i> to Apple commenting on a page from an iPad manual. The student is to comment on language, layout, illustrations and on how clear the instructions are. In addition to suggesting improvements.
2C	This task asks for an <i>article</i> where the student is to relate texts in the preparation booklet to his or her own reading experiences at school. The student should show his or her competence in <i>discussing</i> and <i>reflecting</i> .
2D	A quotation is given from the Philip Pullmann text and the student is asked to discuss the quotation and to give examples of at least two literary texts that have influenced them. The task asks for a <i>text</i> .
2E	The poem 'This Be the Verse' is to be compared with another text studied in English, which deals with the theme personal relationships. Yet again the task asks for a <i>text</i> .

5.1.3.3 *The S2012 guideline*

This examiner's guideline is not as detailed as the one from S2010. It does, however, include some examples of what the examinee should include in his or her response to 1A and 1B. There are no suggested keys. The guideline also includes descriptions on what should be expected of the texts in part two on different levels. The last two pages of the guideline consist of a scoring rubric and a grid for the assessor's personal comments.

5.1.3.4 *Analysis*

The positive features of this exam set:

- a) The preparation booklet includes two illustrations.
- b) The introduction is detailed, and includes five points for the examinee to reflect on while preparing – all connected to *reading*.
- c) It includes eight texts in various genres.
- d) The texts are not very long.

The negative aspects of this exam set:

- a) The lay-out of the preparation booklet is confusing. There are no clear headlines. The different texts are marked by *appendix 1,2, 3* etc. There are lines separating the texts.
- b) The information page in the exam booklet does not inform the examinee of what is assessed in each task. Reference is just made to the assessment guideline at www.utdanningsdirektoratet.no.
- c) In the introduction to task 2, the topic is incorrect. It reads: "The following tasks are based on your preparation topic *Using various sources independently, critically and responsibly*". (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 23.05.2012)
- d) There are five prompts to choose between, but they are very similar. One asks for an article, the other four for a text. However, the bullet points are almost identical. It is understandable that some of my interviewees thought the bullet points were confusing. I am confused by them as well. They leave little room for creativity. You *have to* write a factual text. Period. This corresponds with Ørevik's conclusion in her study of Norwegian EFL exam papers:

“ [...] a number of task options for production give vague or mixed genre instructions, calling for text types that are mixed in a manner which does not reflect changed or hybrid genres in discourse outside school.” (Ørevik, 2012, p. 18)

5.1.4 English, at home and abroad ENG 1002/1003 2012 (F2012)

5.1.4.1 *The Preparation Booklet*

The booklet has ten pages and includes information about the preparation period, advice as to how it would be useful to prepare, reference to the assessment criteria www.utdanningsdirektoratet.no and four appended texts all related to the above mentioned theme; *English at home and abroad*.

As in the previous preparation booklets, the first text is the shortest consisting of fourteen lines. It is a short personal ad called ‘Work wanted, please!’ written by The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2012.

The second text is an extract from *The House on Mango Street* (p. 65-66), by Sandra Cisneros. It has twenty seven lines which makes it a little longer than the previous one. The words *intern* and *brazier* are explained at the bottom of the page.

English in Norway is text number three. The text covers a full page and is divided into five paragraphs. This text is also written by the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2012.

The final text *How to Raise a Global Kid* is a shortened and adapted text from an article by the same name written by Lisa Miller. This adapted article is one and a half pages long and divided into eight paragraphs. One expression is explained at the end of the text – *hissy fit*.

5.1.4.2 *The Exam tasks*

The tasks in the fall exam 2012 are structured in the same way as the previous one. In task 1 the students have to choose between 1A or 1B. Both of the tasks have two parts and they both have to be answered.

Task 1A is clearly aimed at the vocational studies (key words being *jobs* and *workplace*) students where they in both parts of the task are asked to write short *texts* based on the ad in appendix 1. In task 1B the students are asked to comment on the writing styles in two

texts from the preparation booklet and to write a short text on advantages and disadvantages of moving abroad.

As in the previous exam set, there are four tasks to choose from in the second part and all but one task are related to the texts in the preparation booklet. All the tasks have bullet points giving the student the structure of the text and what it *should* include, and asking him or her to choose a suitable title.

2A	The first task is again aimed at the vocational studies students. In this task the students are asked to write a <i>text</i> about the challenges and advantages in workplaces where English is used. They <i>may</i> refer to two texts in the Preparation Booklet. The verb ‘discuss’ is again used, prompting the examinee to write a factual text, even though the task just asks for a <i>text</i> .
2B	This task asks specifically for an <i>article</i> although the instructions and bullet points are similar to the previous task and also use the verb <i>discuss</i> . The focus in this task is for the students to show their competence of English as a world language. They are invited to use texts from the Preparation Booklet, and other information they have gathered during their preparation.
2C	The third task also calls for an <i>article</i> and again the students are asked to <i>discuss</i> the importance of knowing English when living in an English-speaking country. This time they may also refer to a text from the Preparation Booklet, but also to other texts and films they have studied.
2D	In the last task there is no reference to the preparation booklet, which gives the examinees a little more freedom. The topic is English-language literature and social and/or cultural aspects of one or two English speaking countries. The task asks for a text, but the bullet points include instructions like ‘introduction, presentation, reflections and conclusion’ – words which lead the students in the direction of a factual text even though it asks for a <i>text</i> .

5.1.4.3 The F2012 guideline

Clear instructions are given as to what is to be expected from a good response to task 1A. The descriptors are given in the form of three bullet points describing texts of the highest

level of competence. Descriptions of texts of medium and poor competence are not expressed in such detail.

Equally detailed instructions of how task 1B should be solved are given. However, these descriptions do not correlate with the task instructions the students get. Examples and a discussion of this will follow in section 5.1.4.4. below.

There are four short paragraphs with general information on how to assess part two. There is also a section on genre requirements, text structure and language use. There are also requirements regarding content and the use of sources. There are no suggested keys or detailed information on each writing prompt.

The two last pages of the guideline consist of a scoring rubric and a grid for the assessor's personal comments.

5.1.4.4 Analysis

The positive features of this exam set:

- a) The preparation booklet has a short introduction which includes five points to discuss and reflect on.
- b) The preparation booklet includes four texts to read.
- c) The lay-out of the exam booklet. Coloured boxes around each task, make it easier to see which task is which. The Directorate could have gone one step further and used different colours for task 1 and task 2. On the other hand, why not mark each task with lines framing the text?

The negative aspects of this exam set:

- a) The preparation booklet does not include reference to the competence aims
- b) The two longest texts in the preparation booklet seem massive. There are no illustrations to break up the text.
- c) The bullets points give the structure of the text, but are unclear as to which genre is asked for, since they are much the same for both *text* and *article*.
- d) In the guideline, the descriptions as to how task 1B should be solved, do not correlate with the task instructions the students get.

1B

Read “Geraldo No Last Name” (Appendix 2) and “How to Raise a Global Kid” (Appendix 4) in the preparation booklet and do tasks 1 and 2.

1. **Briefly explain**¹⁹ three of the most important differences between the writing styles in the two texts (Appendices 2 and 4).
2. Write a **short text**²⁰ about the advantages and disadvantages of moving abroad, seen from a young person’s point of view.

(Utdanningsdirektoratet, 22.11.2012, p. 4)

The problem here is not the task itself, which is quite good. The challenge is how it is described in the guideline. The following extract from the F2012 guideline describes what is expected from a student response on the highest level (grades 5 and 6) of competence:

- In 1B 1 the student has included three well-chosen and **well explained** examples of the difference in writing styles between the two appended texts in a concise and **continuous text**
- In 1B 2 the student uses both implied and explicit information from the appended texts in addition to his or her own knowledge in order to point out advantages and disadvantages of moving abroad seen from a youth’s point of view
Writes a concise, **continuous text** in an approximately correct, idiomatic and varied language, well adjusted to the **communicative situation**²¹

(Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2012, p. 2)²²

What would I do if I was to *briefly* explain the differences in task 1B1? I would *list* three of the differences with a *brief* explanation of each of them. I would not write a *continuous* text. I would maybe try to include some technical language, because that is what is being stressed in other subjects, like Norwegian. My line of thought is possibly not very different than how the majority of my English students would think if they were to answer this task. Which means that none of my students would score well on this part of the exam, because they had not written a continuous text, something the external examiners are looking for. My question is: How are the examinees supposed to know that they should write a *continuous* text? There is no mention of *continuous* in the task instructions.

¹⁹ My emphasis

²⁰ My emphasis

²¹ My emphasis

²² My translation

How would I solve 1B2? A young person's definition of a *short text* is something *very* short, like a text message, short diary entries or a blog, for example. I would probably text my friend telling her about positive and negative sides of moving abroad. The problem with that is that when I text I do not have to use continuous text. As a consequence, I would not do well on this part of the exam either. Something is very wrong here. Where do the students have room for using their creativity?

5.1.5 Roles and Expectations ENG 1002/1003 2013 (S2013)

This is the exam set which was given to one vg1 general studies class and one vg2 vocational class as an end of term test in December 2013. The questionnaires and the interviews are based on this particular exam set.

5.1.5.1 *The Preparation Booklet*

The booklet has ten pages of text and includes information about the preparation period, advice as to how it would be useful to prepare, reference to the assessment criteria www.utdanningsdirektoratet.no and five appended texts all related to the above mentioned theme; 'Roles and Expectations'.

The first text is 'Sara's Story', which is not an authentic text, but one written by *The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training* in 2012. It is a short text of seventeen lines divided into three paragraphs. It is written in the 1st person singular and seems to be a personal text of some kind.

'Jasmine's Story' is the second text. This text is also written by *The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training* and hence it is not an authentic text. This text is slightly longer than the first one and is also written in the 1st person singular. It has an informal, personal style. There are eight paragraphs and these vary from one to six lines.

The text in appendix 3 is also written by *The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training*. It consists of four short chat room entries on the topic of how deceptive appearances can be. The language is informal.

The fourth appendix is the longest text in the Preparation Booklet-1.5 pages. It is an authentic text, an excerpt (pp. 67-70) from the novel *American Dervish* (2012) by Ayan

Akhtar. It tells the story of how a young Pakistani girl, Mina, adapts to her new life in the US.

Appendix 5 is a cartoon from *How to be British*, by Martyn Ford & Peter Legon: Hove: Lee Gone Publications, 2003. The cartoon depicts eight different British stereotypes in a humorous way.

5.1.5.2 The Exam tasks

The tasks in the spring exam 2013 are structured in the same way as the previous one. In task 1 the students have to choose between 1A and 1B. In part two, to write a longer answer and choose one of the four tasks. In 2A, 2B and 2D the students are free to choose their own title. In 2C the title is given – *Lovely cover, lousy book*.

1A is yet again clearly aimed at the vocational studies students. They are asked to write a short *text* on what they would include if they were to make a promotional film about ‘their’ workplace. Three bullet points steer the student in a certain direction as to what to include.

1B is all about different stereotypes. The point of departure is the cartoon from the Preparation Booklet, but the students are free to write about any national stereotypes in a short *text*.

In part two the students are asked to write a *comprehensive* and *thorough* answer to the following tasks, but there is no indication as to how long the text should be. As in the previous exam, bullet points are given as a hint to what to include and also give the text a structure.

2A	The first task asks for a <i>text</i> in which the students are asked to write about challenges of starting in a workplace of their choice. Again, the verb <i>discuss</i> is used, hinting to a genre the students should use. The task is obviously intended for the vocational studies students.
2B	In the second task the students are asked to compare and contrast a character from a text they have read or a character from a film they have seen with one of the people from appendices 1, 2 and 4. Again, they are asked to write a text, although the bullet

	points hints to 'an introduction, presentation. Comparison reflections and a conclusion'. Not exactly an invite to write a short story...
2C	In this third task the students are asked to write a <i>short story</i> titled "Lovely cover, lousy book'. The bullet points give clear criteria as to what the short story <i>must</i> include – like 'set in an English-speaking country, conflicting roles social norms and values, dialogue, surprising and/or humorous ending'.
2D	The final task in this exam set is based on the excerpt from American Dervish in appendix 4. The examinee is asked to write a text about adapting to a new role or situation. Again the bullet points steer the examinee in a certain direction with words like: introduction, explanation, discussion reflections and a conclusion. The task, however, just asks for a <i>text</i> .

5.1.5.3 The S2013 guideline

The S2013 guideline differs from the previous ones, as this is the first *assessment guideline* with general information about the test. (See section 3.6 for a detailed description of the difference between the two types of guidelines.) This is an advantage for the students in the sense that they get the same information about the exam as the external examiners, but a disadvantage where reliability is concerned. With no detailed information to the examiners as to what to expect from the different tasks, there is room for interpretation and biases that can negatively affect reliability.

5.1.5.4 Analysis

The positive features of this exam set:

- a) The preparation booklet and the exam booklet contain a cartoon in colour. One of the interviewees said that the cartoon was one of the reasons why he chose task 1B. He thought that the illustration was inviting and he got ideas as to what the task was asking for (interviewee I). In other words, it clarified the task for him.

The negative aspects of this exam set:

- a) Abstract topics. The introduction in the preparation booklet invites the examinees *to think about* and *discuss* four topics: what kind of roles they play during the day, how first impressions are not always correct, how people are expected to behave in different situations and typical stereotypes. (Utdanningsdirektoratet,

22.05.2013b) The three first topics are quite abstract. When the students prepared for this test in class, many of them had trouble defining their 'role'. When the teacher asked: "What kind of roles do you play during a day?" many replied: "Roles? I'm just me!". This shows that they do not quite understand the concept of roles. How are they supposed to write well about this topic?

- b) Three of five texts in the preparation booklet are written by the *The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training*. Two of the texts are very similar, both where the content is concerned as well as the titles – *Sara's Story* and *Jasmine's Story*.
- c) There are no texts in the preparation booklet that are work related. This was commented on by the vocational students in the interviews, who described the texts as follows: "The texts were not for students from building and construction"²³ (interviewee B) and "Not very exiting texts" (interviewee E).
- d) All but one of the interviewees from the vocational studies thought the texts were difficult and did not read the whole preparation booklet. This could explain that as many as 14.3% of the vocational students and 8.7% of the general studies students did not use the preparation booklet on the test day.

5.1.6 People who have made a difference ENG 1002/1003 2013 (F2013)

5.1.6.1 *The Preparation Booklet*

The booklet has nine pages of text and like the preceding exam sets, includes information about the preparation period, advice as to how it would be useful to prepare, reference to the assessment criteria www.utdanningsdirektoratet.no and six appended texts all related to the above mentioned theme; 'People who have made a difference'. This booklet only contains authentic texts.

In appendix 1, the text consists of five short quotes by famous people on the topic; 'People who have made a difference'.

Appendix 2 is *Poem 919* by Emily Dickinson. The poem is short – only seven lines.

²³ My translation

Success in appendix 3 is a ten line poem attributed to Ralph Waldo Emerson.

In appendix 4, there is a relatively short article; *Don Ritchie named Australia's Local Hero*, about a man in Sydney who has saved several people from committing suicide by offering them a cup of tea at his house. The article which consists of twenty two lines is divided into five paragraphs. The text includes numerous quotes by Mr. Ritchie. Just below the title, there is a photo of Don Ritchie.

Appendix 5 has no title. At first glance it seems to be a continuation of the previous text which made it a bit confusing. It is actually an excerpt from the novel *The Secret Life of Bees*, by Sue Monk Kidd. The excerpt is one page long.

The last appendix is also an excerpt – this time from the poem *The Ballad of Grace Darling* by Cal Bagby – one verse and the chorus.

5.1.6.2 *The Exam tasks*

The tasks in the fall exam 2013 are yet again structured in the same way as the previous one. In task 1 the students have to write a *concise* answer to either 1A or 1B. In task 2, to write a longer answer and choose one of four tasks. In all of the four tasks in part two, the students are free to choose their own title for their texts.

Task 1A is again aimed at the vocational students, although this time not so pronounced. The students are asked to write an *e-mail* to their boss at '*A workplace of your choice*', commenting on ideas on how to cut costs without reducing staff.

In task 1B the students are given ten ambiguous newspaper headlines. They are first asked to pick out four of the headlines and say how they are unclear. Secondly, to pick one of the headlines, comment on it and suggest a better, clearer version.

In the second part of the exam, the students are asked to write a longer text. The text should be comprehensive and thorough, but there is no indication as to how long should be. As in the previous exam, bullet points are given as a hint on what to include and also give the text a structure.

2A	The first task asks for a <i>text</i> in which the students are asked to write about how they would like to make a positive difference in the future. Either in their working or private life. The task is not clearly intended for the vocational studies students, since they are asked to write about making a difference in either their private or working life.
2B	In the second task the students are asked to compare ‘the lives and achievements of two people from English-speaking countries who they think have made a difference in society. Again, they are asked to write a <i>text</i> , although the bullet points hint to an <i>introduction, background information, comparison, discussion and a conclusion</i> . Steering the examinees into a certain genre direction.
2C	In this third task the students are asked to write an <i>article</i> using films or literature on the topic of social issues and how they may influence one’s opinions and attitudes. The bullet points give clear criteria as to what the article <i>should</i> include.
2D	The final task in this exam set is to write a <i>short story</i> based on a statement by Oprah Winfrey from appendix 1 in the preparation booklet. Again, the bullet points steer the examinee in a certain direction with specific criteria as to what the short story <i>must</i> include.

5.1.6.3 The F2013 guideline

This assessment guideline is the same as the one from S2013, since there is only general information about assessment and no keys for the tasks. From 2013, the assessment guideline is only published once and is valid for both the spring exam and the fall exam each year.

5.1.6.4 Analysis

The positive features of this exam set:

- a) The preparation booklet has an elaborate introduction to the topic. As in the exam sets from the previous year it gives the students five points to reflect on and discuss during their preparation period.
- b) All the texts are authentic.
- c) A small photo is included in the preparation and picture of a front page from an English speaking newspaper illustrates task 1B.
- d) The texts are varied and of different lengths.

- e) The exam set contains several good tasks – especially task 1B and 2D.

The negative aspects of this exam set:

- a) There are no texts that are specifically aimed at the vocational students.
- b) Appendix 5 in the preparation booklet lacks a headline. This makes the reader unsure of whether this text is connected to the text on the previous page or something new.
- c) *The Ballad of Grace Darling* could have had a short introductory paragraph explaining the context, the author, something about the time it was written or simply an illustration. Just as a pre-reading activity to catch the reader’s attention. Then perhaps more students would go to the web page where the text was downloaded from to get additional information.

5.2 COMPETENCE AIMS AND THE LABELLING

As mentioned in 3.5.1., the competence aims are labelled to make future reference easier (LLa= language learning a, COMb=communication b and CSLc= culture, society and literature, competence aim c). This way the competence aims can be used as criteria for the analysis the same way they are used as criteria for the students’ assessment. Refer to section 2.2.3. for descriptions of what the three main areas include)

Language

LLa	<i>exploit and assess various situations, working methods and strategies for learning English</i>
LLb	<i>describe and evaluate the effects of different verbal forms of expression</i>
LLc	<i>assess and comment on his/her progress in learning English</i>
LLd	<i>use a wide selection of digital and other aids independently, including monolingual dictionaries</i>

Communication

COMa	<i>understand and use a wide general vocabulary and an academic vocabulary related to his/he own education programme</i>
COMb	<i>understand oral and written presentations about general and specialized themes related to his/her own education programme</i>

COMc	<i>express him/herself in writing and orally in a varied, differentiated and precise manner, with good progression and coherence</i>
COMd	<i>select and use appropriate reading and listening strategies to locate information in oral and written texts</i>
COMe	<i>select and use appropriate writing and speaking strategies that are adapted to a purpose, situation and genre</i>
COMf*	<i>take the initiative to begin, end and keep a conversation going</i>
COMg	<i>read texts from different genres and with different objectives</i>
COMh	<i>write formal and informal texts with good writing structure and coherence based on themes that interest him/her and which are important for society</i>
COMi	<i>read and write texts related to his/her own education programme</i>
COMj	<i>select and use content from different sources independently, critically and responsibly</i>
COMk	<i>use technical and mathematical information in communication</i>
COMl	<i>produce composite texts using digital media</i>
COMm	<i>select an in-depth study topic within his/her own education programme and present this to the other pupils</i>

*Does not have relevance to the written exam

Culture, society and Literature

CSLa	<i>discuss social and cultural conditions and values from a number of English-speaking countries</i>
CSLb	<i>present and discuss international news topics and current events</i>
CSLc	<i>give an account of the use of English as a universal world language</i>
CSLd	<i>discuss and elaborate on English texts from a selection of different genres, poems, short stories, novels, films and theatre plays from different epochs and parts of the world</i>
CSLe	<i>discuss literature by and about indigenous peoples in the English-speaking world</i>

5.3 THE GRIDS

This study aims to find out how many competence aims are tested in the six exam sets and which ones. The grids below briefly sum up the findings. (See 3.5.1) The use of X and (X) must be accounted for.

- a) X represents that the competence aim can easily be tested in the task.
- b) (X) illustrates that the competence can partially be tested or that it depends on the student's text whether or not it can be tested.

c) Blank boxes in the grid means that the competence aim has not been tested.

5.3.1 The competence aims can partially be tested

COMh	<i>write formal and informal texts with good writing structure and coherence based on themes that interest him/her and which are important for society</i>
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The first part of this competence aim can easily be tested: *'write formal and informal texts with good writing structure and coherence'*. It is much more difficult for a rater to assess whether or not *'the themes interest the examinee or are important to society.'*

5.3.2 The competence aims can be tested, but it depends on the content of the examinee's text

An example of this can be found in task 2D in the S2013 exam. The intention of this task is clearly to measure general competences such as knowledge of the world, sociocultural knowledge, intercultural awareness and intercultural skills and know-how in addition to communicative language competences.

CSLa	<i>discuss social and cultural conditions and values from a number of English-speaking countries</i>
CSLb	<i>present and discuss international news topics and current events</i>

Words to indicate this: *immigrant girl, new demands, new-found freedom, adapting to a new role or situation*. Nevertheless, based on the interviews it seems that the students do not grasp these details. What can be ambiguous here, are the instructions in the introduction of this task: *"Use the story about Mina as a point of departure to write a text about adapting to a new role or situation"*. The students who participated in this study and who chose this task, seemed to have focused on *'write a text about adapting to a new role or situation'*. Their texts were related to difficulties encountered when enrolling at a new school or moving to a new town as a result of their parents' divorce. Kroll and Reid mention this threat to validity - that failure to understand vocabulary or idioms might lead to misunderstanding of what to write (Kroll & Reid, 1994). Consequently, the above mentioned competence aims cannot be tested even though this might have been the test designers' intention.

Students who are able to include information about social and cultural conditions and values in their texts, however, are able to show at least some of their competence related to this particular aim. This is an example of two of the factors Weigle mentioned that can threaten the validity of a test - the tasks themselves and the content of the examinee's text (Weigle, 2002).

COMPETENCE AIMS	HOW TO LEARN ENGLISH S2010						CAREERS AND CAREER PLANNING S2011						READING FOR INFORMATION, LEARNING AND ENJOYMENT S2012							
	1a	1b	2a	2b	3a	3b	3c	1a	1b	2a	2b	2c	2d	1a	1b	2a	2b	2c	2d	2e
LANGUAGE LEARNING																				
Lla				X		X								X						
LLb	X							X		X					(X)					
LLc					X	X								X						
LLd																				
COMMUNICATION																				
COMa			X			X				X	X									
COMb																				
COMc		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X
COMd													(X)		X	X	X	X	X	X
COMe	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
COMf *																				
COMg																				
COMh			(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)			(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)			(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
COMi					(X)					X	X					X	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
COMj					X	X	X			X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X
COMk																(X)				
COMl																				
COMm																				
CULTURE, SOCIETY AND LITERATURE																				
CSLa													(X)							
CSLb																				
CSLc																				
CSLd												X	(X)							
CSLe																				

Table 3

X=CAN BE MEASURED (X) = PART OF THE COMPETENCE CAN BE MEASURED/MAY BE RELEVANT, DEPENDING ON THE TOPIC OF THE TEXT

*= DOES NOT HAVE RELEVANCE TO THE WRITTEN EXAM

COMPETENCE AIMS	ENGLISH, AT HOME AND ABROAD F2012						ROLES AND EXPECTATIONS S2013						PEOPLE WHO HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE F2013					
	1a	1b	2a	2b	2c	2d	1a	1b	2a	2b	2c	2d	1a	1b	2a	2b	2c	2d
LANGUAGE LEARNING																		
L1a																		
LLb		X	X											X				
LLc																		
LLd																		
COMMUNICATION																		
COMa	X	X	X	X	X	X	(X)	X	X	X	(X)	X	(X)	X	X	X	X	X
COMb	X						(X)		(X)				X					
COMc	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
COMd													X					
COMe	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X
COMf*																		
COMg		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X								(X)
COMh	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	X	(X)	(X)
COMi	X		X	X	(X)	X	(X)		X		(X)		(X)					
COMj	(X)	X	X	X	X	X		X	X			(X)	X		X		X	X
COMk																		
COMl																		
COMm																		
CULTURE, SOCIETY AND LITERATURE																		
CSLa		(X)	(X)	(X)	X			X	(X)		X	(X)					X	X
CSLb					X							(X)		(X)				
CSLc			(X)	(X)	X													(X)
CSLd					X			X	(X)		(X)						X	(X)
CSLe					(X)				(X)								(X)	

Table 4

X=CAN BE MEASURED (X) = PART OF THE COMPETENCE CAN BE MEASURED/MAY BE RELEVANT, DEPENDING ON THE TOPIC OF THE TEXT WRITTEN BY THE STUDENT,

*= DOES NOT HAVE RELEVANCE TO THE WRITTEN EXAM

5.3.3 What can be deduced from this grid?

Three distinct features can easily be detected just by looking at the grid. Firstly, that there seems to be a change of focus from the three first exams (S2010, S2011 and S2012) to the last three (F2012, S2013 and F2013). *Language learning* seemed to be more in focus in the first three than testing the students' competence in *Culture, Society and Literature* where hardly any competence aims were tested.

The F2012, S2013 and F2013 exams measure more of the competence aims from the area of *Culture, Society and Literature* and less from the *Language learning* area. These three sets also seem to measure more of the *Communication* aims than in the three previous exams.

Secondly, some of the competence aims are rarely or never tested. It is understandable that it is difficult to test certain competence aims like the ones below.

LLd	<i>use a wide selection of digital and other aids independently, including monolingual dictionaries</i>
COMI	<i>produce composite texts using digital media</i>

However, other competences should not be very difficult to include in a written exam. The following competence aim is not measured *at all* in any of the six exams that were part of my study.

COMk	<i>use technical and mathematical information in communication</i>
------	--

As basic skills are emphasised in LK06 it appears strange that the above competence aim related to the basic skill, numeracy, is not tested in any exams included in this study.

Last, but not least - different competence aims are tested depending on which tasks the examinee chooses. Even though there seems to be a positive improvement from the first three to the last three, this means that students sitting for the same exam are not tested in the same competences. This is a serious threat to both the validity and the reliability of the exam.

5.4 SUMMARY OF THE ANALYSIS

At this point, I would like to draw attention to important findings in this study. The results will briefly be summed up here, and discussed in detail in chapter 6, section 6.2.1-6.2.6.

- The preparation booklet is not useful to all students.
- The bullet points in the tasks create confusion for some students, but are helpful to others.
- The writing tasks are not interesting and relevant for all students.
- The 'text' concept seems to create a genre confusion for both students and the raters.
- The guidelines and the lack of precision in the scoring rubric threaten reliability.
- Receptive skills are not tested.
- The tasks in the same exam set do not test the same competence.
- Some of the competence aims are rarely, or never tested.

6 DISCUSSION

Chapter six aims to discuss the results of this study in relation to the research questions.

- Whether and to what extent the students understand the texts in the preparation booklet and the tasks given so that they can write in such a way that an ample number of competence aims can be assessed.
- Whether and to what extent the ENG1002/1003 English Foundation Course exam measures a broad spectrum of competence aims.

6.1 DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

6.1.1 The preparation booklet is not useful to all students.

A study carried out by Lunde and Skeideid on free access to aids during the final exam in English in lower secondary schools, showed that the use of aids may have become a false security, especially for the weaker students. This negative washback effect may undermine the students' willingness to work throughout the year, because they think they have everything they need on the day of the exam. (Lunde & Skeiseid, 2014) The purpose of the preparation booklet is to help the students – to give them a common platform – and give them ideas for writing texts. The intention is good given the students find the booklet *useful* on the day of the exam and *interesting* enough to read before the day of the exam, otherwise there is no point in handing out a booklet.

The vocational students who participated in this study were not very motivated to read the preparation booklet and thought the texts were uninteresting. When looking closely at the exam sets there is really only one of the preparation booklets that contains texts which vocational students can relate to and that is the one from S2011. These students are maybe the ones that could have the most need for texts to draw ideas from, and these needs are not met. Descriptions like: 'yuck', 'ill suited for building and construction', 'difficult', 'long texts' and 'boring' were repeated often by the interviewees when asked about the preparation booklet. 14.3% of the vocational students did not use the booklet on the test day.

The general studies students found the booklet more useful, but there were a few comments on the lack of illustrations to trigger their imaginations and the fact that the texts were long and similar. In this particular set, three of five texts were written by the Norwegian Directorate for Education.

8.7% of the general studies students did not use the booklet on the test day. Some students said that they might have used the texts in the booklet *subconsciously* when they wrote their texts, although they said they did not use it much.

The aim should be to make the preparation booklet useful for all students. One suggestion is for the students to use the preparation day to find a number of texts themselves related to a given topic or related to their own study programme – or both. In our digital era, it should not be difficult to find texts. The preparation booklet could include a few texts to secure the common platform for all students and useful information about the preparation day as it does at present.

6.1.2 Receptive skills are not tested

Green claims that 'The purpose of assessing reading and listening is to gain insight into how well assessees are able to use their language abilities to understand relevant written or spoken input.' (Green, 2014, p. 97) As previously mentioned, one of the purposes of using source texts in the exam is to give students a common platform and give them a point of departure when answering the written tasks. However, just handing out a booklet and asking students to *read* the texts, does not mean they *understand* the texts. If a rater wants confirmation of a student's receptive skills, he or she will need proof in the form of tasks related to the specific texts – answering questions for example. During the interviews, several vocational students revealed that they had just read parts of the preparation booklet, because they found the texts uninteresting or too difficult for them. Findings in the questionnaires showed that 14.3% of the vocational students and 8.7% of the vocational students did not use the preparation booklet at all on the test day, which means that the rater cannot assess their receptive skills.

There are five competence aims that are related to *reading*. Of these five, only two include the word *understand*.

COMa	<i>understand²⁴ and use a wide general vocabulary and an academic vocabulary related to his/he own education programme</i>
COMb	<i>understand oral and written presentations about general and specialized themes related to his/her own education programme</i>
COMd	<i>select and use appropriate reading and listening strategies to locate information in oral and written texts</i>
COMg	<i>read texts from different genres and with different objectives</i>
COMi	<i>read and write texts related to his/her own education programme</i>

One can say that reading is tested *indirectly*, as the students have to read the tasks in order to write a text. One can make *inferences* about their reading ability, but it is impossible to assess whether or not their ability to read between the lines, understand idioms, expressions or register differences. It would be possible to test all of these competence aims if one included one task that tested receptive skills in the exam.

6.1.3 The writing tasks are not interesting and relevant for all students

Just because words like ‘occupation, work place, and job’ are included in a task does not automatically make it interesting and suitable for the vocational students. This study shows that the tasks intended for the vocational students often are chosen by the general studies students as well. Although the exam allows for that, it seems that it is more difficult for them to answer well and show their overall competence, because they lack the relevant technical terms to show a broad spectrum of competence. Interviewee H from general studies chose task 2A – ‘Write a text about the challenges of starting in a new workplace of your choice.’ (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 23.05.2013) Her written text was about a young teacher’s first weeks at a new workplace. She said she chose that particular task because it was the one she believed was the easier one to write something about, although she had never experienced being new at a workplace herself.

When asked if there were enough writing prompts to choose from, another student, interviewee I, replied: ‘In a way there were enough prompts, but in part 2 I thought it was...there weren’t that many prompts that were very inviting. I didn’t feel like choosing

²⁴ My emphasis

any of them, really, so I chose the one I *most* wanted and the one that seemed most exciting in a way.’ (Interviewee I, my translation)

Weigle mentions that clarity is one important requirement in test design in addition to making tasks interesting (See 2.5.1.2). The examples above show that there is room for improvement where these two requirements are concerned. If two of the *stronger* students have difficulty interpreting the prompt and choosing a prompt where they can show their best competence, the weaker students will be much worse off. Interviewee E, one of the weaker students, confirms this. When asked if he was able to show his competence in answering the tasks he replied ‘Not really’. He also would have liked ‘Easier prompts and more interesting texts.’ (Interviewee E, my translation)

The responses in the questionnaire showed that 26.6% of vocational students did not think the tasks suited their study programme. None of the general studies student thought the tasks were ill suited for their study programme. This shows that the exam favours certain groups of examinees. This corresponds with my experience. The more you as a teacher *vocationalise*²⁵, the less prepared the students are for the written exam. By vocationalising I mean that vocational teachers tend to focus more on practical genres that will be useful in future occupations, like reports, manuals, instructions, logs, and applications and less on academic writing. Texts for reception tend to be non-fiction, related to the particular vocational programme.

In order to build reliability into assessment design, Green suggests that tasks should be ‘clear and unambiguous’ (Green, 2014, p. 73), so that the examinees know exactly what to do and ‘their performance will actually reflect the intended language abilities.’ (Green, 2014, p. 73)

Some of the tasks I have studied give hints and clues as to what the student should do, but they are not clear enough. An example of this is task 2D from the S2011 exam.

²⁵ Read texts, learn vocabulary and write texts that are useful for and adapted to vocational students

TASK D

Use your imagination to expand the information in the poem “Who’s Who” into a biographical text about a person called Sir William Perkins.

Your biographical text should include:

- An introduction
- Facts about his public life
- Facts about his personal and private life
- A conclusion

Give your text a suitable title.

(Utdanningsdirektoratet, 23.05.2011)

To clarify the first two lines in the instruction would have been a huge improvement. To me, imagination and biographical text are two opposites that create confusion. What am I supposed to do as a test taker? This task seems interesting, but I don’t understand what to do, so I opt for another writing prompt. What if the designers gave the examinees more information about the context? What is the purpose of their writing? Who is the intended audience? Intended audience and purpose are the minimum requirements of instructions for prompts according to Weigle (Weigle, 2002, p. 103). The term biographical text should perhaps be explained, so that the examinees know how creative they can allow themselves to be.

It is important that the exam sets contain texts and tasks that the students can relate to in some way. They must find them *interesting* and *meaningful*. This, of course applies to all students, but is especially essential for the vocational students who seem less motivated for the test.

6.1.4 The ‘text’ concept seems to create genre confusion

The aim of the exam is to test the students’ competence. There are three competence aims in the curriculum that mention *genre*:

COMe	<i>select and use appropriate writing and speaking strategies that are adapted to a purpose, situation and genre</i>
COMg	<i>read texts from different genres and with different objectives</i>
CSLd	<i>discuss and elaborate on English texts from a selection of different genres, poems, short stories, novels, films and theatre plays from different epochs and parts of the world</i>

Ørevik distinguishes between 'traditional genres' (short stories, articles, letters to the editor diary entries etc.) and 'school genres' such as a 'personal text' where the aim often is for the students to reflect or give their personal views (Ørevik, 2012). There is nothing wrong with asking the students to reflect or give their personal views. What I question is the vagueness of the text genre. It could use some specification.

There were twenty-four writing prompts in the six exam sets. Of these prompts there was one that specifically asked for a manuscript for a speech, one that asked for a biographical text, only two prompts that specifically asked for short stories, and six for articles. The remaining fourteen asked for a *text*. However, the bullet points and the instructions for a *text* is similar to those for an *article* and a *biographical text*. This is what seems to create the genre confusion. The students are familiar with thinking in genres. Therefore, when they come across one task inviting them to write a text and another inviting them to write an article, both tasks having identical bullet-point-instructions, it is not strange that they become confused. See p. 55 in 5.1.2.2 for examples from the S2011 exam.

Again, it comes back to *clarity* of the task. If the students are asked to show their competence to '*select and use appropriate writing strategies*' they must also know why they write (*purpose*), to whom they write (*situation*) and how to write (*genre*).²⁶

6.1.5 The bullet points in the tasks are confusing for some students, but helpful for others. The bullet points used in the tasks are intended to help the students structure their texts. However, the students who participated in my study were divided in their views as to the usefulness of these points. The stronger students saw the advantages of the bullet points whereas the weaker students felt intimidated by them. This is in contrast to Berg's study, where she found that the 'bullet points scaffold the weaker student's text but limits the stronger students' options'. (Berg, 2014, p. 96)

The bullet points seem to fortify the genre confusion in some tasks. The wording in the task instructions opens up for creativity and an actual choice of genre, but the bullet points narrow the task down and steer students more or less into writing an article. An example of this is found in the S2013 set:

²⁶ COMe from the curriculum

2D

In the excerpt from the novel *American Dervish* (Appendix 4), the immigrant girl Mina changes as a result of new demands and new-found freedom. Use the story about Mina as a point of departure to write a text about adapting to a new role or situation.

Your text should include:

- an introduction
- a brief explanation of how and why Mina changed
- a discussion of whether you agree or disagree with Mina's choices
- your reflections on how best to adapt to a new role or situation
- a conclusion

Feel free to add your own points.

Give your text a suitable title.

(Utdanningsdirektoratet, 23.05.2013)

One possible way to diminish the genre confusion (and misunderstanding ref. 5.3.2) would be to make small changes in the instructions. "Use the story about Mina as an *inspiration* to write a text about adapting to a new role or situation. *Choose* a suitable *genre*". The bullet points could for instance contain information about what the content of the text *must* include:

- a main character who has to adapt to a new role or a situation
- a conflict based on social norms and values

That way the bullet points do not guide the student into writing a certain way, but leave him *'to adapt to purpose, situation and genre.'*²⁷

In other tasks, the bullet points work well and help clarify and steer the examinees into including important elements into the texts they write. This in order to assess certain competences. One example of clear writing instructions and useful bullet points is found in the S2013 set:

2C

The expression "you can't judge a book by its cover" is used in your Preparation booklet (Appendix 3, first text). Based on this expression, write a short story called "Lovely cover, lousy book".

Your short story must:

- be clearly set in an English-speaking country
- involve conflicting roles and/or expectations based on social norms and values
- include some dialogue
- have surprising and/or humorous ending

Use the title: "Lovely cover, lousy book".

(Utdanningsdirektoratet, 23.05.2013)

²⁷ COMe

The verb *must* gives the students clear instructions as to what they need to include in the text in order to show several competence aims. The task opens for the students to show what they know of cultural conditions and values from an English speaking country. In addition, they have to include some dialogue, which allows them to show their ability to separate register differences for instance. The bullet points do not indicate the structure of the text, allowing the students to show their competence in structuring their texts and to *'select and use appropriate writing (and speaking) strategies that are adapted to a purpose, situation and genre'*.²⁸

6.1.6 The guidelines and the lack of precision in the scoring rubric

'Providing clear and comprehensive answer keys, unambiguous rating scales and training for scorers or raters are all likely to lead to more consistent results.' (Green, 2014, p. 73) This is one way of increasing reliability in tests according to Green. In this respect, the first examiner's guideline (S2010) that was part of this study was the only one that included suggested keys to all the tasks. This makes it more reliable than the next ones, because it is more likely that the raters score the tasks consistently. The S2011, S2012, F2012 all include detailed descriptions of what *should* be expected, but there is room for the rater's subjective assessment. This makes the above mentioned tests less reliable than the one from S2010. The two last guidelines in this study are the more general assessment guidelines from spring and fall 2013. These guidelines leave room for a lot of interpretation possibilities and affect reliability negatively. (See 5.1.1-5.1.6 for the complete analysis)

What all of the guidelines have in common are the scoring rubrics that are included. These have not changed considerably. To make a test reliable Green suggests that the rating scales should be 'unambiguous'. The opposite is true for the rating scales of the ENG1002/1003 where the level descriptors are very vague.

The grid below is an extract from the first part of the scoring rubric in the assessment guide from 2013.

²⁸ COMe, my parenthesis

Kjennetegn på måloppnåelse ved sluttvurdering i ENG1002/1003/1005/1006
 –gjelder for sentralt gitt skriftlig eksamen 2013

Karakter	1	2 Eleven kan:	3-4 Eleven kan:	5-6 Eleven kan:
Innhold	Lagere kompetanse enn nivå 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • besvare oppgaven på en stort sett relevant måte og presentere et enkelt budskap 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • besvare oppgaven på en relevant måte • presentere et budskap på en selvstendig og stort sett tydelig måte 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • besvare oppgaven på en utfyllende og relevant måte • presentere et budskap på en selvstendig, reflektert og tydelig måte
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gjøre rede for et emne 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gjøre rede for og drøfte et emne 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gjøre rede for og drøfte et emne på en utfyllende måte
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bruke innhold fra ulike kilder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bruke innhold fra ulike kilder på en selvstendig og ansvarlig måte 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bruke relevant innhold fra ulike kilder på en selvstendig, kritisk og ansvarlig måte

(Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2013)

The first column describes the three areas from the curriculum, language learning, communication and culture, society and literature. I would like to draw attention to the level descriptors for the grades 2, 3-4 and the grades 5-6 that are circled in the grid. They describe what a student can do related to *answering the task (marked yellow)* and *presenting a message (marked green)*.

- To achieve the grade 2 the student can: Answer the task in a *fairly relevant way* and present a *simple message*.
- To achieve the grade 3-4 the student can: Answer the task in a *relevant way* and present a message in a *fairly clear, and independent way*.
- To achieve the grade 5-6 the student can: Answer the task in a *relevant and extensive way* and present a message in an *independent, reflective and clear way*.

What makes this scoring rubric ambiguous, is first of all, that these descriptors require that all raters have the same understanding of what '*fairly relevant*', '*relevant*' and '*relevant and extensive*' mean for instance. Secondly, the descriptors do not separate the grades 3 and 4 and 5 and 6. This means that the raters each have to make an individual evaluation of whether the text is '*relevant 3*' or '*relevant 4*'. The fact that the level descriptors are combined does not secure inter-rater reliability and is a serious threat to reliability of the exam.

Finally, the weighing of the two parts of the exam. The assessment guideline states that if the student has not answered task 1 or task 2, the rater must make a judgement based on what the student has handed in. (Utdanningsdirektoratet , 2013a) The two tasks, however, are of different lengths and measure different competences. To secure reliability, it would make it easier for both examinees and the examiners if they knew *how* the texts were weighed and *which* competences were measured in each part.

6.1.7 The tasks in the same exam set do not measure the same competence aims

Is the ENG1002/1003 exam valid? The validity of a test is a question of to what extent the test measures what it is intended to measure (Brindley, 2001). The first research question I set out to answer was:

- Whether and to what extent the ENG1002/1003 English Foundation Course exam measures a broad spectrum of competence aims.

This study showed that the ENG1002/1003 exam does not measure a broad spectrum of competence aims. Additionally, there was considerable variation in which competence aims that were tested in the same exam set. Different competence aims were tested depending on which tasks the student chose and the content of the text the student wrote. Considering the exam is a high stake test, this is very unfortunate. One would expect that one examinee was tested on a par with the other examinees sitting for the same exam. Although the Directorate's intentions of testing all of the competence aims are good, validity of the exam suffers. It is not possible to test them all in one test. Greene maintains that to limit the scope of what is being assessed will build reliability in a test (Green, 2014). This will also positively affect validity. To secure high validity in the exam and measure as many competence aims as possible one has to simultaneously add more parts and tasks, but at the same time limit the *choice* of tasks.

One possible solution to increase the validity of the exam could be to change the design of the test, the exam format: To increase the number of tasks and to clearly state which competences are tested in each task. Comments that clarify each task as to what is expected could also be useful for the student and improve validity, because it will make plain what the examinee is to focus on. Furthermore, if there is a choice of tasks, to ensure

that the same competence is tested in all of the choices. In order to secure high rater reliability, I would expand the number of tasks to for example five and state how much each of the tasks was worth. The table below summarizes these ideas and is an example of what the design could look like. In the first column the areas and competences aims should clearly be stated so that the student knows what is tested in each of the tasks. The second column shows the number of tasks, the third how much the tasks are worth, and the fourth column could include comments to the students about each task – ‘In this task you are expected to...’ ‘Make sure you include technical terms in you answer’.

Competence Aims	Tasks	% of grade	Descriptions/comments to the students
Language Learning -clearly state what is tested	Task 1	20	Task 1 could test the students’ language ability.
Communication -clearly state which competence aims are tested in each task	This is the most extensive area, and according to my analysis, the most frequently tested. Three tasks could pertain to the competence aims in this area.		
	Task 2	20	Task 2 could test reading. An unknown text could be given for the students to read combined with questions to the text.
	Task 3	10	Task 3 could be related to numeracy.
	Task 4	10	Task 4 could ask the students about their in-depth study related to their study programme
Culture, Society and Literature -clearly state what is tested	Task 5	40	Task 5 could be a longer answer and focus on topical knowledge. In this part there could be a choice of tasks.
	5	100	

6.1.8 The future of the ENG1002/1003 exam

Questions have been asked throughout this thesis whether long written texts are the best way of assessing students’ written competence. It seems I am not the only one concerned with this question. In the article ‘*En gyldig vurdering av elevers skrivekompetanse*’²⁹, Evensen poses the question: ‘How can we be sure that our assessment is valid in regards to both assessing what we think we assess and at the same time doing so in a way that does not restrain the subject area we assess unreasonably’ (Evensen, 2010, p. 13). According to my findings, it proves difficult.

In ‘*Erfaringer med eksamen i engelsk*’³⁰, Hellekjær criticizes the system by inquiring whether the ENG10112/1003 exam tests the right abilities. If a student passes the exam,

²⁹ Valid assessment of students’ written competence, my translation
³⁰ Experiences with the English exam, my translation

he or she is prepared for further education. This implies being able to read and understand technical literature. 'Would it not be appropriate to test the students' receptive skills as well?'³¹ (Hellekjær, Erfaringer med eksamen i engelsk, 2011, p. 45). Yes, it would.

Criticism of the text concept in the final exam in Norwegian, (the subject) is voiced by Sparboe, in his article '*Overgangen fra tradisjonelle sjangre til teksttyper – et uheldig valg*'³². He is concerned about what the final exam really measures of written competence and how just this measurement actually is, the replacement of 'genre' by 'text type' in Norwegian L1 exams and the confusion it may create among students who are used to writing traditional genres (Sparboe, 2014). This article, of course, focuses on the Norwegian L1 exam, but the challenge of assessing a vague 'text' and the concern about just assessment is a common denominator and applies to the L2 exam as well.

As mentioned in section 1.4, there was a revision of the Curriculum in 2013. After several parties had had their say in a hearing, *The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training* passed a resolution to revise and change some of the competence aims. This change came into force 01.08.2013.

During the consultation process, 152 parties contributed in the discussion of the consultation draft. Comments made to the changes showed that

- The division of the main area Communication into Oral Communication and Written Communication in the curriculum was considered a positive change
- 114 parties wanted the text concept specified, in addition to a description of which genres the students were expected to know
- Many parties expressed the problems and challenges of a common curriculum for all study programmes
- The competence aims in the revised curriculum are more numerous than in the previous version. The requirements are even higher, related to students' maturity and the ability to reflect. This is unfortunate for vocational students
- The parties claimed that the present common exam for all study programmes is not appropriate for any of the students and neither vocational nor general studies students are able to show their competence³³

(Utdanningsdirektoratet, 10.04.2013)

³¹ My translation

³² The transition from traditional genres to text – a bad choice, my translation

³³ My translation

Regardless of the criticism, and comments made, the Directorate decided to keep the vague text concept, expand the already numerous competence aims and maintain the existing common exam for all study programmes.

7 CONCLUSION

In the following, I will bring this thesis to a conclusion with some final thoughts on the findings and offer suggestions of possible solutions and improvements. Then I end by proposing some areas for further research.

7.1 SALIENT FINDINGS

To make good exam questions that test a broad spectrum of competence is a complex and difficult assignment.

One of the research question I set out to answer was: *whether and to what extent the students understand the texts in the preparation booklet and the tasks given in the ENG1002/1003 exam so that they can write in such a way that an ample number of competence aims can be assessed.*

To seek information about the students' understanding was not easy. I was only able to make inferences based on the information in the questionnaires and the information acquired from the interviews. What I found was that there was a profound difference between the vocational and the general study programmes when it came to whether or not the students understood the texts in the preparation booklet, the usefulness of the booklet and its information and the extent and the intentions of the writing tasks.

The texts in the preparation booklet seemed more useful to the general studies students. Some of the vocational students did not even read all of the texts. This allows me to infer that they either thought the contents were too difficult or not interesting enough to read. Hence, the texts were not useful for all students. Some students did not even use the booklet on the test day. This undermines the purpose of the whole booklet – the fact that the topic and the texts presented should give all the students a common platform.

Indications also showed that if the students had been better acquainted with the competence aims, they might have been more aware of the extent of the writing tasks. As a result, they would be better qualified to choose the tasks where they could show their total competence. The test designers' intentions are good. The problem is that it does not seem as if the students catch on to those intentions. The vocational students were much better at choosing the tasks that were best suited for them, than were the general studies

students. This may be because the tasks intended for the vocational students seem 'easier' and thus more tempting for all the students to choose. Students from both study programmes seemed to miss the extent or the complexity of the writing tasks. I believe this could be related to the use of the bullet points in the tasks and the genre confusion. Many of the tasks lack clarity. The students do not seem to understand exactly what to do.

The second research question was as follows: *whether and to what extent the ENG1002/1003 English Foundation Course exam measures a broad spectrum of competence aims*. According to the material presented in chapter 4 and 5, it is clear that the exam does not measure as much as it should. In chapter 1, I stipulated a number of competence aims that I thought was reasonable to expect measured within each of the main subject areas. The majority of the exam sets did not meet these stipulated numbers. What the tasks *may* measure (the intentions of the task designers), and what they *actually* measure differs, depending on the content of the texts the student writes. I found that the competence aims within the main area *communication* were more frequently tested than the competence aims in the two other areas. This is reasonable, because some aims are easier to measure than others and this area is also the most extensive in terms of the number of aims. However, in some sets the competence aims in the main areas *language learning* and *culture, society and literature* were hardly tested, even though the competence aims seemed easy to test. Finally, I expected the same competence aims to be tested regardless of which part of *Task 1 (a or b)* or *Task 2 (a, b, c or d)* the student chose. This was not the case. Students sitting for the same exam are not tested in the same competences. This constitutes the most serious threat to the validity of the exam.

7.2 SUGGESTIONS FOR RESTRUCTURING THE ENG1002/1003 EXAM

IS A COMMON EXAM THE BEST SOLUTION?

Based on my findings, I question the use of a common exam for all study programmes. The common exam in its present form is not a good option for any of the study programmes. If the exam favours certain students, I would say that it favours the general studies students. The vocational students are at a loss. As Berg concludes, the winners of the exam arrangement 'are the students who are not selected for the exam' (2014, p. 98). I tend to

agree with this, and hope that local exams for vocational study programmes is once again considered.

MEASURABLE AND LESS EXTENSIVE COMPETENCE AIMS

Students should be assessed by unambiguous and measurable criteria. In the process of analysing the exam sets, I went through the competence aims and the exam sets several times and recorded the competence aims tested in the exam sets with Xs in the grids. Each time I either added new Xs, removed an X or put others in brackets. The essence is that the Xs in the grids changed. This fact proves my point: the test is not reliable. When I cannot agree with myself which competences are tested, it makes it hard for the many teams of raters around the country to agree on which competences to measure in each of the tasks and to agree on a grade. Disagreements happen. Grades vary. Even when the raters seemingly have a common understanding of the tasks and the rating scale. There is too much room for interpretation.

To make the competence aims measurable and less extensive would make the raters' assessment more reliable. It would also help the students write better texts and choose the most appropriate writing prompt, if the competence aims were more decodable.

TOWARDS A NEW TEST DESIGN?

Longer written texts are not the best way of testing students' written competence, as they give too much room for interpretation. This may threaten both the validity and the reliability of the test, something which has been discussed previously. Perhaps it is timely to consider a new test design with an increased number of shorter tasks that are compulsory for all to answer.

Norwegian students are, according to the PISA-study, poor readers (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2012). This not only applies to them as L1 learners, but have consequences for them as L2 learners as well, because as Hellekjær (2008) points out, reading is important in order to develop vocabulary and to acquire good reading strategies. Maybe the time has come to reinstate the testing of receptive skills in the ENG1002/1003 exam. The washback effect could prove positive on the students' writing ability.

7.3 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Firstly, it would have been interesting to expand my study to include more vocational programmes than just building and construction in order to investigate whether the information about the exam is valid for all vocational studies. The fact that my findings in relation to the usefulness of the bullet points in the writing prompts, for instance, were opposite of those found by Berg, makes this worth exploring further.

Another issue worth investigating is the testing of receptive skills. Would an implementation of texts for reception along with tasks, in addition to text production, secure a more objective and reliable scoring of the exam?

An experiment worth following is Re videregående skole's application to the county in order to participate in a pilot project to test out a new organization form for the written exam in English. The details of the project are not ready yet, but the purpose of this experiment is to make a test that does not favour certain study programmes, give the students the possibility to show a broader range of competence aims in English and use sources and digital tools in a suitable way. The idea is to give the examinees a research question within a given topic, expand the examination period so that the students have more time for preparation in order to plan and organize their drafts, co-operate with their peers and receive guidance from their teacher. The notion is to make the exam situation as close to a real life situation as possible.

I fear that as long as the competence aims in the English curriculum are as extensive and unmeasurable as they are at present, the exam tasks as unclear and the scoring rubrics as ambiguous, the exam will remain both invalid and unreliable.

'Sadly, there is no generally accepted 'gold standard' measure of language ability' (Green, 2014, p. 65).

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APPENDIX 1 WRITTEN INFORMATION TO STUDENTS AND PARENTS

■, 09.12.2013

Til elever og foresatte i ■■■■■■■■■■,

I forbindelse med min masteroppgave i engelsk «*A Critical Analysis of the ENG1002/03 Written Exam*» ønsker jeg elevenes hjelp.

Oppgaven min har som mål å se på hvilke kompetansemål som faktisk blir målt i den skriftlige eksamen i engelsk for vg1(studiespes.) og vg2(yrkesfag). I tillegg til min egen tolkning, ønsker jeg å se på elevbesvarelsen og å gjennomføre et intervju med ti elever om deres opplevelse av eksamenssettet.

Etter LK06 er kompetansemålene og eksamensoppgavene de samme for yrkesfag og studiespesialiseringsfag. Jeg ønsker å høre elevenes mening om

a) **forberedelseshftet** – lay-out, språk og vanskegrad på tekstene og

b) selve **skriveoppgavene** – hvilke oppgaver elevene velger, hvordan de løser dem og om de føler de har fått vist sin kompetanse.

4.-8.time fredag 13.12.2013, er satt av til skrive dag i engelsk. Oppgaven vil bli en tidligere gitt eksamensoppgave. Vedlagt vil elevene finne en kort spørreundersøkelse. Hensikten med den er at elevene skal ha et utgangspunkt for intervjuet som ikke vil bli gjennomført før etter jul.

Undersøkelsen er helt anonym og vil ikke kunne spores tilbake til enkeltelever. Hvis det er noen som allikevel ikke ønsker at deres sønn/datter skal delta, er det selvfølgelig helt i orden. Ta i så fall kontakt med meg på mail: ■■■■■■■■■■ eller ring meg på ■■■■■■■■■■ innen 12.12.2013.

På forhånd takk!

Mvh

Hanne Christina Mürer

APPENDIX 2 THE QUESTIONNAIRE, PAGE 1

Spørreskjema

TEMA: ENG1002/1003 FORBEREDELSESHEFTE OG EKSAMENSOPPGAVER

Det er mulig å velge flere alternativ.

Forberedelsesdagen:

1. Hvor lang tid brukte du på å forberede deg?

- Mindre enn 1 time
- 1-2 timer
- Mer enn 3 timer

2. Hvordan jobbet du med heftet?

- Leste
- Slo opp mange ord
- Lagde tankekart
- Leste og oversatte tekstene
- Fikk hjelp
- Hentet informasjon fra andre kilder
- Annet _____

3. Hvilke ord beskriver best hva du syntes om heftet? Sett ring rundt ordene.



APPENDIX 3 THE QUESTIONNAIRE, PAGE 2

Spørreskjema

Oppgaveheftet

4. Hvordan vil du beskrive oppgavene?
- Lette
 - Sånn passe
 - Vanskelige
5. Hadde oppgaveheftet nok oppgaver å velge mellom?
- Ja
 - Nei
6. I hvilken grad syntes du oppgavene passet til din studieretning?
- Passet godt.
 - Helt greit.
 - Passet ikke.
7. Beskriv tekstene i oppgavesettet med tre ord.
- _____
8. Fikk du vist kompetansen din? (Det du kan?)
- Ja
 - Nei
 - Vet ikke
9. Kjenner du til kompetansemålene i engelsk?
- Ja, kjenner dem godt
 - Nei, ikke i det hele tatt
 - Har hørt om dem
 - Vet ikke
10. Hvilke to oppgaver valgte du?
- _____
11. Hadde du nytte av forberedelsesheftet på fagdagen?
- Ja, brukte det mye
 - Ja, litt
 - Nei, ikke i det hele tatt
12. Er du
- Gutt?
 - Jente?

INTERVJUGUIDE

INNLEDNING

- Introduksjon
- Bakgrunn for intervjuet

FORBEREDELSESHEFTE/FORBEREDELSESDAGEN

1. Hvordan jobbet du med forberedelsesheftet?
2. Hvordan synes du tekstene var?
3. Brukte du forberedelsesheftet da du skrev tekstene?
4. Hva synes du om lay-out på heftet?

EKSAMENSHEFTET/EKSAMENSOPPGAVENE

1. Hva var inntrykket ditt av eksamensheftet?
2. Hvilket ord best beskriver heftet?
3. Hva synes du om oppgavene?
4. Hvis du kunne ønsket det en viss type oppgave, hva hadde det vært?
5. Hvilke oppgaver valgte du? Hvorfor?
6. Hjalp «kulepunktene» i oppgave-instruksjonene deg?
7. I hvilken grad fikk du vist kompetansen din gjennom disse oppgavene?
8. Hvordan synes du oppgavene henger sammen med hva som blir undervist gjennom skoleåret?
9. Hvordan synes du oppgavene passer til studieretningen din?

APPENDIX 5 TRANSCRIPTS OF THE INTERVIEWS

Elev A

- Men du - det første du tenkte da du fikk forberedelsesheftet - hva var det?
- Æsj. (pause)
- Æsj - hvorfor tenkte du æsj?
- (pause) fordi jeg hater alt som har så mye skrift. Jeg liker ikke å skrive. Det blir for vanskelig.
- Men lesing da?
- Det går fint, det - å lese.
- Ja
- Leste du tekstene på forhånd?
- Nei.
- Nei...hvorfor ikke det?
- Det vet jeg ikke...
- Vet ikke? Det hjalp ikke at du fikk beskjed om at de kunne bli brukt når du skrev? (Eleven rister på hodet)
- Hvis du ser på teksten, da? (Jeg viser fram forberedelsesheftet, og blar i det) Førsteintrykket av selve heftet, hva er det?
- (lang pause) Mye tekst.
- Er det sånn...eh, nå må jeg prøve å ikke stille ledende spørsmål (smiler) eh, du synes det var greit å lese. Det var ikke fordi at du syntes det var vanskelig?
- Det var greit å lese, men man blir ikke akkurat så motivert av å lese det.
- Nei... men hva synes du om lay-outen, altså oppsettet på heftet?
- Det er fint.
- Det er greit?
- Ja, stor skrift og...
- Hva synes du om lengden på tekstene?
- Lange
- Og da, hvis du ser på ordene i ordskyen her. (henviser til ordskyen på spørreskjemaet) Hvilket ord best beskriver forberedelsesheftet synes du?
- (Tenker lenge) Vanskelig
- Vanskelig. Umm
- Hvis vi går til selve eksamensoppgaven.(Jeg tar fram oppgaveheftet og viser til det) Husker du hvilke oppgaver du valgte?
- 1A og 2B
- Hva var det som gjorde at du valgte 1A?
- Fordi det var den som virket enklest, synes jeg?
- Kunne du valgt den?(Peker på oppgave 1B) Hadde du hatt noe å skrive om, hvis du måtte?
- Nei...
- Nei, husker du at vi har hatt om stereotyper?
- Nei...
- Hvordan vil du beskrive del 1, da? Var den vanskelig, lett eller sånn passe?
- Litt over middels vanskelig.
- Litt over middels vanskelig. Synes du det var nok oppgaver å velge mellom?
- Ja, men de var alt for vanskelige tekster.
- Ja, det var det? I hvilken grad synes du de passet til studieretningen din?
- Dårlig
- Dårlig? Hva kunne vært gjort annerledes?
-skrive fortellinger. Fortellende tekster.
- Du valgte oppgave 2B.
- Ja
- Hjalp disse punktene deg noe? (Peker på "strukturpunktene" i oppgaven)
- Nja.. Jeg skjønnet ikke alt som sto der.
- Slo du opp noen av odene?
- Nei
- Brukte du Ifinger?
- Nei, jeg hadde ikke tilgang.
- Nei, det var det som manglet, ja.. Men synes du du fikk vist det du kunne? Altså kompetansen din i disse oppgavene her?
- Greit..
- Eh, hva tenker du, hvis du skulle valgt deg en oppgave eller en annen type eksamensform for yrkesfag. Hvordan ville den vært? Nå er det jo den samme oppgaven som på studiespes.
- her er det helt umulig å høre hva eleven svarer. Han mumler i tillegg til at det skurrer veldig.
- Du nevnte at du kunne tenke deg flere fortellende oppgaver. Dette er jo en fortelling - en novelle-oppgave. (Jeg peker på oppgave 2C i eksamenshefte) Kunne du valgt denne?
- (Lang pause mens han leser oppgaven) Nei. Nei, den hadde jeg ikke klart..
- For dette er jo en type "fortelling".. Hadde det vært "lurere" med oppgaver som hadde mer med yrkesfag og gjøre?
- Ja. Det kunne vært en egen eksamen for yrkesfag med lettere oppgaver.
- Hva slags type oppgaver kunne du tenkt deg da?
- Fortelle om en arbeidsdag eller et yrke. Tekster om maskiner og det vi driver med.
- Men da tror jeg egentlig ikke det var så mye mer. Er det noe annet du vil tilføye?
- Nei..

APPENDIX 6 TRANSCRIPTS OF THE INTERVIEWS

Elev B

- Hvis vi ser på forberedelsesheftet først. Hva er det første du tenkte da du så forberedelsesheftet?
- Jeg tenkte at jeg skulle se på det når jeg kom hjem - og lese. Jeg begynte og lese og det var forholdsvis interessante historier og tekster. Men kanskje litt feil retta mot anleggsteknikk og byggteknikk. Og vanskelige å sette seg inn i for oss, da.
- Ja.. Hva er det som gjør at de er vanskeligere? Altså tekstene?
- Ja, det er lissom... eh....det er enklere hvis det har noe med yrkesretninga våres å gjøre, da. Så er det litt enklere å sette seg inn i det . Sånn som dette (henviser til forberedelsesheftet han har foran seg) var litt mer for helsefaglig....tenkte jeg, da.
- hmmm. Så du savnet tekster om maskiner og bruksanvisninger og sånne type ting?
- Ja, eller...ja.
- Hva synes du om vanskelighetsgraden?
- Det var helt passe for meg.
- Slo du opp mange ord?
- Nei, slo ikke opp mye.
- Nei...
- Jeg tar fram oppgaveheftet og legger det foran eleven.
- Hvis vi går over til oppgaveheftet. Hva synes du om det?
- ..(pause, mens eleven ser gjennom heftet) Det var hvertfall lette oppgaver å kunne jobbe med, da. I forhold til tekstene, så var det veldig oversiktlig og bra. Alle oppgavene var lissom mulig å gjennomføre.
- Oppgave 1A og 1B er litt forskjellig.
- Ja
- Hvilken var det du valgte?
- Tror jeg valgte 1A? Ja, jeg valgte den.
- Hva er grunnen til at du valgte den?
- Jo, det var fordi jeg har laget en del film og sånn, så da passet det bra. Å skrive en sånn manus-sak, da.
- Eh.. Men du tenkte ikke at den passet spesielt for deg på yrkesfag?
- Jo, det gjorde den jo. Fordi da kunne jeg jo lage no, for eksempel da- så kunne jeg lage en film om det firma som jeg jobber i.
- hmm
- Så kunne jeg lage en reklamefilm for det.
- Så det var en enkel oppgave?
- Ja, veldig enkel.
- Kunne du skrevet noe på 1B om stereotypes?
- Ja, det er jo sånne hverdagslige ting, da - som forskjellige typer. Forskjellige typer mennesker. Så den var jo ikke så vanskelig den heller.
- Del 2 da?
- Da tror jeg jeg valgte 2B, hvis ikke jeg husker feil.... Kanskje ikke? (pause) Jo, 2B tok jeg.
- Og da er det egentlig...de som har laget oppgavene har tenkt at oppgave 1A og 2A er de som passer best for yrkesfag, for de har noe med jobb å gjøre.
- Hm.m
- Så da valgte du den som ikke var sånn typisk for yrkesfag. Husker du hva du tenkte?
- Det var det at jeg har lyst til å jobbe med mennesker. Jeg har jo tenkt å bli lærer etter hvert. Og dette var jolissom om mennesker og hvordan de kan endre seg, eller...Det var interessant.
- Var det nok oppgaver å velge mellom?
- Ja, det var det.
- Synes du du fikk vist kompetansen din?
- Ja, jeg synes det.
- Hvis du skulle kunne ønske deg andre type oppgaver, er det no du ville endret på da? Hvis du kunne ønske?
- Eh....Kanskjelitt mer åssen sjanger tekstene skulle være i? Og kanskje litt enklere og kanskje ikk bare skjønnlitterært. Nei, ikke bare sakprosa, mener jeg. Muligheten for å kunne skrive skjønnlitterært.
- Er det enklere?
- Ja, for mange så tror jeg det er det.
- Det er ikke no vanskelig å finne på noe?
- Nei...
- Bra! Brukte du forberedelsesheftet?
- Ja, jeg satt littegrann dagen før, men jeg brukte det mer på prøven.
- Synes du det var nyttig?
- Ja, absolutt. Jeg brukte det mye.
- Er det noe du har lyst til å føye til?
- Egentlig ikke
- Jamen da er vi ferdige.

APPENDIX 7 TRANSCRIPTS OF THE INTERVIEWS

Elev C

(Vi begynner med å se på forberedelsesheftet)

-Da begynner vi med forberedelseshefte. Hva tenkte du da du så heftet?

-Jeg tenkte at dette kom til å bli vanskelig.

-Hva var det som gjorde at du tenkte at dette kom til å bli vanskelig?

-Jeg tenkte det kom til å bli dårlig når jeg så så mye tekst.

-Ja...Leste du alle tekstene?

-Litt, Jeg leste noen av dem, men ikke alle.

-Det du leste - var det lett, vanskelig, middels?

-Middels

-Middels...slo du opp noen ord?

-Ja, det var et par.

-Ja...du satt og jobbet litt med det?

-Uhhm

-Hvilke av disse ordene her beskriver best hva du følte da du så heftet? (Jeg viser til ordskyen på spørreskjemaet).

-(pause) Den og den (Eleven peker på to ord)

-Uforståelig og vanskelig?

-Brukte du heftet da du skrev oppgaven?

-Ja, i starten.

-Uhhmm...Hvis vi går til oppgavene, da. (Jeg legger fram oppgaveheftet slik at eleven får se på det mens vi prater)

-Leste du det som sto her? Informasjonssiden? (Jeg peker på informasjonssidene i begynnelsen av heftet)

-Ja, den men ikke den. Eleven viser til at det er informasjonssiden på bokmål han har lest, men ikke den på nynorsk.

-Nei,men det er det samme.

-Oppgave...den kortsvarsoppgaven...valgte du 1A eller 1B?

-Hmmm, den - 1A.

-Hvorfor valgte du den?

-Den virket lettere liksom.

-Der skulle du lage en film om en arbeidsplass.

-Ja..

-Var det noe du følte passet til studieretningen din?'

-Ja...det var vel kanskje det å lage en bra film, ja..

-Kan du nok uttrykk som har med jobben din å gjøre til å svare på den?

-Jeg sliter litt med engelsken...

-Ja...pause...Fikk du sagt det du ville?

-Hadde jeg klart det så skulle jeg skrevet mer.

-Uhhmm...Oppgave 2 da, den langsvaroppgaven. Husker du hvilken du valgte der?

-(pause) ...Jeg tror det var den der (peker på 2B)

-Du tror det var den, ja - 2B. Brukte du forberedelsesheftet da, når du skrev den?

-Ja, jeg leste en av de .

-Ja, en av de tekstene?

-Hvis du skal beskrive *den* oppgaven (peker på 2B), var den lett, middels eller vanskelig?

-Vanskelig.

-Den var vanskelig den og?

-Den var mye lettere. (Eleven peker på oppgave 1A i del en)

-Husker du lang du skrev? Eller hvor mye du skrev? (Jeg henviser til oppgave 2B i del 2)

-Tolv setninger eller no.

-Tolv setninger? Var det fordi at det stoppet opp? Orket du ikke skrive mer eller?

-Jeg husker ikke om det var så mye heller...

-Syns du oppgavene her.. eh ..eller hvordan synes du oppgavene her passer til deg som går på yrkesfag?

-De kunne godt vært litt lettere.

-Ja..hva slags oppgave ville du ønsket deg da, hvis du kunne fått velge?

...-(pause) Det kunne vært fint om vi kunne skrive om et arbeidssted. Noe vi jobbet med.

-Ja..Hjalp disse punktene deg no? (Jeg peker på "strukturpunktene" i oppgaveheftet)

-(Eleven rister på hodet.) De hjalp ikke så mye hvertfall.

-Nei..

-Når jeg ikke visste no

-Hadde du god nok tid synes du? Satt du lenge?

-Jeg satt en liten stund faktisk.

-Hvor mye var klokka tror du?

-Den var halv ett eller sånn cirka.

-Ga du opp?

-(pause)..da hadde jeg ikke mer å gi.

-Så du skulle ønske du hadde fått flere oppgaver som hadde med studieretningen din å gjøre?

-Ja.

-Type rapport, logger-sånne type oppgaver, eller?

-uhum (bekreftende)

-Tusen hjertelig. Da tror jeg vi har vært gjennom alt.

APPENDIX 8 TRANSCRIPTS OF THE INTERVIEWS

Elev D

- Brukte du forberedelsesheftet?-
-Nei, fordi jeg var ikke på skolen den dagen vi fikk det.
-Men du brukte det heller ikke på selve skrive dagen?
-Jeg trodde ikke jeg hadde det.
-...for det lå på It's Learning også.
-Ja, men jeg trodde ikke jeg hadde det.
-Da hopper vi over det spørsmålet.
-Men da, tror du du hadde lest gjennom heftet, hvis du hadde hatt det?
-Ja, ikke hele - men mye av det.
-Da går vi til selve eksamensheftet. (Jeg tar fram oppgaveheftet og legger det foran eleven, så han kan bla i det.) Leste du informasjonen på første sida her? (Peker på informasjonssidene foran i heftet)
-Ja, jeg gjorde det.
-Og så var det selve oppgavene. Da var det kortsvarsoppgaver og langsvarsoppgaver. Husker du hvilke av de to du valgte?
-Det var 1A, tror jeg?
-Hvorfor valgte du akkurat den?
-For jeg skjønnte ikke den andre. Eller jeg skjønnte så vidt den og, men...
-Men hvis ikke jeg husker helt feil, så løste du den (peker på 1A) ganske greit?
-Ja, den gikk helt greit.
-Hvorfor var det(1A) den greieste oppgaven?
-For da hadde jeg litt mer å fortelle om, da.
-Hvorfor hadde du mer å fortelle om i akkurat den?
-Fordi jeg har en plass å jobbe.
-Så det er grunnen til at du valgte den?
-Ja, det var lettere å skrive om det.
-Hmm.. Oppgave 2. Den skulle være litt lenger....Husker du hvilken oppgave du valgte der?
-Emmmmm...(Tenker) Jeg tror det var den der. (Peker på oppgave 2 A)
-2A - Hvorfor valgte du den?
-Det var egentlig bare tilfeldig...
-Var det tilfeldig?
-Ja
-Leste du de andre oppgavene?
-Jeg synes det var vanskelig engelsk i de andre oppgavene, så jeg skjønnte ikke alt.
-Slo du opp noen av orda du ikke skjønnte?
-Ja, det tok litt tid. Også var jeg litt ukonsentrert den da'n, så....
-Men du brukte tida godt, gjorde du ikke det?
-Jo jeg satt ganske lenge.
-Hvis du skulle beskrive oppgavene i del to - hvordan ville du beskrevet dem da?
-Skjønner ikke...
-Var de lette, vanskelige, sånn passe?
-Vanskelige. Jeg synes de var vanskelige. Jeg hadde egentlig ikke noe jeg kunne skrive om...
-Men, hvorfor hadde du ikke noe å skrive om? Hva var grunnen til det?
-Sånn jeg skjønnte det, var at jeg skulle skrive om hvis du ikke passa inn i jobben din eller et eller annet og åssen det var for en nykommer å være ny i en jobb, da. Og jeg har jo ikke vært i "ny" jobb i det siste. Start en jobb.
-Ja, for du jobber hos faren din?
-Ja, jeg kjenner jo alle..og har vært der mange ganger og sånn. Det er liksom ikke no nytt for meg.
-De andre oppgavene her... (Jeg peker på resten av oppgavene i heftet)
-Kikka ikke på dem..
-Du kikka ikke på dem?
-Nei, det var så mange vanskelige ord.
-Hjalp disse punktene deg no? (Jeg peker på punktene i oppgaveteksten)
-Ja, de gjorde det. For jeg fikk litt ideer,da. Om hva jeg kunne skrive, men det hjalp ikke veldig mye på teksten.Den ble veldig kort.
-Hvis du skulle komme med noen ønsker om hvordan eksamensoppgaver skulle være for å passa bedre til deg.
-Da ville jeg ha historier, tenker jeg. Eller fakta om noe du kan.
-Hva slags emne tenker du på da?
-Som fakta? For meg? Det måtte bli å skrive om et spill eller no..eller krig?
-Synes du du fikk vist det du kan?
-Nei.
-Hvordan kunne oppgavene vært annerledes? For at du virkelig kunne brilliert?
-Skrive historier.
-Er det lettere å skrive historier, synes du?
-Ja, for da har du peiling og litt å skrive om.

Elev E

- Hvis vi ser på forberedelsesheftet først. Hva tenkte du?
-Jeg synes det var vanskelig, egentlig.
-Hva var det som var vanskelig?
-Mye ord.
-Mye ord? Var ordene vanskelige?
-Det var mange jeg ikke forsto, egentlig...
-Var det noe du slo opp?
-Jeg prøvde å slå opp, men det var vanskelig for det.
-Hva synes du om tekstene da?
-De var helt greie, men de var ikke så spennende, liksom.
-Nei...Hva slags tekster kunne du tenkt deg, hvis du kunne velge? Hva er det som interesserer deg?
-Mer innen det jeg har valgt på skolen..innen yrke.
-Det er litt forskjellig lengde på tekstene her. Leste du alt?
-Jeg leste halvparten.
-Hvilke tekster var det du valgte å lese?
-Jeg leste hvertfall den.(Peker på den første og korteste teksten)
-Sarah's Story? Leste du Jasmine's Story? (Som er den neste teksten i heftet og litt lenger enn den første)
-Ja
-Chat Room Entries?
-Nei, tror jeg ikke jeg leste.
-Og ikke den heller? (Jeg peker på Mina's Story som er på ca 1,5 side)Nei...
-Hva med Appendix 5?
(Eleven rister på hodet)
-Hvis du skulle beskrive heftet med et av disse ordene her-
(Jeg peker på ordskyen på spørreskjemaet) Hvilket ville du valgt?
-Kjedelig..
-Hva er det som gjør at det er kjedelig?
-(Lang tenkepause) Det var ikke noe her jeg interesserer meg for..
-Hvor lang tid brukte du på heftet? Husker du det?
-En halvtime, kanskje?
-En halvtime.
-Ja, tror det.
-Fikk du noe help?
-Nei...
-Du spurte ikke om noen hjemme kunne lese det?
-Nei...
-Brukte du heftet da du skrev oppgaven?
-Nei..
-Hvorfor ikke det?
-Synes ikke jeg trengte det.
-Da går vi over til selve eksamensheftet. Leste du informasjonen på begynnelsen?
(Eleven nikker bekreftende)
-Oppgavene delt inn i kortsvarsoppgaver og langsvarsoppgaver.Hvilken av kortsvarsoppgavene valgte du?
-Jeg valgte 1A.
-Hvorfor valgte du den?
-Det var den jeg kunne skrive om.
-Kunne du valgt 1B? Hvis du måtte?
-Ja, hvis jeg måtte, så. Men den var ganske vanskelig.
-Synes du at du hadde godt nok ordforråd til å skrive om en arbeidsplass?
-Det var noe jeg klarte å skrive om, hvertfall.
-Brukte du disse punktene her? (Jeg peker på punktene i oppgaven)
-(Eleven nikker bekreftende)
-Så den (1A) synes du var grei?
-Ja, den var helt grei.
-Så til langsvarsoppgava...
-Der valgte jeg 2A.
-Hvorfor valgte du 2A?
-Det hørtes ut som noe vi(byggfag) kunne skrive om, men den var fortsatt vanskelig.
-Brukte du disse punktene her? (Jeg viser til punktene i oppgaveteksten)
-Ja, jeg brukte dem littegrann
-Men hva var det som var vanskelig med de oppgavene her? (Viser til heftet)
-Det var det å klare å finne på noe.
-Oppgave 2A, har jo noe med jobb å gjøre. Det å begynne på en ny arbeidsplass. Hadde du ikke noe å skrive om da?
-Jeg synes det var vanskelig å finne på noe....egentlig.

APPENDIX 10 TRANSCRIPTS OF THE INTERVIEWS

- Men du brukte ikke deg selv som eksempel når du skulle skrive?
- Nei...
- Du tenkte ikke at du kunne brukt det at du har begynt i en ny jobb, så "her har jeg noe å skrive om"?
- Nei...
- Var det for di du ikke tenkte på det i farta eller var det fordi du ikke skjønnte hva oppgava spurte om?
- Det var kanskje det at jeg ikke helt skjønnte hva de mente jeg skulle skrive om.
- Slo du opp noen ord i *den* oppgaven?
- Ja, jeg slo opp de vanskeligste.
- Hvilke ord er vanskelige her syns du?
- Det der for eksempel. (Eleven peker på experience)
- Experience?
- Og dette (Eleven peker på expectations)
- Expectations
- (pause...)Det var vanskelig...
- Hva synes du om antall oppgaver? Var det nok å velge mellom?
- Ja, det var nok oppgaver å velge mellom.
- Kunne du tatt noen av de andre her?
- Nei, jeg tror de var litt vanskelig.
- Hva var det som gjorde at de var vanskelige?
- Det var vanskelige spørsmål-ting å skrive om.(Han peker på "struktur/innholdspunktene")
- Det var de punktene her du ble litt engstelig av? Hva teksten skulle inneholde.
- Synes du at du hadde godt nok ordforråd til å svare på oppgave 2A da?
- Nei... Det var litt vanskelig med alle navna og sånn... Det hadde vært lettere hvis ikke det sto noe om hva som skulle være med.
- Så du ville heller hatt flere åpne oppgaver, sånn at du kunne skrive det du ville?
- (Eleven nikker bekreftende)
- Synes du du fikk vist det du kan i disse oppgavene her?
- Egentlig ikke..
- Hva skulle du ønska deg da? Hvordan skulle oppgavene vært?
- Litt lettere oppgaver og tekster som interesserer meg.
- Som hva da?
- Maskiner, tenker jeg.
- Hva slags sjanger skulle tekstene vært synes du?
- Instruksjoner - hvordan man bruker maskiner og sånn. Det er det jeg har bruk for hvertfall.

Elev F

- Hvis vi tar hefter først. Hva tenkte du da du så heftet?
- Ehhh, ... tenker du bare forsida eller hele heftet?
- Hele heftet
- Ehhh. Det er jo noe liknende jeg er vant til fra ungdomsskolen også, så....det er jo eksamen liksom, så jeg skjønnte at det kanskje kom til å bli ganske høyt nivå, men det var ikke sånn at jeg grua meg så veldig. Jeg er jo glad i engelsk og liker det som et fag.
- Hvordan jobbet du med heftet? Hvordan jobbet du med tekstene?
- Jeg leste gjennom. Alle tekstene en tre-fire ganger..eh..Starta vel da vi fikk heftet. Også hadde jeg det med meg på "eksamen".
- Hvor lang tid brukte du ca?
- På hele heftet? Det husker jeg ikke helt... Men jeg tenker kanskje rundt ti minutter? Ca... litt usikker...
- Hvis du skulle beskrive vanskelighetsgraden. Hvordan ville du beskrevet den?
- På en skala fra 1 til 10?
- For eksempel.. 10 er vanskeligst..
- Sånn med ord, vanskelige ord og sånn? Ehhhh... kanskje en 5-6-7? Jeg synes ikke det var vanskelig å lese det, men det er jo mye tekst...så...ja, kanskje en 6'er.
- Slo du opp mange ord?
- Nei, det gjorde jeg ikke.
- Hvis du skulle beskrive lay-out'en. Hvordan ville du beskrive den?
- Ehh...lett leselig. Ehh..Selv om det er mye ord, er det store bokstaver og det er oversiktlig. Jeg syns heftet generelt er godt satt opp og lettlest, ja.
- Hvis vi går til eksamensoppgavene. Hvordan vil du beskrive oppgavene?
- Jeg tok jo 1B. 1A skjønnte jeg ikke med en gang, så den syns jeg var litt vanskelig. Hvertfall når vi ikke har...eller vi har jo en hel dag og det er jo fler oppgaver vi må kunne rekke å ta også. Så jeg syns 1B så lettere ut.MMM, men det er ikke lette oppgaver, så...hvis jeg tar oppgavene også fra 1 til 10 så ville jeg satt dem til en 7-8. Ganske vanskelig da..
- Del 2 da. Det var en langsvarsoppgave.
- Her tok jeg....eh...Hva tok jeg her da? Her tok jeg 2C. Det er en oppgave jeg føler passa meg godt. Eh for jeg har jo sett en del filmer og fikk litt inspirasjon ved å tenke på ting jeg har sett før, og det er jo mange filmer som handler om det at en ser en person og at et får et førsteinntrykk av en person og at en får et annet inntrykk selv og.
- Hjalp disse punktene deg no?

APPENDIX 11 TRANSCRIPTS OF THE INTERVIEWS

-(Eleven leser punktene) Eh...ja det er jo det som en må ha med i teksten, så det ga meg jo et utgangspunkt til teksten jeg skulle skrive.
-Synes du oppgaveheftet hadde nok oppgaver?

-Ja, det synes jeg. Del 2 hadde hvertfall nok. Der var det jo fire oppgaver man kunne velge mellom. Del 1 hadde jo bare 2, men det var en oppgave som var litt lettere å skjønne syns jeg hvertfall. Så jeg synes det var bra oppgaver.

-Lay-out'en her - synes du den var like oversiktlig som i heftet?

-Ja, fortsatt stor skrift og lett å lese, og jeg synes det er oversiktlig.

-Synes du du fikk vist kompetansen din? Fikk du vist fram det du kan eller var det noe annet du...

-Hmmm...ja jeg synes at jeg fikk vist det jeg kunne. I 2C hvertfall. Jeg har jo som sagt sett flere filmer og serier og sånt. 2C passet meg bra og jeg synes jeg fikk vist mitt potensiale gjennom den, da.

-Et spørsmål igjen - Brukte duforberedelses heftet da du skrev?

-Eh...det...husker jeg ikke...Det tror jeg ikke jeg gjorde, men jeg hadde det med sån i tilfelle. Så vidt jeg husker så brukte jeg ikke det under "eksamen", det gjorde jeg ikke.

-Tusen hjertelig!

Bare hyggelig.

Elev G

-Da begynner vi med forberedelseshefte først... Husker du hva du tenkte da du fikk det?

-Jeg synes det var litt kjedelig. Veldig lite illustrasjoner. I heftet vi fikk på ungdomsskolen, så var det hvertfall noen bilder sånn at vi kunne assosiere litt mer over det vi ser og ikke bare tekst. Så det ville vel gjort at flere kunne få det til og.. Det er jo mange som liker å se på bilder og.

-Tekstene da, hva synes du om dem?

-De var helt greie, men jeg føler at de var ganske like. Det var ikke så store variasjoner. Men man fikk jo nok inspirasjon til å klare å skrive.

-Brukte du heftet når du skrev?

-Ikke oppgavene.

-Ikke underbevisst heller, tror du? At du hadde dem i bakhodet da du skrev?

-Jeg fikk sikkert ideer av det jeg leste, men det var ikke sånn at jeg tenkte over det.

-Vanskelighetsgraden på tekstene, da. Hvordan vil du beskrive dem?

-Det spørs vel hva man legger i dem. Om man tyder veldig mye inn i tekstene eller om man bare leser det sånn det står. Men det var ikke...jeg har lest lettere tekster...de var vel ganske vanskelig i forhold til sånn det var på ungdomsskolen, tror jeg.

-Så går vi til eksamensheftet. Leste du informasjonen?

-Ja

-Var den nyttig?

-Ja

-Oppgavene er delt inn i kortsvarsoppgaver og langsvarsoppgaver. Hvilken oppgave valgte du i del 1?

-1B.

-Hvorfor valgte du den?

-Fordi det var den jeg trodde jeg kunne skrive best på, kanskje..

-Var det kjent stoff?

-Ja, det var det vi hadde hatt om...

-Hadde du kunnet tatt oppgave 1A?

-Jeg kunne skrevet om det, men jeg hadde vel ikke fått vist det jeg kunne.

-Nei, det er jo det som er poenget her, at man skal få vist seg fram og briljere litt. Oppgave 2 da?

-Der tok jeg 2C... ja den tok jeg.

-Valgte du å skrive en novelle?

-Ja..

-Kunne du valgt noen av de andre oppgavene?

-Ja....jeg kunne vel det, men det var den som passa meg best.

-Er det den sjangeren du trives best med?

-Novelle eller essay, liksom..Men hvertfall i engelsk liker jeg å skrive..ikke saktekster, liksom. Jeg liker å skrive fritt.

-Hvorfor liker du det best?

-Det passer meg. Språket faller mye bedre. Jeg føler at det blir så stivt og oppstillt, hvis jeg skal prøve å skrive en saktekst.

-Hjalp de punktene deg noe?

-Ja, for jeg veit at den som sitter og retter kommer til å se etter de punktene, så...jeg må jo prøve å bruke dem også hjelper det jo på innholdet for da har jeg jo noe å holde meg til sånn at jeg ikke går helt ut på viddene på en måte.

-Ehh...Hvis du tenker på heftet som en helhet. Tenker du at du får vist kompetansen din?

-Ja. Det var oppgaver som passa meg, så det syns jeg.

-Det var ikke noe her du kunne tenke deg å endre på hvis du fikk sjansen?

-.....Det tror jeg ikke..

-Nei..

-Var det nok oppgaver å velge mellom?

-Ja, jeg syns det.. Man klarer jo ikke å finne helt noe som passer for alle, men her var det mange forskjellige oppgaver, så man finner jo noe som passer helt greit.

-Synes du oppgavene passet til din studieretning?

APPENDIX 12 TRANSCRIPTS OF THE INTERVIEWS

-Ja.....men jeg valgte jo å ta de som passa og...
-Var det vanskelig å se? Hvilke oppgaver som var ment for de ulike studieretningene?
-Jeg tenkte liksom...Det var vel heller litt mer sånn underbevisst tenking..at jeg så at det var sånn video om en jobb. Vi holder jo ikke på så mye med det, så da tok jeg den andre oppgaven. Og i oppgave 2 og, liksom. Der var det jo jobb der og...Det er jo ikke så mye vi kan skrive om..Det er jo ikke så mye av det vi holder på med.
-Så bra! Da tror jeg egentlig vi er ferdige.

Elev H

-Hvis vi begynner med forberedelseshftet først. Hva tenkte du om det da du fikk det?
-At det var greie tekster. De var ikke for lange...sånn at det var slitsomt å lese gjennom dem. Det var greit å komme gjennom de.
-Var det greit å forstå?
-Ja.
-Det var ikke for vanskelig?
-Nei..
-Hva synes du om lay-out her, da?
-...det var veldig bra. Ja, for du ser liksom hva som hang sammen og sånn.
-Brukte du lang tid på å lese det?
-..Nei, jeg tror ikke jeg brukte så lang tid..
-Slo du opp mange ord?
-Neeei, jeg tror ikke jeg slo opp noen..
-Så det var greit?
-Ja, om jeg ikke helt forsto dem, forsto jeg sammenhengen, hvertfall.
-Brukte du heftet mye da du skrev oppgavene?
-Eh...nei, jeg tror ikke det. Nei.. Jeg gjorde ikke det.
-Det var bare som bakgrunnsstoff, liksom?
-Da går vi over til selve eksamensoppgava. Leste du info'en først?
-Eh..leste vi ikke den på skolen?
-Jo, jeg tror det...
-Og så....Oppgave 1 er delt i to - 1A og 1B. Husker du hvilken du tok?
-Jeg tror jeg tok den. (Eleven peker på oppgave 1B)
-Hvorfor tok du den?
-Fordi...jeg følte det var den jeg kunne skrive mest om..Det var den jeg kunne mest om..
-Føler du den henger sammen med det vi gjør i engelsk?
-Uhhumm (Eleven nikker bekreftende)
-At du kjente igjen noe av dette her?
-...Oppgave 2 da. Hvilken oppgave tok du der?
-Emmm..Det var den med læreren som kom og var ny på en jobb?
-2A? Den der? (Jeg peker på oppgave 2A)
-Ja..
-Hvorfor tok du den?
-..Det var for jeg synes det var litt lettere å skrive om det, så jeg synes jeg kunne skrive mest om det.
-Har du no erfaring fra å være ny i en jobb?
-Ikke fra en jobb, men for eksempel fra skolen, da. Fra da vi starta på videregående.
-Så du brukte egne erfaringer?
-Hmmm (eleven nikker bekreftende)
-Synes du du fikk vist kompetansen din gjennom de oppgavene her?
-Ja
-Hvis du kunne endret på noe da. Hva ville eventuelt hatt mer av?
-Nå husker jeg ikke helt hva de andre var...(pause) Jeg vet ikke helt.. Var det bare en som var sånn å bare skrive en story?
-Ja, en novelleoppgave og resten står det vel ikke noe om sjanger på..
-Ja...kanskje en sånn til novelleoppgave, men med litt andre kriterier enn det som sto her, sånn at den ble litt annerledes.
-Hjalp disse punktene deg noe?
-Ja veldig. Det ble mye lettere å finne ut hva jeg skulle skrive om.
-Tror du de ville hjulpet deg hvis du hadde valgt andre type oppgaver og?
-Ja
-Hvordan synes du disse oppgavene passet til din studieretning?
-Bra.
-Det var greit liksom? Kunne du tatt andre oppgavene i del 2 enn de du valgte?
-Jeg husker ikke helt hva de andre oppgavene handla om, meneh jeg kunne sikkert valgt noen av de andre - men jeg føler det var den jeg valgte som jeg kunne skrevet mest om,da
-Da tror jeg ikke det var så mye mer. Takk!

APPENDIX 13 TRANSCRIPTS OF THE INTERVIEWS

Elev I

Forberedelseshefter og eksamensheft ligger foran eleven.

-Hvis vi begynner med det først. (Jeg peker på forberedelsesheftet.) Husker du hva du tenkte da du så heftet?

-Nei, jeg husker ikke akkurat hva jeg tenkte, men....eh jeg synes at ekstene var interessante, da.

-Ja....Hva er det som gjorde at de var interessante?

-Eh.. De forskjellige ..eh .. sjangerne og hva det handla om, egentlig. Tema var egentlig det som interesserte meg.

-Ja..Hva synes du om lay-outet på heftet?

-Det er jo ikke så mye "lay-out" annet enn tekstene - det er jo ikke bilder eller noen ting.

-Savna du bilder?

-Ja, det kunne godt vært bilder for min del.

-Synes du det var litt kjedelig, eller?

-Nei, jeg tenkte ikke no over det egentlig.

-Var heftet lett å finne fram i?

-Ja det var det.

-Så det var greit? Størrelsen på skriften var den....?

-Den var veldig passe.

-Brukte du heftet når du skrev?

-Ja.

-Hva brukte du det til?

-Jeg brukte det egentlig bare som inspirasjon og for å komme på ideer, på en måte. Eller leste gjennom og prøvde å finne noe jeg kunne bygge på.

-Hvor langt tid brukte du på forberedelse før selve prøva?

-Nei...jeg leste vel gjennom en fire-fem ganger, kanskje.. Et par tre timer, tenker jeg.

-Slo du opp noen ord?

-Nei, ikke så veldig mange. Det var ikke så mange jeg trengte å slå opp heller. Også hvis det var noen jeg ikke hadde peiling på, så slo jeg dem opp. De fleste skjønnte jeg når jeg leste setningen. Hva de handla om.

-Ut fra sammenhengen?

-Uhum

-Hvis du skulle beskrive heftet, da - er det lett, vanskelig, middels?

-Heftet var midt mellom vanskelig og middels, på en måte. Ja...

-Så du synes du fikk nok utfordring?

-Ja.

-Det paset for deg?

-Ja, absolutt.

-Så bra! Da går vi over til denne eksamensoppgaven. Leste du denne informasjonen på forhånd? (Jeg peker på informasjonssidene foran i heftet)

-Uhum (Eleven nikker bekræftende)

-Hjalp den deg noe?

-Nja... jeg visste jo egentlig.... eller vi fikk jo vite på forhånd hva vi skulle gjøre.

-Var du inne og så på den eksamensveiledningen på forhånd?

-Nei

-(Blar til oppgave-delen) Også er det sånn at oppgaven er delt inn i kortsvar og langsvar. Husker du hvilke oppgaver du valgte?

-Eh... jeg tror jeg valgte 1B...ja, jeg valgte 1B også valgte jeg 2.....jeg tror det var 2B og faktisk.

-Hva er grunnen til at du valgte 1B?

-Jeg syntes den så mest spennende ut og den passa meg best av de to..eh..Det jeg kunne mest om, på en måte.

-Henger det sammen (oppgavene) med det vi har gjort i engelsk, synes du?

-Ja, egentlig - det med verdier og sånne ting. Ja, vi har jo gått igjennom mye av det i timen, sånn at vi har litt bakgrunnsinformasjon.

-Du nevnte i sta at forberedelsesheftet mangler litt bilder.

-Ja

-Her er det et bilde og det var den oppgaven du valgte. Hadde det noe å si?

-Eh...ja - altså bilde gjorde på en måte at det var mest innbydende å velge den oppgaven. Selv om det var ikke bare derfor - det var jo litt- jeg skjønnte jo at det var den oppgaven jeg hadde mest lyst til å gjøre.

-Fikk du noen ideer fra tegningen?

-Ja, altså - ideer sånn at jeg skjønnte hva oppgaven spurte om, på en måte.

-Ja, hva de var ute etter?

-Uhm.. (bekræftende)

-Skal vi se..Synes du det var nok oppgaver?

-Ja, det var for så vidt nok oppgaver, men i del 2 så syns jeg det var litt sånn...det var ikke så mange oppgaver som var veldig innbydende, som jeg hadde så veldig lyst til å gjøre egentlig, så jeg måtte velge den jeg hadde mest lyst til å gjøre av de. Den som virka mest spennende på en måte.

-Hva var det som gjorde at du ikke hadde lyst til å ta noen av dem?

-HM... altså - Jeg velger den jeg syns er mest morsom av de og som har mest..hva skal jeg si...utfordring. Som jeg syns jeg får mest utfordring i.

-Når du sier utfordring. Tenker du på kompetansemålene?

-Ja, sånn at jeg får vist mest bredde.

-Hjalp disse punktene deg noe?

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- Ja de hjalp. Men det kunne vært litt mer bredde i oppgavene. De var veldig like på en måte. De hadde mye med det samme å gjøre.
- Du mener at de går på det samme temaet?
- Tema er jo greit for så vidt, men måten å skrive på. Jeg synes ikke det passer så grei med måten jeg liker å skrive.
- Synes du oppgavene her passet til din studieretning?
- Ja, det gjorde de, hvis jeg skjønner spørsmålet riktig, da?
- Til studiespes..Jeg stiller de samme spørsmålene til byggfag..ikke sant, yrkesfag..
- Ja ..ja.. De hadde mye bra i forhold til studiespes utfordringa. Absolutt. Det passa bra for vår linje.
- Passet sjangrene deg?
- Nei, det var kanskje det med del 2 at ikke sjangrene var helt sånn jeg er best på da. Det jeg synes er morsomt å skrive.
- Hva er det du er best på , da?
- Kanskje kåseri eller no. Det er egentlig det jeg synes er morsomt å skrive.
- Hva synes du om lay-out på oppgavene? Var det lett eller vanskelig å finne fram?
- Veldig oversiktligeegentlig.
- Så det er du fornøyd med?
- Ja
- Hvis du fikk sjangsen til å endre på oppgavene. Hva ville du gjort da?
- Hmm..jeg hadde nok ikke valgt samme oppgaven igjen, fordi den oppgaven var ganske vanskelig.
- Du valgte 2B?
- Ja,jeg ville valgt 2C.
- Ja, den novelleoppgaven?
- Jeg så etterpå at jeg tror jeg hadde gjort det bedremed 2C. Men det er lett å tenke etterpå.
- Vi skal" øve" mer på å velge oppgave seinere. Er det noe mer du vil tilføye når det gjelder oppgavene?
- Nei, egentlig ikke...
- Ble du overrasket da du så denne eksamensoppgava? Var den sånn du hadde forventa deg?
- Vi har egentlig hatt mange eksamensoppgaver på ungsomsskolen, som tentamner og sånn. Det var ikke så stor forskjell på disse og de vi har hatt før, egentlig.
- I disse oppgavene her, så står det jo ikke noe om lengde på teksten. Bortsett fra at den er kort og den er lang. Var det vanskelig å finne ut hvor langt du skulle skrive?
- Nei...Jeg tenkte bare at å lenge det var på 3-4 sider så var det kanskje greit på langsvarsoppgava. Sånn som vi har pleid å ha det før..
- Så du sammenlikner den her med ungdomsskoleeksamen.
- Ja, den trenger jo ikke være så mye lenger, så lenge man forbedrer seg språklig.
- Tusen hjertlig takk..

Elev J

- Hvis vi begynner med forberedelsesheftet først. Hvordan jobba du med det?
- Eh..egentlig så jobba jeg ikke så mye med det, sånn egentlig..Jeg vet ikke, jeg. Det var jo bare å lese de..Jeg leste alle tekstene også gjorde jeg ikke så mye mer egentlig.
- Nei...Hvordan synes du tekstene var?
- De var greie, men det var noe vanskelig. Hvertfall på den.....Tror det var den (peker på Jasmine's Story)
- Jasmine's Story?
- Tror det var den som var litt vanskelig.
- Hva var det som var vanskelig,da?
- Det var litt sånn...tungt stoff syns jeg.
- Slo du opp noen ord? (Eleven blar i heftet)
- Nei...Den tenker jeg det var.. (peker på Mina's Story)
- Mina's 'Story? Det var jo den lengste teksten.
- Så jeg leste hvertfall alle, men jeg gjorde ikke så mye mer ut av det.
- Brukte du heftet da du skreiv?
- Eh...egentlig ikke. Litt kanskje..
- Hva synes du om lay-outen på heftet?
- Det er helt greit. Det er litt sånn...(Her kommer det noe som er utydelig...Han gjentar "helt greit" på slutten, hvertfall)
- Da kan vi legge vekk den. (Jeg legger vekk forberedelsesheftet og tar fram oppgaveheftet) Selve eksamensheftet, da?
- Uhm..Jeg synes egentlig den var greie oppgaver.
- Husker du hvilke du valgte?
- Her så tok jeg A
- 1A?
- ...og 2B
- Hvorfor valgte du 1A?
- Egentlig så..skjønte jeg ikke helt hva vi skulle gjøre på B, så det var egentlig derfor. Fordi...
- Hva var det du ikke skjønnte der?
-
- Der ser du forskjellige typer mennesker..

APPENDIX 15 TRANSCRIPTS OF THE INTERVIEWS

-.....for da skulle vi velge to typer av disse her, ikke sant og så skulle vi skrive en tekst. I allfall så tok jeg A-

-Hvorfor den, da?

-For da kunne jeg liksom skrive hva du ville nesten. Du skulle bare skrive om en arbeidsplass.

-Har du nok erfaring til å skrive om en arbeidsplass synes du?

-Eh...nei det har jeg egentlig ikke...

-Har du en deltidsjobb?

-Ja , jeg har jo jobba to somre nå ...

-Brukte du deg selv som eksempel?

-Ja, det gjorde jeg kanskje..men ikke helt bevisst.

-Oppgave 2, der valgte du C? Skrive en novelle?

-Ja, jeg tok den for det at den virka som om det var den lettest å skrive hva du ville i. Du skulle bare ha en tittel også skulle du bare ha med det som sto her. (Peker på kulepunktene) De punktene her.

-Hjalp de punktene deg?

-Litt - jeg vet ikke om jeg tok så veldig hensyn til det egentlig. Jeg bare prøvde å flette det inn. (pause)

-Hvis du skulle beskrive dette heftet her med et ord. Du kan jo se på disse ordene her (Jeg tar fram ordskyen fra spørreskjemaet)

-Eh....(...) Informativt kanskje? Det er jo ganske lett å forstå. Det står jo her hva du skal ha med og...og du får tittelen og det er jo ganske lett da.

-Så du syns at du syns den gir god informasjon- gode instruksjoner?

-Ja

-Synes du at du fikk vist kompetansen din?

-Egentlig - kanskje ikke..fordi hvertfall på den første oppgave så syns jeg at jeg skreiv litt mye rør egentlig.

-Hva mener du med rør?

-Det var lissom ikke noe særlig enkelt med det som var...jeg veit ikke, men når jeg skulle skrive om en arbeidsplass, så ble ikke det jeg skreiv no bra skrivni.

-Så du var ikke noe fornøyd med teksten din?

-Nei...På 1A, på 2 var den helt grei. Så da syns jeg jeg fikk det litt til egentlig.

-Hvis du kunne ønsket det en viss type oppgaver.På del 1, hva ville du bytta ut?

-Ikke helt sikker, men...pause...kanskje litt mer sånn retta mot no mer interessant for ungdommer, da - kanskje.

-Som hva da? Hva er interessant for deg?

-Litt usikker..

-Hvordan synes du oppgavene henger sammen med det vi gjør i løpet av årete eller hvertfall det vi har gjort til nå?

Ja, det gjør det jo litt...for det er jo forskjellige ting og typer tekster man skriver, da.. Og det er jo også forskjellige tema vi er innom som man kommer på her.Så det syns jeg.

-Så det henger sammen litt...Hvordan synes du oppgavene passer til studieretningen din?

-Åssen da?

-Altså studiespes.?

-Det er jo vanlig engelsk som vi har på studiespesialisering.. Så det er ikke noe spesielt

-Nei, men da er det ikke noe mer..Hvis du ikke har noe du brenner inne med?

-Nei, egentlig ikke