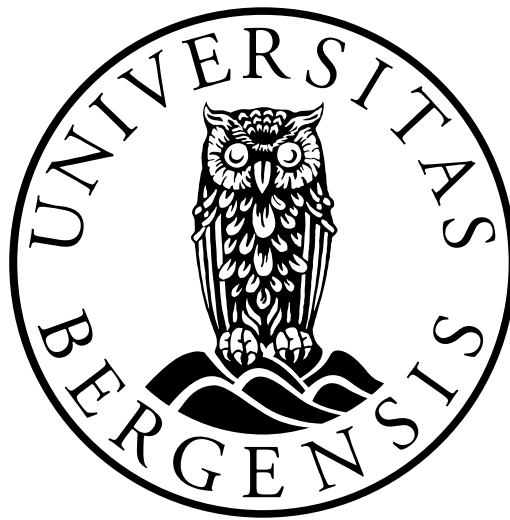


**Conceptualizing interculturality:
Teachers' Perceptions of Intercultural
Competence**



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Abstract in Norwegian

Økt globalisering, migrasjon og teknologisk utvikling gjør interkulturell kommunikasjon uunngåelig. Dette reflekteres i både nasjonale og internasjonale rammeverk, hvor utviklingen av interkulturell kompetanse har fått stadig større betydning fra og med 1980-tallet. *Det felles Europeiske rammeverket for språklæring* (2001) legger eksempelvis til grunn at interkulturell kompetanse har blitt en essensiell del av fremmedspråkundervisningen. Likevel finnes det store sprik i hva forskere mener utgjør vellykket undervisning av den interkulturelle dimensjonen i undervisningen av engelsk som fremmedspråk.

I lys av hvordan vårt postmodernistiske samfunn stiller nye krav til å kunne håndtere kulturelle tvetydigheter, konflikter og forskjeller, har forskere i løpet av det siste tiåret stilt spørsmålsteget ved eldre innflytelsesrike modeller for utvikling av interkulturell kompetanse. En av disse kritiserte modellene er Michel Byram (1997) sin modell, som i stor grad preget utviklingen av både internasjonale og nasjonale styringsdokumenter for språkundervisning. Med utgangspunkt i dette utforsker jeg i denne masteroppgaven lærerkognisjon i lys av nyere forskning rundt interkulturell kompetanse og nyere teoretikers kritikk av eldre modeller. I en norsk utdanningskontekst, er dette et forskningsperspektiv som hittil ikke har blitt undersøkt fra et engelsk språkdidaktisk perspektiv.

Min studie indikerer at engelsklæreres tanker om og gjenfortellinger av deres tilnærminger til kultur ved norske videregående skoler, i liten grad reflekterer nyere teoretiske perspektiver på utviklingen av interkulturell kompetanse. Studien viser derfor at en viktig satsning i fremtiden blir å implementere nyere forskning på interkulturell kompetanse i utdanningsløpet for kommende lærere og lektorer.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Why intercultural competence?

Globalization has made intercultural communication inevitable. Still, there seems to be little consensus among scholars what defines the successful ‘intercultural speaker’. However, within the context of foreign language education, it is increasingly recognized that the impact of transnational borders has turned intercultural communication into a challenging undertaking.

As a teacher-student, I have witnessed how teachers have approached interculturality in a way that positions national identities and the differences among them at the center of their discussions. However, due to increased mass migration and globalization, it has become increasingly difficult to define the concepts of ‘culture’ and ‘identity’ (Wahudi, 2016). As such, it is not enough to develop learners’ understanding of how different cultural contexts affect processes of intercultural communication. Recent scholars have therefore questioned former theoretical perspectives on intercultural competence (IC), which have presented the concepts of ‘identity’ as connected to a particular culture and language. Ultimately, such presentations draw artificial boundaries, which contribute to unbalanced power relations both within and outside of today’s language learning classrooms (Dervin, 2015; Holliday, 2011). A consequence of this is that when dealing with interculturality as an education goal, the ultimate aim should not be to develop learners’ knowledge about who people are based on their identities linked to a specific culture but rather to develop learners’ ability to question cultural claims and the power dynamics they may be concealing.

Furthermore, in light of our increasingly fragmented societies, new forms of racism, Islamophobia and inequality have gained fresh momentum. If learners are to develop a deeper understanding of and appreciation for the lives and cultures of others, such risky territories need to be entered. In fact, recent scholars have highlighted that the development of IC should always entail some degree of discomfort (Dervin, 2015, p. 83). However, former theoretical conceptions have strongly emphasized harmony as an essential aspect of intercultural learning. In recent years, it has been argued that this emphasis downplays the importance of developing learners’ ability to deal with conflicting world discourses, which

is central in processes of intercultural communication (Kramsch, 2011; Holliday, 2012). On this note, it is interesting that IC is conceived as an inseparable aspect of *Bildung*, which, according to Humboldt (2000), entails a “linking of the self to the world to achieve the most general, most animated, and most unrestrained interplay” (p. 9). This aspect is reflected in *The Common European Framework of Reference for languages: learning, teaching and assessment* (CEFR)’s central aim for language education to “promote the favorable development of the learner’s whole personality and sense of identity in response to the enriching experience of otherness in language and culture” (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 1). Contemplating the possibilities that follow from the affiliation of these two concepts, Hoff (2014) sheds light upon how intercultural competence is about more than complete harmonization, as it also concerns the ability to handle difference, misunderstanding and disagreement. From this view, the inseparable nature of *Bildung* and IC may provide an opportunity to renew IC in foreign language (FL) education.

When looking to the current English subject curriculum of *The knowledge promotion*, hereafter (LK06/13), it is noticeable that notions of interculturality are implicitly rather than explicitly embedded. For example, the purpose section includes the following statement: “Communicative skills and cultural insight may provide a basis for greater interaction, understanding and respect between people with different cultural backgrounds” (LK06/13). There is one significant issue arising from this statement that holds important implications for how English foreign language (EFL) teachers are guided to approach interculturality. The incorporated components of ‘respect’ and ‘understanding’ indirectly provide insight into the very core of IC, namely that of ‘stepping into somebody else’s shoes’ (Bredella, 2006). However, while the English subject curriculum requires that learners to develop knowledge about, respect for, and an understanding of other cultures and people, it offers little in the way of *how* cultural issues should be addressed in order to promote IC. In light of this fact, it is noteworthy that assessment is a common cotemporary practice. As a result, former theoretical perspectives on IC have tried to form guidelines and methods for assessing learners’ levels of IC, which offer simple programmed stages for IC development. The idea that learners’ levels of IC can be assessed is, however, problematic. Recent scholars argue that such guidelines and methods “fall into the trap of success only” (Dervin & Gross, 2016, p. 6), and for this reason fail to reflect how IC presents instabilities, discontinuities, and contradictions. As such, the conditions of our world necessitate a reconsideration of current educational methods and aims.

1.2 Aim and scope

Considering how former and renewed theoretical conceptions of IC contrast, or at least highlight differing aims connected to IC as an education goal, the present thesis aims to investigate teachers' perceptions of IC. More specifically, the current study seeks to explore whether traces of renewed interculturality can be identified in the way teachers communicate about their approaches to questions of culture. The overarching questions of research therefore read as follows:

“How do English teachers communicate about interculturality when describing their approaches to cultural issues? In particular, do their discourses reveal traces of renewed interculturality?”

In order to narrow this area of focus, three integrated sub-questions have been formulated, which are all related to recent developments in FL didactic theory:

1. Do teachers pay attention to power relations? If so, how?
2. Do teachers approach controversial cultural issues? Why or why not?
3. What are teachers' beliefs about assessing learners' levels of IC?

To meet these objectives, a mixed methodology study was applied. The main rationale for using mixed-methods research was that of ‘completeness,’ which refers to the idea that a more complete answer can be achieved regarding teachers' perceptions of IC if both quantitative and qualitative methods are included (Bryman, 2015). The study is based on the analysis of 93 questionnaire respondents and 7 interviewees' ways of communicating about their approaches to issues of culture. It is my assumption that few traces of renewed interculturality can be identified in the teachers' discourses. Although no empirical study from a Norwegian educational context has explored this area of inquiry, scholars' proposals for renewing IC are fairly recent, as they did not emerge until around 2008. Accordingly, today's English language teachers might be unfamiliar with newer theoretical perspectives on IC.

1.3 Why teachers' perceptions?

This thesis explores English teachers' reports and thoughts on their approaches to interculturality. This point of departure is commonly known as 'teacher cognition' research. In the field of FL didactics, the interest in this form of research started in the mid-1990s, which is ten years after teacher cognition had gained popularity within the sphere of education. From thereon, there has been a steady increase of research that examines various ideas of what language teachers' think, know and believe, and of the connection of these constructs to what they do. According to Borg (2015), the main factor driving this increase "has been the recognition of the fact that teachers are active, thinking, decision-makers who play a central role in shaping classroom events, rather than programmable robots" (p. 1). In others words, hidden forces like 'attitudes,' 'feelings,' and 'knowledge' shape teachers' behaviors. Consequently, a mere focus on teachers' behaviors is not enough in order to understand what teachers do in the classroom.

Moreover, teacher cognition research is viewed as a strong impetus for improving educational practices, as it is common that teachers' experiences and other external factors, such as curriculum aims, schooling, and personal interests are connected to teachers' perceptions. As a result, several research studies have explored language teachers' conceptions of IC. Relevant studies will later be presented in the current study's theory chapter.

1.4 Definitions

In this section, I will offer an explanation of the ways that the complex concepts of 'intercultural competence,' 'culture,' 'Self,' and 'Other' are used in this current thesis. I acknowledge that numerous definitions exist for these terms. However, several of them pose a number of challenges when considering the complexities of IC.

1.4.1 'Intercultural competence'

Despite the fact that hundreds of definitions of IC exist, this study is based on a broad conceptualization of the term. Rather than viewing IC as a definable and measurable competence, this study is informed by the growing body of research that acknowledges that interculturality can never be fully understood (i.e., Dervin, 2015; Dervin & Tournebise, 2014; Holliday, 2011; Phillips, 2007; Kramsch, 2011). For Holliday (2010b), this implies

that individuals need to “seek a broader picture, to look for the hidden and unexpressed in intercultural encounters” (p. 27).

1.4.2 ‘Culture’

The concept of ‘culture’ is used in this thesis to denote how societal structures influence us as individual beings and the experiences they drawn upon (Holliday, 2013). Terms such as ‘own culture’ and ‘other culture’ therefore refer to the relationship between the identities of the language learners and those of the English-speaking culture(s) in focus. Moreover, it is important to note that this conceptualization is not ignorant of how the concept typically comes to represent a “deceptively, cosy blanket” (Eriksen in Dervin, 2015, p. 8). Culture is primarily a constant negotiation between the individual and his or her socio-historical surroundings. Hence, intercultural meetings occur between individuals rather than between cultures and/or groups (Risager, 2004).

1.4.3 ‘Self’ and ‘Other’

In this study, the philosophical terms used in the *Bildung* theory, ‘Self’ and ‘Other’, are used to refer to the learners’ identities and the individuals from foreign cultures. In addition, the terms will refer to the personal and cultural processes of development that the learners’ may experience because of their engagement with cultural issues in the English classroom. In this regard, Ricoeur’s (1992) perspective on the concept of personal identity is relevant, as he finds otherness in the heart of selfhood, which makes ‘Self’ and ‘Other’ inseparable. As a result, “we only learn who we are through the mirror of others, and that we in turn only understand others by understanding ourselves as Other” (Kramsch, 2009, p. 18).

1.5 Organization of the study

This thesis consists of five chapters. Following the introduction, Chapter 2 provides an overview of theoretical frameworks and select empirical research that foster the research questions of the present study. Chapter 3 presents the methodological approach, alongside a discussion of reliability and validity measures, ethical considerations and methodical limitations. Chapter 4 will present and discuss relevant findings in connection to the presented theory, while the concluding chapter (i.e. Chapter 5) summarizes them. Chapter 5 will also discuss the didactic implications and limitations of the study.

2.0 Background

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a theoretical foundation for how the intercultural dimension may be dealt with in the English learning classroom. The chapter is divided into four parts. First, I will offer an account of the international developments of culture pedagogy. Because of its strong influence within the sphere of FL education, I will focus in particular on Byram's (1997) model of intercultural communicative competence (ICC). Thereafter, I explore the meaning of 'renewed' interculturality. The question of whether one can go beyond seeing culture everywhere to meeting the person behind it will serve as a starting point for examining Dervin & Tournebise's (2013) six 'turbulences.' Practical implications concerning the implementation of these turbulences in the EFL classroom will be discussed along the way. Following this, studies that are relevant to the area of inquiry will be presented. Finally, the *Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters* (AIE) (Council of Europe, 2009) and the current English subject curriculum (LK06/13) will be presented due to the significance of these documents in Norway.

2.1 Historical Developments

Historically, the term 'intercultural competence' is fairly new. However, culture has routinely played an important part in FL teaching and learning (Fenner, 2008). In her book *Language and Culture Pedagogy, from a National to a Transnational Paradigm*, Risager (2007) explains that in the 1970s, the development of culture pedagogy coincided with the "expanded text concept" (p. 39). Concisely, this entailed that other texts from every day life were included in language teaching. So-called 'authentic' texts were viewed to "promote a greater knowledge of the outside world" (Risager, 2007, p. 39). Consequently, scholars developed an interest in determining what kind of 'world knowledge' would be fitting for language learners to acquire. Hence, various scholarly positions were established, with one of them being the German *Landeskunde*.

2.1.1 The German tradition of *Landeskunde*

Since the late 19th century, there has been a long *Landeskunde* tradition in Germany. In this regard, it is interesting to note that Germany is the European country that has had the

“longest and most profound discussions of culture teaching in foreign languages” (Risager, 2007, p. 3).

According to Manfred Erdmenger & Hans-Wolf Istel (1973), *Landeskunde* supported knowledge of the facts about the country associated with the target language. In the context of FL education, then, the teaching of ‘culture’ was mainly concerned with everyday life in different countries. In addition, it was viewed as useful for combating potential communicative misunderstandings, which were thought to emerge from learners’ lack of knowledge about cultural and historical facts. More generally, it was of use for tourists and consumers who had the habit of applying their conceptions about their own culture to the foreign culture. Lists of cultural differences were therefore provided. For Dervin (2010), such lists denote the concept ‘cultural differentialism,’ which is based on the principle that people are different based on the cultural belongings/baggage. As such, the German tradition of *Landeskunde* was highly nation-oriented.

2.1.2 From cultural awareness to intercultural competence

According to Risager (2003), a cultural turn in European cultural pedagogy took place in the 1970s. As she states, “Through the 1970s and the 1980s and especially in the 1990s an interest for culture has grown out of the pedagogic tradition related to language. The forerunner is the focus on communicative competence developed in the 1970s and 1980s [...]” (p. 64, my translation). It follows from this that intercultural competence is an extension of the concept of communicative competence, a competence that focuses on developing learners’ communicative skills, where socio-cultural competence has a central place. The concept of ‘socio-cultural competence’ can be defined in the following way: “When utterances are produced and understood appropriately in different sociolinguistic contexts depending on contextual factors such as status of participants, purpose of the interaction, and norms and conventions of interaction (Canale, 1983, p. 6).

Interestingly, Fenner (2008, p. 276) explains that the introduction of socio-cultural competence as an aspect of communicativeness was the start of viewing the concepts of culture and language as interrelated, as opposed to viewing culture as information conveyed by the language. Contemplating the implications that follow from this, Fenner further points

out that that foreign language learning and teaching have become a matter of “learning *through* culture, as well as learning *about* it” (p. 207).

A closely related aspect to this acknowledgment relates to the development and enrichment of learners’ identities. When learning a new language, the learner brings his or her own culture into the communication process with the foreign culture. The learner’s culture is thus the lenses through which he or she sees things. As such, change in the learner’s identity can only come about by gaining an outside view on his or her own socio-cultural position, which also entails being confronted with foreign cultures (Fenner, 2008, p. 221). The following section will provide an overview of Byram’s (1997) model of ICC, which presents personal and cultural development as a main concern.

2.1.3 Byram’s model of ICC

In the book *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence* (1997), Byram defines the qualities of the successful ‘intercultural speaker.’ The model emerged as a response to the limitations of communicative language teaching, and it describes how the successful intercultural speaker is committed to establishing relations across cultural borders based on respect and mutual understanding.

The model was written in relation to The Council of Europe’s project to develop the CEFR. As a result, Byram’s definition has come to be the most influential within the context of FL education, and it has had an influence on curriculum development in several European countries. The exhaustive model addresses how the ideal intercultural speaker approaches other cultures with openness and curiosity and is genuinely concerned with “establishing and maintaining” relationships across cultural boundaries (Byram, 1997, p. 3). The model makes clear five aspects of learning:

Savoirs : **Knowledge**, e.g., of self and others, of interaction; individual and societal;

Savoir être : **Intercultural attitudes**, e.g., willingness and openness towards relativizing the self and the other;

Savoir comprendre : **Skills of interpreting and relating**, e.g., the ability to interpret an event from another culture and relate it to one’s own culture;

Savoir apprendre/faire : **Skills of discovery and/or interaction**, e.g the ability to acquire new knowledge about other cultures and cultural practices and to use this knowledge in interactions;

Savoir s’engager : **Critical cultural awareness/political education**, embracing the ability to critically evaluate practices, perspectives, and products in one’s own culture and in other cultures.

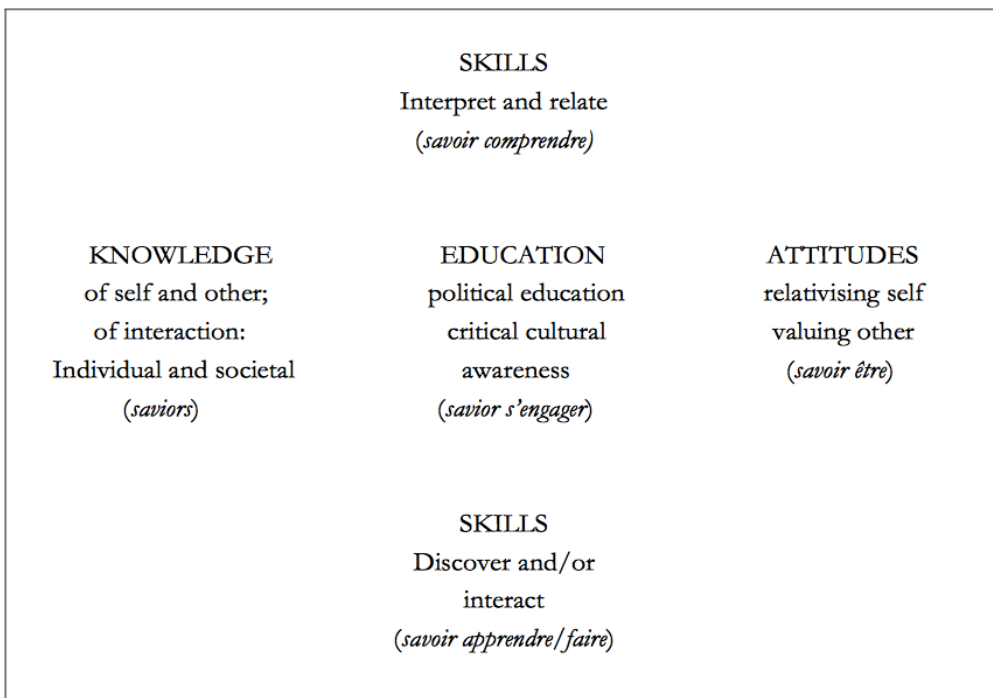


Figure 1. *Intercultural communicative competence: Aspects of intercultural communication* (Byram, 1997, p. 34).

The attitudinal, knowledgeable and skill-related dimensions are interdependent. Still, the component of *savoir être* (attitudes) forms a foundation for the other elements. This is reasoned by how attitudes of openness and curiosity function as a pre-condition for successful interaction (Byram, 1997, p. 34), which entails establishing meaningful relations across cultural boundaries by “suspending disbeliefs about other cultures and belief about

one's own" (p. 34). The intercultural speaker consequently values otherness and relativizes his own cultural values, demonstrating a 'decentring' of the 'Self', which is an ability that lies at the core of IC. Furthermore, the component of *savoir-être* describes how the intercultural speaker "shows readiness to experience different stages of adaption and interaction with another culture during a period of resistance" (p. 58). This means that the intercultural speaker realizes that opposing worldview may be difficult to harmonize.

Unlike the component of *savoir être*, the components of *savoir* (knowledge), *savoir apprendre/faire* (skills) and *savoir comprendre* (skills) highlight the speaker's own culture as a point of departure for understanding the 'Other'. For instance, the component of *savoir* refers to the intercultural speaker's "knowledge of social groups and their products and practices in one's own country and in the other interlocutor's country (Byram, 1997, p. 51). Further, the central objectives of this component are to develop "knowledge about historical and contemporary relationships between one's own and the interlocutor's country" and "knowledge about the national memory of one's interlocutors country and the perspectives on it from one's own" (p. 51). In a similar manner, the component *savoir apprendre* states that the 'intercultural speaker' is able to "identify contemporary and past relationships between one's own and the other culture and country" (p. 53).

Moreover, the component of *savoir-s'engager* (critical cultural awareness) deserves a special mention, as it is "the most educationally significant of all the saviors" (Byram, 2008, p. 236). The main goal set by this component is to foster critical thought, which entails encouraging learners to consider the origin of their moral judgments through independent analysis. For instance, the component describes how the "intercultural speaker is aware of his own ideological perspectives and values" (p. 64), and bases his judgement on "explicit and implicit criteria" (p. 63). As opposed to *savoir-être*, then, *savoir-s'engager* aims to promote critical thought and can thus counterbalance *savoir être*'s emphasis on emphatic understanding and acceptance.

Overall, the successful intercultural speaker encounters otherness with openness and curiosity and is ready to suspend his or her disbeliefs about other cultures and beliefs about his own. Still, recent scholars have come to challenge this well-established model from different points of view, as the next section will further discuss.

2.1.4 The idealized intercultural speaker

By drawing our attention to the issues of the idealized intercultural speaker, recent scholars (e.g., Dervin, 2015; Dervin & Gross, 2016, Hoff, 2014; Ros I Solé, 2013; Wahyudi, 2016; Ferri, 2015) have moved beyond established modes of IC by challenging Byram's previously uncontested model of ICC. The overarching issue concerns the intercultural speaker's idealized position of being "caught in the aporia of the discourse of tolerance" (Ferri, 2015, p.194). In other words, Byram's model of ICC has been criticized for failing to acknowledge that intercultural communication is not merely a question of tolerance but also a matter of dealing with conflict, ambiguity, and complexity.

In her article on the affiliation between ICC and *Bildung*, Hoff (2014) directs her attention toward a central risk related to the intercultural speaker's readiness to "suspend disbeliefs of other cultures and beliefs of one's own" (Byram, 1997, p. 57), as identified in the component of *savoir être* (attitudes). She states that if processes of 'decentring' are to develop mutual respect and understanding, "learners' preconceived opinions and cultural biases must be brought out in the open so that they can be consciously examined and challenged" (p. 512). Otherwise, the intercultural encounter may very well preserve, or even generate, cultural stereotypes and prejudices towards the 'Other'. In other words, the risk relates to the possibility of upholding or even generating stereotypical worldviews due to how Byram's model presents the "transposition of Self as a goal in itself, rather than as a temporary strategy for understanding" (p. 514). For instance, the *savoir-être* component states the following: "The intercultural speaker notes and adopts the behaviors specific to a social group in a way which they and the members of that group consider to be appropriate for an outsider" (Byram, 1997, p. 58). In addition, the preceding statement seems to overlook the fact that intercultural relations are relations of power by suggesting that all the members of 'that group' share the same values.

Furthermore, it is arguable that approaching the 'Other' with an uncritical willingness to exhibit tolerance and acceptance may be counterproductive to the promotion of IC. Hoff (2014) sheds light upon this matter; highlighting how the aim of training learners to exhibit 'correct attitudes' may result in an uncritical way of thinking that does not take learners' opinions and perspectives seriously. The relationship between 'Self' and 'Other' is therefore viewed as based on an imbalance of power. As already suggested, *savoir-s'engager* may be used to counter this concern. Still, it should be noted that *savoir-être* forms the very

foundation for developing the other *savoirs*. As a result, IC is often associated with the ability to develop positive attitudes toward the ‘Other,’ which entails putting oneself into the other’s position (e.g., Forsman, 2006). Moreover, a closely related issue concerning *savoir-être* is the idea of *showing* curiosity and openness towards other cultures. For Dervin (2015), *showing* is not good enough, as it is “possible to show but not believe in what is shown” (p. 76). Simply put, it is absolutely possible to express feelings of open-mindedness and tolerance yet at the same time feel ambivalent toward the ‘Other.’

Another point of consideration is that although the intercultural speaker to some extent acknowledges that opposing worldviews may be difficult to reconcile, recent scholars have argued that this acknowledgement does not necessarily imply that notions of ambiguity and conflict are dealt with to a satisfying degree. For example, the intercultural speaker helps “interlocutors overcome issues of conflict” and to “negotiate agreement on places of conflict” (Byram, 1997, pp. 61-64). Hoff (2014) describes this acknowledgment (i.e., the recognition that agreement is not possible) as “a solution for which the intercultural speaker may settle when all attempts of a harmonious fusion of horizons have failed, rather than as positive conditions for the communication process” (p. 514). Hoff further emphasizes that conflict and disagreement “may lead to meaningful communicative situations in which the participants are deeply engaged, thus contributing to a higher level of honesty and involvement” (Hoff, 2016, p. 58). This could be linked to Dervin’s (2015) criticism of former theoretical perspectives on IC as being too dependent on keywords such as ‘respect,’ ‘tolerance,’ and ‘open-mindedness.’ The strong presence of such ideals, he argues, protects learners from experiencing notions of discomfort, and, as a consequence, distracts them from real discussion on new forms of segregation, discrimination, oppression and inequality (p. 83). Accordingly, teachers are recommended to embrace notions of ambiguity and conflict, as this could generate more sincere discussions on cultural complexities could contribute to developing learners’ ability to handle notions of discomfort and ambiguity in processes of intercultural communication.

Another recently contested component is that of *savoir* (knowledge). According to Dervin (2015), the development of *savoir* amplifies superficial boundaries by placing emphasis on the concepts of ‘culture’ and ‘countries’ (p. 76). For example, this component’s main objective is to develop learners’ “knowledge about social groups and their products and practices in one’s own and in other’s interlocutor’s country” (Byram, 1997, p. 58). Holliday

(2011) shares Dervin's view and also points out that the concept of 'culture' can easily lead to essentialism, which entails "presenting people's individual behavior as entirely defined and constrained by the cultures in which they live so that the stereotype becomes the essence of who they are" (p. 4). At the core of these scholars' arguments lies the firm conviction that the concepts of 'culture' and 'countries' imprison subjective notions of 'Self' and 'Other' into straightjackets, an argument that I will return to in section 2.2.1.

Moreover, it is apparent that Byram's model of ICC and its emphasis on 'country/ies' shows the influence of more nation-oriented approaches to IC, traceable to the German tradition of *Landeskunde*. It is interesting to note that Byram later on has elaborated on this relatedness by stating that in 1990s, this emphasis was an acceptance vision within the field of interculturality. To support his argument, Byram & Guilherme (2010) draw attention to the influence of Hofstede's "regional taxonomy that provided a static and stereotyping, but widely accepted, vision of intercultural communication" (p. 4).

What seems to be lacking in Byram's model of ICC, then, is a more consistent focus on the complexities of intercultural communication, as the goal of developing IC is "not a balance of opposites, or a moderate pluralism of opinions but a paradoxical, irreducible confrontation that may change one in the process" (Kramsch, 1993, p. 231). Therefore, in the following section, I will discuss current efforts to renew IC in FL education.

2.2. Renewing IC

Various scholars have considered the idea of 'renewed' interculturality (e.g., Dervin & Gross, 2016; Dervin, 2015; Hoff, 2015; Piller, 2011; Holliday 2011, 2013; Risager, 2007; Ferri, 2014). Such scholars advocate the transition from a traditional approach to a postmodern approach. This transition has developed as a response to the following main issues: the pigeonholing of individuals into static identities, the comparison of national cultures, an overreliance on ideals of openness and tolerance, and an ignorance of the power relations among participants in a communicative situation. It follows that a critical stance towards the concept of 'culture' is taken, which "sometimes is nothing more than a convenient and lazy excuse" (Piller, 2011, p. 172). The scholars who advocate renewed IC are therefore interested in the concept at a metalevel, asking the question of whether one can go beyond seeing culture everywhere to meeting the person behind it.

2.2.1 The multiple stories of ‘Self’ and ‘Other’

Traditionally, the concept of ‘identity’ has suffered from being regarded as a stabile essence, similar to that of culture (Dervin, 2015, p. 15). Renewed interculturality is founded on a radically different belief that suggests we all have different identities depending on the context of communication (Gee, 2000, p. 99). As a result, recent scholars argue that former theoretical perspectives on IC have problematically “considered the ‘Other’ as someone who has a solid, unchangeable culture and identity who needs to learn our culture, and whose ‘culture’ we need to understand” (Paavola & Dervin cited in Hahl, 2015, p. 21). Holliday (2010a) offers a similar approach. He argues that the common idea that people’s ‘identities’ are unchanging and dependent on their origins, not only pigeonholes them to fixed categories, but also easily results in an abuse of power. For this reason, teachers are advised to take into account the multiple stories of ‘Self’ and ‘Other’. For instance, in the English classroom, a teacher might state the following: “Native-Americans are really peaceful.” Although this comment shows signs of openness and tolerance, it also indicates that this teacher had certain expectations (potentially negative) about Native Americans before the actual meeting, as the word ‘peaceful’ is an antonym of ‘violent.’ Moreover, this teacher’s statement generalizes all Native Americans as peaceful. Accordingly, *diversities*¹ are not recognized, as this statement makes one story become the only story.

Another challenging aspect concerning the multiple stories of ‘Self’ and ‘Other’ relates to the “common vision in education which focuses exclusively on *difference* (Dervin, 2015, p. 103). In light of this challenge, recent scholars have further shed light upon the complex concept of ‘othering’, which can be defined in the following way:

Othering is an interdisciplinary notion that refers, amongst other things, to differentiating discourses that lead to moral and political judgement of superiority and inferiority between ‘us’ and ‘them’ and within groups. (Dervin, 2014, p. 1)

¹ Instead of using the term *diversity*, the current thesis will use the term *diversities* when referring to the treatment of people of different genders, social classes, races, ages, and religions. For a discussion on the concept of diversity, see Dervin (2015). According to Dervin, the term *diversity* is highly problematic and biased, as it often implies *oneness*.

This means that an over-emphasis on cultural difference may lead to discrimination and false beliefs. However, because the presence of others makes us search for symbolic order, which includes defining the unfamiliar, othering is regarded as a *universal sin* (Dervin, 2015). It is thus essential for all approaches to IC to recognize unequal power relations and from thereon see identities as multiple, dynamic, and complex (Kramsch, 2006). In this regard, it should be noted that recent scholars have challenged notions of culturalism, which can be defined as “using culture as an explanation for everything that a representative of another country does, thinks, etc. while ignoring the fact that other reasons might apply” (Dervin, 2015, p. 113). Still, Holliday (2014) argues that scholars nearly always frame the multiple stories of ‘Self’ and ‘Other’ as exceptions to the essentialist rule rather than as realities in their own right (p. 7). On a similar note, Ros I Solé (2013) states that influential conceptions of IC limit the way “multilingual subjects are allowed to position themselves in the language learning experience and the roles they are allowed to adopt” (p. 335). It follows from this that newer approaches to IC are called for, as traditional conceptions overlook the complex realities of our world.

2.2.2 Turbulences for an intercultural education

In the article “Turbulence in intercultural communication (ICE) does it affect higher education?” Dervin & Tournebise (2013) propose six ‘turbulences’ for an intercultural education, which are regarded as reflective of today’s post-modern world (pp. 534-53). The turbulences could be read as a response to the following question: “What is wrong with former, yet still influential theoretical perspectives on IC?”

However, before presenting this proposal, I find it important to stress that not all scholars agree with these ‘turbulences’. For this reason, it is possible to argue that culturalism is still very present in research on interculturality (Dervin & Gross, 2016). This presence continues to influence current English teaching practices, which often include learning fixed ideas about foreigners’ identities, costumes and characters in which individuals from certain groups or nationalities are equaled to stereotypes that share certain labels with each other (Hahl & Löfstöm, 2016). Such labels do not lead to interculturality; instead, they easily lead to the use of stereotypes, which often includes negative connotations (Holliday, 2011).

Turbulence 1: *Put an end to differentialist bias*

The first ‘turbulence’ illustrates the need to discontinue focusing merely on differences in education, especially in relation to the tired concept of culture. As already stated, such a focus may lead to cultural assumptions that conceal important power relations, such as between dominant and non-dominating groups, which often leads to stereotyping, othering and generalizations. In practice, teachers may put an end to differentialist bias by developing learners’ awareness of cultural similarities that “cut across countries, regions, languages, religions and so on” (Dervin & Gross, 2016, p. 4). It is, however, important to note that the idea of putting *an end to the differentialist bias* does not mean that one should stop exploring differences altogether. In light of this view, Crenshaw (1997) addresses the idea of positive discrimination: “It is obvious that treating different things the same can generate injustice in similar terms than treating same things differently” (p. 258). Consequently, a continuum is needed wherein the teacher alternates between cultural differences and similarities (Phillips, 2007).

Turbulence 2: *Move away from individualistic biases*

The second ‘turbulence’ problematizes *the individualistic bias* on culture. As discourses about ‘Self’ and ‘Other’ are co-constructed among people, intercultural relations are always relations of power. Accordingly, when educators approach interculturality, their stereotypical views, representations and ideologies inform and influence encounters and thereby identities (Dervin, 2015). As a result, teachers are encouraged to reflect on themselves and on how their cultural outlooks influence the ways in which cultural issues are handled. In other words, self-reflection is essential for IC development; as such, processes may come to challenge indoctrinated cultural assumptions (see section 2.1.3). Yet, self-reflection is not an easy skill to learn, as it involves a distancing of the ‘Self’. In this regard, teachers may be advised to maintain a reflective dialogue with others, such as colleagues, as this may be essential for “learning to critically and more objectively review one’s own deeply held beliefs, conception and assumptions in order to reject those ideas or adapt to and transform them” (Husu cited in Hahl & Lofström, 2016, p. 5).

In addition, teachers may be recommended to “monitor their language use” (Holliday, 2004, p. 49). To elaborate on this recommendation, I find it useful to turn to the concept of ‘polyphony.’ According to Bakhtin (2006), this concept explains how people’s discourses are never neutral, as “each word tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived it

socially charged life; all words and forms are populated with intentions” (p. 239). Consequently, teachers’ ways of communicating about the ‘Other’ may conform to culturalist discourses, though such discourses need to be recognized and challenged. In order to do so, teachers may benefit from asking themselves the following questions when presenting the ‘Other’:

What explicit and implicit statements about identity markers are involved, about which groups?

What are the fault lines along which groups are defined and differentiated?

Are you overlooking important differences within (or across) these groups?

How free are members of the group to change or decline norms?

Do they open up or shut down options of dissent (or exit) within the group?

Who is making the statements? Why might they be making them?

On whose behalf are they speaking - explicitly or implicitly? What lends them authority to do so?

Why are they able to voice their opinions? Whose voices are not heard?

Are the statements that are being made empowering or oppressing the groups or individuals involved (which ones)? (Breidenbach & Nyiri, 2009, p. 343-45).

Turbulence 3: *Accept failure*

The third ‘turbulence’ denotes how the intercultural can never be fully understood.

Therefore, it is impossible to predict the outcome of intercultural communication.

Traditionally, however, the concept of ‘culture’ has been used to explain why failure occurs, which does not embrace how “people for themselves construct the reality of others, and how culture is itself socially constructed” (Holliday, 2010b, p. 74). This means that renewed views on IC conceive failure a result of notions of instability and discontinuity, rather than of cultural difference. In more practical terms, failure may occur by falling into culturalist traps. For instance, a FL teacher may with her best intentions encourage a FL learner,

coming from elsewhere, to share his ‘culture.’ However, such encouragements may result in confusion, and perhaps even feelings discomfort, depending on whether or not this learner’s information is in line with the teacher’s preconceptions. Moreover, because the intrinsic aspect of failure may be discomfoting to face, it typically holds negative connotations. Yet, encountering failure can enable individuals to achieve a new level of cultural understanding (Dervin & Gross, 2016, p. 6). Consequently, it is recommended for FL teachers to not only accept failure but to also see the beneficial aspects of it in terms of their future teaching practices. Furthermore, it should be noted that this also involves moving away from previous models of IC. This argument will be discussed more thoroughly in section 2.2.4 of the current chapter.

Turbulence 4: Look at exceptions, instabilities and processes rather than structures

Piller (2011) states that many scholars have focused on structures that describe how certain groups of people (often determined by nationality or ethnicity) communicate with each other. However, this emphasis does not reflect how the concept of identity is subjective, complex, and dynamic. In addition, cultural categorizations may promote or uphold stereotypes and prejudices. It follows from this that teachers are advised to look for exceptions and instabilities, which includes paying close attention to how their teaching materials portray the ‘Other’. In this regard, it is interesting to note that textbooks still play a crucial role in education, which is problematic. First, textbooks are written, published, and emerge as a response to “the official knowledge a society wants its children to acquire” (Williams, 2012, p. 1119). Consequently, textbooks often reflect the values and ideologies of the nation-state. In addition, research has indicated that FL textbooks typically neglect *diversities* (Eide, 2012). This means that they may promote the idea that cultural identities are stable rather than complex and dynamic entities. In contrast, learners’ encounters with literature present an amalgam of multiple, diverse, even conflicting literary voices, and can thus serve as beneficial mediums for IC development (Porto, 2014; Hoff, 2016).

Nevertheless, no teaching material is fully neutral, as discourses both “conceal and reveal something about the nature of being” (Hoff, 2016, p. 92). Accordingly, teachers should try to look beyond the surface level of their materials or, in the words of Kramsch (2011), to look for what is left unsaid.

Turbulence 5: *Take into account the importance of Intersectionality*

The fifth turbulence denotes the co-construction of various identities, similar to the way gender, age, social, profession, and class intersect in intercultural interaction. Originally, the idea of ‘intersectionality’ has been used to denote the dynamics of difference in feminist social movements, taking as its starting point notions of race, sexuality, class and other elements, and how they together they may contribute to forms of inequality (McCall, 2005). Notions of intersectionality could thereby raise awareness to the plurality of voices and experiences when approaching interculturality (Hoskins & Sallah; 2011; Dervin, 2015). In short, the concept of intersectionality clarifies how identity markers such as gender, age, profession, and social class influence processes of intercultural communication. In the context of FL education, the relevance of this interplay has two sides. First, it may combat injustice, inequality, discrimination and the like by moving away from a mere focus on ‘culture’. Second, it may lead to knowledge of learners’ own sociocultural positions. This twofoldedness mirrors recent scholars’ perspective on how the idea of intersectionality could help examine power relations from a multifaceted viewpoint and “‘individualize’ examinations of intercultural encounters, contrary to generalizing them based on interlocutors’ national and/or ethnical identity” (Dervin, 2015, p. 83).

Turbulence 6: *Place justice at the center of interculturality*

The last turbulence concerns the idea of *justice*, which denotes “commitment to combat inequality, racism, as well as sexism, and all other forms of prejudice, oppression, and discrimination through the development of understanding, attitudes, and social action skills” (Räsänen cited in Dervin & Tournebise, 2013). In practical terms, I interpret this turbulence as placing controversy in education, as critical discussion on issues of race, inequality and oppression may come to counter unjustified moralistic judgments made about the ‘Other’ (Layne, 2015, p. 10). Accordingly, teachers are advised to stop sheltering learners from experiencing notions of discomfort by being overly concerned with reaching the ideal of tolerance, as previously mentioned in section 2.1.3. Moreover, it is interesting to note that the concept of tolerance is regarded as a problematic one, in the sense that it may overlook existing power imbalances in processes of intercultural communication. As Hage (2000) states: “Those who are tolerated represent the topic of the conversation and therefore are viewed as mere strangers (pp. 90-91). Thus, the ideal of tolerance, which former models of IC have highlighted, may hide unequal power relations due to how notions of interculturality are rarely viewed from ‘within’. Yet, how are teachers to deal with cultural controversies in

a constructive manner? In order to answer this question, the next sub-section will draw upon Iversen's (2014) notion of 'uenighetsfellesskap' (a community of disagreement).

2.2.3 The intercultural as controversy

Cultural controversies tend to split our modern societies and typically bring about elements of confrontation, the forceful expressions of ideas and even conflict (Hooks, 1994). In order to deal with these elements, I view the concept of 'uenighetsfellesskap' (a community of disagreement) as helpful. The Norwegian sociologist Lars L. Iversen (2014) defines the concept in the following way: "A community of disagreement is a community where a group of people with different opinions, who together try to solve the challenges that they face" (p. 13, my translation). The preceding lines shed light upon how 'tolerance' is not enough, as notions of disagreement provide the foundation for democratic processes.

Sharing this perspective, recent scholars (e.g., Hoff, 2013; Tornberg, 2004; Fenner, 2001) have suggested that learners should be given the opportunity to express their true opinions in a multi-vocal classroom environment, (i.e., an environment where no one's voice is fully allowed to dominate). The scholars' have claimed that when different voices interact and confront each other, meaning is generated into a new common experience. The learner's voice is thereby identified but also assumes responsibility in its interaction with 'Other' voices. For Tornberg (2004), this kind of interaction help develop learners' ability to listen to the 'Other's' argument and thus alludes to how all discourse participants should be met with respect. Along similar lines, Hoff's (2013) case study indicates that although some students may have a habit of expressing controversial remarks in class, their comments might cause a loud response from the rest of the class. In addition, other learners may offer constructive remarks, by asking learners, who express biased thoughts, to back up their claims with evidence. Yet, how can teachers of English deal with responses that they conceive as intolerable, apart from valuing multi-vocality? In order to answer this question, I turn to two central principles suggested by Iversen (2014) for dealing with disagreement.

The first principle that I find helpful is *Focus on response*, which may help teachers deal with learners' controversial remarks. Iversen suggests that teachers should not ask themselves the question, "Can I tolerate this?" Instead, they should ask themselves: "How do I want to deal with this?" This preceding question holds at its core teachers'

responsibility to take all discourse participants seriously and to ask critical, yet at the same time, polite questions.

The second principle, *Separate the argumentation and the person*, further illustrates the value of letting learners express their initial thoughts about the cultural issue in focus. As mentioned in section 2.1.3, the intercultural encounter may easily result in a “superficial and perfunctory affair unless it involves a sincere in depth examination of personal thoughts and feelings” (Hoff, 2014, p. 515). Thus, by separating argumentation from person, teachers may help their learners reconsider their subjective views through in-depth analysis, and from thereon promote critical thought.

2.2.4 Assessing IC

Because of the increase of instructional objectives, which arguably view the aim as ‘arriving at a destination’ (McKarnan, 2010, p. 57), assessment is today a common practice. Indeed, for the last decades, several scholars have tried to form guidelines and methods for assessing learners’ levels of IC². Notably, Snežana Samardžić-Marković (2015) recently stated that what has been lacking in the Council’s approach to transform the way we live and work, is a universal system to define and measure democratic competences. As a response to this, the European Council is currently working on defining 20 core-competencies for measuring democratic competence, interestingly partnered with intercultural competence, that include the following: responsibility, tolerance, conflict resolution, critical thinking, empathy and openness. As such, the Council’s ambition echoes Byram’s (2008) argument that “there is no reason in principle to avoid assessment of all the *saviors*” and that reluctance to do so “may spring from fear of the responsibility of blocking access to opportunities through an examination system based on values of openness and critical self-awareness [...]” (p. 223).

However, current and former ambitions to measure IC by following ‘recipe-like’ formulas have not avoided criticism; as such efforts are based on several misconceptions. One misconception relates to the too positivistic idea that IC is something that one gains for life by following simple stages for IC development. To support this argument, scholars use the term ‘simplicity’ to capture how learners move back and forth between different levels of

² See Fantini’s (2006) *Assessment tools of intercultural communicative competence* for a practical example.

cultural understanding in intercultural engagement. Partly, such fluid movements emerge as a response to how processes of intercultural communication are context-based. As Kramsch (1993) points out: “The success of any communicative activity is heavily influenced by the way the participants perceive the situation and shape it accordingly through their verbal and non-verbal behavior” (p.49-50). Similarly, Shi-Xu (2001) states that misunderstanding and failed communication are a “joint, co-ordinated, commonly consequential effect. No individual person, group, nation, culture, region and such like can alone be responsible for anything or achieve maximally possible success” (p. 290). It follows from this that no one can be perceived as ‘better’ than others, which makes the task of assessing IC a problematic one.

Another issue concerns the affective dimension of IC: How can learners’ feelings be assessed? As previously indicated, learners may express feelings of openness and tolerance, yet still feel ambivalent towards the ‘Other’. Hence, learners’ open and tolerant utterances cannot always be taken at face value, as mentioned in section 2.1.4. Moreover, it is important to stress that IC development is a time-consuming process. In this regard, Hoff (2013) argues that FL teachers’ main concern should be forming situations for learning that catalyze processes of intercultural development rather than drawing conclusions about the result of such activities. Along similar lines, Ulvik (2014) states that the field of education can learn from the arts by embracing notions of unpredictability. Such notions, Ulvik (2014) posits, function as fruitful conditions for promoting an education for democracy and for developing learners’ ability to find creative solutions for current and future world problems.

In summary, by bringing awareness to some of the complexities of IC into focus, the theory discussed in this chapter underscores valid reasons as to why the question of ‘whether one can go beyond seeing culture everywhere to meeting the person behind it’ has been raised. Six ‘turbulences’ for renewing IC have been presented, and practical implications of implementing them in a FL educational context have been discussed along the way. Moreover, a special emphasis has been placed on the conflictual nature of intercultural communication, which makes it important for educators to embrace notions of conflict and ambiguity, and to accept notions of failure.

2.3 Previous research

In 1999, Byram and Risager conducted a large-scale, comparative study about intercultural learning in lower and upper-secondary education. The study revealed that language teachers experienced an image problem, as it was common among teachers to associate language learning with acquiring certain kinds of skills. Another interesting finding was that teachers had a simplified understanding of ‘culture,’ that typically relied on ideas of the national. Furthermore, teachers expressed awareness of their responsibility to developing learners’ feelings of openness and tolerance towards other cultures. In sum, the scholars concluded that IC was an aim within the sphere of language teaching.

In Sercu et.al (2005) quantitative comparative study, language-teachers’ views of IC were examined in seven countries: Belgium, Bulgaria, Poland, Mexico, Greece, Spain, and Sweden. The comparative study was underpinned by Byram’s influential model of intercultural communicative competence (see section 2.1.2) and identified two teacher profiles: those who aimed to promote and those who did not. An interesting aspect that emerged from the teachers who did not aim to promote IC was the fear of reinforcing cultural stereotypes. The teachers who were in favor, on the other hand, believed that the act of exploring issues of culture in the language-learning classroom would make learners more tolerant towards other people and cultures.

In Portugal, Guilherme (2002) conducted a study of why and how upper-secondary language teachers approach the concept of ‘culture’. This entailed finding out how they defined critical cultural awareness and what kinds of development could help them improve their culture teaching-practices. The teachers highlighted the need to focus on target or native cultures. Additionally, the study explored how teachers thought of themselves as cultural mediators (i.e., as “someone who acts as an ‘intermediary’ using his/hers competence to transfer meanings from one party to another, where the parties do not share the same language” (Byram & Alread cited in Kohler, 2015). Nevertheless, The teachers did not show any traces of ‘critical cultural awareness,’ which aforementioned denotes how the ‘intercultural speaker’ “evaluates critically on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one’s own and other cultures” (Byram, 1997, p. 63).

In Finland, Forsman (2006) carried out a three-year study during which she examined her own culture teaching practice in a lower-secondary English classroom. The aim of her study was to develop learners' awareness of difference and diversity, using Byram's model of ICC as an organizing framework. Interestingly, Forsman concluded that it is possible to modify or change learners' simplified views on other cultures. Such transformations did, however, require a teacher's repeated and systematic working on cultural issues for a longer period.

In Australia, Kohler (2015) oversaw an action-research project that observed and interviewed three teachers of Indonesian in Australian schools. The focus was on the language teachers and their roles as intercultural mediators. The study concluded that the teachers' perceptions, practices and their own cultural and linguistic identities greatly influenced their mediations.

Moreover, while Itkonen's (2015) study did not focus on language teaching explicitly, it is helpful for understanding how FL teachers could approach interculturality in a way that is in line with newer perspectives on IC. The study makes a strong case for why renewed interculturality should be incorporated into research on IC in education. In the study, the scholars discovered that the increasing diversity among learners challenges upper-secondary teachers' sense of interculturality and their ability to treat the 'Other' fairly. However, the study's findings also revealed an awareness of positionalities and ideologies, as well as a concern about equality and justice - two issues that showed how renewed conceptions of IC could result in real empowerment of all in any educational context.

As the studies above have indicated, teachers' perceptions of IC have been popular concern within the field of language education. However, in a Norwegian educational context, this topic has received only limited scholarly attention. Instead, the focus has been on the potential of teaching materials for IC development. In *Questions of culture and context in English language learning textbooks*, Lund (2007) explored how textbooks used in lower-secondary education deal with notions of 'context,' 'culture,' and 'intercultural learning.' Interestingly, Lund (2007) concluded that "the development of the students' intercultural awareness and of their attitudes towards other cultures is no main concern in today's textbooks" (p. 324). Instead, her study identified a trend of textbooks being more focused on the linguistic aspect of communication. Following a similar track, Eide's (2012) PhD

dissertation called attention to how Spanish textbook materials generally suffer from their descriptive style that neglects the multiple voices that we find within the explored cultures. Therefore, she concluded that current textbooks might not be suitable material for promoting intercultural competence in FL education (Eide, 2012).

In summary, although the scholarly interest in teachers' perceptions of IC started in the 1990s, it is by no means an area of focus in which scholars have lost interest. Nationally, however, only minimal research has been performed. Thus, this is an area of inquiry that deserves more attention from a Norwegian educational context. Moreover, it is clear that most of the studies cited above have used Byram's model of ICC as a framework for analysis. As a result, few studies have examined teachers' conceptions of IC in light of newer theoretical perspectives on IC development.

2.4 The current situation

Byram (2008) emphasizes the need for an international and supranational approach to citizenship education. In this section, I therefore further explore the AIE, and how this policy document conceptualizes the intercultural. Thereafter, LK06/13 will be presented, as the purpose of these policy documents is guide teachers of English in their work.

2.4.1 The AIE

The AIE is a direct response to the recommendations of the Council of Europe's White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, "*Living together as equals in dignity*" (2008). Byram, Barrett, Ipgrave, Jackson and García designed this document, and it is presented as a further development of Byram's model of ICC.

In the AIE, the 'intercultural' refers to the "capacity to experience cultural otherness, and to use this experience to reflect on matters that are usually taken for granted within one's own culture and environment" (Byram et al., 2009, p. 10). Consequently, the conceptualization of interculturality chiefly involves being "open to people from other cultures" and "evaluat[ing] one's own everyday patterns of perceptions" (p. 10). Further, the paper makes clear that the following competences are required for effective intercultural dialogue:

1. Respect for otherness
2. Empathy
3. Acknowledgement of identities
4. Tolerance of ambiguity
5. Knowledge
6. Skills of discovery and interaction
7. Behavioral flexibility
8. Communicative awareness
9. Skills of interpreting and relating (seeing similarities and differences)
10. Critical cultural awareness
11. Action orientation (Byram et al., 2009, pp. 23-25).

The above competences suggest that the AIE regards culture as a complex concept. As discussed in section 2.1.2, Byram's model of ICC has recently been criticized for overemphasizing the word 'country.' Interestingly, this word is heavily downplayed in this document. Instead, there is an emphasis on today's crossing of cultural boundaries. For Byram et al. (2009), cultural boundaries exist between ethnic groups, religious groups, language groups, racial groups national and state groups, local and regional groups and supranational groups (pp.19-22). It follows from this that AIE intends to offer critical insight into how different cultural boundaries may be crossed in the course of an intercultural encounter. Another interesting element is the competence 'tolerance for ambiguity.' As stated in the AIE, tolerance for ambiguity is essential for successful intercultural communication. As such, this document echoes recent critiques directed toward how the successful 'intercultural speaker' experiences ambiguous situations as unpleasant and for this reason avoids them.

2.4.2 The English subject curriculum in LK06/13

The current English subject curriculum describes the purpose of the subject, the basic skills, the main subject areas, the competence aims, and the number of teaching hours of the subject in all the school levels. In this section, I will explore what the English subject curriculum conveys about the intercultural.

In the introduction to the English subject curriculum, the overarching aims for the teaching of English are discussed. Influenced by trends of society and working life, these aims clarify how increased globalization has made it important for learners to develop communicative skills and cultural understanding, as this may provide a better basis for “greater interaction, *understanding* and *respect* between people of different backgrounds” (LK06/13, abbreviations added). The need to develop learners’ feelings of openness and emphatic understanding toward the ‘Other’ is also included in the main subject area ‘Culture, Society and Literature.’ As such, the current English subject curriculum explicitly conveys that IC development concerns much more than developing knowledge about cultural, geographical and historical facts; thus, it moves beyond the German tradition of *Landeskunde*.

However, the aforementioned emphasis on developing learners’ feelings of respect and emphatic understanding towards the ‘Other’ is not to be found in the competence aims for the first year of upper-secondary education for general studies or in the aims for the first and second year of upper-secondary education for vocational studies. Accordingly, the competence aims appear to be more knowledge-based. For example, in the competence aims related to the teaching of ‘Culture, Society and Literature’ we read how learners are expected to “discuss and elaborate on culture and social conditions in several English-speaking cultures” and to “discuss and elaborate on English-language films and others forms of cultural expressions from different media” (LK06/13). As already hinted at in section 2.2.4, this contradiction between the overarching aims and the competence aims may relate to the fact that ‘attitudes’ are not ‘skills’ that can easily be assessed. In spite of this, I find it noteworthy that the curriculum also places great responsibility on the teacher to recognize that both attitudinal and cognitive aspects need to be taken into account when working with IC.

Another clear weakness concerning the competence aims is that they neglect learners' own cultural outlooks. As explained in section 2.1.4, such an oversight may result in unbalanced power relations. However, in the purpose section it is stated that the reading of literary texts may instill a "deeper understanding of others and oneself" (LK06/13). The preceding statement implicitly touches upon aspects of interculturality and acknowledges that intercultural meaning is constructed between interlocutors as a kind of ideological bridge. Consequently, we again notice how the overarching aims and the competence aims contradict each other. It follows that all aspects of the curriculum need to be taken into account when approaching IC. As a final point, it should further be noted that, unlike the AIE, LK06/13 leaves notions of ambiguity and conflict unaddressed. In this respect, the curriculum echoes Byram's ICC model, where the ideal put forth is to search for a harmonious fusion of horizons. As explained in section 2.1.4, this strong emphasis could potentially downplay the importance of raising learners' awareness of the conflicting nature of intercultural communication.

To conclude, this section has described policy documents that guide English foreign language (EFL) teachers in their work on IC. In the AIE (2009), it is evident that a complex understanding of 'culture' is presented. Moreover, the document argues that 'tolerance for ambiguity' is crucial for youths growing up in today's globalized world. As for LK06/13, it is noticeable that Byram's (1997) model of ICC has had an impact on its design. I have also noted that there are certain contradictions in the curriculum that might leave teachers searching for clues for how to approach interculturality in the English classroom.

3.0 Methods and materials

This chapter will introduce the research methods I regarded as the most appropriate for examining this study's research questions. An outline for the methods employed, i.e. questionnaires and interviews, will be provided. Thereafter, the chapter will discuss a demonstration of the development toward collecting data and will include a description of the tools applied to analyze the data. The subsequent section will address the reliability and validity measures. Finally, the chapter will touch upon ethical issues regarding the process of collecting data and the limitations of each of the employed methods.

3.1 A mixed-method approach

In this study, a mixed-method approach was employed for completeness purposes. As it applies to research, 'completeness' refers to the idea that a more complete answer can be provided to the area of inquiry if both quantitative and qualitative methods are included (Bryman, 2015, p. 643). Therefore, two separate methods were selected, namely interviews and questionnaires. I aimed for this combination to allow for the establishment of numeric trends as well as to uncover underlying patterns. Consequently, I regarded both methods as of having the same priority.

3.1.2 Merging qualitative and quantitative data

The main challenge of adopting a multi-method strategy is the long tradition of viewing qualitative and quantitative research as separate paradigms and the idea that research methods involve epistemological commitment. A qualitative approach essentially concerns documenting individuals' subjective views, relying on the researcher's subjective interpretations of data. In contrast, quantitative research entails making generalizations about numbers of individuals collectively through the use of statistics. It is therefore understandable to assume the two paradigms are incompatible. In consideration of this impression, Bryman (2015) points out that there has been a growing interest in mixed-method research, which testifies to the fruitfulness of combining the two separate paradigms.

The choice of adopting a mixed-method strategy was also founded on factors other than reasons of completeness. Since this study examines teachers' perceptions of IC, ideas

about how to obtain access to this reality affect the choice of methods. Researchers who adopt a quantitative paradigm are usually informed by a positivistic approach to epistemology. This means that the social phenomenon studied is conceived as patterned and predictable. Hence, knowledge about individuals' lived realities is pre-existing, waiting to be discovered. Researchers who adopt qualitative methods, on the other hand, tend to be informed by the constructivist approach. In other words, they believe in the existence of multiple realities. This means that realities are constructed in social settings and thereby interpreted thereof. However, there is another philosophical paradigm that presents a compromise between the two: critical realism. Researchers who conduct mixed-method research are said to capture the spirit of this tradition, which believes in situated realities (Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2007).

Disadvantages related to adopting a mixed-method approach should be acknowledged, as the approach is both difficult to plan and conduct. In addition, the possibility of failing to corroborate findings always exists (Bryman, 2012, p. 636). Researchers must also develop sufficient knowledge in both fields of research and should remember to collect data with the same intention. Altogether, it becomes essential to make aims explicit for each method employed and to also to prepare oneself for the possibility of inconsistent data. The present thesis has taken these concerns into account, which will be discussed later on.

3.1.3 On choosing the questionnaire

The questionnaire is one of the two methods employed by this study. As the purpose of this study is to explore English teachers' perceptions of IC, it was deemed beneficial to get as many teachers as possible to report on their culture teaching practices. Web surveys operate by inviting future respondents to visit a website on which the questionnaire can be found and completed. This simple access makes it easy to receive a high response rate. Web surveys are also anonymous. It is therefore possible to argue that this method does not suffer from 'interviewer effects' (i.e., the notions that interviewees are more prone to represent themselves in the best possible light due to the physical presence of the interviewer).

3.1.4 On choosing the interview

The interview, founded on a phenomenological-inspired approach, was viewed as a favorable method due to the qualitative nature of this current study. This form of interview attempts to understand the personal perspectives of the interviewee (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009 p. 45). Thus, the interview may generate a greater understanding of each individual's personal experiences, feelings and attitudes, which would otherwise be difficult to measure or observe. Interviews also allow for interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee. This interaction is helpful and valuable, as it limits the occurrence of misunderstandings.

Furthermore, the semi-structured format was regarded as beneficial in the present study. In contrast to structured interviews, this format is more open. Yet, similar to other professional interviews it has an overarching purpose and involves a certain application of techniques (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009, p. 45). Therefore, the interviewer performs the interview in accordance with a carefully worded informal interview guide, which deals with grouped topics. However, the topics are not constrained to a specific plan. Consequently, different questions may be asked to different participants, allowing for a certain amount of flexibility. An important advantage of this flexibility is that it allows for the carrying out of emphatic conversations about sensitive issues. It also enables the interviewer to follow up on intriguing leads or new information that is shared.

3.2 Data collection procedures

In this section, I provide an explanation of my process of collecting empirical data. Subsequently, I will detail the participant recruitment process and discuss relevant background information about the participating candidates. Finally, I address the processes of conducting the interviews and questionnaires.

3.2.1 Designing the questionnaire

Due to the well-known issue of low response rates (Byram, 2015, p. 224), I paid particular attention to length and design. I ensured that the layout was 'easy on the eye' by paying particular attention to the ideal of shortness and the answer options' layout. An advantage of web surveys is that they provide a variety of possible designs; consequently, it becomes easier to adjust colors, response styles, formatting, and other elements.

The web survey consisted of twelve questions: ten closed and two open-ended questions. The advantages of using close-ended questions are as follows: 1. They make it easier to process answers. 2. They enhance comparability measures. 3. They require less effort from the respondents. Yet, there are also certain disadvantages associated with the use of closed questions. For example, there is a loss of spontaneity in answers as well as the possibility of not catering possible answers. This possibility was dealt with by adding the open-ended category 'other' when appropriate. Most questions were answered through a conventional forced-choice format, which means that the respondent had to select one option out of several. This made it easier to analyze the collected data. Some questions did, however, allow for several answers, which was unavoidable due to the nature of the questions. Two open-ended questions were also constructed, which offered the respondents the opportunity to express personal experiences and thoughts on their own terms.

I will now present the design of the questionnaire in more detail. The questionnaire first targeted the background information of the respondents, such as the duration of their teaching experience. As these were factual questions, I applied a forced-choice format in order to reduce the likelihood of errors.

The questionnaire further addressed whether the respondents believed it was important to deal with cultural issues in class, how often they addressed them, and what external factors influenced their culture-teaching practice. The first question addresses the teachers' feelings/beliefs. Yet, as people vary in the intensity of their feelings/beliefs, I chose to avoid the conventional 'Yes/No' category and instead included a Likert-scale that had the following answer options: "Very important," "Important," "Somewhat important," "Less important," and "Not important." In terms of how frequent the teachers report to approach issues of culture, ambiguous terms such as 'often' and 'regularly' were avoided. Instead, answer options like: "More than once a week," "Once a week," and "2-3 times a month" were included.

Following this initial section, the questionnaire dealt with what the respondents *typically* encouraged their learners to consider when dealing with issues of culture. A range of options was listed, including the open-ended category "Other." However, as people often have a difficult time keeping in mind several options at a time (Pew Research Centre, 2016), I tried to keep the number of answer options relatively limited. The list was,

however, far from random. Since the purpose of the current study is to examine how, if at all, English teachers' perceptions of IC reflect newer theoretical perspectives on interculturality, I cautiously narrowed the list down to the following answer options:

The learners' feelings of openness, understanding, and tolerance toward other cultures and individuals from other cultural backgrounds

Facts about the other cultures' history, religion and geography

Cultural differences

The learners' own cultures and outlooks

Communicative patterns of the English-speaking culture

Controversial cultural issues, such race-relations and issues of inequality

The learners' feelings of uncertainty emerging from their engagement with given cultural issue

- *Other? Please specify:*

As discussed in the theory chapter, theoretical perspectives on IC vary. Byram (1997) has defined five aspects of learning (see 2.1.3), which include fostering learners' ability to 'establish and maintain relationships across cultural boundaries' (Byram, 1997, p. 3). These defined aspects are reflected in several of the answer options above. For example, the component of *savoir-être* (attitudes) is reflected in the following answer option: "Their feelings of openness, understanding and tolerance towards the other cultures and individuals from other cultural backgrounds." However, as the reader of the present thesis may recall, this component has also been criticized for neither taking the learners nor the foreign cultures sufficiently seriously, due to its strong emphasis on tolerance and mutual understanding. Since the component of *savoir-être* is regarded as a foundation for developing the other *savoirs*, and is generally the component that scholars highlight, it is arguable that notions of 'Self' are not emphasized strongly enough in Byram's ICC model. Consequently, I included the answer option "Learners' own cultures and outlooks" in order to examine the respondents' attention to power imbalances.

Similarly, the answer options “Controversial cultural issues, such as race-relations and issues of inequality” and “Their feelings of uncertainty emerging from their engagement with given cultural issues” were included to trace potential elements of renewed interculturality. Moreover, it should be noted that I deliberately chose to exclude the answer option ‘Cultural similarities’ when designing the list. Although this answer option reflects more recent views on IC, it is closely associated with the included answer option ‘Cultural differences’, a culture teaching-objective that according to Dervin (2015) is overly emphasized in today’s education. In this regard, it is interesting to note that Alves’ (2017) empirical study demonstrated that ‘similarities’ hold more positive connotations than ‘differences’ in social environments. Accordingly, it is arguable that by including both answers options, respondents would be tempted to exaggerate their emphasis on cultural similarities, thus forming *social desirability bias*. Nevertheless, they were allowed to express this potential focal point in the open-ended category “Other.”

The succeeding questionnaire questions focused on the interactional modes and teaching materials the teachers preferred using when working with cultural issues in the English classroom. The reason for including a question about the respondents’ preferred interactional modes was to explore whether the teachers preferred methods gave learners the opportunities to learn from each other and to interpret the issue at hand by themselves. A forced-choice format was given to this question; however, the issue of pigeonholing the respondents was avoided by including the following answer option: “A combination of all/some of the interactional modes.” In contrast, the question addressing preferred culture-teaching materials was given a multiple-choice format. The respondents were offered an exhaustive list of culture teaching materials, which also included the category “Other.”

Although Bryman (2015) advises researchers to avoid open-ended questions in questionnaires due to the time consuming processes of coding and analyzing them, they may also “allow for unusual response to emerge” (p. 244) and “are useful for exploring new areas or ones in which the researcher has limited knowledge” (p. 245). Therefore, I chose to include two open-ended questions. The first open-ended question was included as a direct response to the question about the teachers’ preferred culture-teaching materials. The respondents were asked to reflect on why they viewed their selected materials as beneficial mediums for developing learners’ cultural understandings. This was also a transitional question, as the main purpose was to explore the extent to which the

respondents reported paying attention to existing power relations in light of how their teaching materials portray the ‘Other.’

Further, the respondents were asked to indicate how often they reflected on their own cultural outlook when dealing with issues of culture. As mentioned in chapter 2.2.2, scholars who advocate renewed interculturality recommend teachers to *move away from individualistic biases* by paying attention to their own preconceived views of others. Similar to the question concerning the teachers’ habits regarding the addressing of cultural issues, this was a question about frequency. Hence, I included the following answer options: “Every time,” “Almost every time,” “Sometimes,” “Rarely,” “Never,” and “Not as often as I would like.” Yet another open-ended question followed this closed one. The respondents were encouraged to share their thoughts on what they experienced as challenging, if anything, when working with issues of culture.

Finally, the respondents were asked to share their beliefs about a particular issue. This time, the issue at hand was that of assessment. This question dealt directly with the teachers’ experiences with assessing their learners’ developed levels of cultural understanding. As the main intention was to see whether the teachers grasped the complexity of IC development by *accepting notions of failure* (see section 2.2.4), it was tempting to include a disagree/agree format for the associated question. In fact, disagree/disagree questions have been highly popular within a wide-range of research fields. However, a potential pitfall of adopting this ranking-scale is that it easily constructs *acquiescence response bias*, as people aim to be likable. Therefore, I included an item-specific question to combat this problem. The item-specific question was formulated in the following manner: “After having carried out a session which dealt with a/several issue(s) of culture, how easy or difficult do you find it to assess your learners’ developed levels of cultural understanding?” As a result, the following rating scale was adopted: “Very easy,” “Easy,” “Neutral,” “Difficult,” and “Very difficult.”

3.2.2 Designing the interview guide

As mentioned in section 3.1.4, semi-structured interviews are less structured than structured interviews; a consequence of this flexibility is that there always exists a risk of going off on tangents. In order to combat this risk, I prepared an interview guide. When

designing this guide, I aimed to include the areas that I needed in order to cover my research questions. Yet, I did avoid making them too specific. The interview guide was divided into six themes, which were often accompanied by subsequent sub-themes. Due to time constraints, I had to alter the design of the questionnaire to better accommodate the interview situation. Moreover, the different sub-sections had individual adjustments, allowing the respondents to elaborate on their answers to the pre-interview questionnaire. The overarching themes were as follows: 1. Purpose of teaching culture; 2. Presenting the 'Other'; 3. Recollections of and reflections on a previous culture-teaching session(s); 4. Motivations behind encouraged considerations; 5. Faced challenges; 6. Controversial cultural issues.

A briefing and debriefing were also prepared and included in the interview guide. This inclusion offered the interviews an effective structuring frame. The main reasons for including the briefing section were to make the interviewees comfortable, and to remind them of the purpose of the study, its anonymous nature, and the use of the tape recorder. The debriefing section, on the other hand, included thanking the participants for their contributions and a short summary of the interview. The respondents were also asked about whether they had any further comments concerning the issues discussed. Following Bryman's (2015) recommendation, I left the tape recorder going because "interviewees sometimes 'open up' at the end of their interviews" (p. 484).

It is important to also address the main themes and sub-themes of the interview guide in more detail. As aforementioned, the first part of the interview guide focused on the interviewees' perceptions about the purpose of teaching culture. The interviewees were therefore asked to discuss the purpose of approaching issues of culture in the English learning classroom and what cultural aspects they preferred to address. The subsequent theme, *Presenting the 'Other,'* had included two related sub-themes. First, the respondents were asked to reflect on what their culture teaching choices meant for raising their learners' cultural awareness. In the pre-interview questionnaire, great varieties of interactional modes were covered. As previously mentioned, this question was included as it could come to target whether or not the respondents aimed to foster sociocultural learning environments that embrace multiple, contradicting and sometimes conflicting voices. Such environments may help develop learners' ability to cope with notions of ambiguity and discomfort, a development that scholars who advocate renewed

interculturality view as crucial. Because all of the participating interviewees stated that they preferred to combine all/some of the interactional modes described, I asked these follow-up questions: “Why is it important to combine several interactional modes when working with issues of culture?” and “How do you think your learners can help each other understand the cultural issue explored?”

The second sub-theme concerned the respondents’ thoughts on their preferred culture-teaching materials. In the questionnaire, the respondents had come up with differing reasons as to why their preferred the materials were beneficial to use. In the interview, they were encouraged to elaborate on these reflections. An example of how this was done is illustrated in Figure 2 below:

Presenting the ‘Other’ (1)	Follow-up questions
You stated that you prefer to use and combine movies and literary and factual texts, as this would allow you to <i>highlight different parts of the issue....</i>	Why do you see this as important?
	What would this look like in practice?

Figure 2. *Example of follow-up sequence (Interviewee 4)*

In terms of the theme *Recollections of and reflections on a previous culture-teaching session*, the respondents were first asked to talk about a previous culture-teaching session, or series of sessions. According to Borg (2015), such retellings are valuable in research concerned with teachers’ perceptions, as discrepancies often exist between reports and actual practices. It is typical that reports shed light upon what the teachers think should or could be done, as opposed to being reflective of how their practices are influenced by other factors such as syllabuses, colleagues, school administrations, and individual preferences. Hence, the aim of including this theme was to identify potential inconsistencies in the teachers’ reports and thoughts on their approaches to interculturality.

Moreover, this theme functioned served as a means to explore how, if at all, the teachers' views on assessment and their attention to their own cultural outlook fit within the framework of renewed interculturality. The respondents were asked to answer the these follow-up questions:

1. How did you experience this session?
2. Was there a point where you reflected on your own cultural outlook when carrying out this session? If so, can you please reason why?
3. What impact do you think this session had on your learners' cultural understanding?

The participants were also encouraged to elaborate on their motivations behind the culture-teaching objectives that they typically encouraged their learners to consider. The objectives have been outlined in section 3.3.2, so I will not describe further here. The only exception is the culture-teaching objective 'Controversial cultural issues such as race-relation nad issues of inequality.' I purposely saved this objective for the end of the interview. An important reason for this concerns its sensitive nature. According to Kvale & Brinkmann (2009), interviewees are more likely to share sensitive information at the end of their interviews.

Thereafter, the respondents were encouraged to elaborate on what they viewed as challenging, if anything, when approaching issues of culture in a classroom context. Although most respondents had answered this question when filling in the pre-interview questionnaire, it was purposely included due to how social interaction is a prerequisite for knowledge (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 72). Finally, I wanted to probe into whether or not the teachers' dared entering risky territories by approaching cultural controversies, as renewed views on interculturality regard discomfort as inherent to IC development. Hence, I chose to start by asking the following direct question: "Are there any cultural topics that you think should be avoided in the classroom? Why or why not?" This was followed by more factual questions that concerned the respondents' habits of approaching cultural controversies, such as: "Do you approach cultural controversies to the extent that you would like?" Further, this section included questions about potential external factors that influenced the teachers' commitment to dealing with cultural tensions.

3.2.3 Recruiting participants

In this study, the group of participants included upper-secondary school teachers who taught English at vg.1 (general studies) and/or vg.1 and 2 (vocational studies). In order to find teachers of English who matched these specifications, two carefully worded invitations were sent out (see Appendices B and C). The first invitation aimed to recruit participants to answer the web survey. The invitation was distributed to 220 upper-secondary schools in Norway. It is impossible to determine whether or not teachers from across the country are represented due to the anonymous nature of the web survey. It is, however, reasonable to assume that respondents were from different parts of the country. The teachers had the opportunity to complete the survey from the 20th of October to the 20th of December 2016.

The other invitation aimed to recruit interview candidates, which turned out to be more challenging. Although the invitation was sent out to all upper-secondary schools in the Hordaland region, few teachers expressed their interest right away. I therefore had to be patient and continue to search for potential candidates. Since the initial phase was marked by such a low-interest rate, I felt the need to invite teachers from outside of the Hordaland area. The invitation was therefore sent out to some upper-secondary schools in Rogaland. Finally, I was left with seven interview candidates. Five of them taught English in Hordaland and two taught English in Rogaland.

3.2.4 Interview and questionnaire respondents

93 teachers completed the web survey. The group of participants taught English in the following study programs:

52,69% Vocational and General studies

24,73% General studies

22,58% Vocational studies

The participants' years of experience teaching English were as follows:

34,41% Less than five years

43,01% 5-14 years

15-24% 15-24

25 % 25 +

As for the interviewees, seven English upper-secondary teachers accepted my invitation.

Table 1 (below) presents relevant background information on each candidate:

Table 1. *Interview participants*

Interviewee	Gender	Years of teaching experience	Teaches English in	Location
1	Female	15-24	General and Vocational studies	Hordaland
2	Female	5-14	Vocational studies	Hordaland
3	Male	5-14	Vocational studies	Hordaland
4	Male	5-14	General studies	Hordaland
5	Male	5-14	General studies	Rogaland
6	Female	Less than 5	Vocational studies	Rogaland
7	Female	15-24	General and Vocational studies	Hordaland

3.2.5 Conducting the questionnaires

Two identical web surveys were designed online using SurveyMonkey enterprise. One had IP identification, while the other did not. The questionnaire that did have IP identification served as a pre-interview questionnaire, and as a base for the follow-up interviews. The other web survey did not have IP-identification and was distributed to 220 upper-secondary school administrations across the country. A link to complete the survey was included in the formal invitation.

3.2.6 Conducting the interviews

All interviews were conducted at the end of 2016 and varied in length from approximately 30 to 60 minutes. Each of the individual interviews was carried out at the teachers' respective schools. Six of the interviews were conducted in Norwegian, while one was conducted in English. I was aware of the complexities of researching in different languages and the problems related to translation. In spite of such issues, I viewed letting the interviewee decide on the language as an advantageous decision, as I wanted the participants to feel as comfortable as possible. Moreover, I wanted the interview situation to appear authentic, characterized by a nice conversation flow. Given the possibility of a diversity of views within the volunteering group of teachers, I was prepared for conversations to go unanticipated directions.

3.3 Data analysis

The purpose of this study factored into the selected methods for analyzing the collected data. Interview data were qualitatively analyzed, while questionnaire data were mainly analyzed quantitatively, yet to some extent qualitatively.

The quantitative findings were carefully examined and were transformed into analyzable formats. In terms of the levels of measurements, the quantitative data was both nominal (variables that cannot be ranked or ordered) and ordinal (variables that can be ranked or ordered). Yet, in spite of this difference in measurement it is common practice to present both nominal and ordinal data by using bar charts and pie charts (Bryman, 2015, p. 335). For this reason, I made no difference between the two when selecting the chart type.

The qualitative data were investigated using a deductive approach to content analysis, which involves an analysis of data performed in light of pre-established categories and codes that are relevant to the study's research questions (Bryman, 2015). In this process of analysis, an initial step was to transcribe the interview data. According to Kvale & Brinkmann (2009), there is no standard answer to how this should be done; I therefore chose to do the transcription in written style, not in a verbatim one (see Appendix H for the transcription key). Next, the interview transcripts and the respondents' answers to the open-ended questions included in the questionnaire were read and re-read thoroughly. In this process, I made sure to include some general notes about what I found intriguing or

particularly significant. The material was further analyzed by linking the pre-established categories and codes to the sequences in the data (For an example of a coded page, see Appendix G.) Moreover, during this step of the analysis, some codes were removed, revised and added, as the participants' discourses about their approaches to IC provided insight into new aspects that not had been taken into account when deciding on the prior codes. (For the final version of the developed coding sheet, see Appendix F.)

Finally, the complete data set related to each question of research was considered. This allowed the quantitative and qualitative results to be compared and contrasted using a cross-analysis process. The primary aims of this analysis were to examine whether the qualitative findings shed light upon aspects of interculturality that the quantitative results did not and to identify some overall trends in the complete data set.

3.4 Reliability and validity measures

'Reliability' refers to the "consistency of a measure of a concept" (Bryman, 2012, p. 159). 'Validity,' on the other hand, concerns whether a measure of a concept provides an accurate measurement. In order to achieve reliability and validity, this study applied a mixed-method approach (see section 3.1), which made it easier to understand data from a more holistic view through completeness. In this study, the data collection process and the stages of the analysis were carefully planned. Next, I will focus on the reliability and validity measures that were taken in relation to each adopted method in the present study.

3.4.1 The web survey

The web survey assured reliability of the collected data due to the development of a clear presentation that consisted of relatively few questions. However, there will always exist a risk of respondents answering questions in haste, and as a consequence of doing so, they select the wrong boxes. Thus, I paid close attention to the layout of answer options favoring vertical layout options whenever possible, as horizontal ones tend to generate confusion (Sudman & Bradburn, 1982). Furthermore, clear instructions on how to respond were provided, such as with the statement: "Select the boxes that best correspond to your culture-teaching practice."

In addition, I made sure to avoid acquiescence and social desirability biases, as previously mentioned in section 3.2.1. Furthermore, when designing the two open-ended questions, I limited the length of answers provided to 350 words. This made it easier to process answers, which ensured reliability measures. Moreover, the questionnaire software assured reliability measures for the collected data by transforming the collected answers into analyzable formats. Statistical errors were therefore avoided.

As one of the major difficulties when writing a survey is getting the wordings right, I paid close attention to the way the included questions and answer options were formulated. As a result, validity measures were assured. However, in relation to the question concerning what the respondents typically encouraged their learners to consider when dealing with issues of culture, the answer option “Learners feelings of uncertainty emerging from their engagement with given cultural issues,” may have caused confusion, as aforementioned. Accordingly, this answer option’s ambiguous wording may have negatively affected validity measures.

3.4.2 The semi-structured interviews

In this study, a prepared interview guide was used in order to follow the predefined topics and sub-questions. In relation to the use of interview guides, Patton (2002) points out that the researcher’s flexibility in choosing what questions to ask and when to ask them may result in less systematic data and thus reduce reliability. Yet, it is the same flexibility that allows for the interviewee’s voice to be heard in the presence of the more dominant interviewer. In addition, this flexibility constructs a narrative of its own. Hence, the semi-structured format assured the validity of this study.

The conducted interviews were recorded and transcribed. Reliability measures associated with these processes are rarely described (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 206). However, in this case it should be mentioned that the complexities of translating quotes from Norwegian to English could decrease the level of reliability. Being aware of this issue, I aimed to keep the meaning of the informants’ statements as authentic as possible. The quality of the data collection procedure was also tested through a pilot test. This ensured reliability, as questions and other elements were modified to improve the quality of the collected data. Moreover, there are several pitfalls in interpreting qualitative evidence.

Consequently, potential misinterpretations were countered by asking the interviewees to clarify utterances (e.g., by asking, “Say what you mean by...?” and “It sounds like you are saying... is that a fair summary?”) I also encouraged the participants to ask for clarifications when faced with ambiguity. Furthermore, I sought to validate the plausibility of my interpretation of the qualitative evidence by discussing them with my supervisor.

3.5 Ethical considerations

In accordance with The Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD)’s code of ethics, anonymity and confidentiality were valued throughout the research process, which ensured respect for the individuals taking part in this study.

When conducting research, there are several ethical issues to consider. In the current study, I decided not to use the term ‘intercultural competence.’ In an ideal world, the English teachers would have been acquainted with the term. However, as the current curriculum never explicitly mentions the term, I presupposed that this was not necessarily the status. To use it could thereby have fostered feelings of confusion, or perhaps even inadequacy among the participants. To minimize this risk, I instead asked about their approaches to cultural issues and/or cultural sensitivities.

In order to fulfill the requirements of confidentiality and anonymity of information that the research participants provided, I used pseudonyms in transcripts and protected stored digital information with usernames and passwords. In the processes of transcribing interviews, I also made sure to alter details that could be connected to the participants, thus guaranteeing full anonymity. Moreover, it is essential to point out that the two web surveys were different in terms of their degree of anonymity. The larger survey was completely anonymous, while the other had IP identification. The IP addresses were later removed in order to present the data anonymously.

Written and oral consent was obtained from all interview participants. An initial e-mail informed the participants about the purpose of the study and measures of anonymity and confidentiality (see Appendices B and C). When writing these e-mails, I made sure to stress that the information provided would only be used to fulfill the aims of the research project. The participants’ opportunity to withdraw from the study was also underlined.

Moreover, legal requirements were also anticipated. Permission from NSD was granted (see Appendix A). NSD was also informed about changes applied to the project along the way.

3.6 Limitations of the web survey and the interviews

There were several limitations to the current study. In the web survey, a default setting was unknowingly selected, which did not allow teachers to complete the survey before having answered each included question. As a result, several teachers allowed themselves to answer the open-ended questions by writing down punctuation marks and random letters. In addition, and as previously indicated, the risk of having respondents selecting the wrong boxes also poses an issue.

Moreover, although I avoided using technical terms when designing the questionnaire, it became clear to me in retrospect that the answer option: “The learners’ feelings of uncertainty emerging from their engagement with given cultural issue” to the question: “When approaching issues of culture, what do you typically encourage your learners to consider?” may have caused confusion. The problem here is that the respondents may have not fully understood the meaning of “feelings of uncertainty emerging from their engagement with given cultural issues.” In hindsight, I could perhaps have used simpler language and altered the option to the following: “Express their opinions on what is difficult for them to understand about others’ worldviews.”

In terms of the qualitative data, subjectivity is always a limitation, both in terms of processes of collecting them and of analyzing them. When transcribing the interviews from oral to written form, key features of communication disappear, such as the interviewees’ facial expressions and their tone of voice. As a result, the transcripts were only viewed as tools for interpreting and understanding the teachers’ perspectives (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2011, p. 200). When conducting the interviews, I also sought to present myself as neutral as possible. It is, however, impossible to fully achieve such an ideal. It is therefore possible that my own verbal and non-verbal expressions influenced the interviewees’ answers to the questions asked. Additionally, minor variations in how questions are formulated might lead to different results. In this study, an interview guide was viewed as valuable in order to avoid such variations. However, the transcriptions later revealed that some formulations

were somewhat altered due to the differing contexts of communication and to certain distractions.

Furthermore, getting teachers to participate is always a challenge. In an ideal world, I would have selected interview candidates based on their answers to the pre-interview questionnaire. This would allow me to perform a purposeful sampling (i.e. a sampling that is a “flexible, on-going, evaluative process of selecting successive respondents” (Glaser & Strauss cited in Dörnyei 2007, p. 126), There was, however, little interest in taking part in the planned interview among teachers of English. I was therefore left with the teachers who were willing to participate, which could have potentially resulted in the forming of a homogenous group. According to theory, this demanding search for willing participants characterizes what is referred to as ‘convenience sampling.’ Although this sampling strategy is considered to be the least desirable, it is worth mentioning that saturation (i.e., when new data do not provide new information on the research topic) might not occur. In addition, Dörnyei (2007) notes that this form of sampling is the most common sampling strategy, and that it is generally conceived as being extremely practical and time saving (p. 129).

Nevertheless, considering these less-than-ideal circumstances, I find it important to stress that I did specify the group of participants and the number of participants I sought to interview. All interview candidates were teachers in an upper-secondary school, teaching English in vg.1 (general studies) and vg.1 and 2 (vocational studies), as previously mentioned. I aimed to interview seven interview participants. I hoped that this number would generate a large and rich enough body of interview material, although such a number can never be stated with full certainty when conducting qualitative research (Magnusson & Marecek, 2015, p. 37).

Another limitation relates to how teachers’ cognitions are generally viewed as resistant to change and difficult to modify if the teachers have not had the opportunity to reflect on their teaching practices (Borg, 2015). It is therefore possible that the interviewees, in the very interview situation altered their views and beliefs on their approaches to cultural issues through critical reflection.

This chapter has provided an outline of the research design and described the research procedures in detail. A mixed-method approach was adopted for the purpose of completeness. Qualitative interviews and quantitative and, to some extent qualitative, questionnaires were used as main methods for gathering data. Moreover, validity and reliability measures concerning the process of collecting data were considered. Finally, ethical considerations, accompanied by the limitations of the interview and questionnaire data, were discussed.

4.0 Presentation and discussion of findings

This chapter will discuss the key findings of the current mixed-method study; it examines upper-secondary English teachers' perceptions of IC against the backdrop of on-going changes in the fields of interculturality pedagogy and FL didactics. Following Bryman's advice on how to present mixed-method research, this chapter will be organized thematically in relation to the main findings emerging from the complete data set, which can be connected to the current study's questions of research. As such, the quantitative findings will be presented and discussed together with the qualitative findings. This combination allows "authors to build on quantitative findings by making regular references to qualitative findings when they allow for enhancement of the quantitative evidence or supply some gaps" (Byram, 2015, p. 645). In addition, this merger is reflective of how the quantitative and qualitative components of this current study were related from the outset, as opposed to the paradigm wars between quantitative and qualitative research (see 3.1.3).

As already indicated, the findings presented in this chapter stem from 93 questionnaire candidates and 7 interviewees' discourses about their approaches to IC. All of the findings related to each survey question are summarized in Appendix D, whereas the interview transcripts included in Appendix I show the context of the teachers' comments that are included in the following sub-sections.

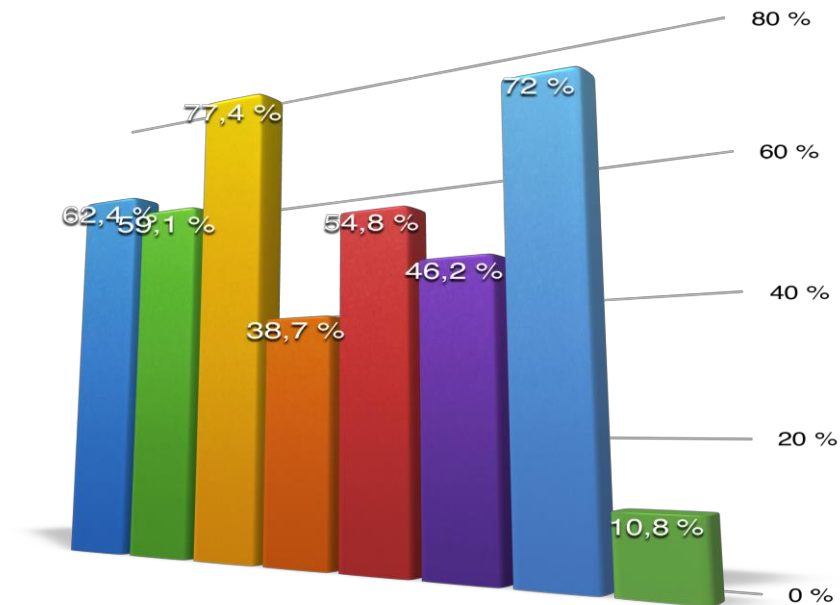
4.1 Power relations

According to recent scholars who advocate renewed interculturality, the 'intercultural' never emerges in a power vacuum. Still, there has been a tendency among former theoretical perspectives on IC to overlook this fact. Therefore, in this section, I examine the teachers' attentiveness toward relations of power.

4.1.1 Cultural differences and similarities

In the web survey, teachers were asked to indicate what culture-teaching objectives they typically encouraged their learners to consider when approaching issues of culture in class. The candidates were allowed to select more than one box. The main rationale for this choice relates to the fact that multiple answer questions do not force respondents to pick

just one objective, and consequently offers them more freedom. Figure 3 below (which I later will return to) shows that most respondents (77, 4%) prioritized the culture-teaching objective ‘Cultural differences’. In fact, this objective achieved the highest score.



- Their feelings of openness, understanding, and tolerance toward other cultures and individuals from other cultural backgrounds
- Facts about the other culture's history, religion and geography
- Cultural differences
- Their own cultures and outlooks
- Communicative patterns of the English-speaking culture
- Controversial cultural issues, such as race-relations and issues of inequality
- Facts about the other culture's customs, traditions and values
- Their feelings of uncertainty emerging from their engagement with given cultural issues

Figure 3. *When approaching cultural issues, what do you typically encourage your learners to consider? Please mark the boxes that best correspond with your approach.*

Based on this result, it is arguable that the teachers' reports on their approaches to interculturality could potentially overlook unequal relations of power, as this fixedness on difference could easily result in analytic stereotypes and overgeneralization (Ferri, 2016, p. 109). The qualitative findings enforced this assumption. In the semi-structured interviews, several interview candidates strongly emphasized the importance of discussing cultural differences, as illustrated in the extracts below:

One could discuss many interesting topics. What makes some cultures *different* from our own? What *distinguishes* English-speaking cultures from each other? For example, why are Norwegians *different* or less outgoing, than Americans are? Why are Brits so polite contrary to Americans? (Interviewee 3)

[...] People think differently about the wolf population's role in Norway, it does have to concern the big issues. Yet, there is still something that keeps each nation together. For example, we have the 'Kvikk Lunsj' and the Marius sweaters, just like Brits have their cherished cup of tea. *Such differences* are important to consider *if one is to understand how the English people see the world* [...]. (Interviewee 7)

If I have learners coming from English-speaking countries in my classroom, I tend to ask them if they can tell us something about their culture in order to include them and to make my learners understand more about *their* culture. About *differences* that can be difficult for *us* to understand. For example, if I have a student coming from an Indian background this becomes relevant when discussing India. I could then ask the student, "*What is it like in the place that you come from? Do you learn English at school?*" (Interviewee 2)

The teachers' emphasis on difference brings to mind Dervin and Gross' (2016) argument that such a focal point may easily lead to culturalism by imposing fixed roles on others. As mentioned in section 2.2.1, such roles do not reflect today's reality of increased cultural complexity. Hence, in order to make learners of English 'successful' intercultural speakers, it becomes important to realize that IC development does not occur as a result of examining how groups of people are likely to behave, think, or feel based on their national or cultural belongings. Furthermore, it was noteworthy that some of the English teachers' statements included references to the distinctions between what makes 'us' different from 'them.' As previously discussed in section 2.2.1, Holliday (2011) explains that this division

can lead to othering. In light of this phenomenon, Interviewee 2's comment above is notable for several reasons. First, the teacher singles out a minority student in order to "make what seems very foreign, closer to home." This action is highly problematic, as the learner might feel excluded or viewed as different in a predominately white classroom. Next, notions of Western superiority are found in her discourse, as her comment seems to imply that students in India do not learn English at school and for this reason have a lower social status compared to Norwegian students. However, it is clear that this teacher aims to be inclusive. Her comment therefore presents a paradox that illustrates how failure is unavoidable when working on IC.

Although the questionnaire and interview respondents emphasized what makes cultures different from each other, some of the remarks they made nuanced this impression. As mentioned in section 2.2.2, a focus on cultural similarities could combat stereotyping, othering and generalizations by moving beyond "clear cut boundaries between people" (Dervin, 2015, p. 17). As such, a focus on cultural similarities may help teachers question unequal relations of power. Because there were no answers to the larger web survey that indicated this priority, such sporadic comments were unexpected. To illustrate, Interviewee 4 stated the following:

It is about the common human experience, which is an important bridge in light of developing a cultural understanding. I mean, although people from other cultures may appear very different from a distance, they may be more similar to us than what we initially think. Yet, there is room for self-criticism here. I know that I do not give such similarities the attention they deserve. (Interviewee 4)

Even though Interviewee 4 in the above extract admits that a mere focus of differences leads him to "overlook the common human experience," he also states that cultural similarities do not necessarily receive the attention they deserve. In a way, the teacher's expressed feeling of guilt may indicate that he was unconsciously caught between former and renewed views of interculturality. The following dialogue supports this interpretation, as the teacher earlier on in his interview commented on the difference between examining the concept of 'culture' and notions of 'multiculturalism':

I: What do you think the purpose of teaching culture is?

R: Well, on the one hand, it concerns the concept of culture, and on the other, the multicultural. However, as the situation is the way it is today, the learners need to develop knowledge about the United States and Great Britain.

I: I see. So, when teaching about questions of culture, you mostly focus on the United States and Great Britain?

R: The answer to that is both yes and no. However, the countries and the differences between them do receive a lot of attention. The competence aims are very vague. However, I do recognize that culture entails much more, the nuances within. On vg.2, on the other hand, this element is focused on to a greater extent [compared to vg.1].

(Interviewee 4)

Moreover, the dialogue is indicative of why the English teachers placed an emphasis on cultural differences. As addressed by several of the candidates, an important aim of the English subject was to develop learners' ability to discuss the social conditions of other English-speaking cultures. For several of them, this implied developing learners' ability to "compare and contrast what makes English cultures *different* from each other"

(Interviewee 6). Accordingly, their interpretation of the current curriculum echoes the German tradition of *Landeskunde* (see section 2.1.1) and Byram's model of ICC (see section 2.1.3).

There were, however, two teachers who were more systematic with regards to highlighting cultural similarities. To illustrate, Interviewee 5 and 1 stated the following:

[...] As I said, to counter point all the focus on differences, a Muslim girl wearing a hijab, does she not have the same...now that was really stereotypical. I mean, is she not a teenager as well? (Interviewee 1)

The fact that cultures consist of different individuals, with different backgrounds, sexual orientations, interests... some may have more in common with individuals, who from an outside perspective, appear as completely different [...] My learners often think of themselves as healthy Norwegian youths. American youths, on the other hand, are often perceived as fat and lazy. However, they do have much in common, like McDonalds, going to the gym, TV series. In fact, they [teenagers in general] may have more in common with each other than what they have with other Norwegians who are older, like me. I mean, when did it become popular to go the gym in order to get buff? (Interviewee 5)

The above comments reveal traces of intersectionality, meaning that the intercultural is not only concerned with different cultures and countries but also with gender, age, generation and other factors. As described in section 2.2.2, the scholars who advocate 'renewed'

interculturality stress that the idea of intersectionality may help teachers of English to question unequal power relations by acknowledging that “it is not just ‘culture’ that guides intercultural engagements but the co-construction of various identities such as gender, age, profession, social class, and so on” (Dervin, 2016, p. 104). Moreover, it is interesting to note that that Interviewee 1, later on in her interview, stated that because of time issues, cultural similarities were paid less attention to than cultural differences. This perspective connects well to Abdallah-Preccille’s (2006) argument that examinations of cultural similarities are more time-consuming than examinations of differences.

4.1.2 Teaching materials

Teaching materials can function as beneficial mediums for promoting IC, or they can foster limited and biased assumptions about the ‘Other.’ Consequently, teachers are recommended to be critical towards their preferred materials’ content in relation to *diversities*, as mentioned in section 2.2.2. For this reason, the questionnaire respondents were asked to indicate what teaching materials they preferred to use when addressing culture-related issues. They were also asked to further comment on the benefits of using them in their responses to the following open-ended question: “Why do you view this/these material(s) as beneficial in relation to exploring cultural issues?”

When indicating the teaching materials that they preferred, the teachers were allowed to select several answer options. The answer options included a wide range of materials, such as English literary texts, movies, documentaries, factual texts, news articles and songs. An “Other” category was also included to allow more freedom for the teachers (see section 3.2.3). The majority of respondents selected more than one type of material. The most popular materials were the following: ‘English literary texts’ (86,9%), ‘Movies’ (81, 2%) and ‘Factual texts’ (76, 09%) (see Appendix D).

When commenting on the benefits of their preferences regarding preferred teaching materials, the respondents mainly seemed focused on the materials’ potential to engage their learners and on offering realistic, relatable, and descriptive accounts of the English culture(s) under scrutiny:

These materials are often descriptive of the English-speaking cultures in focus. (C.29)
Documentaries offer real examples that are easy for the students to relate to. (C. 79)
They are engaging, which is important for making learners interested. (C.69)

However, as the citations above illustrate, few stated *why* such texts were viewed as beneficial. This may imply that teachers do not reflect enough on the ideological dimension of their teaching materials. In other words, their inclination to choose certain teaching materials did not come across as a deliberative attempt to develop learners' ability to go beneath the surface of discourse and appearances. Rather, the teachers appeared to be more focused on fostering and maintaining learners' interests. In this regard, it was interesting that several of the more elaborate answers highlighted the connection between the concept of 'culture' and other individuals' worldviews, as illustrated below:

These materials are realistic and bring us closer to the source culture. They can also aid us in understanding other cultures and why people think the way they do (C.36)

I think documentaries are very beneficial to use, as they provide a very realistic account of how it may be like is like for people in other countries. Movies are also very good. We just watched the movie *Rabbit-Proof Fence*, which offers valuable insight into what it is like for the Aboriginals, and how their worldview relates to their culture/tradition (C.22)

Although C.36 and C.22 refer to materials' potential to offer realistic accounts, their comments also describe other individuals' senses of 'Self' as unquestionable and tied to a particular country. This is particularly evident in C.22's statement on how the movie *Rabbit-Proof Fence* offered ("valuable insight into what it is like for the Aboriginals, and how their worldviews relate to their culture/ tradition"). Accordingly, the extracts above suggest that the concepts of 'culture' and 'identity' are perceived as stable and unchanging entities, rather than of being dynamic, multiple and complex. As discussed in section 2.2.1, this view typically reduces the 'Other', by failing to acknowledge that processes of globalization and mass-migration have made it increasingly difficult to categorize the unfamiliar. Additionally, the concept of 'culture' typically, "wraps individuals into a suffocating embrace" (Prashad cited in Dervin, 2015, p. 10). As such, the teachers' comments may come represent an abuse of power. However, considering the *differentialist bias* that analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative data demonstrated, this finding was not unexpected.

However, some questionnaire respondents appeared to be more critical toward the content of their materials in relation to *diversities*, though comments such as the following were rare:

The source material should be part fact, part artistic expression. Pupils should learn through a variety of material, and see the target culture from different angles. (C.56)

Through using a variety of materials, learners are allowed to reflect on how rich and complex the expression of culture is. It also permits researching as many students as possible. (C.27)

In the semi-structured interviews, on the other hand, teachers appeared to pay more attention to existing power relations in light of their teaching materials. Interestingly, this was also reflected in their answers to the pre-interview questionnaire. This finding possibly corresponds with how this group of teachers could have kept in mind that they were going to be interviewed, and, therefore, spent more time reflecting on their questionnaire responses. For example, when elaborating on the benefits of her preferred culture-teaching materials, Interviewee (1) stated the following:

[...] Some materials present [cultural issues] from a very one-sided perspective, the textbooks especially. I think that my learners are very used to seeing issues of culture from a one-sided perspective. The media often have certain preferences, so that is what they are used to. Therefore, it becomes important to nuance such portrayals. (Interviewee 1)

In the above comment, we notice how Interviewee 1 is aware of how her teaching materials were reflective of dominant discourses that could empower some groups and disempower others. Moreover, the interviewees' reflections on their favored teaching materials filled a central gap that the questionnaire data did not cover. Specifically, the teachers criticized their English learning textbooks. Several of the interviewees later pointed out that their textbooks simply had too much power, as they often represented the 'Other' in simplified ways. As a result, the teachers felt as if they needed to add something in order to nuance such presentations. For example, when asked about whether she had any further questions at the end of her interview, Interviewee 7 respondent accordingly:

So, where are you going with this thesis? I know we have been talking about how questions of culture are approached. There are, of course, many materials that one can use and which are beneficial to use - they may be more objective and perhaps more engaging. However, I would argue that we teachers heavily rely on the textbooks; we may add something, which is necessary in order to avoid simplifying things [...] (Interviewee 7)

This interviewee's reflections bring to mind Hahl's (2015) argument that textbooks may be 'tyrannical' in the sense that they can exercise too much power, as they are reflective of the values and ideologies of the nation state. Hence, it is noticeable that the teachers' perspectives on their textbook materials revealed a trace of 'renewed' interculturality. However, the teachers' ability to look beyond the surface level of teaching materials was more evident in their retellings of their former culture-teaching sessions. In their descriptions, several interviewees gave the impression that the concept of 'culture' often was used to categorize the 'Other.' For instance, although Interviewee 7 appeared to be critical towards the content of her materials, as indicated above, she stated the following when elaborating on a former class session:

I: Can you recall a previous culture-teaching session?

R: We just watched the movie *Green Street Hooligans* [...]. The movie is set in Manchester, around the 1980-90s. The movie offers a very realistic account of the issue of Hooliganism [...]. In this movie, we follow an American character who was expelled from Harvard. Then, he travels to England and a culture clash occurs. The movie is good for diving into the American youth culture and how it differs from the British youth culture. That poor American character, neither was he used to drink large pints of beer, nor was he used to fight.

(Interviewee 7)

In the above dialogue, it is noticeable that the Interviewee suggests that American youths are less violent and less prone to heavy drinking compared to British youths. Hence, it appears as if she believes that the behaviors of American and British youths are determined by their differing cultures, rather than other factors. Her previous comment on how she "may add something [materials] in order not to simplify matters," therefore came across as a lesser concern. A possible explanation for such discrepancies could relate to how teachers' reports on their practices often lead to wishful thinking (see section 3.2.2). According to Borg (2015), this lack of congruence may also relate to the very nature of belief systems, as they are naturally disposed to a certain amount of inconsistency, as well as to other contextual factors (e.g., time constraints, curriculums, schooling, teaching experience and the like).

Furthermore, in relation to the teachers' attention to power relations, I also asked the interviewees about how they interpreted the following statement found in the English

subject curriculum: “Reading English literary texts can instill a deeper understanding of oneself and others.” Although these lines implicitly touch upon interculturality, not all teachers recognized this. Interestingly, those who did linked them to the idea of developing learners’ understanding of “how they [people from other cultures] see and experience the world” (Interviewee 1), whereas notions of ‘Self’ were included from a comparative and nation-oriented perspective, as the below comment illustrates:

[...] We have to try to understand the culture that the literary characters present, “how do these characters react, behave?” and “how do they differ from most of us [Norwegians]?” (Interviewee 3)

The preceding answers are interesting in the sense that they reflect theoretical perspectives within the field of FL didactics that have highlighted how the reading of FL literary texts can develop learners’ levels of IC (see section 2.2.2). Interestingly, recent scholars have further shed light upon how the reader’s dialogue with FL texts can function as a form of intercultural communication in itself: a form of communication that “encompasses multiple, complex identities which must be discerned by the reader” (Hoff, 2016, p. 86). FL literary texts can thereby offer alternative representations of the ‘Other’ (Holliday, 2004) and thus counter cultural simplifications. However, as hinted at by the included excerpts above, the interviewee respondents did not acknowledge this potential.

However, one teacher recognized how literary texts could challenge learners’ stereotypical worldviews. To illustrate his point, he referred to a short story called “*Neighbours*”. This story, he said, portrayed a variety of characters coming from different backgrounds. As a result, this story was able to capture how all of these characters had their own stories that moved beyond notions of culture. In his words, the story took into account “the characters’ personal stories” (Interviewee 5). What is interesting about this reflection is that it challenges ideas of culturalism. However, as already suggested, this expressed viewpoint was unique.

4.1.3 Teachers’ own cultural outlooks

Teachers’ own worldviews inform and influence their approaches to IC. For this reason, the questionnaire respondents were asked to indicate how often they reflected on their own cultural outlook when dealing with culture-related issues. The options were “Every time,”

“Almost every time,” “Sometimes,” “Rarely,” “Never,” and “Not as often as I would like.” The reason for asking this question relates to how teachers need to become aware of their preconceptions in order to avoid reducing the ‘Other’ (Holliday, 2004). This view is also reflected in Dervin and Tournebise’s (2013) second ‘turbulence’ (i.e., to *move away from individualist biases*).

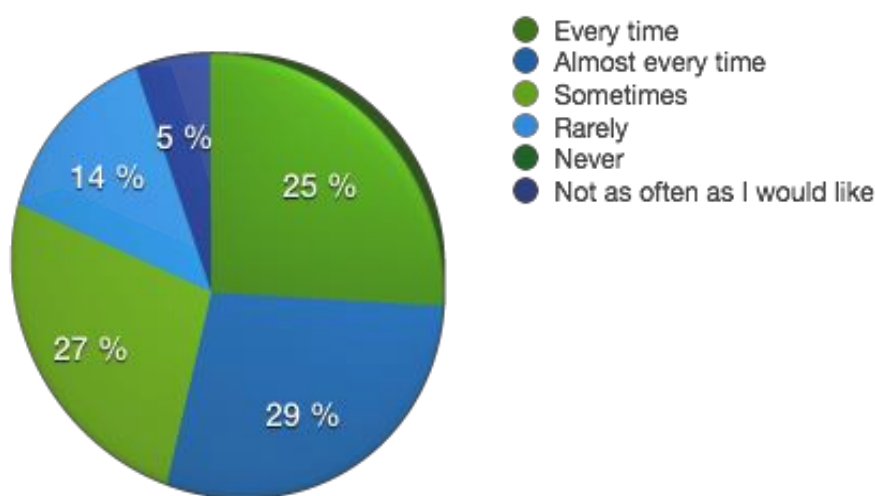


Figure 4. *How often do you reflect on your own sociocultural position and outlook when dealing with questions of culture?*

Figure 4 (above) reveals that the majority of teachers, a total of (54%), reported that they reflected on their own cultural outlook every time (25%) or almost every time (29%) when dealing with issues of culture. This finding illustrates that teachers’ valuation of self-reflection differed. Although only 38, 7 % of the questionnaire respondents reported that they regularly encouraged their *learners* to reflect on themselves (see Figure 3 on page 52), they seemed more inclined to critically examine their own outlooks. This could possibly indicate that teachers are aware of the experiences, values, and ideologies that they bring with them when approaching interculturality (as opposed to thinking that their ways of approaching the ‘Other’ are fully neutral).

Findings from the semi-structured interviews supported this interpretation, as most of the English teachers believed that critical self-reflection was necessary in order to counter existing power relations between one's own culture and the English-speaking culture when handling cultural issues. The presence of this awareness first revealed itself in the teachers' answers with regards to *why* they regularly reflected on their own outlooks when approaching notions of interculturality, as the below dialogue illustrates:

R: Because as a teacher, well you have enormous powers really, when it comes to influencing the students. I therefore think it is important to highlight different aspects of all issues, which demands self-criticism. It is not about focusing on one side-that would be propaganda-to avoid that and to reflect on one's own narrow perspective, although this may be difficult.

I: What do you mean by "difficult"?

R: Well, we all think in simplified ways, and it can be difficult to realize this when presenting such issues. I try to be critical, however, it impossible to - but I make an effort

I: Through self-reflection?

R: Yes, as I said.

(Interviewee 1)

Several interviewees shared this viewpoint. For instance, Interviewee 5 stated the following when answering why he reflected on his cultural outlook every time when dealing with issues of culture: "To make sure I become aware of my own stereotypes." Answering the same question, Interviewees 2, 4 and 7 interestingly pointed to how their own sense of 'Norwegianness' limited their cultural understanding in several ways, which sometimes resulted in 'narrow' representations of the 'Other':

It is about trying to understand my own thoughts in relation to certain English-speaking cultures, which can be difficult as I am Norwegian. I mean it is impossible for me as a Norwegian to understand how the people within these cultures think. Therefore, it touches upon the fact that I have to realize that I do not know everything about everyone.
(Interviewee 2)

[...] I am aware of that I am Norwegian, and that I explore these topics from the perspective of a 40 year-old man. I am very aware of the hermeneutic circle and all that [...]. We [teachers in general] are all a product of something, which reasons why we need to reflect on our own backgrounds in light of how we present and discuss certain subject matters. (Interviewee 4)

[...] Especially as a teacher, one has to reflect on one's own attitudes. It has to do with confronting oneself, to ask the question, "Who am I to define my learners' [from foreign cultures] views and feelings about this issue?" (Interviewee 7)

Hence, the teachers' reflections revealed a critical understanding of the power relations that come to play when dealing with issues of culture in the English classroom. In other words, this means that traces of 'renewed' interculturality could be identified in the interviewees' responses. Moreover, I find it noteworthy that there was one teacher who recognized that he resorted to cultural stereotypes, although he viewed them as 'dangerous.' The teacher stated, "I know that I sometimes offer stereotypical remarks when dealing with these issues, which is natural, yet at the same time somewhat dangerous" (Interviewee 5). As such, the teacher's comment indirectly challenges former conceptions of IC, which often include learning fixed ideas about foreigners' identities, in which individuals from certain groups or nationalities are equated to stereotypes that share certain labels with each other (Hahl, 2015).

Adding to this critical line of thought, Interviewee 3's discourse demonstrated traces of 'renewed' interculturality by addressing *the inevitable sin of Othering* (Dervin, 2015), and connected it to his own sociocultural position, although this was not explicitly requested. The teacher stated that he sometimes forms moral judgments about the 'Other' when dealing with issues of culture. In fact, it was this awareness that made him criticize his own choice of words at times, as the comment below illustrates:

[...] It would be unprofitable if I as a teacher exposed moral judgments when presenting other cultures; even though I of course do this - "they are so and so". Consequently, I have to reflect critically on my own views, and the way that I present and talk about culture-related issues [in class]. (Interviewee 3)

This perspective is reflective of Holliday's (2004) argument that language teachers need to monitor their language use and pay attention to culturalist discourses, as the use of language is never innocent (see section 2.2.2). Moreover, Interviewee 3's comment closely relates to his previous answer concerning why he regularly reflected on his cultural outlook, which addressed his "sometimes pre-described views on a selection of cultural questions." Similarly, at a later point during the interview, Interviewee 1 indirectly added a new element to her previous comment on why she valued processes of self-reflection by

addressing the issue of ‘white guilt.’ She did so when contemplating her faced challenge of “understanding cultural issues from the insider’s perspective”:

Well, it is about trying to understand my own insider-perspective. I think it is easy to fall into the sorry trap. To feel sorry for minorities like the Native Americans, the Maoris and the like, the European guilt that we all feel to some extent. However, that is not the whole issue here. I also try to understand this group of people, to understand the extent to which they [Aboriginals] themselves feel about everything being ruined because of European influence. “Are you just a victim?” Alternatively, “can you influence your own future in a way?” When teaching I want their voices to be heard, not mine. (Interviewee 1)

Another interesting finding is that several of the interviewees expressed that they viewed the ideal of ‘neutrality’ as a challenging one, as illustrated in the following exchange:

I: So, one challenge concerns your level of objectivity?

R: Yes. I just had a learner who liked Donald Trump. That was difficult. One has one’s own thoughts in relation to this, and I think it is important to express them, although some would say that the ultimate aim is to be neutral [as a teacher].

I: How did you come to feel about this learner?

R: Yes, one often thinks that followers of Trump are less smart. However, in relation to this learner, this was not the case. This was a reflective learner [...]. As a teacher one has to think critically about one’s own views in order to take learners, with other viewpoints, seriously.

(Interviewee 6)

In other words, this teacher recognized how the ideal of neutrality is impossible to reach due to the influence of one’s own cultural outlook. According to newer theory on IC, such awareness is crucial for recognizing unequal power relations both within and outside of the EFL classroom. As such, the teachers comment on how she had to think critically about her own views in order to take her “learners, with other viewpoints, seriously,” shed light upon how power should be central to interculturality in education (Devin, 2015, p. 105). Furthermore, her reflection effectively corresponds with Iversen’s (2014) view of the classroom as a ‘community of disagreement’, a community that is not dependent on a set of shared values (see section 2.2.3). It also brings to mind that entering into dialogue with the ‘Other’ can be a challenging undertaking (Hoff, 2014), as this line illustrates, “I just had a learner who liked Donald Trump. That was difficult.” As a final point, it is interesting to note that the interviewees’ expressed challenge of being neutral was never

conveyed in their answers to the following question, found in their completed pre-interview questionnaires: “What do you view, if anything, as particularly challenging when dealing with issues of culture?” It is therefore possible to further argue that the quantitative findings emerging from the larger web survey, where only eight respondents stated that they found it challenging to appear neutral, could in reality be higher (see Appendix D). A possible reason for this identified discrepancy may be that the interview offered the teachers more time to reflect on their teaching practices.

To conclude, the findings suggest that the teachers’ attention to unequal power relations varied. Although some teachers expressed that they were afraid of ‘simplifying things,’ their comments about their approaches to IC were characterized by a strong emphasis on difference. It is thus perhaps not surprising that elements of culturalism were also identified. Such elements are reflective of former theoretical conceptions of IC, which tend to neglect existing power relations. Nevertheless, traces of renewed IC were also found. As previously indicated, the majority of the participants reported to regularly reflect on their own cultural outlooks when addressing cultural issues in class. In the semi-structured interviews, the teachers reasoned this by stressing the impact of their ideological beliefs about ‘Other’. In addition, some interviewees moved away from *differentialist biases* by stating the need to examine what people have in common. Still, the consideration of this lastly mentioned concern did not appear to be a central focus point. In sum, then, traces of both newer and former theoretical perspectives on IC were identified in relation to the teachers’ attentiveness toward existing power relations.

4.2 Controversial cultural issues

Contradictory to former theoretical perspectives on IC that tend emphasize harmony and agreement as aims of intercultural learning, newer conceptions of interculturality encourage teachers to deal with significant issues of inequality, prejudice, race and discrimination, and to view such discussions as helpful for IC development. In this section, I therefore examine whether or not the respondents reported dealing with controversial cultural issues in the English learning classroom.

In the web survey, 58 (62,4%) respondents expressed their responsibility in terms of developing learners’ feelings of openness, understanding, and tolerance toward other

cultures and individuals from other cultural backgrounds, whereas 43 (46,2%) respondents reported focusing on controversial cultural issues (see Figure 3 on page 52). Thus, a considerable difference in percentage did not exist between the respondents' reported attention towards these differing objectives. However, since the teachers had the opportunity to select as many answer options as they pleased (eight in total), I was curious of the ratio of respondents who focused on both of these culture-teaching objectives. Based on this curiosity, I compared the two answer options. In practice, this entailed comparing the ratio of teachers who listed controversial cultural issues with the ones who had listed ideals of openness, understanding, and tolerance as focal points.

As table 2 (below) illustrates, this comparison revealed that out of the 58 (100%) teachers who regularly encouraged their learners to develop openness, understanding, and tolerance, only 28 (48, 2%) of them also listed that they encourage their learners to reflect on cultural controversies. In contrast, 32 (74,4%) out of the 43 (100%) teachers who listed that they often approached cultural controversies also listed their focus on developing learners' feelings of openness and tolerance. Although this quantitative finding does not allow generalizations to be made, it provoked my interest in determining whether an overdependence on ideals of openness and tolerance downplays the importance of dealing with notions of ambiguity and conflict in the EFL classroom.

Table 2. The ratio of respondents who focused on both controversial cultural issues and ideals of openness and tolerance

	Feelings of openness, understanding, and tolerance	Controversial cultural issues
Feelings of openness, understanding, and tolerance (A)	100% 58 teachers Group A	48,2% 28 teachers Group A
Controversial cultural issues (B)	74,42% 32 teachers Group B	100% 43 teachers Group B

4.2.1 Notions of ambiguity and conflict

In the semi-structured interviews, the teachers who had not listed ‘controversial cultural issues’ explained why cultural controversies were not a shared focal point. For example, one teacher stated the following when answering to whether or not there were any cultural topics that were best left unaddressed in the English classroom:

[...] There are a few topics that I just don't always feel like discussing [...] For instance, there are learners who typically come with un-nuanced, although often ironic, comments, which at worst could come to hurt other learners of minority backgrounds. I mean, how should one respond to them [as a teacher]? (Interviewee 7)

What is noticeable in the above statement is that “less-nuanced although often ironic” comments could come to cause learners from ethnic minorities to feel discomfort and were thus conceived as a central challenge in terms of dealing with controversial cultural issues. Ultimately, the task of dealing with controversial remarks appeared to result in a feeling of ‘walking on eggshells’, which in turn caused this teacher to avoid sensitive topics altogether. Similar points of view were expressed in the qualitative data that emerged from the web survey. For instance, questionnaire respondents stated that they experienced the following aspects particularly challenging: “Students stereotypical views [are an issue]. Some students have much prejudice towards cultures [that are] different from ours. I am afraid that they sometimes hurt other students. For example Muslims.” (C.6); “Students who are dominant, racist and or sexist can be quite difficult to manage in the classroom, in particular, when discussing culturally sensitive topics.” (C.89)

Based on these teachers’ remarks above, it seems fair to assume that their faced challenge of dealing with controversial remarks could be rooted in how teenage students sometimes become very defensive of their perspectives. As Forsman (2006) explains, “Students might resort to focusing on perceived ‘strange ways’ of the Others, while retaining their own familiar and ‘normal’ perspective” (p. 81). In regards to dealing with this feeling, Iversen (2014) offers a practical advice: focus on response. As mentioned in section 2.2.3, the English teacher may benefit from asking the question “how do I want to deal with this?”, rather than “can I tolerate this?” At the heart of this argument lies the idea that teachers need to welcome notions of disagreement, take all discourse participants seriously, and ask critical, yet, at the same time polite, questions to learners who make controversial and racist remarks. Moreover, Hoff’s (2013) case study reports that fellow learners might also

play an important role in countering such views.

Another expressed concern seemed to relate to minority learners' potential emotional reactions towards certain subject matters, as the following comment demonstrates:

[...] For example, if I teach Africans immigrants -the slave period was something that they [her African learners' ancestors] went through. Black people were clustered. It is uncomfortable to address this dark chapter [in history] in a predominantly white classroom. If they [her learners from Africa] also experience this topic as uncomfortable, then perhaps it is best to leave it unaddressed. Some issues can be very personal. (Interviewee 7)

Some questionnaire respondents also expressed this matter, which was identified in the respondents answer to: "What do you find challenging, if anything, when approaching issues of culture?" For example, one respondent stated the following: "Having people from different cultures/countries in class (from countries in war, refugees) is challenging in terms of how to approach the issue of culture" (C.39). The presented comments above are interesting for several reasons. First, they seem to suggest that learners of minority backgrounds amplify teachers' insecurities in terms of approaching cultural controversies. Accordingly, it seems fair to argue that cultural controversies may be discussed to a lesser extent, or even dismissed, in more 'culturally diverse' English classrooms. In addition, the comments seem to indicate that the teachers view feelings of discomfort as negative as opposed to natural. An implication that follows from this is that learners are protected from dealing with issues that could develop their ability to maneuver notions of discomfort, which is central for IC development (see section 2.1.4).

At the other end, it seemed as if the teachers who reported to regularly approach cultural controversies embraced notions of discomfort as fruitful conditions for IC development. This assumption, however, appeared to be somewhat misleading. Although these respondents were seemingly committed to approach cultural controversies, their views on what constituted fruitful conditions for the development of such discussion varied. The variation in the teachers' views ranged from an emphasis on emphatic understanding and harmony on the one side of the spectrum to the highlighting of disagreement and conflict on the other. In the following comment, the former alternative is detectable:

One should not judge, I mean the aim must be to develop an emphatic understanding toward people from other cultures. Therefore, it is the teacher's task is to develop the

learners' ability to answer questions like "would you not have liked to experience this [an arranged marriage]?" and "would there not have been several positives sides to such an arrangement?" If the learners cannot answer such questions with an open state of mind, then they have not learned what they were supposed to. This is why such issues are dealt with in the first place. The learners need to put aside their prejudice, because if they choose not to, nothing will happen. (Interviewee 3)

The comment above reflects the component of Byram's model of ICC known as *savoir-être* (see section 2.1.3). It is apparent that Interviewee 3 placed an emphasis on learners' need to encounter the 'Other' with an open and tolerant mind. The teacher's remark on how learners "need to put aside their prejudice" because "if they don't, well then nothing [will] happen" is particularly interesting as it brings to mind what Byram calls 'the ability to decentre' (i.e., to move away from one's own perspective), which lies at the heart of IC (see section 1.2). However, if such 'decentring' processes are to take place, learners' cultural biases need to be exposed and further challenged. In this regard, it is worth noting that very few teachers reported focusing on their learners' own cultural outlooks. As shown in Figure 3 (page 52), only 38,7% of the respondents listed that they tend to encourage their learners to reflect on their own culture and outlook. In contrast, 62,7% of the respondents reported focusing on the development of their learners' feelings of openness, respect, and tolerance. This finding could indicate that learners are rarely encouraged to take a step back, to reflect on themselves and their emotions from a critical distance, but are rather encouraged to develop empathic understanding toward the 'Other.' Seemingly, the teachers' reports on this manner reflect Byram's component of *savoir-être*, which arguably downplays the promotion of independent and critical thought (see section 2.1.4).

Nevertheless, as already suggested, there were some teachers who highlighted notions of disagreement and conflict as potentially fruitful conditions for discussions of cultural controversies:

Generally, we are very good at living in bubbles, and especially teenagers. There is so much going on in their lives. It is very understandable. For some of them, there is such a vast difference between school and everything else... I try to get them out of these bubbles once in a while, which also involves discussing difficult topics such as race. Some may react emotionally. They may get upset. Yet, to have such emotions is really just as part of growing up. I encouraged them to think about their emotional responses, as they open the door to understanding the serious dynamics, to understand the fact that not everything is perfect, that we cannot tolerate simply everything. Because that is the approach that we tend to have, is it not? People in general, as long as we tolerate what's different then everything is O.K., but when we reflect on it, one discovers that this is not necessarily the case. (Interviewee 1)

When I teach, the learners typically develop a consensus on certain cultural topics, especially controversial ones [...]. Possibly, this is a consequence of my learners' efforts toward pleasing everyone with politically correct answers. However, I am uncertain of whether such efforts generate fruitful discussions on such topics. (Interviewee 4)

Interestingly, the comments included above indicate that these teachers appear to recognize the benefits of conflict and disagreement. As such, the excerpts reflect recent scholars' arguments regarding how learners need to develop the ability to handle notions of discomfort and ambiguity in processes of intercultural communication (Kramsch, 2011; Hoff, 2014). Nevertheless, these comments also indicate that *consensus* seems to be an aim among the learners. This may imply that the teachers' beliefs about their approaches to cultural controversies do not necessarily correspond with what actually goes on in the classroom (Borg, 2015). Moreover, it is worth noting that Interviewee 1 and 5 did not report that they tend to encourage their learners to reflect on 'their feelings of uncertainty emerging from their engagement with given cultural issues' when completing the pre-interview questionnaire. It is therefore possible to argue that the quantitative result emerging from the larger web survey, where only 10,8 % of the respondent reported encouraging such reflections, could in reality be higher (see Figure 3 on page 52). As aforementioned, a possible explanation for this mismatch may relate to the ambiguous choice of words in the answer option (see section 3.6).

In the following section, I will address other external factors that seemed to influence teachers' commitment to dealing with cultural controversies. Interestingly, these factors do not touch upon ideals of developing learners' openness and tolerance. Consequently, the semi-structured interview provided valuable insight in light of aspects of interculturality that the quantitative results did not.

4.2.2 Other influential factors

Firstly, the English teachers' habits of approaching cultural controversies seemed to be influenced by whether or not the English learning textbooks that they used invited such explorations. For example, Interviewee 2 stated, "I try to foster such discussions when it is natural, or when the textbook materials encourage them. However, few texts for vg.1 include cultural controversies." Similarly, another English teacher stated:

It is important to address sensitive issues. However, they are perhaps not discussed to the extent in which-the textbook materials tend to neglect such issues. I think that we teachers rely on the textbook to a greater extent than we would like. (Interviewee 7)

The teachers' comments connect well with the fact that textbooks still play a vital role in FL teaching and learning and brings to mind why recent scholars have expressed interest in exploring the extent to which marginalized groups are represented in language learning textbooks (e.g., Hahl et al., 2015; Eide, 2012).

Secondly, the current national English subject curriculum appeared to function as an external factor that influenced the teachers' commitment to dealing with cultural tensions in general, as illustrated by the following exchange:

I: Do you approach cultural controversies to the extent that you would like?

R: I probably could have addressed them more often; there is certainly room for self-criticism here.

I: What do you mean?

R: Well, it of course important that my learners develop the ability to express and give grounds to their opinions, and to listen to the opinions of others. However, the competence aims are what they are tested in, right?

(Interviewee 4)

In the above dialogue, it is noticeable that the lack of an explicit reference to notions of conflict in LK06/13 resulted in a feeling of a lack of structural support. Consequently, some teachers stated they approached cultural controversies to a lesser extent than they would have liked to due to current pressures related to testing and assessment.

Thirdly, the extent to which the respondents reported dealing with cultural controversies seemed to be influenced by whether the teachers taught English in general studies or vocational studies. Interestingly, this difference did not correspond with the teachers' interpretation of the English subject curriculum. Rather, it provided insight into how learners of vocational studies often had language difficulties. Such difficulties, made it "challenging to make up time for critical discussion around sensitive topics" (Interviewee 6). This expressed obstacle was also identified in the web survey's results, as several respondents highlighted their learners' levels of language proficiency as a central challenge

when approaching cultural issues (see Appendix D). I find it particularly noteworthy that most of the teachers who offered such comments taught English in vocational studies. For example, C.87 stated, “Sometimes the language can be challenging, especially in certain types of vocational classes.”

In summary, the findings suggested that the teachers’ commitment to approach cultural controversies varied. First of all, the tendency among some of the teachers to neglect certain subject matters appeared to relate to how feelings of discomfort were viewed as negative as opposed to natural. For instance, the material indicated that teachers were hesitant to approach cultural controversies in more ‘culturally diverse’ classrooms. Consequently, the overall findings supported Dervin’s (2015) argument regarding why certain issues, such as inequality and racism, are typically neglected in FL education (see 2.1.4). Further analysis of the material also revealed that the teachers who did address cultural controversies ranged from highlighting notions of harmony and agreement on the one side of the spectrum to the highlighting notions of conflict and disagreement on the other. In light of this lastly mentioned alternative, the qualitative findings suggested that although some teachers appeared to recognize the benefits of conflict and disagreement, *consensus* seems to be an aim among the learners. Accordingly, this finding may imply that these teachers’ beliefs about their approaches to cultural controversies do not necessarily correspond with what actually goes on in the EFL classroom.

As a final point, it should be noted other external factors, such as available teaching materials, the design of the current subject curriculum, and language learners’ levels of language proficiency, decreased the teachers’ levels of commitment to approach cultural controversies.

4.3 Beliefs about assessment

According to Dervin & Gross (2016), one of the most important goals related to interculturality in language education is that of *accepting failure* by taking into account the fluid and procedural aspects of IC development, as opposed to the simplistic notion that IC is something that one gains for life through the development of certain kinds of skills and attitudes. Therefore, in this section I examine teachers’ beliefs about assessing learners’ intercultural competence.

In the web survey, the respondents were asked to state how easy or difficult it was for them to assess the individual learner’s level of cultural understanding. The options were “Very easy,” “Easy,” “Neutral,” “Difficult,” and “Very difficult.” As mentioned in section 3.2.3, this ranking scale was adopted in order to avoid acquiescence response bias. Still, it is important to acknowledge that the question presupposes that IC can and should be assessed, which is not necessarily the case. Consequently, the leading nature of this question may have manipulated the respondents to favor the answer-options “Easy” and “Very easy.”

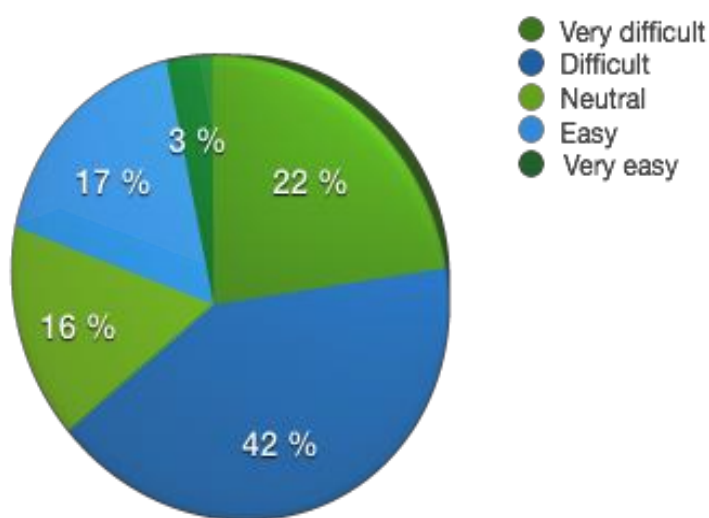


Figure 5: *After having carried out a session that dealt with a culture-related issue (or issues), how easy or difficult is it for you to assess your learners’ developed levels of cultural understanding?*

Figure 5 (above) reveals that the majority of the respondents found their learners’ levels of intercultural awareness “Difficult” (42%) or “Very difficult” (22%) to measure after having dealt with a question of culture for a shorter period of time. Consequently, the group of teachers who viewed it “Easy” or “Very easy” appeared to be outnumbered. In light of this finding, it seems possible that teachers could have avoided the answer options “Easy” or “Very easy” as to not seem arrogant. Considering this possibility, this result only might indicate that the majority of the English teachers perceived IC development as a time-consuming and complex process.

The findings from the semi-structured interviews came to support this assumption, as the majority of the interviewees perceived the task of assessing the individual learner's level of IC as challenging. In the following exchange, Interviewee 1 was asked to discuss a previous culture-teaching session. More explicitly, she was asked to answer the following question: "What impact do you think this session had on the learners' cultural understanding?" She answered the question in the following way:

R: Hopefully, it [the session] would make them understand towards how people are different [...]

I: Why do you say "hopefully"?

R: Well, it is of course difficult to know for sure. It is easy to get clues on whether they have developed insight into historical facts or not. The learners' respect towards people coming from elsewhere, on the other hand, is impossible to gain insight into [as a teacher].

I: I see. Is there a connection between this challenge and your previous statement on how you view it difficult to assess your learners' developed levels of cultural understanding?

R: Yes. That is what I am trying say.

(Interviewee 1)

What the above excerpt illustrates is that the assessment of learners' feelings towards the 'Other' was conceived as difficult to measure, as 'attitudes' were not 'skills.' On a similar note, Interviewee 4 expressed the following:

Overall, I hoped that they learned something. Yet, it is difficult to gain insight into how the learners truly feel about such issues. I think that some learners lie about their personal opinions when discussing the difficult topics, we [teachers in general] simply expect them to express some sort of sympathy, right? I think it is important to accept that not everything can be measured, in spite of the increased focus on exam performance.
(Interviewee 4)

The citation above is particularly interesting in the sense that it demonstrates how Interviewee 4 explicitly acknowledge the lack of reliability between learners' expressed feelings of openness and their genuine feelings toward the 'Other', as illustrated by the following line, "I think that some learners lie about their personal opinions when discussing the difficult topics". As previously discussed in section 2.1.4, recent theoretical

conceptions of IC believe that it is possible for a language user to appear open, yet at the same time, feel a sense of ambivalence towards the ‘Other’ (Hoff, 2014; Dervin, 2015). Accordingly, the teacher’s comment reveals traces of renewed interculturality by showing an awareness of how teachers cannot always take what learners say at face value.

Furthermore, the teacher’s comment on how he thought it was important to “accept that not everything can be measured” brings to mind Hoff’s (2016) argument that “interculturality to a larger extent than before requires the ability to look beyond actions and words”, and thus yields “a reconsideration of current educational aims and methods” (p. 82). In a similar vein, Interviewee 7 offered useful information about the pitfalls of depending on “assessable facts alone” by addressing how IC development also involved developing learners’ “feelings of respect for other cultures.” Accordingly, these reflections show how the teachers were able to look beyond the competence aims found in the current English subject curriculum and, by doing so, confronted current pressures associated with assessment.

Moreover, as explained in section 2.2.4, intercultural communication is always a two-way street, which makes the task of assessing learners’ levels of IC a problematic one.

Interestingly, a teacher of English indirectly based her reflections on a previously held teaching session on a similar conclusion:

My aim was that this session would help my learners understanding how people’s emotions affect the way they communicate, and how people of English cultures may answer the question: “How do you do?” with something other than “Fine, thanks. And you?” This is the turn taking that is memorized from the outset, right? However, the response to the question “how do you do?” is very contextual. (Interviewee 6)

In other words, this teacher recognized how her learners, despite their knowledge about other culture’s communication patterns, may come to experience failure in processes of intercultural communication. This perspective reflects how “any individual can be absolutely “interculturally competent” but s/he may be easily troubled by the lack of motivation of the other, her/his bad intentions, her/his language skills” (Dervin, 2010, p. 7). Interviewee 5 also acknowledged the complexities of IC development. The teacher stated the following when reflecting on a previous culture-teaching session:

When working with issues of culture one continuously develops new insights [...]. However, sometimes one falls back on more simplified or stereotypical understandings [of the 'Other']. This is not only reflective of the learners' experience, but of my own experience as well. (Interviewee 5)

By bringing up how individuals sometimes reverted to more simplified and stereotypical portrayals of the 'Other', Interviewee 5 seemed to be aware of how any approach to IC has its limits (“[...] Sometimes one falls back on more simplified or stereotypical cultural understandings”). As such, the teacher's comment echoes recent scholars' arguments that people in processes of intercultural communication alter between simple and complex ideas, as captured by the term 'simplicity' (Dervin & Gross, 2016, p. 6). However, although most of the interviewees viewed the task of assessing learners' levels of IC as a challenging one, one teacher believed that learners' levels of cultural understanding were easily assessable. Interestingly, this argument did *not* neglect the idea of assessing the attitudinal aspect attached to the concept of IC. This was revealed when she explained how learners' attitudes towards the 'Other' were influential on their grades, in the sense that their attitudes indicated a deeper cultural understanding:

I: How did you experience this session?

R: Well, I could see with my own eyes, the learners understood this issue [...]. They sympathized with those who often are stereotyped. There was particularly one student who showed a higher level of cultural understanding. Therefore, I wrote her comment down. It was my impression that the learners learned a lot, which was later proven by the report that they handed in.

I: I see. Were your learners' altered attitudes significant in relation to the grade they received on this report?

R: Yes, they were influential in the sense that their level of sympathy indicated a greater understanding of the issue. However, if their grammar was bad then [...]

(Interviewee 2)

The above dialogue is notable for a number of reasons. First, it illustrates how this teacher believes that learners' altered attitudes towards the 'Other' can be assessed. As a result, her reflections contrast with Interviewee 4's comment on how it is perfectly possible for learners' to express feeling of openness and tolerance in order to 'please' the teacher. The exchange also shows how her learners' feelings of sympathy directly influenced their grades, which is highly problematic. It is not recent news that youths today worry about

their grades. Accordingly, learners are desperately looking for fixed formulas for how to achieve good marks. Two main issues stem from this. First, this desperate search may imply that today's learners are consciously aware of the fact that feelings of openness and understanding are indicators of IC. Because of this, young individuals might hide their genuine emotions in order to become successful students. This is unfortunate as similar performances may hide stereotypical and bias views that need to be exposed and challenged (see section 2.1.4). Second, failure is unavoidable when working on IC. Consequently, there are no fixed formulas for IC development. One way teachers can raise learners' awareness of this fact is to discontinue judging the results of their intercultural engagements.

Another interesting phenomenon in this above excerpt is that the English teacher, either explicitly or implicitly, ascribed to Byram's and the Council of Europe's claim that learners' attitudes toward the 'Other' can be assessed (see section 2.2.4). As discussed in section 2.4.2, the current national English subject curriculum does not appear to share this viewpoint, as the emotional aspect of IC is left unmentioned in the assessable competence aims yet is still discoverable in its purpose section. Hence, the teacher's response does not reflect the guidelines of the national curriculum but is instead in line with current ambitions set by the Council of Europe. However, Interviewee 2's expressed view did appear to be exceptional, as indicated by the discussion above.

To sum up, the majority of the questionnaire respondents and interview participants viewed the task of assessing learners' level of IC as difficult. The interviewees mainly reasoned this by highlighting the fact that learners' 'attitudes' were not 'skills' that could be easily assessed. Consequently, the teachers further pointed out that the development of IC was a complex process. Their critical awareness of this made it difficult for them to predict the learning outcome of their teaching methods and activities when approaching issues of culture. Altogether, the English teachers' beliefs about assessment were reflective of 'renewed' interculturality by showing an *acceptance of failure*.

5.0 Conclusions and implications

This chapter is organized into four sections. First, a summary of the study's key findings is offered with reference to the overarching research question of the thesis. Thereafter, the study's didactic implications are outlined. Following this, recommendations for further research are specified, followed by some concluding remarks in the final section.

5.1 Summary and conclusions

The aim of this study was to investigate English upper-secondary teachers' perceptions of IC. More specifically, a mixed-method web survey and qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted in order to examine teachers' reports and thoughts on their approaches to interculturality. In this study, the two methods complemented each other, as the weaknesses associated with one of the methods were supplemented with the strengths of the other.

Former and newer theoretical perspectives on IC informed the study. Holliday's (2010b) conceptualization of interculturality as a concept that can never fully be explained served as the study's operationalization of the concept. As before mentioned, a practical implication of this argument is that FL teachers are recommended to seek a broader picture and to allow learners to go beneath the surface of discourse and appearances when dealing with culture-related issues in class.

The overarching research questions of this thesis were as follows: "How do English teachers communicate about their approaches to issues of culture? In particular, do their discourses reflect traces of renewed interculturality?" In order to narrow this area of focus, three integrated sub-questions were formulated: 1. Do teachers pay attention to power relations? If so, how? 2. Do teachers approach controversial cultural issues? Why or why not? 3. What are teachers' beliefs about assessing learners' levels of IC?

In response to the first research sub-question, the study has provided insight into teachers' altering levels of attention to existing power relations. For instance, whereas most candidates strongly emphasized cultural differences, some interviewees touched upon the

need to highlight cultural differences as well as similarities, when dealing with issues of culture in class. Their level of attention to this lastly mentioned concern did, however, vary. Furthermore, an identified trend in the complete data set was that the concept of ‘identity’ was typically presented as tied to a particular culture and language. This is an important finding, as teachers and learners today, more than they ever have before, need to learn how to question common understandings due to the increased presence of globalization and mass migration.

However, further analysis also revealed that most candidates regularly reflected on their own cultural outlooks when approaching questions of culture in class. The analysis of the interview data showed a relation between this reported habit and the teachers’ attention to existing power relations, in the sense that the teachers’ reflections on why they performed such acts of self-reflection shed light upon their narrow, and at times, biased cultural understandings. As a result, the teachers moved beyond former theoretical perspectives’ inattentiveness to unequal power relations by paying critical attention to the influence of their own worldviews.

The second sub-question aimed to explore teachers’ commitment to dealing with controversial cultural issues. By examining the ration of teachers who focused on both dealing with controversial cultural issues and developing learners’ feelings of openness and tolerance, the questionnaire results revealed that the teachers who strongly supported the ideals of openness and tolerance appeared slightly less likely to approach cultural controversies. Although this finding did not allow me to generalize, it was interesting in the sense that it provoked my curiosity about whether an emphasis on ideals and openness and tolerance could lead to the overlooking of more culturally sensitive subject matters.

A thorough analysis of the qualitative findings offered a more complex picture in terms of why cultural controversies were neglected. First of all, the qualitative findings indicated an inclination among the teachers to avoid certain subject matters due to increased ‘cultural diversity.’ This was particularly evident in the interviews, as some interview candidates expressed that they felt as if they ‘walked on eggshells’ when approaching such issues due to their ‘culturally diverse’ learners. For instance, some teachers expressed that they found it difficult to challenge ‘more dominant’ learners’ controversial remarks made in class. They further argued that such remarks could cause learners from ethnic minorities to feel

discomfort. Another expressed concern seemed to relate to minority learners' potential emotional reactions towards certain subject matters. As such, notions of discomfort were viewed as negative, as they could impede learners' development of IC. This is an interesting finding as it sheds light upon the complexities of our time, which calls for renewed ways of understanding IC in education.

Next, the qualitative findings indicated that the teachers who did approach controversial topics in the classroom had differing ideas concerning what constituted fruitful conditions for IC development. The variation in the teachers' views ranged from an emphasis on emphatic understanding and harmony to the highlighting of disagreement and conflict. In light of this lastly mentioned alternative, further analysis revealed that although some teachers appeared to recognize the benefits of conflict and disagreement, *consensus* seems to be an aim among the learners. This finding could indicate that the teachers' beliefs about their approaches to cultural controversies do not necessarily reflect what actually goes on in the classroom (Borg, 2015).

The third research sub-question aimed to investigate the teachers' beliefs about assessment. The material indicated that most teachers experienced it difficult or very difficult to measure learners' levels of IC. However, it is important to acknowledge that the questionnaire results analyzed in relation to this strand of analysis may have had poor reliability. Nevertheless, the qualitative findings further revealed that most teachers were aware of how 'attitudes' were not 'skills.' Learners' levels of IC were therefore perceived as a problematic measure. The analysis of the interview data also revealed that the teachers' acknowledged that failure was unavoidable when working on IC. Only one interview candidate believed that learners' levels of IC were easily assessable. Interestingly, this expressed view did *not* neglect the idea of assessing the attitudinal aspect attached to the concept of IC, which is reflective of former theoretical conceptions of IC.

Based on the analysis of the complete data set, then, the study's findings indicated that some elements of renewed interculturality were identifiable. As a result, the current thesis' hypothesis was partially confirmed.

5.2 Implications

The findings of my study have several didactical implications. First, it seemed as if the glimpses of renewed interculturality identified in the teachers' comments were testimonies of undeveloped thoughts about their teaching practices. As such, a potentially beneficial approach would be to include newer theoretical perspectives on IC in EFL education and in other professional development programs. First, such courses could offer teachers expansive tool-kits that provide critical insight into the complexities of IC, thus enabling them to move beyond *differentialist biases* and the outdated conviction that “the more you know about their habits, thoughts, etc. the more able you are to “control” them and thus interact in a proper and unproblematic way” (Dervin, 2016 p. 103). Second, by including research on textbooks and other culture-teaching materials, such courses may assist teachers in identifying hidden ideologies, othering and other forms of reductions during their hectic workdays. Finally, a focus on renewed interculturality in teacher education and professional development would offer valuable insight with regards to *why* and *how* notions of disharmony may function as fruitful conditions for IC development, as Hoff (2014) poignantly remarks:

Disagreement and conflict may often lead to meaningful communicative situations in which the participants are deeply engaged, thus contributing to a higher level of honesty and involvement. Such personal investment is essential if the intercultural dialogue is to affect the learners' way of thinking and personal identities. (p. 514)

In light of this aforementioned argument, another didactic implication to consider concerns the current curriculum design. As this study demonstrated, LK06/13 influences current teaching practices. This level of influence was not only reported by the candidates themselves but was also reflected in their emphasis on developing learners' knowledge about and respect for others. Nevertheless, it seemed as if this focal point affected the teachers' willingness to deal with cultural controversies in a negative way. Accordingly, developers of the future design might want to include notions of conflict and ambiguity as essential components of IC development. In this regard, it is interesting to note that the English subject is currently being revised in order to contribute to developing learners' ability to face future challenges. As stated in a recent white paper on competences in the school for the future, “In diverse communities it is important to promote harmony and

understanding, but also to deal with conflicts if they arise” (NOU, 2015, p. 31). It will be interesting to see whether this explicit mentioning of notions of conflict will have any consequences for English teachers’ perceptions of IC in the future.

Moreover, because findings from this current study suggest that English teachers need to develop insight into *how* they can help their learners to grasp and deal with cultural complexity, designers of teaching materials should consider including ‘newer’ conceptions of IC. This may include incorporating texts that challenge learners in a number of ways, such as by acknowledging *diversities*, and by including notions of ambiguity and discomfort. As identified in the teachers’ reports, several of the respondents were concerned about ‘simplifying things’ yet, at the same time, approached issues of culture in a way that came to categorize the ‘Other.’ In addition, teachers expressed they they were hesitant to approach complex cultural issues due to their learners’ lower levels of language proficiency. However, misunderstanding and miscommunication are natural parts of intercultural communication (Kramsch, 2011; Hoff, 2014; Dervin, 2015). As such, the encounter with texts that may be difficult to comprehend language-wise could come to play an essential role for developing learners’ ability to deal with conflict and ambiguity in a constructive manner.

5.3 Limitations and suggestions for future research

The results have offered evidence that suggests that knowledge about teachers’ perceptions of IC is central for improving current educational practices. The study adopted a mixed-method approach by incorporating a quantitative web survey and qualitative semi-structured interviews. The main rationale for using mixed-method research was that of ‘completeness,’ as previously mentioned in section 3.1. However, this study would have offered a broader account on the subject matter if it had included information from EFL learners. Internationally, there have been very few studies that have examined the ways learners’ perceive the intercultural dimension of the English subject. Future research that takes on learners’ experiences it thus needed in order to uncover potential gaps between teachers’ perceptions of their culture-teaching practices and their learners’ perceptions. Future research should also include classroom observation in order to explore what actually goes on in English learning classrooms.

In terms of another interesting area for future research, I recommend examining teachers' perceptions and practices of interculturality before, during, and after having carried out courses that help may them to "pause to wonder and stand rapt in an awe by rejecting culturalist approaches" (Dervin & Hahl, 2015, p. 14). Then, this question can be raised: Would similar results be obtained if this study were replicated with candidates who had participated in a course on renewed views on interculturality? Further, I would argue that it is especially important to focus on the development of student teachers. According to Wahl (2006), teachers are more prone to using teaching practice ideas that they have experienced themselves during their own educational pathways. Consequently, a research focus on student teachers' perceptions of interculturality may help pre-service teachers develop a shared metalanguage that recognizes *diversities* and accounts for notions of failure, discomfort, and ambiguity when dealing with cultural issues in the English classroom.

5.4 Concluding reflections

The study has contributed to the field of FL didactics due to its analysis of teachers' perceptions about a central concern in today's EFL education. An identified trend in the material is that teachers perceive IC as a matter of developing knowledge, respect and emphatic understanding toward the 'Other.' However, as previously mentioned, learners also need to develop the ability to deal with conflict, ambiguity, and complexity, as intercultural communication is a challenging undertaking. The analysis also indicated that teachers present the concept of 'identity' as tied to a specific culture and language. Ultimately, such presentations draw artificial boundaries that contribute to unbalanced power relations. Therefore, an important implication of the study is that newer theory on interculturality should be included in in pre-service teacher education and in other professional development programs, as well as in the development of teaching materials, to a greater extent. As already stressed, this would be an important step in terms of addressing the complexities of our world. From this starting point, learners can begin to develop a better understanding of our postmodern world. It is my hope that this thesis will function as a source of inspiration for putting this suggested initiative into action. I also hope that it will offer valuable insight for future research.

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Appendices

Appendix A: NSD Approval



Hild Elisabeth Hoff
Institutt for fremmedspråk Universitetet i Bergen
Sydnesplassen 7
5007 BERGEN

Vår dato: 03.11.2016

Vår ref: 50420 / 3 / HIT

Deres dato:

Deres ref:

TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 06.10.2016. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

<i>50420</i>	<i>How do teachers approach question of culture in EFL classrooms?</i>
	<i>A comparative study</i>
<i>Behandlingsansvarlig</i>	<i>Universitetet i Bergen, ved institusjonens øverste leder</i>
<i>Daglig ansvarlig</i>	<i>Hild Elisabeth Hoff</i>
<i>Student</i>	<i>Benedicte Brekke</i>

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

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

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

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

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 18.05.2017, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Kjersti Haugstvedt

Hildur Thorarensen

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

NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS
NSD – Norwegian Centre for Research Data

Harald Hårfagres gate 29
NO-5007 Bergen, NORWAY

Tel: +47-55 58 21 17
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Org.nr. 985 321 884

Appendix B: Written information to the questionnaire respondents

Forespørsel til engelsklærere om å ta del i en kort spørreundersøkelse i forbindelse med masteroppgave

Jeg studerer ved universitet i Bergen, hvor jeg nå er på mitt siste år ved integrert lektorutdanning med master i engelsk. I den anledning skriver jeg min avsluttende masteroppgave under veiledning av Hild Hoff. Oppgaven handler om hvordan engelsklærere jobber med temaer/problemstillinger knyttet til kultur. I forbindelse med oppgaven ønsker jeg deltakelse av lærere som underviser engelsk ved studiespesialiserende 1 trinn. I tillegg ønsker jeg deltakelse fra engelsklærere som underviser ved yrkesfaglig linje 1.-2.trinn.

Spørreundersøkelsen er anonym. Av den grunn vil det ikke være mulig å spore opp din IP-adresse eller e-post opp mot dine oppgitte svar. All data behandles konfidensielt, hvor den selve tekniske gjennomførelsen foretas av MonkeySurvey.

Det er også viktig å merke seg at innsamlingsdataen må være personlig. Undersøkelsen må derfor ikke gjennomføres av andre. Undersøkelsen har 10 lukkede spørsmål, samt 2 åpne spørsmål. Den vil ikke ta mer enn 15 minutter å fullføre. Svar ønskes mottatt før 10.12.2016.

Dersom du ønsker å bidra kan du få tilgang til spørreundersøkelsen ved å følge linken under:

<https://no.surveymonkey.com/r/QPZ7TH6>

Om du har noen spørsmål kan du ta kontakt per e-post benedicte.brekke@student.uib.no
Eller gjennom å ringe 90870090.

Du kan også ta kontakt med min veileder Hild Hoff ved institutt for fremmedspråk per e-mail: Hild.Hoff@uib.no

Prosjektet er meldt til personvernombudet NSD (Norsk senter for forskningstjeneste).

På forhånd takk for din interesse.

Med vennlig hilsen

Benedicte Brekke

Appendix C: Written information to the interviewees

Forespørsel til engelsklærere om å delta i intervju i forbindelse med masteroppgave

Jeg studerer ved universitet i Bergen, hvor jeg nå har påbegynt siste år ved integrert lektorutdanning, med master i Engelsk. I den anledning skriver jeg min avsluttende masteroppgave under veiledning av Hild Hoff ved institutt for fremmedspråk. Oppgaven omhandler engelsklæreres tilnærminger til kultur som tema med tilknyttede læringsmål. I min studie ønsker jeg deltakelse av engelsklærere ved studiespesialiserende, 1. trinn, samt deltakelse av engelsklærere ved 1. og 2. trinn, yrkesfaglig linje.

I intervjuene vil jeg særlig ha interesse for hvilke metoder og materialer engelsklærere bruker for å fremme kulturforståelse i undervisningen.

Det er frivillig å være med i studien og du har mulighet for å trekke deg til enhver tid, uten å forklare dette noe nærmere. Du vil også kunne unnlate å svare på spørsmål som stilles. Opplysningene du gir under intervjuet, vil bli anonymisert og behandlet konfidensielt. Jeg vil spille inn samtaleintervjuet på et lydopptak som vil bli slettet når oppgaven er ferdig skrevet, som etter planen vil bli innen sommeren 2017. Intervjuene vil ha en fast tidsramme på ca. 30- 60 minutt.

Dersom du sier deg frivillig til å delta, er det ønskelig at du tar deg tid til å svare på en kort, digital spørreundersøkelse i forkant. Undersøkelsen har 12 spørsmål. Invitasjon til spørreundersøkelsen sendes via mail. Det vil være mulig å spore din e-post og IP-adresse opp mot oppgitte svar, som vil danne grunnlag for vår personlige samtale. Digital informasjon oppgitt, vil i likhet med all annen informasjon, bli anonymisert og behandlet konfidensielt.

Dersom du ønsker å delta, er det hensiktsmessig at du signerer vedlagte samtykkeerklæring. Du kan enten sende denne samtykkeerklæringen til meg via e-post, eller levere den personlig før intervjuet starter. Om du ønsker å levere erklæringen personlig før intervjuet starter, er det fint om du likevel sender meg en mail angående ditt ønske om å delta.

Om du har noen spørsmål angående oppgaven eller innsamlingen av data kan du kontakte meg per e-post benedicte.brekke@student.uib.no eller gjennom å ringe 90870090.

Studien er meldt til NSD (Personvernombudet for forskning, Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste).

Håper på din deltakelse.

Med vennlig hilsen

Benedicte Brekke

Samtykkeerklæring:

Jeg har mottatt skriftlig informasjon og sier meg villig til å delta i prosjektet:

Signatur.....

E-post:

Appendix D: Answers to the web survey

Q1: For how many years have you been an English teacher? Please select your category

Answer Choices	Responses	
Less than 5 years	34,41 %	32
5-14 years	41,94 %	39
15-24 years	15,05 %	14
25 years +	8,60 %	8
Answered		93
Skipped		0

Q2: Which of the following programs do you teach?

Answer Choices	Responses	
The program for Vocational studies (educational training that provides practical experience in a particular occupational field i.e.: Food and Health)	21,51 %	20
The program for specialization in General Studies	25,81 %	24
Both vocational and general studies	52,69 %	49
Answered		93
Skipped		0

Q3: How important to you think it is to deal with cultural issues when teaching English? Please tick off the objective most descriptive

Not important		Moderately important		Slightly important		Important		Very important		Total	Weighted Average
0,00 %	0	2,15 %	2	3,23 %	3	37,63 %	35	56,99 %	53	93	4,49
										Answered	93
										Skipped	0

Q4: How often do you deal with issues of culture when teaching English?

Answer Choices	Responses		
Once a week		51,61 %	48
2-3 times a month		32,26 %	30
Once a month		7,53 %	7
A few times a year		5,38 %	5
Once a year		0,00 %	0
Less than once a year		1,08 %	1
Not as often as I would like		2,15 %	2
	Answered		93
	Skipped		0

Q5: In your approach to questions of culture, which of the following factors influence you the most?

Answer Choices	Responses	
The English subject curriculum	25,81 %	24
Colleagues	1,08 %	1
Ambitions or goals set by the school	0,00 %	0
Students' interests and/or needs	12,90 %	12
My own interests/preferences	8,60 %	8
Elements of all/some of the aspects	51,61 %	48
	Answered	93
	Skipped	0

Q6: What of the following culture-teaching objectives do you tend to focus on when exploring issues of culture? Please select the most descriptive boxes

Answer Choices	Responses	
Their feelings of openness, understanding, and tolerance toward other cultures and individuals from other cultural backgrounds	62,37 %	58
Facts about the other culture's history, religion and geography	59,14 %	55
Cultural differences	77,42 %	72
Their own cultures and cultural outlooks	38,71 %	36
Communicative patterns of the English-speaking culture	54,84 %	51
Controversial cultural issues, such as race-relations and issues of inequality	46,24 %	43
The other culture's customs, traditions and values	72,04 %	67
Encourage learners to express and/or reflect on their feelings of uncertainty emerging from their engagement with given cultural issues	10,75 %	10
Other (Please specify)		0
	Answered	93
	Skipped	0

Q7: What modes of classroom interaction do you prefer using when exploring issues of culture? Please the box that best correspond to your preference:

Answer Choices	Responses	
Lecture performed by teacher, inviting students' questions	2,15 %	2
Small group discussion	8,60 %	8
Full-class discussion	4,30 %	4
Students-led (Oral reports or the like are given by students, followed by a discussion-seminar format)	0,00 %	0
Individual work	0,00 %	0
A combination of all/some of the interactional modes	84,95 %	79
	Answered	93
	Skipped	0

Q8: What materials do you prefer using when exploring issues of culture? Please select the most descriptive boxes accordingly:

Answer Choices	Responses	
Movies	81,52 %	75
Documentaries	69,57 %	64
Role-play	11,96 %	11
Literary texts	86,96 %	80
Newscasts	29,35 %	27
Songs	48,91 %	45
Written news found on the internet	57,61 %	53
Online communication technology, i.e.: Skype, Facebook, MSN	6,52 %	6
Factual texts	76,09 %	70
Newspaper articles	40,22 %	37
Other material(s)? Please specify.		10
	Answered	93
	Skipped	0

Q9: Why do you view this/these material(s) to be beneficial in relation to exploring cultural issues? Your answer cannot exceed 350 words

Why do you view this/these material(s) to be beneficial in relation to exploring cultural issues? Your answer cannot exceed 350 words
Answers:
1. Relatedness and my own interest
2. supplement each other-
3. Engaging
4. xx
5. I consider an interplay between all these materials necessary and beneficial for the students to enhance a deeper understanding. A mix of fact and fiction will help them in this respect. Stirring emotions is easier through film and literature and therefore makes it easier to develop their respect and understanding for other cultures
6. Literary texts are emotionally engaging. This may help them understand the cultural issue, or culture in question
7. They are close to the source.
8. Relatedness and level of difficulty. The materials should not be too demanding, I think literary texts are easily understood by most of my students.
9. I think that these materials may not only develop learners' knowledge about other cultures, but also develop higher levels of empathy, which I think is necessary for understanding what may seem as very strange
10. Songs and movies often have an impact on young people
11. I think different materials enlighten culture in different ways. Combined with varied methods giving pupils a chance to both succeed and be challenged.
12. Literary texts and movies encourage empathy and lets the student live the characters life, which is useful for understanding how people from other cultures feel.
13. They are descriptive
14. Easy for the pupils to engage in these kinds of materials
15. They often come from the relevant culture itself, so the students can interpret directly without the information going through me.
16. x
17. I think these materials are very realistic, and therefore manage to show of important cultural tendencies
18. They are accessible, and make it easier for the students to relate to other cultures and their people's set of values
19. It is beneficial to use outside-textbook material because authenticity matters to the students. In addition, it is important to use more than one approach to be able to engage more students.

20. Learners find these materials interesting
21. The students need to see and hear realistic stories
22. I think documentaries are very beneficial to use, as they provide a very realistic account of how it may be like for people in other countries. Movies are also very good. We just watched the movie <i>Rabbit-Proof Fence</i> , which offers valuable insight into what it is like for the Aboriginals, and how their worldview relates to their culture/ tradition.
23. ?
24. Because they are engaging and reflect and present different types of cultural issues
25. x
26. they are authentic sources
27. Using a variety of supports allows to reflect how rich and complex the expression of culture is. It also permits reaching as many students as possible.
28. Updated, relevant, "ungdomsretting", etc.
29. They are interesting and descriptive of the English-speaking countries in focus
30. I feel they help the students understand these cultures better - they get a different viewpoint depending on what we use in class. Using online communication technology also brings it closer to home for many of my students as they feel more comfortable using something they're familiar with to look into these issues.
31. Movies are great as introductory material and concluding material. Songs make pupils discover the story and relate it to the topic.
32. Variety
33. Literary texts, movies and song can give the student an insight which is more personal
34. .
35. They have the possibility to discuss and discover through reading literary texts and watching movies.
36. These materials are realistic and bring us closer to the source culture. They can also aid us in understanding other cultures and why people think the way they do
37. x
38. They are up-to-date and therefore interesting.
39. They put focus on cultural issues in different ways. Important to use different techniques to catch most of the students' interest.
40. I find that it works. Variation makes the pupils interested and engaged in the topics.
41. Literary texts often highlight important topics, such as cultural norms and customs shared by the people of the explored culture
42. These materials often highlight important aspects such as cultural norms and customs of the people/culture

43. Because they are the most common materials that would be available from the culture in question
44. Sorry, no time to expand on this.
45. x
46. Up to date, from real life and it appeals to the students
47. When I have the time, I like to show documentaries that illustrate how history influences countries' cultures.
48. With access to the internet there is no reason not to use sources where things are explained and updated on an hourly basis, which allows for students to really see and (hopefully) grasp the tendencies in different English speaking countries.
49. They are good for exploring the culture in focus, they student may gain insight into other cultural and the values of the people within them. I think movies are especially good, as they often engage the learners more.
50. The students become more interested and engaged.
51. Movies make the larning process easier. Literary texts often give us information about the time the text was written. Written news gives us up to date information.
52. News often shed light upon current issues, which is good for developing learners' knowledge about other cultures or countries.
53. I think it gives a good view for the students.
54. Because I believe they are authentic sources of information about the culture, as well as on a level that students can comprehend.
55. There are so many great documentaries out there, they help showing what I have teached them
56. The source material should be part fact, part artistic expression. Pupils should learn through a variety of material, and see the target culture from different angles.
57. Because they show important aspects of the target culture, such as traditions and values, which is important for developing learners' understanding for others' world perspectives and life styles.
58. If you want your students to be interested in learning languages, they must learn about culture as well.
59. They can all provide information about cultural issues and at the same time we can learn about different genres in accordance to the subject curriculum.
60. The personal narrative that literature has is crucial in the approach of cultural issues. Factual texts are good in the sense that students learn to be critical to the various sources used as well.
61. They are engaging, which is important for making learners interested.
62. Because the students are often deeply engaged and affected by them.
63. Literary texts may describe cultural aspects that are difficult for learners to understand.

64. To make the pupils interested
65. Different perspectives, keeps interest, allows in-depth studies and scrutiny of practice
66. To create variation in the classroom. Switching activities often helps the students keep the focus. Film and documentaries give them a chance to hear another voice than mine, soemthing that I find important.
67. It is important to show the students authentic matierial
68. I like to use factual texts as they prepare learners for their exams
69. Discussing the above after reading/watching it with the students, seems like an eye opener for many.
70. uh... students need something to begin with. One cannot just present a topic like: use of guns in the US without providing some sort of information. I cannot assume that my students know enough to discuss or present anything before I have given them something. Students prefer films, I like to use all kinds of material.
71. Because they often highlight relevant aspects of culture and help learners' understand what may be very different from out culture
72. News on the internet are very current, and describe current issues from an insider-perspective.
73. Using different approaches enables different perspectives and methods.
74. x
75. They are descriptive and normally not as stereotypical
76. A wide variety of texts - both structured and authentic - will provide the students with different perspectives. These materials also invite the students to be critical readers and create interest in a varied and multicultural classroom.
77. Accessibility
78. x
79. I use real examples that are easy for the student to relate to
80. Literary text and movies engage the learners on a personal level.
81. I always ask my class how they want to approach the subject-and most often films are preferred.
82. To be objective when dealing with issues that are difficult to understand from a Norewegian point of view.
83. It is important that the pupils get their knowledge through both factual and fictional sources. Some of the content needs interpretation, while other content can be found directly. Variation is vital.
84. They are authentic and awaken the students' interest. The mix of texts helps in reinforcing a certain message
85. The need for classroom variation (easy accessible texts mixed with autentic matierial, speech + sound and image to make an impression)

86. Making the material come alive is most important. This happens through personal stories, authentic articles.
87. ?
88. I use documentaries, as they are good for exploring other cultures traditions and norms. Movies are also good, as they make learners interested and offer a realistic account of how it is like to be from the culture or country in focus
89. They make learners interested. I also think that literary texts can make them more engaged as they are often easier to read compared to news articles.
90. The students need factual information about different groups of people, as well as more subjective narratives make them develop empathy for others
91. Some texts are very good for examining historical facts, which needs to be considered if learners are to develop knowledge about people from other cultures.
92. I see variation as the key to understanding. News provide updated information, factual texts/textbooks give us an overview, while literature/films etc. make it easier to relate to the issues.
93. When discussing complex issues I find it sometimes difficult to be impartial in my teaching

Q10: What do you view, if anything, as particularly challenging when approaching cultural issues? Your answer cannot exceed 350 words

What do you view, if anything, as particularly challenging when approaching cultural issues? Your answer cannot exceed 350 words
Answers:
1. To be non-partial when dealing with topics that not only engages me personally, but are important to make a standpoint towards. I also find it challenging to relate certain topics to my students pre-experiences
2. Students' resistance towards changing their viewpoints about other cultures. They sometimes do not want to realize that they often are very narrow.
3. Sometimes it is challenging to offer various perspectives on the issue at hand. I feel that it sometimes becomes very stereotypical.
4. To be neutral, especially when dealing with sensitive topics that go against my values
5. Too much of the information I present is often more interesting to me (being interested in a lot of different topics) than to the students. Typical teacher disease

6. Students' stereotypical views. Some students have much prejudice towards cultures different from ours. I am afraid that they sometimes hurt other students. For example Muslims
7. Sometimes the language can be challenging, especially in certain types of vocational classes.
8. To approach cultures that are very different from the western culture. It can be challenging to deal with them in a neutral way.
9. x
10. To get the students to put the material into a bigger context.
11. When working with systems of government, pupils in the first year of a vocational programme often do not know basic concepts since they do not have social studies until the second year. I spend a lot of time explaining the concepts instead of focusing on the material at hand.
12. Little time to explore many aspects of a topic, the curriculum is large.
13. If there are students who say things that may be difficult for other students (black students, Muslims etc)
14. Challenging to make it interesting for the pupils
15. The student's vocabulary and knowledge of political institutions, politicians etc referred to in the news texts.
16. Time
17. I do not want to answer
18. To get students to recognize that people portrayed in a text, film or article, are actually people.
19. Finding source material that hits the right level of the student's competence and at the same time is engaging.
20. I don't know
21. The vocabulary cannot be too difficult for learners in vocational studies. Moreover, it is important to find a way for the pupils to relate to the issue.
22. ?
23. Being structured enough to keep up attention
24. -
25. The time aspect, or rather the amount of competence aims in the English subject curriculum.
26.
27. student's engagement, which is crucial but hard to predict
28. Students' prejudice and lack of basic knowledge about the topics.

29. To find films and articles that is not too difficult/boring for the students
30. Student focus when using the Internet is sometimes challenging as they are so familiar with using their laptops for this kind of thing that they start looking at other things.
31. The lack of references among the pupils. Pupils 20 years ago knew immediately what you were talking about when using names, dates, places and happenings. Pupils today do not.
32. x
33. .
34. qq
35. Some of the students are not interested in such topics. Some do not have enough background information.
36. -
37. To make sure that the aims of understanding the cultural issues in today's society is not overshadowed by the technical curriculum aims, such as written communication and oral communication. Those, I feel, should be a given.
38. x
39. Having people from different cultures/countries in class (from countries in war, refugees) is challenging in terms of how to approach the issue of culture.
40. Old books with not updated information/facts.
41. I don't know
42. Trying to be neutral in my teaching!
43. I like using real news but my students are often at a level where using native English from good news sources would be too challenging.
44. Sorry, no time to expand on this.
45. x
46. If the students actually understand the theme. Do they have enough references from their own cultural background?
47. To get to learners to see the perspective from another country
48. vocabulary and idioms. Norwegians tend to think of their English as great, when in fact these issues cause problems because the students do not know the words or terms used.
49. X
50. --

51. To find counter arguments to issues that personally make me feel upset og angry.
52. Up to date books
53. I choose material which is easy to understand for the students.
54. Sometimes authentic material uses very local words or expressions which confuses the students, but are not very important for them to know at this level.
55. That it can be hard for some weak students to understand "difficult English language"
56. To find material which is both relevant and interesting, but also easy to read. Pupils in vocational courses especially struggle with long texts and advanced language.
57. ?
58. To find material that the students find interesting.
59. Prejudice
60. To find good factual texts to add to the material found in the textbook.
61. .
62. Sometimes the students do not seem to understand the issue and might focus on other aspects.
63. Nnn
64. To fond materials which are not to difficult to understand.
65. Student motivation, time needed for in-depth study versus time available
66. -
67. It is difficult to get Norwegian students to understand other cultures when they are so young and have little or no experience with other cultures
68. The language, many students struggle with reading English and require easier texts
69. It can sometimes be challenging for students to remember and relate the different topics to earlier subjects.
70. Students find it difficult to read long texts, and this is a challenge. Sometimes it is difficult to refer to historical context. They need to see a film, they often lose patience with long historical lectures, so I avoid these.
71. I'm tepid as to the benefits they offer the students in terms of actual language learning
72. I don't really view anything as challenging.

73. It is challenging to assess the outcome of cultural competence. I find it difficult to challenge extreme and fixed viewpoints. Often the most vocal pupils hold views that other pupils are reluctant to challenge. I do not want to be the one to silence pupils once I have got them expressing themselves.
74. .
75. To approach issues of race can be challenging when having learners from other cultures
76. Find suitable material for the weaker students.
77. It can be difficult to have learners from immigrant background when dealing with certain kinds of issues
78. Time.. .
79. Some times they do not relate to them as real
80. Many teenagers are quick to judge other cultures and customs
81. I find it particularly challenging to engage the students which can be defined as below average students. They usually don't see the point.
82. Making sure I reach every student at his/her level.
83. Finding good sources is difficult. You need to be open to finding sources outside office hours and be good at seeing connections between different sources, e.g. a newspaper article and a literary text.
84. I don't really find any of it very challenging.
85. The vocabulary and the students lack of ability to extract key information.
86. To challenge biases.
87. Vocabulary
88. It can be difficult to find materials that are accessible to all students (what is adequately challenging to some will be too difficult for others and can be offputting for this reason).
89. Students who are dominant, racist and or sexist can be quite difficult to manage in the classroom, in particular, when discussing culturally sensitive topics.
90. x
91. I don't know.
92. Viewing differences in a constructive and non-judgmental way is the biggest challenge. I try to focus a lot on the concept of what is "normal".
93. That the rest of the world has much greater hierarchy than Norwegian society has and that that hierarchy is accepted to a greater degree than most Norwegians can imagine.

Q11: How often do you reflect on your own sociocultural position and outlook when dealing with questions of culture?

Answer Choices	Responses		
Every time	24,73%		23
Almost every time	29,03%		27
Sometimes	26,88%		25
Rarely	13,98%		13
Never	0,0%		0
Not as often as I would like	5,38%		5
	Answered		93
	Skipped		0

Q12: After having carried out a session that dealt with a culture-related issue (or issues), how easy or difficult is it for you to assess your learners' developed levels of cultural understanding?

Answer Choices	Responses		
Very difficult	21,51%		20
Difficult	41,94%		39
Neutral	16,13%		15
Easy	17,20%		16
Very easy	3,23%		3
	Answered		93
	Skipped		0

Appendix E: Answers to the pre-interview questionnaire

Interviewee 1



COMPLETE

Collector: Email Invitation 1 (Email)

Started: Friday, September 30, 2016 9:07:31 AM

Last Modified: Friday, September 30, 2016 9:13:08 AM

Time Spent: 00:08:36

Q1: For how many years have you been an English teacher? Please tick your category
15-24 years

Q2: In what program do you teach English?
Both vocational and general studies

**Q3: How important do you think it is to deal with cultural issues when teaching English?
Please tick the objective most descriptive**
Very important

Q4: How often do you focus on cultural issues when teaching English?
Once a week

Q5: In your approach to questions of culture, which of the following factors is most important to you?
Elements of all/some of the aspects

**Q6: What modes of classroom interaction would use in relation to your selected materials?
Please select the most relevant box**
A combination of all/some of the interactional modes

Q7: What of the following culture teaching objectives do you tend to approach? Please select the most descriptive criteria

Their feelings of openness, understanding, and tolerance toward other cultures and individuals from other cultural backgrounds

Cultural differences

Controversial cultural issues, such as race-relations and issues of inequality

Q8: What material(s) do you tend to use when exploring cultural issues? Please select the most descriptive boxes accordingly

Movies
Documentaries
Songs
Literary texts
Factual texts

Q9: Why do you view this/these material(s) to be beneficial in relation to exploring cultural issues? Your answer cannot exceed 350 words

By using these materials one is able to both teach about cultural issues in an historical context, as well as exploring current cultural issues. Also by combining lots of resources, one can highlight different parts of the issue, as the different resources may represent opposing viewpoints on the issue. I think this is really important as some materials may represent them from a very one-sided perspective.

Q10: What do you view, if anything, as particularly challenging when approaching cultural issues? Your answer cannot exceed 350 words

The fact that it is very difficult to understand, and convey, these issues from the "inside perspective", ie from the perspective of the people living this issue. This is especially the case when dealing with cultural issues in cultures very different from our own

Q11: How often do you think of your own sociocultural position and outlook when dealing with questions of culture?

Almost every time

Q12: After having carried out a session that dealt with a culture-related issue (or issues), how easy or difficult is it for you to assess your learners' developed levels of cultural understanding?

Difficult

Interviewee 2



COMPLETE

Collector: Email Invitation 3 (Email)

Started: Saturday, October 01, 2016 7:20:19 PM

Last Modified: Saturday, October 01, 2016 7:31:53 PM

Time Spent: 00:11:3

Q1: For how many years have you been an English teacher? Please tick your category
5-14 years

Q2: In what program do you teach English?
Both vocational and general studies

Q3: How important do you think it is to deal with cultural issues when teaching English?
Please tick the objective most descriptive
Very important

Q4: How often do you focus on cultural issues when teaching English?
Once a week

Q5: In your approach to questions of culture, which of the following factors is most important to you?
Elements of all/some of the aspects

Q6: What modes of classroom interaction would use in relation to your selected materials?
Please tick the most relevant box
A combination of all/some of the interactional modes

Q7: What of the following culture teaching objectives do you tend to approach? Please tick the most descriptive criteria
Their feelings of openness, understanding, and tolerance toward other cultures and individuals from other cultural backgrounds
Inform the learners about the target culture's customs, traditions and values
Cultural differences

Q8: What material(s) do you tend to use when exploring cultural issues? Please tick the most descriptive boxes accordingly
Movies
Literary texts
Factual texts

Q9: Why do you view this/these material(s) to be beneficial in relation to exploring cultural issues? Your answer cannot exceed 350 words

These provide a variety of views of the subject and bring us closer to the source culture

Q10: What do you view, if anything, as particularly challenging when approaching cultural issues? Your answer cannot exceed 350 words

To keep students interested in attaining a deeper understanding of other cultures, not just a superficial understanding.

Q11: How often do you think of your own sociocultural position and outlook when dealing with questions of culture?

Sometimes

Q12: After having carried out a session that dealt with a culture-related issue (or issues), how easy or difficult is it for you to assess your learners' developed levels of cultural understanding?

Neutral

Interviewee 3



COMPLETE

Collector: Email Invitation 3 (Email)

Started: Tuesday, October 04, 2016 7:34:55 PM

Last Modified: Tuesday, October 04, 2016 7:49:09 PM

Time Spent: 00:14:14

Q1: For how many years have you been an English teacher? Please tick your category
5-14 years

Q2: In what program do you teach English?

The program for Vocational studies (educational training that provides practical experience in a particular occupational field i.e.: Food and Health)

Q3: How important do you think it is to deal with cultural issues when teaching English? Please tick the objective most descriptive

Very important

Q4: How often do you focus on cultural issues when teaching English?

2-3 times a month

Q5: In your approach to questions of culture, which of the following factors is most important to you?

Elements of all/some of the aspects

Q6: What modes of classroom interaction would use in relation to your selected materials? Please tick the most relevant box

A combination of all/some of the interactional modes

Q7: What of the following culture teaching objectives do you tend to approach? Please tick the most descriptive criteria

Their feelings of openness, understanding, and tolerance toward other cultures and individuals from other cultural backgrounds

Cultural differences

Other (please specify)

Target trad. Vs. cont.outlook. I also encourage my learners to develop an understanding towards cultural traditions and values hat may be difficult to relate to....

Q8: What material(s) do you tend to use when exploring cultural issues? Please tick the most descriptive boxes accordingly

Literary texts

Q9: Why do you view this/these material(s) to be beneficial in relation to exploring cultural issues? Your answer cannot exceed 350 words

All types of media are of course relevant, but the advantage point must be literature, since it does not reduce issues to "text-book morals"

Q10: What do you view, if anything, as particularly challenging when approaching cultural issues? Your answer cannot exceed 350 words

Available text corpus: if one wants to provide a fruitful cultural education, one basically needs to create one's own corpus, even though most available textbooks have a rather good intention of helping me

Q11: How often do you think of your own sociocultural position and outlook when dealing with questions of culture?

Almost every time

Q12: After having carried out a session that dealt with a culture-related issue (or issues), how easy or difficult is it for you to assess your learners' developed levels of cultural understanding?

Difficult

Interviewee 4



COMPLETE

Collector: Email Invitation 6 (Email)

Started: Wednesday, November 23, 2016 2:08:29 PM

Last Modified: Wednesday, November 23, 2016 2:14:45 PM

Time Spent: 00:07:15

Q1: For how many years have you been an English teacher? Please tick your category
5-14 years

Q2: In what program do you teach English?
The program for specialization in General Studies

**Q3: How important do you think it is to deal with cultural issues when teaching English?
Please tick the objective most descriptive**
Important

Q4: How often do you focus on cultural issues when teaching English?
2-3 times a month

Q5: In your approach to questions of culture, which of the following factors is most important to you?
Elements of all/some of the aspects

**Q6: What modes of classroom interaction would use in relation to your selected materials?
Please tick the most relevant box**
A combination of all/some of the interactional modes

Q7: What of the following culture teaching objectives do you tend to approach? Please tick the most descriptive criteria
Inform the learners about the target culture's history, religion and geography

Q8: What material(s) do you tend to use when exploring cultural issues? Please select the most descriptive boxes accordingly
Movies
Written news found on the internet
Factual texts
Newspaper articles

Q9: Why do you view this/these material(s) to be beneficial in relation to exploring cultural issues? Your answer cannot exceed 350 words

These provide a nice overview on the subject. To combine materials also allow me to highlight different cultural aspects

Q10: What do you view, if anything, as particularly challenging when approaching cultural issues? Your answer cannot exceed 350 words

I do not know.

Q11: How often do you think of your own sociocultural position and outlook when dealing with questions of culture?

Sometimes

Q12: After having carried out a session that dealt with a culture-related issue (or issues), how easy or difficult is it for you to assess your learners' developed levels of cultural understanding?

Difficult

Interviewee 5



COMPLETE

Collector: Email Invitation 1 (Email)

Started: Tuesday, October 18, 2016 1:59:58 PM

Last Modified: Tuesday, October 18, 2016 2:06:26 PM

Time Spent: 00:09:27

Q1: For how many years have you been an English teacher? Please tick your category
5-14 years

Q2: In what program do you teach English?
The program for specialization in General Studies

Q3: How important do you think it is to deal with cultural issues when teaching English? Please tick the objective most descriptive
Very important

Q4: How often do you focus on cultural issues when teaching English?
Once a week

Q5: In your approach to questions of culture, which of the following factors is most important to you?
Elements of all/some of the aspects

Q6: What modes of classroom interaction would use in relation to your selected materials? Please tick the most relevant box
A combination of all/some of the interactional modes

Q7: What of the following culture teaching objectives do you tend to approach? Please tick the most descriptive criteria
Their feelings of openness, understanding, and tolerance toward other cultures and individuals from other cultural backgrounds
Their own cultures and outlooks
Controversial cultural issues, such as race-relations and issues of inequality

Q8: What material(s) do you tend to use when exploring cultural issues? Please tick the most descriptive boxes accordingly
Documentaries
Literary texts
Factual texts

Newspaper articles

Other material(s)? Please specify.

Whenever I have students with other cultural backgrounds than Norwegian, I tend to engage them in describing their views on cultural differences, often describing their initial prejudices when facing the Norwegian culture for the first time.

Q9: Why do you view this/these material(s) to be beneficial in relation to exploring cultural issues? Your answer cannot exceed 350 words

Using students' own experiences with multiculturalism makes things a bit more "close to home". Culture is something that is all around us, at all times, and we have elements of the "new" multiculturalism all around us.

Q10: What do you view, if anything, as particularly challenging when approaching cultural issues? Your answer cannot exceed 350 words

Respondent skipped this question

Q11: How often do you think of your own sociocultural position and outlook when dealing with questions of culture?

Almost every time

Q12: After having carried out a session that dealt with a culture-related issue (or issues), how easy or difficult is it for you to assess your learners' developed levels of cultural understanding?

Very difficult

Interviewee 6



COMPLETE

Collector: Email Invitation 5 (Email)

Started: Friday, November 11, 2016 1:13:48 PM

Last Modified: Friday, November 11, 2016 2:56:29 PM

Time Spent: 06:42:40

Q1: For how many years have you been an English teacher? Please tick your category
Less than 5 years

Q2: In what program do you teach English?
Both vocational and general studies

Q3: How important do you think it is to deal with cultural issues when teaching English?
Please tick the objective most descriptive
Very important

Q4: How often do you focus on cultural issues when teaching English?
Not as often as I would like

Q5: In your approach to questions of culture, which of the following factors is most important to you?
Elements of all/some of the aspects

Q6: What modes of classroom interaction would use in relation to your selected materials?
Please tick the most relevant box
A combination of all/some of the interactional modes

Q7: What of the following culture teaching objectives do you tend to approach? Please tick the most descriptive criteria
Their feelings of openness, understanding, and tolerance toward other cultures and individuals from other cultural backgrounds
Cultural differences
Communicative patterns of the English-speaking culture
Controversial cultural issues, such as race-relations and issues of inequality
The other culture's customs, traditions and values

Q8: What material(s) do you tend to use when exploring cultural issues? Please tick the most descriptive boxes accordingly

Movies
Songs
Literary texts
Written news found on the internet
Factual texts

Q9: Why do you view this/these material(s) to be beneficial in relation to exploring cultural issues? Your answer cannot exceed 350 words

Literature (including song lyrics and fictional films) has a tendency to engage the students more. They also make it easier for students to relate to or understand other cultures.

Q10: What do you view, if anything, as particularly challenging when approaching cultural issues? Your answer cannot exceed 350 words

Respondent skipped this question

Q11: How often do you think of your own sociocultural background/position and outlook when dealing with questions of culture?

Every time

Q12: After having carried out a session that dealt with a culture-related issue (or issues), how easy or difficult is it for you to assess your learners' developed levels of cultural understanding?

Difficult

Interviewee 7



COMPLETE

Collector: Email Invitation 8 (Email)

Started: Thursday, December 08, 2016 1:35:48 PM

Last Modified: Thursday, December 08, 2016 1:50:52 PM

Time Spent: 00:14:04

Q1: For how many years have you been an English teacher? Please tick your category
15-24

Q2: In what program do you teach English?
Both vocational and general studies

Q3: How important do you think it is to deal with cultural issues when teaching English?
Please tick the objective most descriptive
Very important

Q4: How often do you focus on cultural issues when teaching English?
2-3 times a month

Q5: In your approach to questions of culture, which of the following factors is most important to you?
Elements of all/some of the aspects

Q6: What modes of classroom interaction would use in relation to your selected materials?
Please tick the most relevant box
A combination of all/some of the interactional modes

Q7: What of the following culture teaching objectives do you tend to approach? Please tick the most descriptive criteria
Inform the learners about the target culture's customs, traditions and values
Cultural differences
Inform the learners about the target culture's history, religion and geography

Q8: What material(s) do you tend to use when exploring cultural issues? Please tick the most descriptive boxes accordingly
Movies
Documentaries
Literary texts
Factual texts

Q9: Why do you view this/these material(s) to be beneficial in relation to exploring cultural

issues? Your answer cannot exceed 350 words

Together, these materials may complement each other. For example, factual texts may inform learners about the other culture's tradition, history, while movies may offer learners' a personal insight.

Q10: What do you view, if anything, as particularly challenging when approaching cultural issues? Your answer cannot exceed 350 words

Sometimes the material is difficult for some pupils, fx too long literary texts. They might find it boring.

Q11: How often do you think of your own sociocultural background/position and outlook when dealing with questions of culture?

Almost every time

Q12: After having carried out a session that dealt with a culture-related issue (or issues), how easy or difficult is it for you to assess your learners' developed levels of cultural understanding?

Difficult

Appendix F: Coding sheet

Category 1: Power relations	Coding
Traces of renewed IC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on cultural differences, as well as similarities • Awareness of how identities are multiple, dynamic and complex • Commitment to identity multiple voices when presenting the ‘Other’ • Acceptance of ambiguity • Awareness of how one’s own cultural outlook influences how the ‘Other’ is portrayed • Openness towards new knowledge • Commitment to combat inequality, injustice and discrimination
Traces of former theoretical conceptions on IC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differentialist biases • Cultural categorization • Specific countries linked to certain values, behaviors, and the like • Labeling the ‘Other’ • Othering • Cultural superiority • Neglection of ‘Self’
Category 2: Controversial cultural issues	Coding
Traces of renewed IC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to deal with controversial cultural issues • Positive valuation of notions of conflict and disagreement
Traces of former theoretical conceptions on IC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing IC to a matter of developing knowledge about, understanding of and respect for the ‘Other’

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External factors; a lack of structural support for dealing with controversial cultural issues, learners' interests and language proficiency levels
Category 3: Assessment	Coding
Traces of renewed IC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of how learners' levels of IC are difficult to measure • Acceptance of incomplete understandings • Simplicity; awareness of learners altering levels of IC • Awareness of how failure is unavoidable when working on IC
Traces of former theoretical conceptions on IC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific ideas that relate to how IC can be assessed through observation, test results and the like

Appendix G: Example of coded page

R: Yeah, we talk a lot about education., especially when we come to Africa. How people are desperate for schooling versus in Norway where students can't be bothered to show up. We should be aware of this, and to appreciate this. Not in the sense that we should have a bad conscious about this, but to be aware. Does that make any sense?

} cultural differences

I: Yes, absolutely.

R: Yet, it is not only about differences, but also similarities. I think it is easier, however, to discuss cultural differences, they are more apparent and less time-consuming. Still, we have to focus on similarities in order to counter point all the focus on differences that we hear, all the negativities... a Muslim girl wearing a Hijab is she really that different from you? Does she not have the same... that was really stereotypical... I mean, is she not a typical insecure teenager as well?

} cultural differences as well as similarities
 } awareness of how it shifts on multiple, complex and dynamic
 } traces of research
 } SC

I: Yeah, why do you find it more time-consuming to discuss similarities over differences?

R: Well, in way differences are easier because they are so apparent. Eh, similarities are also challenging because they make you realize things you necessarily don't want to realize.

I: The learners as well?

R: Yeah the learners as well....

I: I see, so will turn our attention towards your previously stated challenges...

R: Mm

I: Yeah... So you also stated the following challenge: *it is very s very difficult to understand and convey this issues from an insider perspective, i.e., from the people living the issue. This is especially the case when dealing with cultures that are very different from our own...*

} cultural categorization
 } traces of former theoretical conceptions of C

R: Mm.

I: Mm, interesting. So I am curious about whether you can elaborate on your motivation behind understanding things from an insider-perspective?

R: Well, it is really about trying to understand my own perspective. I think it easy to fall into the sorry trap. To feel sorry for minorities like the Native Americans, the Maoris and the like...The European guilt that we all feel to some extent. But it is not the whole issue here. Emm, so, I am trying to understand how the people feel because I want to understand to what extent they themselves feel about everything being ruined because of European influence. Are you just a victim? Or can you influence your own future in way? When teaching I want their voices to be heard, not mine.

} commitment to combat inequality, discrimination and injustice
 } traces of research
 } SC

I: Yeah, so if I understand you correctly, you are afraid of falling into the sorry trap?

R: Exactly

Appendix H: Conventions used when transcribing

The conventions used when transcribing

Symbols used to represent the transcription categories:

R: Researcher

I: Interviewee

...: Symbol indicating a pause in the interview. The more asterisks the longer the break.

[...]: An ellipsis indicating that parts of the citation have been removed.

Beau-: A hyphen indicates an abrupt cut-off or self-interruption of the sound in progress indicated by the preceding letter(s). The example here represents a self-interrupted “because”

Appendix I: Interview transcripts

Interview candidate 1, date: 25.11.2016

I: What do you think the purpose of teaching culture is?

R: Well, not so much here in this school, but in other schools, one has to deal with students with different cultural backgrounds. The more the learners know about their cultural background, and about the differences between cultures, the better are they equipped for the society in which we live in. Also, it is easier to understand issues from English-speaking countries if one has a bit of knowledge about the culture in which it is in it.

I: Yeah. You said that if you had been working at a different school, you would have had learners from more varied backgrounds.

R: Yes.

I: Would you say that your classrooms' levels of homogeneity influence your approach to questions of culture?

R: I think it is important to focus on cultural issues regardless of whom you teach. However, I think it would be even more important if you had learners from other cultures in your class. Perhaps you could draw on their competences as well, to make them talk about their own culture in a sort of natural way.

I: I see.

R: Yeah, and not the teacher having to do it all the time. Middle class, white Norwegians attend this school. Therefore, it is up to the teacher to do the whole cultural issue thing.

I: What do mean?

R: Well, I think that it would have been more interesting if you had students from different cultural backgrounds, to make them talk about their background, in order to get rid of some prejudice that the VG journalists promote.

I: Prejudice?

R: Yeah, you know...

I: Mm. Have you always felt passionate about dealing with cultural issues?

R: I think it has evolved. Because when you start out as a teacher, the first years, whether you like it or not, you do focus much on the learners. Norway in the 1980s was very different from today. My first class-now I realize that things have changed a lot. In my second year, I was teaching minority students, people from all over the world. The experience made me realize that it is important. That it makes us understand each other and the differences that often cause confusion.

I: Interesting. What cultural aspects do you like to teach?

R: Well, everything really. It really depends on the class. Some students are very engaged. It is really is up to me to decide on what to teach. Personally, I like to approach issues that tell us something about how others see the world. I think that we Norwegian may find it difficult to relate to values that we do not share. Therefore, I think it is interesting to make my learners grasp the reality of others.

I: I understand. Do you feel free to approach cultural issues in accordance with your preferences?

R: Well, there are several factors. The English subject curriculum is nice to use as a red-thread.

I: So, the curriculum is one influential factor?

R: Yes. I would say that the curriculum influences my approach. Yet, the aims are very open. I mean I can interpret them, which I think is a good thing.

I: Mm.

R: You see I like to challenge my learners. To make them think differently about other cultures and to make them aware of the fact that there are differences. For example, we have been working on social conditions within the U.S., there are so many issues; the presidential election... Preferably, I would like to explore them even more. However, time is always an issue. One cannot simply prepare them for everything...

I: Yes. In the pre-interview questionnaire, you stated that you like to combine methods, for example full-class discussion with lectures when approaching cultural issues. So, I am curious about why you like to combine teacher-centered with learner-centered modes of interaction?

R: My experience is that if you focus too much on teacher-centered methods learners get to laid-back. They become too passive. I try to foster discussions. In this school, we have something called a socio-cultural learning visison. Therefore, we focus even more on fostering classroom discussions. Consequently, I had to change my approach. Still, I think we have to have some teacher-centered stuff. Now, for instance, I am teaching about the Aborigines. However, some students have never heard about them. They do not know who they are, nothing about their history. Consequently, we need to have teacher-centred modes as well.

I: Mm. What do you think you learners may learn from each other when discussing cultural issues?

R: Well, although my learners come from very much the same background, they still may have different experiences. Some of them may have foreign parents, grand parents. Perhaps, some of them have paid some time abroad; others may have friends from elsewhere. I think everybody can contribute something, if they just give an effort. It is about trying to understand the underlying differences between our culture and other cultures.

I: Yes. In the pre-questionnaire, you stated that you liked to combine different materials. You stated, “By combining lots of resources, one can highlight different parts of the issue. So, I am curious of why you think this as important?”

R: I think this is important in the sense that some materials may represent them from a very one-sided perspective, the textbooks especially. I think that my learners are very used to seeing issues of culture from a very one-sided perspective. The media often have certain preferences, so that is what they are used to. As a teacher, one therefore has to nuance such portrayals. However, the textbooks are often used as a point of departure. I do not know whether this is a good thing or not. The important thing here is that I add things.

I: I see.

R: Yes. Learners need to gain insight into opposing views, if not they will only be left with a very superficial understanding of the way things work.

I: What do you mean by superficial?

R: I mean like a very simplified understanding ...

I: You also stated that you preferred using literary texts?

R: Yeah, that is correct.

I: Therefore, I would like to ask you about how you understand this following statement: “Reading English literary texts can instill a deeper understanding of oneself and others”

R: Well, I think literature. I agree with that statement, in the sense that if you read stuff, let us stick with the Aborigine example. There was this Aborigine girl, who was one of the stolen generations, who was stolen from the place that she lived to work for another family. She thinks that she will be a member of this family. However, when she gets there it is very clear that she is going to be a servant. Then we get an insight into how she feels about this, and how she reacts to that. For this reason, I think this story can tell us a lot about Aborigines and the stolen generation. I also think that we can also learn how we think about the subject, to develop a sense of empathy. How is this different from our culture? Do we have an understanding about how this was like?

I: Interesting. How did you experience this session?

R: Well, sometimes the learners failed to understand the deep underlying issue of race. So, perhaps a lack of understanding ...

R: How did you feel about that?

I: It was somewhat challenging. As a teacher, one has to make them understand the problem-it concerns how we treat other people. One thereby has to bring in other examples closer to the learners' experiences. Generally, we are very good at living in bubbles, and especially teenagers. There is so much going on in their lives. It is very understandable. For some of them, there is such a vast difference between school and everything else.... I try to get them out of these bubbles once in a while, which also involves discussing difficult topics such as race. Some may react emotionally. They may get upset. Yet, to have such emotions is really just as part of growing up. I encouraged them to think about their emotional responses, as they open the door to understanding the serious dynamics, to understand the fact that not everything is perfect, that we cannot tolerate simply everything. Because that is the approach that we tend to have, is it not? People in general,

as long as we tolerate what's different then everything is O.K., but when we reflect on it, one discovers that this is not necessarily the case.

I: How do you respond to learners' emotions when discussing topics such as race and inequality?

R: Well, I see them as natural... how can one not get upset when dealing with such issues? Another literary text that I think is a revelation for many that I just used is a story is about person from Trinidad. The story goes to London mostly because he wants to avoid getting married... this character is in many ways very stereotypical, very laid-back, if not to say lazy. He takes every day as it comes, throws parties with his friends, and is basically just cruising along. Then, his girlfriend shows up, and she is very different. She is very forceful, very dominant and forces him to marry her because they only have one bed. Up until then, she forces him to sleep on the floor... this is London in the 1950s so it is very cold... In the end, he marries her because he wants to be in the bed. On his wedding day, he finds out that her aunt will get the bed. Therefore, it is good because it focuses on the stereotypes of the Caribbean male population.

I: Yeah.

R: Yeah, and I try to show them why this Tina is so forceful, because the boy Brackly, he is called, is like a jelly ...

I: Yeah, a 'tøffelheld'.

R: Exactly a 'tøffelheld'.

I: Mhm. What impact do you think this session had on your learners' cultural understandings?

R: Hopefully, it would make them understand that people are different.... I mean, yes, perhaps men from the Caribbean a bit lazy. We need to discuss why that is.

I: Why do you say “hopefully?”

R: Well, it is of course difficult to know for sure. It is easy to get clues on whether they have developed insight into historical facts or not. The learners' respect towards people coming from elsewhere, on the other hand, is impossible to gain insight into.

I: I see. Is there a connection between this challenge and your previous statement on how you view it difficult to assess your learners' developed levels of cultural understanding?

R: Yes, yes that is what I am saying.

I: When carrying out this session, was there moment where thought about your own cultural position?

R: I cannot recall whether I did or not. But I do tend to think about it. Especially, when dealing with more sensitive issues.

I: Can you explain why?

R: Because as a teacher, well you have enormous powers really, when it comes to influencing the students. I therefore think it is important to highlight different aspects of all issues, which demands self-criticism. It is not about focusing on one side-that would be propaganda-to avoid that and to reflect on one's own narrow perspective, although this may be difficult.

I: What do you mean by “difficult”?

R: Well, we all think in simplified ways, and it can be difficult to realize this when presenting such issues. I try to be critical, however, it impossible to- but, I make an effort.

I: Through processes of self-reflection?

R: Yes, as I said.

I: Yes, so we will now discuss some of the culture teaching objectives that you stated that you tend to make you learners consider when dealing with questions of culture ...

R: Yes.

I: You previously stated that you tend to encourage your learners to reflect on cultural differences.

R: Yeah, we talk a lot about education, especially when we come to Africa. How people are desperate for schooling versus in Norway where students cannot be bothered to show up. We should be aware of thi. We need to appreciate our oppertunties. Not in the sense that we should have a bad conscious about this, but to be aware. Does that make any sense?

I: Yes, absolutely.

R: Yet, it is not only about differences, but also similarities. I think it is easier, however, to discuss cultural differences, they are more apparent and less time-consuming. Still, we have to focus on similarities in order to counter point all the focus on differences that we hear, all the negativities... a Muslim girl wearing a Hijab, is she really that different from you? Does she not have the same... that was really stereotypical. I mean, is she not a typical insecure teenager as well?

I: Why do you find it more time-consuming to discuss similarities over differences?

R: Well, in way differences are easier because they are so apparent. Similarities are also challenging because they make you realize things you do not necessarily want to realize.

I: The learners as well?

R: Yes, the learners as well.

I: I see. I will change the topic. In the pre-interview questionnaire, you stated that you found the following challenging, “To understand and convey cultural issues from an insider perspective, i.e., from the people living the issue. This is especially the case when dealing with cultures that are very different from our own”...

R: Mm.

I: Can you elaborate on your motivation behind understanding and conveying cultural aspects from an insider-perspective?

R: Well, it is about trying to understand my own insider-perspective. I think it is easy to fall into the sorry trap. To feel sorry for minorities like the Native Americans, the Maoris and the like, the European guilt that we all feel to some extent. However, that is not the whole issue here. I also try to understand this group of people, to understand the extent to which they [Aboriginals] themselves feel about everything being ruined because of European influence. “Are you just a victim?” Alternatively, “Can you influence your own future in a way?” When teaching I want their voices to be heard, not mine.

I: So, if I understand you correctly, you are afraid of falling into the sorry trap?

R: Correct.

I: Is there a connection between this fear and of your stated aim of developing your learners’ feelings of openness toward other cultures?

R: Yes, absolutely, or at least that is what I am aiming at.

I: Can you elaborate on this connection?

R: I think they are mutually exclusive. One has to develop inside-knowledge, if one is to develop feelings of understanding and tolerance.

I: Mm. Your challenge of developing an insider-perspective, is it a challenge that you have come in terms with, or is it a challenge in which you try to counter in some way?

R: I try to counter it, we should at least try, to give it at go...

I: I see. We will now switch over to another topic. In the pre-interview questionnaire, you stated that you tend to encourage your learners to reflect on controversial cultural issues.

R: Mm.

I: We have previously touched upon this, however...

R: Yes, but there are still many other issues. We have talked a lot about South Africa and there was at some point earlier on, a very large focus on the AIDS issue, how all people have AIDS. That was something that we needed to discuss, as this was not the case. When we had 'innføringklasser' in English, we had to work a lot on developing learners' cultural awareness. There were issues in this class. Having different students with different cultural backgrounds in the same room-, the Eastern European students, at one point, were very negative toward other learners from Africa and from the Middle East. They had a kind of 50s approach to this, the race card was obvious. We had to take measures, to try to talk about how we behave and how people are different but at the same time equal.

I: I understand. Are any cultural topics that should be avoided in the English classroom?

R: No, not as such. No. However, I understand where that question is coming from. There are certain issues that definitely can be quite uncomfortable to address and discuss.. Yet, like I said earlier, reality is not always nice, which makes them so important to address.

I: Are there any other factors that influence your approach to controversial cultural issues?

R: Well, yes. Personally, I think that such issues are very interesting. However, things are often simplified. It is the competence aims that the learners are tested in. Learners constantly worry about their grades, and their exams. So yes, other factors are influential.

I: I see. Is it fair to say that you do not approach certain subject matters to the extent that you would prefer?

R: Yes. That is a fair to say. Still, I would argue that my own interests are highly influential. It is dangerous to avoid cultural sensitivities. I think that such issues can promote hatred if they are not dealt with.

I: So, to develop feelings of respect and tolerance?

R: Yes, I think so.

I: Right, so we are come to the end of the interview. Thank you so much for your contribution. I know that you are busy. Do have any questions to what we have discussed so far?

R: No, I don't think so. I think it is very important to discuss these issues.

I: I agree. Do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions regarding what we have discussed, or the thesis in general.

Interview candidate 2, date: 29.11.2016

I: Hva mener du er hensikten med å tilnærme seg kulturelle spørsmål i engelskundervisningen?

R: Jeg tenker først og fremst at det er veldig viktig. Det er på en måte det som gir mening for engelskfaget. Slik det er lagt opp til i læreplanen skal elevene lære om de ulike landene, men dette er ikke interessant dersom man ikke går i dybden på det kulturelle. Men det kan være en utfordring å gjøre det interessant for elevene. Man må gå inn i det kulturelle på en måte som gjør det så interessant at elevene klarer å følge med. Det er gjerne slik at når elevene hører ordet ”kultur”, for eksempel når vi skal lære om New Zealand, så blir de frustrerte. Men, dette er jo en viktig del av faget. Så vi må finne en tilnærming som gjør at de ser helheten og viktigheten av det kulturelle. Spesielt når verden i dag er så globalisert. Jeg tenker at de unge er jo egentlig opptatt av kultur. Men man må også tydeliggjøre at kultur ikke bare er noe spesifikt, men også noe generelt for ulike grupper mennesker. Personlig synes jeg at dette med kultur er interessant.

I: Hvilke kulturelle aspekter like du å undervise i?

R: Det kan være så mangt. Jeg synes jo kultur i seg selv er svært interessant, særlig det multikulturelle. Jeg må jo forberede elevene på det mangfoldet som finnes. Det blir for snevert å kun fokusere på historiske fakta. Læreboken trekker frem enkelte tekster som omhandler dette. Men for at elevene skal synes det er interessant må jeg gjerne legge til noe. Film føler jeg ofte fenger. Kombinasjonen av film og dokumenter fungerer ofte bra. Likevel varierer dette fra klasse til klasse. I noen klasser er elevene flinke, mens dette kan være annerledes i andre klasser. Det er eksempelvis stor forskjell på studiespesialiserende og yrkesfag. Dette gjør at man må tilnærme seg kultur på en annen måte. Detaljerkunnskapen får kanskje ikke så mye spillerom, og man må kanskje forenkle fremstillingen noe.

I: Konkret hvordan forenkler du fremstillingen?

R: Jeg tenker da på en språkmessig forenkling.

I: Hva sikter du til når du nevner ”detalj kunnskap”? Kan du gi eksempler på dette?

R: Læreplanen er jo delt opp med det siktemålet at at elevene skal kunne noe om den engelskspråklige verden. En forutsetning for slik kunnskap, er en forståelse av at det finnes ulike kulturer. Men fokuset er jo mest på kulturer i *engelsktalende* land - det er jo engelskspråket faget handler om. Derfor må undervisningen vinkles gjennom å gripe fatt i både Storbritannias og USAS rolle i hvordan verden er blitt engelsktalende. Det ligger masse detaljer i dette, som ikke alltid er like enkle å forstå.

I: Har du alltid synes det har vært viktig å gripe fatt i kulturelle problemstillinger i engelskundervisningen, eller har dette forandret seg i din tid som underviser?

R: Jeg har alltid synes det har vært viktig. På min tid på universitet var det gjerne mer todelt; *enten* britisk eller amerikansk. Personlig synes jeg imidlertid det kan være like interessant med de mindre landene og de variasjonene man gjerne får i Norge. Jeg har elever som kommer fra ungdomsskolen som egentlig snakker britisk fordi lærerne har snakket britisk.

I: Hva tenker du om at norske elever velger seg ut en britisk tavlevariant?

R: Nei, altså det britiske har jo alltid stått sterkt i Norge. Men, jeg ser jo at elevene gjerne blander veldig. De klarer ikke å holde seg konsekvent til en talevariant. Så de er nok et produkt av impulser fra både media og skolen. Så det er en utfordring å få elevene til å velge og følge en form.

I: Over til metoder for undervisningen. I spørreskjemaet sa du at du pleide å kombinere lærersentrerte metoder, slik som forelesning, med mer elevsentrerte metoder når du tilnærmer deg kulturelle temaer. Jeg er

nysgjerrig på hvilke fordeler du ser med å kombinere lærer- og elevsentrerte metoder.

R: Jeg opplever at jeg som lærer må greie ut om tematikken. Jeg har mange måter å gjøre dette på. Jeg kan forelese litt, vi leser det som står i boken. Deretter kan elevene jobbe med ting på internett, mer selvstendig. En slik kombinasjon fungerer bra. Det er derimot en utfordring å få elevene til å *snakke* engelsk.

I: Hvorfor er det utfordrende å få elevene til å snakke engelsk?

R: Spesielt for enkelte elever. Det er noen som vegrer seg. De liker ikke å lese høyt eller snakke høyt, men elevene skal jo gis en karakter på bakgrunn av dette. Så jeg prøver å få elevene til å snakke høyt.

I: Tenker du at elevene kan lære noe fra *hverandre* gjennom slike diskusjoner rundt kulturelle temaer?

R: Hm, de lærer nok først og fremst det å snakke. Det å sette ord på tankene sine. Det å lytte til andre, og kanskje komme i dialog. Ofte leser de for hverandre i par. De lærer også å diskutere seg frem til et svar på ting. På denne måten lærer de mange ting samtidig; språket, resonnering og sosialisering, og det å diskutere seg frem til et svar.

I: Oppfordrer du mer til diskusjon i lys av kultur enn i lys av andre temaer i engelskundervisningen, for eksempel grammatikk?

R: Ja, kanskje fordi vi kan ha mer en mening om kulture? Enkelte ting er jo fakta – da er det lite rom for diskusjon. Vi kan ikke diskutere om det faktisk skjedde at Storbritannia erobret verden, ettersom det er et historisk faktum. Derimot kan vi diskutere de kulturelle forskjeller. Dersom jeg har fremmedspråklige elever i klassen, kan det være nyttig å få elevene til å forklare aspekter ved deres kultur for å belyse forskjeller som kan være vanskelige for oss til å forstå. Eksempelvis om jeg har en elev med indisk

bakgrunn i klassen, blir hans bakgrunn relevant når vi har om India. Jeg vil da kunne spørre den indiske eleven: ” Hvordan er det der du kommer fra? Lærer indiske elever engelsk på skolen?”

I: Hvordan reagerer fremmedspråklige elever på en slik oppfordring?

R: Dette varierer i stor grad. Enkelte er veldig sjenerte, mens andre blir glade for muligheten til å fortelle om sitt hjemland.

I: Vi skal nå gå over til å diskutere materialene du bruker i undervisningen. I spørreskjemaet skrev du at en fordel med de materialene du foretrekker å bruke, er at de gir ulike perspektiver på temaet som blir tatt tak i, og at de bringer oss nærmere kulturen som er i fokus.

Jeg er nysgjerrig på hvorfor du ser det som viktig at materialene dine tilbyr flere perspektiver?

R: Poenget er først og fremst å få elevene til å forstå. Enkelte ganger er det vanskelig å forstå den aktuelle teksten vi arbeider med. Ved å kombinere flere materialer, vil elevene se og lære om ulike måter temaet gjennom ulike uttryksmåter, med ulik vanskelighetsgrad.

Noen materialer kan være bedre egnet for å gi et oversiktlig bilde for hvordan folk har det i de ulike kulturene og landene. Filmer er eksempelvis veldig egnet for dette, gjennom bilder og lyd. Det blir da enklere for elevene å relatere seg til kulturer de kanskje vet veldig lite om fra før.

Lærebøkene, derimot, er ikke like autentiske. Læreboken er jo fra Norge. Hva vet vi nordmenn om hvordan disse folkene har det?

I: I spørreskjemaet krysset du i tillegg av for at du pleier å bruke litteratur når du tilnærmer deg kulturelle problemstillinger.

I den forbindelse lurer jeg på hvordan du forstår denne setningen:

”Literary text can instill a deeper understanding of oneself and of others.”

R: Engelskboken har utdrag av litterære tekster. Tanken er nok at vi skal konkretisere ting på en annen måte. Noen av tekstene er gode, andre ikke like gode. Jeg må velge tekster ut fra klassen. Vi har eksempelvis en tekst med tittelen ”Does my head look big in this”, som handler om en australsk jente som vurderer om hun skal gå med hijaben på fulltid eller ikke. Dette er et svært sensitivt tema, så da må man tenke på elevsammensetningen. Det kan fort bli ubehagelig, og være vanskelig å forutse hvordan enkelte elever vil reagere. For ikke lenge side hadde jeg til eksempel en elev som brukte hijab, og jeg vagte da å la denne teksten være. Det kunne fort blitt en diskusjon om vi skulle arbeidet med teksten.

I: Hva mener du?

R: Jo, slike temaer hører kanskje mer hjemme i religionsundervisningen.

I: Skjønner. Ville du tatt tak i denne teksten dersom hun ikke brukte hijab?

R: Det ville vært mer sannsynlig, ja.

I: Jeg vil nå gjerne at du gir et eksempel på en eller flere timer hvor du tok tak i et kulturelt emne.

R: Vi arbeidet nylig med Sør-Afrika. Jeg har vist en dokumentar om en standupkomiker, Trevor Noah, som bruker sitt liv som utgangspunkt. Komikeren har hvit mor og svart far. Han snakket mye om stereotypier i Sør-Afrika knyttet til til svart og hvit hudfarge.

I: Hvordan opplevde du timene du viet til denne dokumentaren?

R: Jeg så på elevene at de skjønte det, og oppfattet disse tingene. Altså, de skjønte det fordi han bruker humor som virkemiddel. De følte hvordan som ofte blir stereotypisert har det. De sympatiserte med de. Det var særlig en elev som viste en høy kulturforståelse, så det var noe jeg noterte meg. Mitt inntrykk var at elevene lærte en god del. Det kom også frem av rapporten de senere leverte inn.

I: Ja, skjønner. Hadde elevenes holdninger som da kom frem av denne rapporten noe å si for karakteren de fikk?

R: Det spilte selvsagt inn. Det har med forståelsen dere å gjøre. Men selvsagt, om grammatikken var dårlig, har også dette betydning.

I: Angående humorelementet, hvilken effekt tror du dette har for elevenes kulturforståelse?

R: Jeg tror dette kan bidra til bedre forståelse. Det illustreres også av et stykke i boken vår, faktisk en av de bedre tekstene, som heter "What every white person should know about black people", eller noe slikt. Teksten er en kronikk om idiotiske, fordummende stereotypier. Stereotypiene blir latterliggjort. Jeg tror absolutt at humor er en gunstig måte å gå inn i det kulturelle på. Det fungerer selvsagt ikke alltid – det er ingenting som alltid vil fungere. Men man må prøve flere virkemidler. I diskusjonene i etterkant av dokumentaren, forsøkte jeg å frem at det var dypere toner til dette humorelementet.

I: Når du diskuterte temaet på et dypere nivå - var det øyeblikk der hvor du tenkte over ditt eget kulturelle ståsted?

R: Ja, jeg gjør som regel det. Det handler om å prøve å forstå sine egne tanker knyttet til enkelte kulturelle temaer. Det kan være vanskelig, om ikke umulig, for meg som norsk å forstå hva menneskene som tilhører de ulike kulturene egentlig tenker. Så det handler om å innse at jeg ikke kan alt, og dermed ikke

kan si til elevene med 100% sikkerhet at folk i eksempelvis England tenker slik eller slik.

I: I spørreskjemaet gjorde du klart at du pleier å se på kulturelle forskjeller. Kan du utdype litt mer om hvilke type forskjeller du fokuserer på?

R: Ja, det ser jeg på som veldig viktig for å forstå hvorfor for eksempel USA og Canada, som har likt språk, likevel er så forskjellige på mange måter. Elevene må forstå hvorfor kulturforskjellene oppstår ved å ha et historisk perspektiv på kulturellene. Det bidrar til å utvide forståelsen. Da blir det ikke lenger enkelt å stigmatisere og finne stereotypier. Det blir mer interessant å gå i dybden. Når jeg underviser om USA fremhever jeg stereotypien om at mange amerikanere er overvektige, for å så gi forklaringer til *hvorfor*. Den historiske biten er da svært viktig.

I: Kan du utdype hvorfor det er så viktig å diskutere forskjeller mellom kulturer?

R: Man må ha noen knagger å kulturene på. Eksempelvis hadde jeg en klasse hvor elevene faktisk hadde landet Sør-Afrika og India, Ghandi og Mandela. Det er jo selvsagt likheter, begge hadde kjempet viktige kamper. Men likevel må man synliggjøre forskjeller for å unngå slike sammenblandinger.

I: I spørreundersøkelsen skrev du at kunne være vanskelig å utvikle en dypere forståelse av en kultur, noe mer enn bare en ”svevende” forståelse?

R: Det stemmer. For å ta et banalt eksempel: det holder ikke å vite at i Australia finnes det koalabjørner. Det har jo lite så med kulturen å gjøre.

I: Nettopp. Men hva legger du mer konkret i at elevene skal utvikle en dypere forståelse?

R: Det handler både om faktakunnskap og å utvikle respekt. Det er gjerne faktakunnskapen som kan være vanskelig. Det overordnede ved kulturen, som går på at alle land har en kultur som har blitt bygget opp gjennom mange år, og har utviklet seg på bakgrunn av historiske hendelser. Men så har vi hvert enkeltes lands nåværende kulturforskjeller, som i større grad omhandler stereotyper, som amerikanernes våpenlovgivning. Da må jeg jobbe med å få elevene til å forstå at det ikke er så lett å bli kvitt våpen i USA, og bakgrunnen for dette. Vi må se på grunnloven, the amendments, og hvorfor amerikanerne tenker som de gjør.

Man må forklare så mye som er nødvendig for å komme til kjernen, altså hvorfor kulturen og tankesettet i et land er slik det er. Graden av forståelse vil variere fra ulike klasser og for hver enkelt elev.

Også min forståelse av kulturene begrenses gjennom at jeg ikke har erfart eller levd i disse kulturene selv. På noen områder kan kunnskapen og det vi lærer være noe overfladisk.

I: Jeg vil nå fortsette med undervisning av kontroversielle temaer, som vi allerede har rørt litt ved. Er det noen kulturelle temaer du unngår i undervisningen?

R: Jeg forsøker å røre ved temaene når det er naturlig, og når lærebøkene trekker de frem. I tillegg vil det bero på klassen. Dersom klassen har elever med mange ulike bakgrunner, går jeg i mer begrenset grad inn på disse temaene. Det kan være fort gjort å skape en uheldig debatt som som det ikke kommer noe gunstig ut av. Det kan være en risiko for å tråkke feil, å ordlegge seg feil, eller såre noen gjennom å ta det opp, selv om dette så klart ikke er hensikten. Det er vanskelig å forutse elevenes reaksjonene.

I: Kan du gi du eksempler på temaer som kan være vanskelige å ta tak i klasserommet?

R: Hijab-diskusjonen er et eksempel. Et annet eksempel er black-history. Likevel; i takt med en mer multikulturell verden, vil det bli stadig viktigere å

ta tak i mer sensitive temaer.

Men en vil jo ikke gjøre det verre enn det allerede er i en klasse hvor kjemien er preget av mangfold. Det trenger nødvendigvis ikke å bli en debatt av det.

Jeg tenker at slike debatter kan gjøre vondt verre, med å bringe fram synspunkter som ikke er særlig nyanserte.

Om det først blir en debatt, kan det også bli et spørsmål om *hvordan* man debatterer noe. Det er mange ting da man må trekke inn, for eksempel hensynet til ytringsfriheten.

I: Er det andre faktorer som påvirker i hvilken grad du tar tak i kontroversielle temaer?

R: Læreplanen gir føringer. Kompetansemålene er mer faktabaserte. Jeg kommer ikke på flere faktorer enn de jeg allerede har nevnt.

I: Til slutt: har du noen spørsmål eller annet du vil tilføye til de temaene vi har diskutert så langt?

R: Nei, jeg tror ikke det? Er det noe du synes var uklart?

I: Nei. Jeg setter stor pris på at du satt av tid til å gjennomføre intervjuet.

R: Jo, det skulle bare mangle. Jeg vet det er vanskelig å få tak i kandidater.

I: Ja, det er det! Du må forresten ikke nøle med å ta kontakt dersom det er noe du lurer på angående oppgaven, eller behandlingen av informasjonen.

R: Nei, jeg tar kontakt dersom jeg har spørsmål.

I: Fint, jeg er tilgjengelig både på telefon og mail.

Interview candidate 3, date: 1.12.12016

I: Hva mener du er hensikten med å tilnærme seg kulturelle spørsmål i engelskundervisningen?

R: En årsak er jo selvsagt at kulturelle er en så sentral del av læreplanen. Selv om læreplanmålene har en veldig stor rekkevidde. I tillegg er det er en måte gi elevene innsikt i den globale virkeligheten, den samfunnsfaglige og multikulturelle biten. Læreplanen fremhever også dette. Det er svært viktig, eksempelvis å se kultur i forhold til litteratur.

I: Læreplanen påvirker altså hvordan du jobber med kultur?

R: Ja, helt klart, men det opp til meg hvordan jeg tolker disse læreplanmålene.

I: Så du føler altså at du har en frihet når det kommer til tolkning av læreplanmålene?

R: Ja det er klart. Men det er jo slik at elevene skal opp i eksamen, og slik blir gjerne fokuset mer på temaer som er relatert til det de blir testet i.

I: Hvilke type temaer er dette?

R: Det vil gjerne være mer faktabasert, for eksempel om sosiale forhold. Så av den grunn er jeg kanskje ikke så fri som jeg gjerne skulle ønske, ettersom mange kulturelle spørsmål er svært utfordrende å finne svar på.

I: Forstår. Hvilke kulturelle aspekter liker du å undervise i?

R: Det var annerledes når jeg jobbet på ungdomsskolen, da var fokuset mer på lingvistikk. Men på videregående er det mer fokus på det multikulturelle, noe jeg synes er mye mer interessant. Så jeg prøver å tilnærme meg denne biten så ofte jeg kan. Man skal lære elevene å se forskjeller og lære dem å forstå dem. Det handler om å forstå seg selv innenfor en globalisert verden,

blant annet kulturforståelse gjennom å studere forskjeller. Hva skiller andre kulturer fra vår egen? Hva skiller engelsktalende kulturer fra hverandre? Hvorfor er nordmenn forskjellige fra amerikanerne, for eksempel ved at vi er mindre utadvendte? Hvorfor er briter så høflige?

I: Kan du utype hvilke forskjeller dere pleier å se på?

R: Språket selvfølgelig. Men også eksempelvis sosiale og religiøse forskjeller, blant annet mellom India og England. Det kan være dypere, mer samfunnsmessige forskjeller, som er enda mer utfordrende å forstå. Det lingvistiske skjønner de med en gang, mens kulturforskjellene er ikke like enkelt. Så jeg må jobbe mye mer grundig, og undervise annerledes. Utfordringen er kanskje at det er jo ikke alt som er enkelt å forstå verken for meg eller elevene. Det kan bli doble vurderinger. Man må eksempelvis sammenligne sin egen kutlur med den indiskue, og i et slikt lys blir norsk og britisk kultur ganske lik. Det blir kanskje enklere for en lærer å ta steget fra Norge til England først Men det trenger ikke å være det, det er jo selvfølgelig store forskjeller også mellom disse kulturene.

Ideelt sett skulle eksempelet vært mellom to engelskspråklige kulturer. Likevel kan man i praksis ikke unngå Norge. Vi må først sammenligne med det norske, men fokuset i læringsplanmålene er nok mer å sammenligne to engelskspråklige kulturene. Men målet med læringen blir uansett det samme. Vi kan jo ikke gjøre undervisningen helt kunstig heller.

I: Hva vil du si at målet med læringen er?

R: Som jeg allerede har vært inne på, handler det om å forstå seg selv i forhold til de andre kulturene, dynamikken mellom kulturene, og om å utvikle respekt og forståelse.

I: Interessant. Når det kommer til metoder; i spørreskjemaet krysset du av på at du kombinerte for eksempel klassediskusjon, gruppearbeid, med forelesning. I den forbindelse lurte jeg på hvilke fordeler du ser med å

kombinere lærersentrert med elevsentrert undervisning når du jobber med kultur?

R: Elevene må selvfølgelig lære å tenke selv, og derfor blir det viktig å gi dem muligheten til det, selv om alle former for undervisning har svakheter. Enhver lærer tenker nok at man må variere, det er gunstig for å holde på elevenes oppmerksomhet. I forbindelse med kultur, ville det nok vært best at elevene jobber selvstendig og lærer seg å tenke kritisk, gjennom å finne stoff, fakta og å utvikle kunnskap hvordan man sammenligner, samt gjennom å forstå hva man skal se etter. Likevel trenger de jo alltid eksempler på hvordan man gjør dette av en lærer.

I: Hva tenker du elevene kan lære av hverandre når de jobber med kulturelle spørsmål?

R: Generelt så fungerer samarbeid for å fremme læring. De skal lære å lytte.

I: Hvorfor er dette viktig?

R: Jo, det har med argumentasjon å gjøre. Elevene må lære seg å kommunisere, det er helt sentralt i engelskfaget.

I: Jeg tolker deg slik at ved å la elever jobbe sammen vil de bli flinkere til å lytte til hverandre?

R: Nettopp. Det handler om å utvikle toleranse og respekt for det man ikke nødvendigvis er enig i. Vi diskuterer jo kontroversielle temaer, eksempelvis diskuterte vi nylig arrangert ekteskap. Det er et tema som kan være vanskelig for elevene å forstå.

I: Hva gjør du med temaer som kan være vanskelige for elevene å forstå?

R: Ja, det er ikke alltid så enkelt. Det er en del kulturelle spørsmål som er vanskelige å forstå. Vi må erkjenne at slik er det bare, det er en del av det å prøve å forstå.

I: Så du ser ikke på dette som en utfordring?

R: Det kan være en utfordring. Poenget er å få frem at man ikke skal dømme det som er forskjellig, men heller prøve å utvikle en forståelse fra den andres ståsted. Derfor er det viktig at jeg som lærer stille spørsmål som ”hvorfor ville ikke du likt dette?”, ”finnes det positive sider med å få et arrangert ekteskap?” Dersom elevene ikke kan svare på slike spørsmål med et åpent sinn, har de ikke lært det de skulle. Det er jo derfor vi tar tak i disse temaene, elevene må legge fordommene til side. Ingenting skjer dersom elevene ikke klarer dette.

I: Forstår. Vi skal nå snakke om materialene du bruker når du jobber med kulturelle problemstillinger. I spørreskjemaet trakk du frem litteratur som et materiale du så på som særlig fordelsmessig. I den forbindelse lurte jeg på hvordan du forstå denne setning:

”Literary texts can instil a deeper understanding of others and oneself?”

R: Sånn rent litterært kan vi jo få et utenfraperspektiv, og forstå verden gjennom andres øyne. All litteratur handle jo om kulturforståelse. Det å forstå andre er jo selvfølgelig, men jeg har ingen god definisjon på hvordan man forstår seg selv gjennom det å lese litteratur. Det handler om å ikke bare lese, men å lære noe om verden. Men jeg har ikke tenkt mer konkret på hvordan man lærer noe om *seg selv* gjennom litteratur, selv om man selvfølgelig gjør det.

I: I spørreskjemaet skrev du at en fordel med litterære tekster er at de ikke reduserer kulturelle spørsmål til ”textbook morals”?

R: Ja, nettopp. De er opplysende, du får en diskusjon i teksten. For eksempel tenker jeg mye på den indiske verden i dag. En tekst vi bruker mye er en tekst som heter ” Homeless Bird.” I teksten illustreres problemet med arrangert ekteskap. Selv om elevene vil slite mer med å forstå å se det positive med arrangert ekteskap, vil teksten kunne bidra til slik forståelse. Man får empati og foretåelse for karakterenes synspunkt på arrangert ekteskap. Men det forutsetter at man prøver å forstå deres kultur – hvordan oppfører disse karakterene seg, og hvorfor gjør de dette? Og hvordan er det forskjellig fra hvordan vi forholder oss til dette?

I: Skjønner. Hva mente du med at litterære tekster ikke reduserte kulturelle temaer til ” textbook morals”?

R: Også dette henger sammen dette med det forrige. Jeg tenkte kanskje mer på faktabøker når jeg skrev det. Men vi trenger allti å belyse flere sider av en sak når man diskuterer det kulturelle.

I: I tillegg skrev du jo også om utfordringer knyttet til det å bruke litterære tekster, hvor du skrev at corpuset ikke var så behjelpelig. Du skrev at ”if one wants to provide a fruitful cultural education, one basically needs to create one’s own curpos”.

Kan du utdype hva du mener med en ” fruitful cultural education”?

R: Jeg vil nok påstå at det er gode bøker. Men man forstår jo som lærer at man kan gjøre mer for å få elevene engasjerte. Eksempelvis går det an å skrive på en mer spennende måte, særlig når det gjelder faktatekster. Jeg tror kanskje at man må tenke at vi må tilpasse faget mer til elevene. Det blir stadig mer utfordrende. Det som tidligere var pensum på første trinn på videregående, er nå blitt ungdomsskolepensum.

Når det kommer til det med textbook morals, oppfordrer disse ikke akkurat til kritisk tenkning. Vi vet jo at ting er mye mer komplekst enn hvordan lærebøkene fremstiller det.

I: Kan du utdype dette?

R: Lærebøkene er egentlig veldig faktabasert. De engasjerer ikke elevene.

I: Forstår. Du har jo allerede snakket om ulike timer hvor du har utforsket kulturelle problemstillinger. Kan du fortelle om en konkret tidligere time hvor et kulturelt tema ble tatt tak i?

R: Det kan jeg selvfølgelig. Vanligvis tar jeg utgangspunkt i kulturelle stereotyper, for eksempel hvordan man i Norge gjerne ikke holder dørene for andre, mens man i Storbritannia er mer høflige.

Men det kan være for betent å ha den fremgangsmåten, man må være åpen for selvkritikk for ens egen kultur. Det kan fort bli farlig om jeg som lærer sier at Norge er bedre på enkelte ting. Det ville vært mer problematisk. Det blir litt sånn godhetstyranni om vi bare presenterer gode sider med kuklturer. Kanskje der er bedre å få frem grunnene til hvorfor man gjør ting og oppfører seg på en bestemt måte?

Det blir kanskje noe uheldig om man legger moralske dommer frem i undervisningen, selv om det selvfølgelig uunngåelig vil forekomme likevel, de er sånn og sånn type tenkning. Så det å finne frem kritiske ting ved seg selv, men også måten man snakker om andre kulturer på, blir viktig.

I: Nettopp. I spørreskjemaet krysset du av for at du tenkte over ditt eget kulturelle ståsted nesten hver gang du tok tak i kulturelle temaer. Henger dette sammen med det faktum at du legger moralske dommer frem i undervisningen?

R: Ja, det er nok hovedgrunnen. Jeg tenker at det er veldig viktig, man er tross alt bare menneske.

I: Vi skal nå snakke mer om hva du oppfordrer elevene dine til å reflektere rundt når kulturelle spørsmål tas opp. I spørreskjemaet skrev

du under kategorien 'other' at du oppmuntrer elevene dine til å utvikle en dypere forståelse for kulturelle tradisjoner som kan virker fjerne.

Kan du fortelle litt om hvordan du konkret og i praksis gjør dette?

R: Som sagt sagt vi har nylig snakket om arrangerte ekteskap, som kan virke fjernt for dem. Det er også enkelte temaer kan resultere i ambivalente følelser, ettersom det kanskje strider mot hvordan man opprinnelig tenkte at situasjonen var. Det fjerne blir jo ofte veldig forenklet. Det beste er om man gjennom å gjøre elevene engasjerte klarer å gjøre dem bevisste på hvorfor man tenker som man gjør om enkelte kulturer. Ofte har mange elever veldig forenklete syn. Rasehistorien er et eksempel, det kan gjerne være uforutsigbart hvordan elevene reagerer på for eksempel nåtidens raseforhold i USA. Men det må man belage seg på, og gjerne gjøre elevene forberedt på slike temaer i forkant.

I: Blir du påvirket av klassesammensetning når du tar tak i slike sensitive temaer?

R: Jeg ville nok tenkt at de satt med annen kunnskap og bakgrunn enn de andre typisk norske elevene. De vil kanskje kunne bidra til å utvikle forståelse for noe som kan virke litt rart for oss. Var det svar på spørsmålet?

I: Ja, absolutt. Når det kommer til kontroversielle spørsmål, er det noen spørsmål du unngår?

R: Nei, jeg tror ikke det. Ofte vil elever med bakgrunn fra andre land også *ønske* å diskutere slike temaer i utgangspunktet. Jeg har eksempelvis mange elever med muslimsk bakgrunn som er veldig glade i Jane Austen. Jeg tror at alle elever vil ha svar på spørsmål som angår kvinners plass i samfunnet, og mye annet selvfølgelig. Jeg tror ikke man trør over grenser ved å diskutere slike temaer. Det er i tillegg en viktig del av engelskfaget når man nettopp skal lære om andre kulturer – at elevene får mer innsikt i hvordan andre tenker og handler.

Det bidrar til forståelse for andre kulturer og gir kunnskap om den verden vi lever i. Faktakunnskapen uten moralske føringer er selvfølgelig viktig, den også. Men målet må være å kunne se andre.

En annen ting er at ungdommen sliter med å vite hva de *selv* mener. Elevene må lære å ta stilling til temaer de ikke nødvendigvis tenker så mye på i hverdagen. Da må man jo gå inn i den andres situasjon og synspunkter. Så det er sunt å utfordre dem. Jeg gir dem muligheten til å prøve, men så sier de gjerne at ”jeg vet jo ingenting”. Da er det viktig at jeg som lærer utfordrer dem til å i alle fall *prøve* å finne ut av ting.

I: Vi har nettopp snakket en del angående din tilnærming til mer betente temaer. Nå vil jeg gjerne spørre deg om hva du mente da du skrev at du oppmuntrer elevene til å reflektere rundt 'target trad. versus cont. outlook'.

R: Det var ikke veldig presist. Jeg sikter til *Target*, læreboken, her. Det er mye stoff i læreboken, og jeg føler den har den rette innstillingen. Faktatekstene er dårlige, men det er mange gode litterære tekster i denne boken som man virkelig kan jobbe med. Content outlook handler om at at sånn og sånn er det for natives Americans in America. Det må ha vært det jeg har ment. Faktatekster versus litterære tekster.

I: Jeg er ikke helt med nå, beklager.

R: Jeg skal prøve å forklare. Det har med å iredtesette stereotypier. Det er det jeg har ment. Eksempelvis var det nylig en time hvor vi hørte på en låt av Tupac Shakur. Dette er en kultur de kanskje kjenner litt mer til. Teksten var en typisk ode til moren, som er et vanlig tema innenfor hip hop-sjangeren. Men det fine med sjangeren er jo at elevene kan fortelle mye. Dette var en byggklasse da. Teksten fungerte veldig bra for å få elevene til å delta. Jeg spurte dem om hvordan de ville ha skrevet en raptekst. Den ville kanskje ikke ha sett helt lik ut som denne, altså en hyllest til morsfiguren. Denne subkulturen baserer seg på en ”fattig til rik”-kultur. Teksten bidro til å

fremme forståelse for at dette er noe som går igjen i den amerikanske kulturen.

I: Ah, jeg forstår.

R: Altså, hvorfor går hip hop-erne buksen dratt opp? Jo, det er fordi du ikke skal vise at du har kniv. Det vet elevene mye om. Dette blir derfor god metode, fordi temaet er noe guttene på byggfag gjerne vet noe om.

I: Hvilken påvirkning tenker du dette har for deres kulturforståelse?

R: Forhåpentligvis kan timen ha utviklet forståelse om at det finnes mange subkulturer og at kulturer er veldig komplekse. Slik forståelse må ligge til grunn skal man respektere de forskjellene som finnes der ute. Men det er jo umulig å vite i hvilken grad dette var en god time som sådan.

I: Skjønner. Henger dette sammen med at du i spørreskjemaet synes det er vanskelig å måle elevenes kulturforståelse etter en klasseromsøkt?

R: Ja. Det er en sammenheng der. Å utvikle en forståelse for andre kulturer handler om mye mer enn å kunne si noe om sosiale forhold. Det handler om danning.

I: Danning?

R: Timen kan jo også ha ført til at elevene ble tryggere. At de fikk en forståelse for at de selv bor i et samfunn med en kulturarv. De blir kanskje tryggere på seg selv når de møter folk fra andre kulturer, slik at man selv føler tilhørighet i et samfunn. At vi er som vi er på godt og vondt.

I: Så en slags trygghetsfølelse?

R: Ja, kanskje det? Jeg tror det. Men nå har jeg undervisning om 10 minutter.

I: Skjønner. Avslutningsvis lurer jeg på om du har noen spørsmål til det vi har diskutert så langt?

R: Nei, jeg tror ikke det? Beklaget om jeg er litt rotete, det er jo veldig svevende dette med kultur. Jeg håper du får noe ut av det.

I: Ja, det gjør jeg garantert. Ikke nøl med å ta kontakt dersom du har spørsmål i ettertid. Jeg setter stor pris på at du ville stille til intervju.

Interview candidate 4, date: 5.12.2016

I: Hva mener du er hensikten med å tilnærme seg kulturelle spørsmål i engelskundervisningen?

R: Jeg tenker på kulturbegrepet på den ene siden, og det å skape forståelse for det multikulturelle. Men kulturbegrepet i engelskfaget har også med historie og politikk å gjøre. Så når man har gått gjennom utdanningsløpet, må man kjenne til den engelskspråklige verden. Det er nok England og USA som man har mest med å gjøre.

I: Ja, så du fokuserer mest på USA og England?

R: Svaret på det er både ja og nei. Men det er klart at forskjellene og hva som kjennetegner hver enkelt lands politikk og historie får mye fokus... Kompetanse målene er likvill litt uklare... men er erkjenner at kultur innebærer mye mer enn disse to landene, nyanser innad i kulturene. Dette er noe vi ser mer på ved vg.2 engelsk. Ved vg.1 engelsk er hovedfokust å utvikle elevenes forståelse for hvordan engelskmennene og amerikanerne ser verden om man kan si det slikt. Derfor trenger de kunnskap. Dette er jo to land som elevene har mye kjennskap til fra før. De får mye gjennom tv og den slags. Så, engelsk er kanskje av den grunn et enkelt fag. I andre språkfag er det nok viktigere å få innblikk i andre kulturer som ikke ligger så nært som USA og England. Så i engelskfaget handler det om å få et klart bilde av for eksempel det amerikanske samfunn, men det handler om å nyansere. Nyansere, det vil jeg si er et nøkkelord.

I: Ja. Så hvile kulturaspekter liker du å undervise i?

R: Jeg liker jo å tilnærme meg temaer som globalisering og det multikulturelle. Men samtidig har vi engelsk som verdensspråk og ulike engelskspråklige land. På vg.1 er det et kompetansemål som går på dette med kulturuttrykk i forskjellige land. Det er jo veldig vagt. Det er nok kanskje litt

sedvane som medfører at undervisningen gjerne blir om forskjellene mellom USA og England, historien bak verdier og dens slags.

I: Forstår. Du var innom dette skillet mellom det multikulturelle og den mer historiske og faktabaserte biten. Jeg fikk inntrykk av at du fokuserer mest på den historiske delen. Stemmer det?

R: Ja, sånn direkte er det nok det som er fokus. Historie er jo mye det jeg holder på med nå, men vi diskuterer også mer komplekse temaer. For eksempel temaer som synet på dødsstraff, våpenlovgivning og dens slags. På den ene siden har vi sterkt fokus på fakta, men på den andre siden prøver vi også å tenke på det mer underliggende. Det blir en slags blanding. Jeg prøver jo å komme litt under huden på slike spørsmål, men det blir klart begrenset gjennom i hvor stor grad jeg klarer det. Ofte å jeg svare på spørsmål fra elevene, som ”hvorfor er de så rare?”. Jeg forsøker å nyansere, med mer eller mindre suksess.

I: Læreplanen; hvilken påvirkning vil du si den har på din tilnærming til kulturelle spørsmål i engelskundervisningen?

R: Jeg vil ikke si den har så mye påvirkning egentlig. Den er veldig åpen, noe som er bra, man kan jo knytte mye forskjellig inn i den. Læreboken styrer også i noen grad. Jeg bruker veldig myea nent i tillegg til engelskboken. Den har eksempelvis ikke en egen seksjon om USA eller Storbritannia. Den mangler også mye om historie.

Men det handler også om hva elevene blir spurt om på eksamen. Skriftlig eksamen er jo veldig lite knyttet om til det politiske systemet i USA. Det er, slik jeg også har snakket med mine kollegaer om, at vg1-eksamen er veldig bred, det er ikke så enkelt å få vist hva man kan. Mens på muntlig eksamen kommer man mer inn på den faktabaserte biten.

I: Forstår. Vi skal nå gå over til hvilke metoder du bruker når du tilnærmer deg kulturelle problemstillinger. I spørreskjemaet krysset du

av på at du kombinerer diskusjon, individuelt arbeid og lærerstyrt undervisning. Jeg er nysgjerrig på hvilke fordeler du ser med å kombinere lærersentrert og elevsentrert undervisning når du tilnærmer deg kulturelle temaer.

R: Ja, det er nok litt sånn som i alle fag. Det kunne sikkert vært mer eller mindre av det ene eller andre. Klart, jeg snakker vel mye mer enn hva jeg tror. Men jeg prøver likevel å forme en slags dialog, men da aktiviserer vi en del. Dersom jeg danner grupper, da diskuterer alle. I et språkfag vil de på denne måten få praktisert å snakke engelsk. Så kunne jeg nok i enda større grad oppfordret til individuelt arbeid. Jeg vet jo at elevene liker forskjellige ting. Det er også gjerne litt for lite plenumsdiskusjon.

I: Om man er mer konsentrert om elevsentrerte metoder eller klasseromsdiskusjon, hva tenker du elevene kan lære av hverandre?

R: Elevdiskusjoner kan være svært matnyttige når man får til diskusjoner rundt mer kompliserte temaer. Det skal likevel sies at i mine klasserom dannes det som oftesten reflektert konsensus rundt vanskelige eller mer sensitive temaer. Den vestlige tankemåten påvirker i stor grad hvordan man tenker, det er jo gjerne derfor man har slike spenninger i samfunnet. For eksempel;” hvorfor kan ikke bare islam endre sitt kvinnesyn? Man må likevel prøve å forstå deres perspektiv;” hvor de kommer fra?”

I: Mhm, hva med når du har fremmedkulturelle i klasserommet?

R: Ja, det skal sies at skolen jeg underviser på har en nokså homogen sammensetning. Det aller fleste er nordmenn. Det ville kanskje vært annerledes på andre skoler. Da ville det kanskje dukket opp en større diskusjon. Det er jo forskjeller innad i kulturer også. Det blir igjen en annen vinkling. Det ville krevd mye mer forberedelse fra meg som lærer.

I: Hva mener du?

R: Da måtte jeg ha forberedt meg på mulige fallgruver. Nyansering er jo som sagt viktig, men man kan jo på den annen side ikke ta høyde for alt.

I: Forstår. Vi skal nå gå over til materialene du bruker i undervisningen. I spørreskjemaet krysset du av for at du pleier å bruke litterære tekster når du tilnærmer deg kulturelle spørsmål. I den forbindelse lurte jeg på hvordan du forstår den følgende påstand: ”literary texts can instill a deeper understanding of others and others”.

R: Ja, det er jo på en måte der litteraturen god, for å forstå det fellesmenneskelige. I den ene klassen min skal vi lese en roman som heter ”Animal Farm.” Joda, på den ene siden handler den om den russiske revolusjonen. Men i diskusjonen vil vi jo tolke om boken handler om noe *mer*. Handler dette om bare om dyr på en gård eller handler det om noe mer? Så klart, det blir jo fortsatt på et samfunnsnivå mer enn et individnivå. Men, man kan jo trekke det, gjøre det til noe mer prinsipielt om styreform og tanker omkring det. Det er jo nært, men ikke *personlig* på den måten. Man har andre filmer og dikt som kan belyse og berike ulike temaer; hvordan er det å være ung eller menneske, for eksempel? Det spiller jo ingen rolle om det er en gutt eller mann som prøver å forstå ståstedet til en ung jente, eller om man prøver å forstå ståstedet til en native-American i undervisningen. Det handler om den fellesmenneskelige erfaringen. En viktig brobygger for kulturforståelse. Som sagt, folk kan virke veldig forskjellige på avstand, men vi er ofte mer like en hva man tror. Det er likevillig rom for selvkritikk her, jeg vet jo at slike likheter kanskje ikke alltid blir hovedfokuset.

I: Ja. Så altså å skape en fellesforståelse av det av å være menneske?

R: Ja, det å kjenne seg igjen i andre mennesker, selv om det ytre kan være ganske forskjellig. Det er veldig viktig.

I: Ja. I spørreskjemaet krysset du ikke av for at du brukte mye litteratur i undervisningen, men at du brukte mye faktatekster, filmer og nyheter?

R: Ja. Læreboken blir ofte brukt som et utgangspunkt, det bør nevnes, men elevene trenger mer kjøtt på bena.

I: Nettopp, for i spørreskjemaet skrev du at gjennom å bruke flere materialer kan belyse flere kulturelle aspekter. Hvorfor synes du det er viktig?

R: Ja som sagt, elevene får mer kjøtt på bena. Læreboken er veldig enkelt skrevet. Den er heller ikke særlig oppdatert på nyheter og aktualiteter. Men det er jo læreplanmålene elevene blir testet i, ikke læreboken. Så det å utforske andre materialer det er veldig viktig. På mange måter så tror jeg en kombinasjon kan være veldig givende for elevene.

Nyhetene har jo en vinkling, filmer en annen. Gjennom å kombinere de ulike vinklingene vil elevene utvikle et mer komplett bilde av det kulturelle temaet, som vil gjøre lettere for dem å forstå. Det gir dem også mer å gå på.

I: Å gå på?

R: Ja, altså å få elever til å forstå hva dette handler om, hvorfor ting er som de er.

I: Skjønner. Kan du fortelle litt fra en time hvor du tok tak i et kulturelt tema?

R: Ja, den siste timen begynte vi å se Forrest Gump. Det var litt tilfeldig, men den oppsummerer jo godt. I den andre klassen hadde vi om dikt. To av diktene var fra 1. verdenskrig, om positive syn på krigen. Vi kom da inn på det historiske. I tillegg har jo begge klassene hatt mye heldagsprøver. I forkant av disse prøvene jobbet vi mye med mer vanskelige temaer, for eksempel om dødsstraff. Hvorfor er det feil? Går det an å forsvare dette? Hvorfor er flertallet i USA for dødsstraff?

I: Dersom vi tar utgangspunkt i timen om dødsstraff; hvordan erfarte du denne timen?

R: Jeg synes den var veldig bra. Utgangspunktet var en kort faktatekst om USA, med tilknyttede refleksjonsspørsmål. For eksempel; dersom du skulle liste opp de verste forbrytelsene, hva ville disse vært og hvorfor? Mange var engasjerte, og vi fikk til gode samtaler. Dette var et tema som engasjerte. Man kan ha meninger uten å ha mye kunnskap om temaet. Men det er så klart fint om man også tilegner seg kunnskap.

I: Hvordan erfarte du denne timen?

R: Som sagt, teamet engasjerte. Så det ble en god og reflekterende time. Jeg hadde forberedt meg godt på denne timen. Det er ikke alltid jeg legger like mye arbeid i forberedelser. Men dette er et tema jeg synes er svært interessant selv. Det er liksom så langt borte fra det norske. Dødsstraff i Norge er fjernt, vi ser jo eksempelvis hvordan Breivik har det, altfor godt. Men det er likevel noe i norsk kultur som sier at dette er feil. Hvorfor er det så forskjellig fra USA?

I: Ja, det er jo spørsmål som er viktig å stille seg. Så hvilken påvirkning tror du denne timen hadde på elevenes kulturforståelse?

R: Tja, si det. Når jeg underviser i slike temaer så kommer ofte slik ekkokamre frem.

I: Hva tror du er grunnen til det?

R: Jeg tror nok det kan relateres til hvordan elever er forsiktige med å komme med utalelser som fornærmer andre. Altså, at de heller kommer med mer politisk korrekte svar, som kanskje ikke er en bra ting. Så, det er vanskelig å si hvilken effekt denne timen hadde, ekkokamre er ikke alltid så hensiktsmessige når man diskuterer kontroversielle temaer.

I: Ja, så hvilken effekt tror du denne timen hadde?

R: Sånn i det store og hele, håper jeg jo at de satt igjen med noe. Men som sagt, elever kan jo fort skjule deres egentlige holdninger rundt slike temaer. Jeg tror nok de føler på at lærere forventer at de skal vise en form for empati for andres kulturer. Man må liksom akseptere at alt kan ikke måles, selv om det er et strekt fokus på å forberede elevene best mulig til både muntlig og skriftlig eksamen.

I: Forstår. Tar du tak i kontroversielle temaer i den grad du synes det er hensiktsmessig?

R: Ja, men jeg kunne nok tatt tak i dem i enda større grad.

I: Hva mener du?

R: Det er kjempeviktig at elevene får trening i å ytre deres meninger om ting, men også å lytte til andres meninger. Men det er klart at det kan være vanskelig å gi rom for dette i en hektisk skolehverdag. Kompetansemålene er jo det de blir testet i, ikke sant?

I: Ja. Når du tok tak i temaet dødsstraff, var det et øyeblikk der du tenkte over ditt eget kulturelle ståsted?

R: Ikke under denne timen. Men jeg er generelt veldig klar over at jeg en norsk mann som ser på disse temaene gjennom mine 40 år gamle øyne. Jeg er klar over den hermeneutiske sirkelen og alt det der. Det er en del av pakka. Vi er alle produkt av noe, hvilket understreker viktigheten av at vi tenker over hvilken påvirkning vår bakgrunn har på måten vi snakker og diskuterer kulturelle temaer på, bakgrunnen vår påvirker nok i mye større grad enn hva vi tror.

I: Er det noe i din bakgrunn som påvirker din tilnærming i særlig høy grad?

R: Bortsett fra det faktum at jeg er norsk, vet jeg jo at mine synspunkt kommer gjennom særlig når vi holder på med politikk og den slags. Man kan ikke være helt naiv heller.

R: Mhm. I spørreskjemaet krysset du av på at du oppmuntrer elevene til å reflektere rundt historiske fakta. Det var det eneste av de mange svaralternativene du krysset av for. Jeg lurer derfor på om det betyr at dette med å utvikle elevenes forståelse og respekt for andre kulturer kommer i skyggen?

R: Nei, det vil bli feil slutning. Grunnen til at jeg bare krysset av det med historiske fakta bunner nok i at jeg er historielærer. Jeg burde ha krysset av flere, ettersom jeg ønsker og jobber mot begge deler. Det må likevel sies at det å ha faktakunnskap i bunn er veldig viktig, synes jeg. Man trenger fakta før man kan reflektere rundt sine egne holdninger, ellers blir det bare synsing.

I: Mhm, så du tar høyde for begge?

R: Dett er klart. Men som sagt; historielæreren i meg synes at fakta må ligge i bunn. De henger selvsagt sammen. Jeg kunne jo hatt faktaprøver; kan du ikke de 50 statene så kan du ingenting om kultur, ikke sant? Jeg er jo ikke slik. Men at fakta hjelper elevene å begrunne, er utvilsomt.

I: Ja, skjønner. Nå vil jeg trekke fokuset litt mer mot utfordringer. Du skrev i spørreskjemaet at du ikke så noen utfordringer med å ta tak i kulturelle problemstillinger?

R: Nei, stort sett vil jeg jo si at engelsk, slik jeg opplever det, er et fag elevene opplever som ganske ok. Det er et fag de behersker godt. Det er ikke så mye lekser og den slags. De fleste har jo en ganske god forståelse, de har sett mange filmer. På et vis er gjerne litt kjent stoff.

I: Men dersom man snevrer dette mer ned til å tak i kultur?

R: Ah, jeg leste nok spørsmålet litt for raskt. Jo, en sentral utfordring som er jo mitt eget ståsted. Som jeg sa, jeg vet jo at mine holdninger kommer frem. For eksempel omkring temaer som dødsstraff som jeg var innom. Det kan være en utfordring.

I: Mhm, forstår. Er dette en utfordring du prøver å ta tak i, eller er det en utfordring du lever godt med?

R: Det er nok både og. jeg lever jo med den.

I: Forstår. Til sist vil jeg spørre deg om du har noen spørsmål til det vi har diskutert så langt?

R: Nei, men du har jo valgt et veldig bredt tema her da!

I: Ja, jeg har det. Men det jo veldig interessant.

R: Ja, hvilken vinkling vil du ha på oppgaven?

I: Nei, det må jeg se nærmere på når all dataene er behandlet.

R: Skjønner.

I: Stor takk for at du stilte til intervju!

R: Jo, selv takk!

I: Du må for øvrig bare ta kontakt dersom det er noe du lurere på i ettertid.

R: Ja, det skal jeg gjøre.

Interview candidate 5, date: 7.12.2016

I: Hva mener du er hensikten med å tilnærme seg kulturelle spørsmål i engelskundervisningen?

R: Jeg starter ofte med er å prøve å definere dette kulturbegrepet, som mange bruker, men egentlig ikke vet hva er. Jeg starter gjerne med å prøve å definere hva norsk kultur er. Da tar vi en brainstorming for å se på hva er egentlig utgjør den norske kulturen. Deretter tar vi et metablikk etterpå ved å stille spørsmål som: ” hvor representativt er dette for dere?”, ”hvor viktig er dette i deres liv?”, og forsøker å få frem hvor viktig dette er i forhold til elevenes *egen* kultur. Elevene nevner gjerne bunad, komler og slike ting, som egentlig ikke har noen aktiv rolle i deres liv. Deretter gjør vi det samme når vi går inn i andre kulturer, så kan jeg henvise tilbake til det. Når elevene har pratet om hva de tror amerikansk kultur er, hva som er sentralt i den kulturen, da stiller jeg spørsmål som: ” husker dere når vi snakket om Norge, hvor lite representativt dette var for dere? Hva tror dere da om det dere sier om amerikansk kultur og de andre kulturene vi går inn i?”.

I: Ja, så dette er et kulturaspekt du liker å undervise om?

R: Ja, å problematisere hele kulturbegrepet. Kan vi egentlig si at en kultur er sånn og sånn? Så henviser jeg til debatten for noen år tilbake til Christian Tybring-Gjedde som anklager Hadia Tajik for å ikke forstå hva norsk kultur er, hvorpå han prøver å definere det selv, uten å klare det. Det er et flyktig begrep som jeg bruker som et inngangspunkt når jeg tilnærmer meg kultur og kulturelle spørsmål. Det blir på en måte særlig viktig å ta tak i nå fordi vi blir flerkulturelle. Mange føler at den norske kulturen blir truet, så det blir stadig viktigere. Det blir gjerne slik at det kulturelle blir statisk. Folk føler de må beskytte det de mener er kulturen. Da blir det kanskje viktigere for noen å definere hva norsk kultur er, eller hva amerikansk kultur er. Slik som i dag i USA, er det jo gjerne et tema at man skal beskytte den amerikanske kulturen mot innvandrere, men hva der egentlig den amerikanske kulturen? Hva er det som skal beskyttes? Elevene må få innsyn i dette.

I: Skjønner, føler du deg fri til å utforske det kulturelle slik du ser det hensiktsmessig?

R: Læreplanen sier vel på en måte hva vi skal gå innom, i forhold til ungdomskulturer og slike ting. Så den er jo styrende for hvilke ting vi går innom. Den sier jo også hva vi skal gjennom, så i forhold til litteratur og andre kulturelle uttrykk og slikt, ligger den klart der som en styrende ramme. Men samtidig er den ganske åpen og vid. Så hva angår kulturelle uttrykk, kan man i stor grad fremstille det slik man ønsker selv.

I: Akkurat, så læreplanen fungerer mer som en *rettesnor*?

R: Ja, akkurat.

I: Ja, da skal vi hoppe litt over til metodene du bruker. I spørreskjemaet krysset du av for at du bruker ulike metoder. For eksempel forelesning, åpen klassediskusjon og gruppediskusjon. Jeg lurer på hvorfor du synes det er hensiktsmessig å kombinere læresentrert med elevsentrert undervisning når du tilnærmer deg kulturelle problemstillinger?

R: Grunnen til at elevene får sitte litt i grupper, er at de da får en mulighet til å gjøre seg opp en mening gjennom å diskutere. Da får alle delta og si sin mening. En annen ting er at det også må være noe lærerstyrt undervisning, fordi det kulturelle er så komplisert for elevene. Eksempelvis kan jeg ha en forelesning om britisk politikk og det britiske samfunn og se på ”the decline of Englishness”, altså hvor blir det av det stereotypiske vi forbinder med England? Fish and Chips, og alt det der. Deretter ser vi på utviklingen av samfunnet, og med det ta inn ulike kulturelle uttrykk. For eksempel holder vi nå på med å lese et dikt av Finn Larken, hvor vi ser på hvordan det kulturelle uttrykket korresponderer til diktet. Men det er vanskelig for elevene å lese et dikt løsrevet alene. For at elevene skal kunne se de kulturelle koblingene i diktet må jeg dra dem gjennom det.

I: Riktig, så det lærersentrerte blir nødvendig når kulturelle uttrykk bli vanskelige å forstå?

R: Ja, de må til en viss grad bli veiledet gjennom det.

I: Ja, forstår. Når du oppfordrer til gruppearbeid og plenumsdiskusjoner knyttet til kulturelle spørsmål, hva tenker du elevene kan lære av hverandre?

R: Jeg har jo, heldigvis, folk fra ulike kulturer i klasserommet. Så når vi snakker om for eksempel nigeriansk kultur, har jeg en elev med nigeriansk bakgrunn. Jeg bruker pleier å bruke disse elevene aktivt i klasserommet, hvor jeg spør på forhånd, for eksempel: ”hvordan var det for dine foreldrene?”. Eller eksempelvis: ”din mor var fra Etiopia og din far fra Somalia - hvordan har det vært når kulturene møttes?”.

Disse elevene har jo opplevd dette i virkeligheten. Elevene kan derfor bidra med enormt mye når man tilnærmer seg kulturelle temaer.

I: Du sa ”heldigvis” - tror du det hadde vært annerledes om klassen din hadde vært mer homogen?

R: Ja, meget. Da jeg jobbet i Bergen var det enda større grad av flerkultur i klasserommet. Men også her har vi elever med ulik bakgrunn. Jeg har elever med nigeriansk bakgrunn, en med indisk mor som er født i Singapore, men som selv har vokst opp i Florida. Så det finnes slike ekstremmikser som er ekstremt fruktbare om man tar tak i dem. Fordi den vanlige norske eleven har ikke helt begrepene. De vet ikke helt hva det vil si i praksis, dette med flerkultur. Hvorfor oppstår det spenninger? og betraktninger om at ”du er sånn og sånn”, knyttet til tanker om hvor man er fra.

I: Interessant. Nå skal vi gå over til materialene du bruker i undervisningen som vi allerede har vært litt innom allerede. I

spørreskjemaet krysset du av for flere materialer, og et av dem var litteratur.

Jeg er nysgjerrig på hvordan du tolker denne setningen:” Literary texts can instil a deeper understanding of others and oneself”.

R: Ja, det er litt problematisk fordi vi ikke har noe liste over hva elevene må lese, annet enn at de må være på engelsk. Men de litterære tekstene elevene leser gir jo en helt annen forståelse. En tekst jeg har brukt i forbindelse med undervisningen om Australia heter ” Neighbours”, tror jeg den heter, en novelle. I forkant av lesningen har jeg hatt en brainstorming med dem om hva de forbinder med Australia, og du får gjerne opp det typiske stereotypiske; kenguruer, slanger, ” upper house” og alt det der. Så leser vi en novelle fra Australia som ikke nevner noe av disse tingene. Det er en novelle som handler om et flerkulturelt nabolag i utkanten av Sydney, som egentlig er ganske likt det flerkulturelle samfunnet i Norge. Da lærer elevene noe om hvor lite disse stereotypiene har å si i praksis. Da lærer de jo i stedet noe om seg selv, plutselig blir de noen som lager stereotyper, så får de ofte litt dårlig samvittighet. De erkjenner at Australia handler om en del mer enn bare kenguruer og urfolk.

I: Mhm, så dette var en tekst du hadde en klar hensikt med, nemlig å nyansere?

R: Stemmer, det er jo klart at ikke alle tekster er relevante, så det er viktig å være kritisk.

I: Når du tok tak i denne novellen, tenkte du over ditt eget kulturelle ståsted?

R: Ja, jeg gjorde faktisk det. Jeg pleier å gjøre det, for å bli klar over å ta tak i mine egne stereotyper. Altså å passe på at jeg ikke begrenser den engelske kulturen eller gruppen vi tilnærmer oss til min egen oppfatning av hvordan de er.

Jeg vet at jeg gjerne uttrykker noe stereotypisk ubevisst, det er jo naturlig, men samtidig kan det være farlig. Det er jo ikke den kunnskapen man vil at elevene skal sitte igjen med. En grunn til dette har med det å være nøytral å gjøre. Jeg har gjerne en menneskerettighetstanke som sitter i. Jeg tenker nok at jeg på noen tidspunkter kan virke ganske støtende for enkelte. Spesielt dersom de kommer fra et spesielt politisk ståsted, eksempelvis om det finnes noen som har rasistiske tilbøyeligheter i klasserommet. Men, jeg tenker nok at man ikke kan være objektiv i slike situasjoner. Det har med å gjøre at rasistiske tanker må bli utfordret i et klasserom preget av mangfold.

I: Ja, så det er lov å ha en mening som lærer også?

R: Ja, men spørsmålet blir jo i hvilken grad jeg skal la min mening påvirke, jeg sikter jo mot å være så nøytral som mulig når jeg tilnærmer meg kulturelle temaer. Man har stor påvirkningskraft som lærer, men man kan aldri være 100% nøytral.

I: Skjønner, har denne mangelen på nøytralitet en sammenheng med hvordan du i spørreskjemaet krysset av for at du reflekterer rundt ditt eget kulturelle ståsted hver gang du tilnærmer deg kulturelle spørsmål?

R: Ja, i hovedsak så er det grunnen til at jeg tenker over mitt ståsted. En annen faktor er jo at jeg vet jo ikke alt om alle.

I: Skjønner. Angående det det kan komme rasistiske tilbøyeligheter, hvordan håndterer du disse?

R: Jo, det er derfor jeg kan innta en rolle som djevelens advokat i klasserommet, ved å prøve å trigge følelser og engasjement, at elevene kan bli litt hissige i visse samtaler. Men hva angår kulturelle temaer som rører ved menneskerettigheter, så mener jeg at det er unngåelig å fremme sin mening, Det er synspunkter som jeg tar for gitt at alle skal være enige i. Man må jo selvfølgelig lodde stemningen først og å se på hvordan man skal gå inn i det. Sentralt er også temaer som tvangsekteskap, det er viktig.

I: Mhm, hvordan erfarer du det å få i gang diskusjon rundt slike temaer?

R: Det er vanskelig å få i gang diskusjoner i klasserommet i utgangspunktet, det er så mange som er redde for å snakke engelsk. Men det er disse temaene som engasjerer elevene mest, der har de meninger. Da handler utfordringen mer om det å strukturere samtalen rundt meningene. Det å få alle elevene til å danne grupper, slik at alle elevene får muligheten til å ytre seg, så kan jeg ta det opp på plenumsnivå etterpå. Men det er klart at enkelte reaksjoner som er veldig sterke slik at man må håndtere disse når de oppstår, enten om de er i grupper eller plenum.

I: Forstår. I spørreskjemaet redegjorde du for fordeler med å oppfordre elever fra andre kulturelle bakgrunner til å beskrive deres syn på forskjeller og deres fordommer til den såkalt norske kulturen. Hvorfor tenker du det er viktig å gi denne muligheten?

R: Det handler litt om det at de som er her, altså nordmenn, skal få se seg selv gjennom andres øyne. Det er ikke bare nordmenn som har stereotypiske syn på andre kulturer, men også andre kan se veldig stereotypisk på nordmenn basert på hvordan vi oppleves som. Kanskje ikke bare rent stereotypisk heller, men også mer faktisk. Så igjen, gir dette en dypere innsikt fordi at man forstår at” ok, folk ser på meg på denne måten og jeg kjenner meg ikke igjen i det, hvordan ville folk ha opplevd hvordan jeg så på dem?”.

I: Hvordan pleier elevene å ta denne oppfordringen?

R: De flerkulturelle?

I: Mhm.

R: De pleier å synes at dette er veldig gøy, fordi da får man på en måte” kødde” med de andre.

I: Ja, så det blir gjort på en slags spøkefull måte?

R: Ja, det blir en veldig artig greie, så kan de andre komme med motsvar. Det må bli god stemning om det skal funke. Jeg har gjort dette på et annet nivå også. Hvor elevene diskuterte rundt spørsmål som: ”Ja, du er fra Karmøy mens du er fra Sveio, hvordan tenker dere om hverandre?” Og da kom det ganske krasse synspunkt. Jeg måtte stoppe dem på et tidspunkt. Folk har nok lettere å hetse folk fra nabokommunen en folk fra et annet land.

I: Morsomt. Når det gjelder materialene du liker å bruke, skrev du i kategorien ”annet” at du pleier å bruke elevenes erfaring med ’multiculturalism’ som en kilde til å diskutere kulturelle temaer, ettersom dette gjorde ’culture closer to home’. Jeg er da nysgjerrig på hva du mener med ’closer to home’?

R: Igjen, vi snakker jo hele tiden om verden der ute, men så har vi jo også denne verdenen i klasserommet gjennom elevene. De er jo på en måte førstehåndskilder til å forstå hva det multikulturelle, eller det interkulturelle, handler om. Hver elev vil jo ha noe å bidra med, de har jo alle sin måte å se ting på, som vil bidra til å få frem kulturelle ulikheter og likheter også innad i klasserommet. En annen ting knyttet til å ’bring things closer to home’, handler om hva jeg tar inn i undervisningen. Læreboken er jo representativ for verden der ute, jeg må få dem til å innse dette. Mange av tekstene er jo hentet fra nyheter. Jeg prøver å koble det på. Altså at det som skjer på skolen her ikke bare sanner ”skolegreier”, men at det også handler om det virkelige livet der ute.

I: Hvordan erfarer du det å prøve å bygge på elevenes personlige erfaringer med det multikulturelle?

R: Jeg har i grunn ikke opplevd noe ubehag i forhold til det. Men jeg har vært litt forsiktig når vi snakker om det som ikke er akseptabelt. Altså, i hvilken grad skal man la kulturrelativismen åpne for absolutt alt. Det kan jo være

opplevelser i klasserommet om kjønnslemleste, og slike ting som det som kan være litt ekkelt å komme inn på.

I: Det var en ganske naturlig overgang til å prate mer om det å ta tak i kontroversielle kulturelle temaer.

R: Ja, det er viktig å ikke unngå slike sensitive temaer selv om det kan være ubehagelig. Det er der vi kan stikke hull på dette. Så man skal ikke være redd for å støte noen, men selvfølgelig må man sjekke opp hvilket rom man har. Jeg har noen med fremmedkulturell bakgrunn, så jeg spør dem alltid først om jeg kan få stille dem spørsmål, slik at de er forberedt på det. Skal vi gå inn på de mørke kapitlene i amerikansk historie, slavehandel og den slags, sier jeg alltid fra til elevene først. Særlig sier jeg i fra til dem med afrikansk bakgrunn. Man vet aldri helt hvordan de reagerer, men jeg synes likevel det er viktig at man løfter det frem selv om jeg alltid gruer meg litt til disse timene, men det har mer med uforutsigbarheten å gjøre. Men jeg gjør det jo for det.

I: Ja, sant. I spørreskjemaet krysset du av på at du pleier å la elevene få reflektere over seg selv og sin egen kultur. Er dette en oppfordring du kunne ha gitt i en sånn samtale?

R: Ja, det går litt mer på dette med å oppfordre dem til å definere den norske kulturen. Som vi var innom, dette med mind-maps og lignende, rundt hva elevene mener det typiske norske er, og kanskje også beskrive hvor viktige de typiske tingene de forbinder med norsk kultur er for dem, eksempelvis bunad og lignende. Da spør jeg; hvor viktig er denne bunaden som du kanskje bruker 1-2 ganger i året for din identitet? Altså; jeg problematisere deres definisjon rundt hvem de tenker at de er. Jeg spør gjerne videre:” hva vil du si er viktig i livet?”. Da svarer de gjerne ting som tv-serier, og at taco er viktigere enn kumlene. Altså, jeg utfordrer deres syn på hva kultur egentlig er. Om det var et svar nok?

I: Ja, absolutt. Hvordan tror du elevene erfarer denne typen” konfrontasjoner”, om vi kan kalle det det?

R: Jeg tror de synes det er artig. Igjen vil jo ingen av dem påstå at de tingene de trekker frem som viktig er en ekstremt viktig del av deres hverdag. Samtidig er det jo viktig sett i forhold til denne kulturarven, eller hva man skal kalle det, og for å et samhold. Men jeg tror de synes det er artig når jeg spør den enkelte: ”hvor ofte spiser du disse kumlene?”, ” hvor ofte går du på ski?”, ” hvor ofte går du med bunad?”. De er oftere på McDonalds, eller på treningsstudio og lignende. Altså er de mer på treningsstudio for å bli ” buff”, enn på fjellet for å bli sunn og frisk. Og hvor annerledes er dette da i forhold til andre kulturer, er det egentlig så forskjellig? Man har jo gjerne den holdning som sprer seg om at det komme andre folk fra andre kulturer som drar med seg ting som er så forskjellig. Da må man se på er det virkelig er så forskjellig? Altså, det kommer unge folk fra Syria som har smartphones de også.

I: Vil du si at du er like opptatt av likheter som forskjeller?

R: Ja, og jeg tror vi er nødt til å diskutere begge, vi er nødt til det i relasjon til dannelsesperspektivet og elevers fordommer. Men samtidig synes jeg likevel det er viktig å påpeke at det er viktig å ikke være 100% kulturelister. Det er noen ting som ikke fungerer. Men da pleier jeg ikke å løfte det opp på et norsk kulturnivå, men mer opp på et nivå som har med menneskerettigheter å gjøre. Det vi pleier å gjøre da, dersom vi skal se på hva som er viktig for den norske kulturen, er å trekke det opp mot dette nivået. Mer hva som er typisk *vestlig*. Demokratisk tankegang og menneskerettigheter. Dette som kanskje er det viktigste, og det som ikke passer med det, må på en måte siles vekk.

I: Ja, du krysset du og av på at du ønsket av elevene skulle utvikle åpenhet og toleranse for andre kulturer og individer med ulike bakgrunner. Vil du si at dette har en sammenheng mellom det at du oppfordrer til å se likheter på tvers av kulturer?

R: Ja, jeg tror at gjennom innsikten om at’ jeg vet ikke helt hva min egen kultur er’, og at’ jeg synes ikke den definisjonen representerer meg’, vil elevene kanskje forstå at det skrekkbildet som blir malt av enkelte kulturer, i

enkelte settinger, ikke er riktig. Det er jo ofte slike kategoriseringer som blir den sentrale likheten. At kulturer består av mange forskjellige individer med forskjellige bakgrunner, legninger, interesser. De som ofte fremstår som veldig forskjellige behøver ikke alltid å være det. Og de man tenker man ikke har noe til felles med, kan faktisk være dem man har mest til felles med. Elevene tenker jo ofte på seg selv som sunn norsk ungdom, mens de tenker på amerikanere som late og feite, men de har jo likevel veldig mye til felles. McDonalds, treningssentre, tv-serier. De deler ofte flere interesser med dem, enn med voksne nordmenn som ikke klarer å følge like godt med på de nye trendene, sånne som meg. Jeg merker det selv, når ble det plutselig så stort fokus på å bli så” buff” på treningssenteret?

I: Ja nettopp, så altså knyttet til å utvikle åpenhet?

R: Ja, knyttet til å utvikle åpenhet handler det om at elevene ser at fordommene som finnes om norsk kultur ikke stemmer om meg, derfor kan jeg kanskje anta at fordommene som finnes om de andre kulturene ikke alltid stemmer. Jeg tror at gjennom innsikten om at” jeg vet ikke helt hva min egen kultur er” og at” jeg synes ikke den definisjonen representerer meg”, vil de kanskje forstå at det skrekkbildet som blir malt av enkelte kulturer ikke er riktig. Slike diskusjoner rundt mer sensitive temaer er viktig for å få frem mangfoldet innad i klasserommet og i kulturen. Det er kanskje spesielt viktig i dag ettersom det er så veldig mye fokus på det negative som finnes i andre kulturer. Så ja, det er viktig og det er noe jeg vier tid til det når jeg presenterer spørsmål som har med kultur og samfunnsforhold å gjøre.

I: Forstår. Kan du gjenfortelle litt fra en time hvor du tilnærmet deg en eller flere kulturelle problemstillinger?

R: Ja, da kan jeg ta utgangspunkt i novellen” Neighbours” og forklare litt mer rundt den. Vi hadde som sagt en gjennomgang om hva elevene forbandt med Australia. Da får man opp de typiske tingene: tyver, slanger, krokodiller, urfolket og den slags. Så leser vi denne novellen som handler om et flerkulturelt nabolag, hvor et par flytter inn i et nabolag hvor der er mange

europiske innvandrere som bor. Innvandrere fra Polen, Italia, Hellas og andre områder, og hvordan de ikke snakker samme språk, men tilnærmer seg hverandre. I begynnelsen handler novellen om hvor ulike disse folkene er i begynnelsen og hvor lite forståelse de har for hverandre, men likevel møtes i sånne basale ting. For eksempel gjennom dyrking av grønnsaker. De ene paret blir også gravid og skal ha barn, dette er universelle ting. Så fokuset ender på hva som er likt fremfor det som skiller dem. Så det er en veldig fin novelle som tar for seg det universelle, at det er ting som er likt. Likheter mellom individer, og at vi heller kanskje bør fokusere på likhetene. Man klarer å se forbi språklige barrierer og ulikheter og blir venner, paret føler seg beriket av dette etterpå. Men i utgangspunktet er mannen en akademiker, mens naboen er i utgangspunktet en snekker som spikrer en planke uten mål og hensikt. Det er et totalt sprik, de forstår hverandre ikke på noe som helst vis, men så møtes de da i grønnsakhagen og i fødselen av barnet. Da får elevene et godt innblikk i dette med at vi må se på hva som binder oss sammen, hver enkelt individ sin personlige historie, i stedet for det som skiller oss.

I: Hvordan følte du denne timen her gikk?

R: Veldig bra, fordi at jeg kunne gå tilbake etterpå til kartet vi laget på forhånd. Forkunnskapene elevene hadde til Australia. Jeg kunne spørre: ”Fant dere noe av dette i novellen?”. Den representerer det virkelige liv i Australia, og gir et godt innblikk i samfunnet der i dag, men det står ingenting om Operahus, slanger og krokodiller. Men hvilke av disse føler dere selv representerer best Australia? Teksten eller deres eget bilde? Da kommer man ofte til konklusjonen om at teksten er mer representativ. Så, de får følelsen av at fortellingen av en kultur er annerledes enn realiteten. I tillegg kommer jeg jo ofte på ting, jeg får innsikt, mens jeg holder på. Jeg lærer jo også noe av elevene, og man lærer jo hele tiden nye ting underveis i klasserommet. Men når man holder på så faller man kanskje tilbake til litt sånne forenkelde og stereotypiske holdninger. Det skjer ikke bare med elevene, jeg som lærer kan jo også si ting som er mindre reflekterte.

I: Skjønner, men hvilken påvirkning tenker du at denne timen hadde for elevenes kulturforståelse?

R: Jo, jeg tenker jo at dette var en time hvor elevene fikk innsyn i hvor kompleksst alt er. At man må se bredere på det, men man vet jo aldri. Det tar jo tid å utvikle forståelse for kultur.

I: Henger dette sammen med at du i spørreskjemaet krysset av på at du synes det er svært vanskelig å teste elevenes kulturforståelse?

R: Ja, det og det faktum at holdninger umulig å måle.

I: Stemmer. Kanskje vi kan gå tilbake til dette med å ta tak i kontroversielle temaer. Tar du tak i kontroversielle temaer i den graden du synes det er hensiktsmessig?

R: Ja, jeg føler jo det. Det er så mye grums man må ta tak i. Det er kjempeviktig at elevene får innsikt i alt dette.

I: Kan du forklare hva du mener med ”grums?”

R: Det er jo en del ting som kommer som kjønnslemleste, en tanke om kvinnens rolle i samfunnet som er utrolig lite kompatibelt med vår forståelse av hvordan samfunnet skal være. Og det handler ikke om at det skal være norsk, det handler om hvordan det skal være å være menneske.

Menneskerettigheter er utarbeidet av FN for eksempel, så det er ikke spesifikt noe norsk over det, men mer en enighet verden har kommet til. At et barn har rett til å ikke bli skjendet, at kvinner har en rett til å delta i samfunnet og at man skal ha aksept for alle seksuelle legninger. Det kommer folk fra andre land som har motstridende tanker til dette. Man ser det jo også i den norske befolkningen, kanskje fra steder hvor det ikke så velinformerte mennesker. Så i hvilken grad det handler om kulturelle forskjeller, eller om det rett og slett handler om mangel på utdanning og forståelse for verden, det vet jeg ikke.

Men dette er det jeg legger i ”grumset”, og der er jeg helt tydelig på når jeg underviser da dette er ting vi ikke kan akseptere uansett hvor forståelsesfulle og åpne man skal være. Det blir naivt, og til og med kanskje ondskapsfullt. Jeg tar opp forskjellige synspunkt, altså hvorfor skal man lage som mye rabalder rundt en hijab? Så diskuterer vi; ja, det er kanskje ikke et så stort problem isolert sett. Men hva da med en burka eller niqab? Er det ok? Da kommer man inn på at det kanskje ikke er så ok likevel. Man kommer inn på at her er det et praktisk problem også. Kvinner bli pakket inn i ting slik at man ikke kan se dem. Er det prinsipielt sett ok? Hva er de praktiske problemene rundt det? Og er det rettfærdig å likestille en burka og niqab med en hijab? Samtidig er det viktig å trekke inn den andre siden. Ok så du skal nekte noen å gå med hijab, er det ok at folk for gå med kors på seg? Den siste delen der tenker jeg er særlig viktig. Med ”grums” mener jeg de tingene som kommer med forskjellige kulturuttrykk som ikke er kompatible med vår forståelse av menneskerettigheter og demokrati.

I: Ja, nettopp. Sånn avslutningsvis vil jeg spørre deg om du har noen spørsmål til det vi har snakket om så langt.

R: Nei, jeg tror ikke det? Får du noe ut av dette her da?

I: Ja, jeg regner da med det!

R: Ja, kanskje litt sånn lærersyndrom, men det er jo veldig interessant dette med kultur, og engelsklæreren har et stort ansvar her.

I: Ja, tror du alle tenker over dette ansvaret i den grad du gjør?

R: Det er umulig å vite. Jeg håper jo det! Men det er kanskje litt naivt. Men alle burde gjøre det!

I: Enig i det. Du må bare ta kontakt om du har noen spørsmål i etterkant av intervjuet.

Interview candidate 6, date: 25.11.2016

I: Hva vil du si er hensikten med å tilnærme seg kulturelle spørsmål i engelskundervisningen?

R: Det er jo flere grunner til at kultur er en så stor del av engelskundervisningen, men det første jeg kommer på er jo at elever må lære seg å forstå og å lære seg å kommunisere med folk fra andre kulturer.

I: Kan du utdype?

R: I det ligger det jo å kunne vise forståelse for levestil som er forskjellige fra den typiske norske livsstilen da, om jeg kan si det slik. Ja, det å utvikle forståelse er jo kanskje det jeg tenker er aller viktigst. Det innebærer at man må se på hva som er relevant for de ulike kulturene.

I: Kan du gi et eksempel?

R: Ja, for eksempel så har vi en tekst som heter ”Understanding Britain”. Det første jeg gjør er å forsøke å konkretisere kulturen for elevene. Det er ikke det altså, jeg skjønner at man ikke kan forstå Storbritannia gjennom å lese en tekst på fire sider, men den kan brukes som et utgangspunkt.

I: Hvordan da?

R: Ja, altså selv om læreboken ikke alltid gir et så godt innblikk i den engelske kulturen, så er den et fint sted å begynne. Den fokuserer gjerne litt mer på faktabasert kunnskap som elevene trenger. For eksempel fakta om demografi, geografi og politiske styresett.

I: Hva mener du med den ”engelske kulturen”?

R: Da mener jeg andre engelskspråkelige lands kulturer, altså folk verdier og levesett.

I: Ok, forstår. Hvilke kulturelle aspekter liker du å undervise i?

R: Elevene er veldig opptatt av det de skal kunne til eksamener og prøver. Men slik faktakunnskap er ikke akkurat spennende å undervise i. Engelsk er jo først og fremst et forståelsesfag, så da holder derfor ikke å bare pugge fakta. Å slå opp i en bok å si slik er det. De skal drøfte og diskutere, det er jo det som står i alle læreplanmålene som handler om samfunn og kultur.

I: Så å drøfte levesett?

R: Ja, akkurat. Hvorfor er det slik at urfolk har dårlig helse og sliter med rusproblemer? Slike type spørsmål.

I: Forstår. Har læreplanen noen innflytelse på hvordan du tilnærmer deg kulturelle spørsmål?

R: Jeg tenker jo at, jeg tror i alle fall det, jeg har et nokså bevisst forhold til den. Det henger nok litt sammen med at jeg ikke har jobbet i så mange år, mens en del andre sikkert ikke er så bevisste på at det har kommet en ny læreplan. De tenker nok litt mer sånn at at” slik har vi alltid gjort”. Men jeg er nok fortsatt på det stadiet hvor jeg må gå til andre kilder på hvordan det skal gjøres. Så, det er jo ikke utelukkende boken jeg følger.

I: Men den påvirker?

R: Ja, det er klart. Som sagt, så henger kanskje dette litt sammen med min egen usikkerhet, så jeg håper dette blir bedre med årene.

I: Det er bra å holde seg oppdatert da.

R: Ja, det er jo det.

I: Så, vi kan nå gå over til hvilke metode og materialer du bruker når du underviser kultur.

I spørreskjemaet krysset du av på at du pleier å kombinere elev- og lærersentrerte metoder.

Jeg er nysgjerrig på hvilke fordeler du ser nettopp med å kombinere lærersentrerte med elevsentrerte metoder når du tilnærmer deg kulturelle spørsmål?

R: Hmm, godt spørsmål. I en ideell verden ville vi jo bare hatt elevsentrert aktivitet. Men jeg tror nok at input fra meg kan dra i gang noen ting. Dersom jeg snakker litt om bakgrunnen for hvorfor jeg stiller spørsmålene jeg gjør. At de ikke starter med helt blanke ark på en måte, for å så prøve å dra de inn igjen. Dersom de har diskutert noe seg imellom, altså dersom jeg snur det mot meg igjen. jeg kan oppfatte hva de har fått ut av diskusjonen og eventuelt justere dem litt dersom de har havnet på villspor.

I: Ja. Hva tenker du elevene kan lære av *hverandre* når de diskuterer kulturelle problemstillinger?

R: Masse. Men det er vanskelig å si noe spesifikt. Men det kommer jo ofte frem holdninger. Det er jo veldig kjekt når de er uenige om ting. Da skjer det noe, da starter det noen tankeprosesser. Jeg blir jo veldig glad når elevene mine er uenige om ting, ettersom de da må forklare seg. Så da blir det forståelse for at ”åja, det går an å tenke på den måten også”, som igjen vil åpne opp for en mer åpen forståelse. Det er kjemperelevant for å utvikle kulturforståelse.

I: Ja, interessant. Skapes det ofte slike diskusjon?

R: Svaret er nei. Jeg skulle ønske jeg hadde mer tid. Engelskelevnene mine på yrkesfag har jeg bare 90 minutter i uken. Så ja, altfor liten tid. Nivået innad i

gruppen er også en utfordring. Noen av elevene sliter med tekstforståelse, og mer grunnleggende ting. Så det å drøfte da, blir igjen en utfordring.

I: Skjønner. Vi skal nå gå over på materialene du bruker i engelskundervisningen.

I spørreskjemaet krysset du av på at du brukte forskjellige materialer, blant annet litteratur. Så jeg lurte først på er hvordan du tolker denne setningen:” Literary texts can instil a deeper understanding of others and oneself”.

R: Jeg tenker at bruken av litteratur kan hjelpe elevene å tilnærme seg stoffet på en annen måte. Det er kanskje lettere for elevene å relatere seg til. Å kjenne seg igjen i en litterær tekst versus en mer faktabasert presentasjon av noe. I dag for eksempel, spurte jeg elevene hvordan ”the style of writing” og tonen i romanen vi leste var med på å danne et inntrykk av hovedpersonen og hvordan hun hadde det. Elevene reagerte med at” dette var en kjempevanskelig oppgave”. Så da begynte jeg litt sånn enkelt ved å spørre:” Likte du teksten og måten den var skrevet på?”. Elevene responderte med å si ”ja”. Da spør jeg videre:” Hvorfor det?” Elevene svarer igjen:” Jeg likte at den var skrevet i jeg-person, for da følte jeg at jeg fikk se det gjennom hennes øyne.” Så da tenkte jeg, ” ja, akkurat”. Det er jo det jeg spør om her. Da ble det på en måte litt lettere å forstå sammenlignet med faktatekstene vi hadde lest.

I: Ja, skjønner. I spørreskjemaet skrev du at fordelene ved å bruke litteratur var at litterære tekster har en tendens til å engasjere elevene, og gjør det lettere for dem å forstå andre kulturer. Så da lurte jeg på om du ser en sammenheng mellom engasjement og forståelse?

R: Jeg tror jo at forståelse fyrer opp under engasjement. At forståelse gjør det lettere for elevene å komme med innspill. Dersom de selv føler at ”dette forstod jeg faktisk, dette var ikke bare en haug med greier som jeg leste og så

glemte”. Det tror jeg lettere skjer gjennom lesning av litteratur kontra faktatekster. Litteratur har mer personlighet.

I: Ja, hvilken effekt tror du dette har på elevenes kulturforståelse?

R: For eksempel så kan de jo legger merke til hvordan litterære karakterer reagerer eller oppfører seg annerledes enn hva de selv gjør. Dette pleier jeg å bygge på, ettersom dette kan fremme en diskusjon omkring hvorfor. Hva er det i deres kultur som fører til dette?

I: Ja.

R. En annen ting jeg gjør er at jeg ofte knytter litteratur opp mot fakta. Da får liksom elevene et enda bedre overblikk over kulturen vi diskuterer. Faktatekster kan likevel være ganske vanskelige å forstå noen ganger

I: Skjønner. Angående vanskelighetsgrad. Hvor høy synes du vanskelighetsgraden skal være når man tilnærmer seg kulturelle spørsmål?

R: Em, jeg tror at når det er snakk om kulturelle spørsmål kan elevene ha godt av at det til og med kan bli litt *for* vanskelig for dem. At de blir utfordret. Det er et område som jeg synes er viktig å utfordre dem på. Vi trenger å stille vanskelige spørsmål, som får oss til å tenke. Selv om det blir vanskelig, så har vi i hvert fall tenkt på det. Det er ofte elevene sier: «Årh, det var et kjempe vanskelig spørsmål». Da sier jeg: «Ja, jeg også synes det er et vanskelig spørsmål». For eksempel, det var et spørsmål i læreboken angående urfolk. Om at drop-outs og unemployment var et større problem blant indianere i forhold til resten av den amerikanske befolkningen. Den spurte også om hva som kunne gjøres for å bedre problemet, og elevene svarte at «dette er en kjempevanskelig oppgave». Og jeg svarte at: «Ja, om det hadde vært lett så hadde jo ikke dette vært et problem i USA». Det er jo ingen som sitter med et fasitsvar her, dere skal reflektere rundt det. Noen blir stimulert av slike

oppgaver, andre blir helt frustrerte. Slike problemstillinger kan være utfordrende.

I: Mhm. Jeg lurer på om du kan gjenfortelle fra en time hvor du tilnærmet deg et kulturelt spørsmål?

R: Ja, for eksempel angående dette «how are you?» -spørsmålet. Elevene har helse- og oppvekstfag, så det jeg har jobbet med dem i det siste i engelsken har jeg samkjørt med hva de har om i programfag, altså i kommunikasjonsfaget deres. I dette faget har de hatt om følelser og reaksjonsmønstre. Så vi har hatt om temaet «emotion ». Vi har sett en barnefilm som heter ” Inside-Out”. Jeg så plutselig en dag at det stod igjen fra programfagstimen, ” glede”, ” sinne”, ” frykt” og så videre Så jeg har prøvd til en viss grad å knytte dette opp mot hvordan man forholder seg til andre kulturer og til hvordan man kommuniserer med andre fra andre fra engelsktalende land. Jeg håpte jo at denne timen skulle utvikle forståelse for hvordan følelser påvirker måten man kommuniserer med folk på og hvordan spørsmålet: «How are you?» ikke alltid gir svaret: «Fine, thanks. And you?» Det er jo det vi forventer å få til svar. I engelsken er jo denne frasen pugget fra grunnskolen av. Men responsen på et slikt spørsmål er jo også veldig kontekstavhengig.

I: Mhm, så interessant. Den timen var oppfinnsom. Hvordan erfarte du denne timen?

R: Jeg følte den gikk bra, selv om noen uforutsette ting skjedde. Jeg gav dem en rollespilloppgave. Det var morsomt å se hvordan de ulike elevene valgte å løse den. En av dem skulle spørre hvordan personen hadde det, mens den andre skulle si at det ikke gikk bra på et eller annet grunnlag. Så skulle den andre reagere, eller respondere på det. Når man stiller spørsmålet «how are you?», så forventer man at folk skal si at de har det bra. Hva gjør man da når noen sier at det *ikke* går bra i det hele tatt? Det som var morsomt å se var hvordan enkelte elever tok oppgaven veldig på alvor, mens på den andre siden var det en del kjæledyr som hadde dødd. I et tilfelle var det en gullfisk.

Så da klarte ikke den andre å respondere med noe annet en: «Vel, du kan vel bare gå å kjøpe en ny?». Så de tok en humoristisk vri, mens et annet par gikk inn i en voldsom diskusjon om at hun hadde en veldig dårlig dag på grunn av at kjæresten hadde vært utro. Men som lærer, så var det jo viktig å stille spørsmål som: «Hvordan reagerte du på det du sa, følte du at personen sa noe som gav deg støtte?». Noen hadde ordentlige samtaler, mens andre tullet det vekk. Men, jeg tok også *dem* seriøst ved å spørre: «Hvordan følte du da hun sa det og det?», så svarte hun: «Nei, altså jeg følte at jeg ikke fikk så mye empati.» Så det ble jo noe fornuftig ut av det.

I: Hvilken påvirkning tenker du at timen hadde på elevenes kulturforståelse?

R: Jeg er ikke helt sikker, men tenker at timen likevel i ettertid kan ha bidratt til økt forståelse og respekt for at folk tenker forskjellig. At folk kanskje har ulike behov for å snakke om ting basert på deres kultur. Men det er jo umulig å vite. Timen var jo også et langt stykke fra hvordan jeg pleier å undervise kultur. Det var en elev som sa: «Ja, men, jeg ville jo aldri ha svart på det spørsmålet ærlig om noen hadde spurt meg om det.» For meg var det i utgangspunktet en time som trente kommunikasjonsferdigheter som henger sammen med kulturaspektet, den fikk frem individuelle forskjeller på hvordan man kommuniserer. Det tenker jeg kanskje elevene satt igjen med. Håper jeg.

I: Interessant. Vi skal nå gå innpå hva du mer sånn konkret oppfordrer elevene dine til å tenke rundt kultur. I spørreskjemaet krysset du av på at du hadde en tendens til å se på kulturelle forskjeller.

R: Ja, jeg tror det har med å gjøre at vi sammenligner ut fra vårt eget perspektiv. Hva gjør en kultur annerledes fra vår egen. Det er fort gjort å gjøre en sammenligning som kanskje ikke er så fornuftig. Jeg har jo elever med andre kulturelle bakgrunner. Problemet da er at sammenligningsgrunnlaget forsvinner. Så da prøver jeg å se mer på forskjeller mellom engelskspråklige kulturer.

I: Ja?

R: Det er mange forskjeller som er interessante å ta tak i. De skaper engasjement. Hvorfor er amerikanere mer utadvendte enn nordmenn? Hvorfor er engelskmenn mer høflige enn amerikanere? Slike diskusjoner engasjerer.

Men det skjer jo selvfølgelig at jeg fokuserer på det norske, til tross for det jeg nettopp sa. Det var en gang jeg fikk besøk av to jenter fra USA som kom på besøk i engelsken da vi snakket om ObamaCare. Min norske klasse var jo helt klare på at dette var helt genialt og den beste løsningen. Det lignet jo på hva vi hadde i Norge. Altså, hvordan kunne noen amerikanere være skeptiske til det? Så da fortalte jentene fra USA om denne skepsisen. Hvordan foreldrene deres var skeptiske, hvordan de selv ikke helt visste. Altså, de forklarte ut fra sitt liv hvordan det ville påvirke dem, det gav altså et innblikk i deres liv, at det er forskjeller også i USA som i Norge.

I: Spannende. Hvordan erfarer du det å styre sånne diskusjoner som lærer?

R: Det kan noen ganger være utfordrende at elevene er uenige, selv om jeg liker det veldig godt. Jeg skal jo åpne opp for alle elevenes meninger, selv om det kanskje er noen jeg er mer enige i selv. Så det kan nok være en annen utfordring - å ikke la diskusjonen ikke bli for farget av hva jeg selv tenker, og å spille ballen videre til dem. Jeg er ikke så veldig god til å holde kjeft.

I: Ja, så du føler at en utfordring ligger i det å være objektiv til andres meninger?

R: Ja, jeg hadde jo for eksempel en elev som likte Donald Trump. Det var litt vanskelig, altså” how on earth”, liksom. Han er jo mer eller mindre en rasist. Man har jo sine egne tanker i forhold til dette.

I: Hvilke tanker fikk du da overfor denne eleven?

R: Jo, det blir jo litt sånn at man tenker at alle som følger Donald Trump er mindre smarte. I dette tilfelle så stemte ikke dette. Det er jo ikke alltid slik. Denne eleven var faktisk veldig flink å reflektere og å argumentere. Altså som lærer så må man jo være litt kritisk og tenke på egne standpunkt til slike temaer for at også elever som mener noe annet skal tas på alvor.

I: Ja. Er det noen kulturelle temaer du unngår å tak i? Hvorfor eller hvorfor ikke?

I: Nå må jeg tenke meg om før jeg svarer. Problemet med å tak i sensitive temaer er jo at det kan være vanskelig å forutse resultatet av diskusjonene som vokser frem. Målet er jo at elevene skal bli mer åpne. Men, det er et ”men” her. Man kan ikke godta absolutt alt. Jeg tenker jo at dess vanskeligere temaer er, desto viktigere er det at det blir tatt opp. En skal likevel være forsiktig.

R: Hvordan kan man være forsiktig?

I: Det er et godt spørsmål. Jeg tenker jo at om man skal snakke om omskjæring, og man har en omskåret jente i klasserommet, så er det viktig å snakke med henne om dette på forhånd. Jeg ville ikke dratt henne frem som et eksempel, men kanskje om andre temaer så ville jeg kunne gjort det. For eksempel bruk av hijab. Men det er klart, man skal være forsiktig med elevenes personlige grenser på sånt.

I: Så det å avtale med elevene på forhånd er noe du pleier å gjøre når du tilnærmer deg mer kontroversielle temaer?

R: Det er egentlig ikke noe jeg systematisk har gjort. Men i enkelte tilfeller har jeg gjort det.

I: Husker du noen slike tilfeller?

R: Ja, det var ikke så lenge siden vi skulle ha om apartheid. Da hadde jeg en elev med afro-amerikansk bakgrunn som hadde veldig sterke meninger om rasisme. Denne eleven hadde snakket mye om Mandela. Jeg viste at hun sikkert hadde en personlig mening - spørsmålet var om dette var noe hun ville snakke om eller om det ble for nært på en måte. Jeg har jo opplevd at noen kan synes det er vanskelig, dersom du har noen med afrikansk bakgrunn og du skal snakke om rasisme og afro-amerikanere. At det er vanskelig, når vi fleste sitter der som hvite nordmenn. Men, jeg vet ikke. Det er jo enda viktigere da å faktisk snakke om det, vi må utvikle en forståelse av hvordan de har det. Så jeg synes ikke at ulike kulturer kan eller bør være en hindring for slik diskusjon. De bør heller være en ressurs.

I: Ja.

R: Ja, så når det kom til spørsmålet ditt så: jeg forstår hvorfor du stilte det. Men, jeg vet ikke. Jeg tror jeg tar tak i dem i den grad det er nødvendig. Jeg mener at jeg gjøre det.

Skal jeg være helt ærlig så tror jeg nok at jeg har en tendens til å holde ting litt på overflaten. Ikke alltid, men som regel.

I: Hva tror du grunnen til dette er?

R: Det har kanskje mest med elevenes interesser å gjøre. De ønsker å gjøre det godt på eksamen først og fremst. Det er sjeldent at slike temaer kommer på eksamen. Jeg har aldri sett en eksamensoppgave for vg1 som går i dybden på temaer som rasisme og den slags.

I: Skjønner, så dette påvirker?

R: Ja, det gjør det, uheldigvis.

I: Forstår. Har du noen spørsmål til det vi har diskutert så langt?

R: Nei, ikke som jeg kommer på akkurat nå.

I: Du må bare ta kontakt dersom du kommer på noe i etterkant.

R: Ja, det skal jeg gjøre. Takk for intervjuet, det var lærerikt. Det er ikke så ofte jeg setter meg ned å reflekterer rundt min egen undervisning. Jeg er så ny i gamet.

I: Ja, det skjønner jeg. Jeg setter stor pris på at du satte av tid til både spørreundersøkelsen og intervjuet.

R: Jo, takk i like måte.

Interview candidate 7, date: 19.12.2016

I: Hva mener du er hensikten med å tilnærme seg kulturelle spørsmål i engelskundervisningen?

R: Altså, det er en ting jeg tenker, og det er jo det rent praktiske; det er jo selvfølgelig i fagplanene. Vi er opptatte av å oppfylle målene i disse fagplanene, fordi eksamen ofte også dreier seg om dem. Så jeg er opptatt av at elevene skal være i stand til å svare på spørsmålene på eksamen. Da tenker jeg særlig på den skriftlige eksamenen. Den kontrollerer ikke jeg, ikke sant?

I tillegg tenker jeg at kultur gjør undervisningen mer interessant. Elevene synes jo ofte det at det er kjekkere og mer interessant å få litt mer kjøtt på beina om kultur og samfunn. Det er jo nettopp det en stor del av faget består av. På det første året tenker jeg jo at kulturstudier inkluderer så mye, altså eksempelvis musikk og populærkultur. Det gjør faget mer spennende for elevene. Det er overkommelig og det blir ikke bare et fag. Det blir ikke bare et språk - det blir noe som noen faktisk lever i. Om samfunn og kultur rett og slett. Altså, hva ellers skal man ta tak i? Det er klart at man kan si at språklige ting er særlig viktig på lavere trinn, kanskje også på yrkesfag. Men på programfagene har dette mindre å si, heldigvis. Elevene kan gjerne mer engelsk. Andre ting teller jo. Man skal se på samfunnsforhold. Vi har sett på New Zealand, for eksempel.

I: Hva konkret så dere på da?

R: Jo, da så vi på geografi og historie - det er jo en viktig del av landet. En annen grunn til at vi tar tak i kultur, handler jo om at verden blir mindre. Man reiser mer, drar på utveksling. Da må man jo kommunisere med folk fra disse landene - ikke bare vite om landet, men også de forskjellige kulturene innad i disse landene.

I: Hvilke kulturaspekter like du å undervise i?

R: Ja, det er jo flere. Men jeg synes det er særlig interessant å ta tak i temaer som elevene kan kjenne seg igjen i. For eksempel britiske og amerikanske elevers skoleuniformer, og de generelle forskjellene på USA og England. I England er man gjerne mer, hva skal jeg si, høflig? Man har monarki og den slags. Man skal også gi elevene innsyn i hvordan det er å være ungdom i disse engelsktalende landene, og deres måte å forholde seg til ting på.

I: Forstår. Vi skal nå gå litt mer inn på metodene du bruker når du tilnærmer deg kulturelle spørsmål. I spørreskjemaet krysset du av for at du pleide å kombinere ulike metoder, slik som gruppediskusjon, forelesning og klassesdiskusjon. I den forbindelse lurer jeg på hvilke fordeler du ser med å kombinere lærersentrerte metoder med elevsentrerte metoder når du tilnærmer deg kultur?

R: Ja, fordelene med lærersentrert undervisning er at det er jeg som styrer. Vi kommer gjennom tingene jeg hadde tenkt på forhånd og det tar omtrent den tiden som jeg hadde tenkt. Altså, man har mer kontroll. Fordelen med elevstyrt metode kan være ulike ting, men det er gjerne at elevene kanskje blir mer nysgjerrige. Det tar kanskje lengre tid og det er ikke alltid slik at vi kommer frem til målet jeg hadde sett for meg, kanskje de ender opp et helt annet sted. Men de er mer engasjerte, kanskje dette gjør at elevene føler at det angår dem i større grad? At de er med på å bidra med sine erfaringer og sin kunnskap? Engasjementet tenker jeg er særlig viktig når vi jobber med elevsentrerte metoder, ellers så blir det ikke gjort noen ting. Jeg tenker også at fordelene med å kombinere er at det blitt litt variasjon.

Ja, jeg tenker og at elevsentrerte metoder kanskje åpner opp for mer refleksjon. For eksempel når de leser en novelle. Dersom elevene leser på egen hånd, kan de gå gjennom teksten i deres eget tempo. Kanskje det åpner opp for mer refleksjon. Hvorfor skjedde det? Hvorfor skjedde det sånn og sånn? Kanskje de svake elevene kan bli hjulpet av de mer sterke? Når det kommer til kultur så er det jo noen ting som kan være litt faktiske ting som kan være litt vanskelige å forstå. Kanskje særlig historiske fakta.

I: Forstår. Vi kan gå over på materialene du bruker. Et av de materialene du sa du pleier å bruke når du tilnærmer deg kultur er litterære tekster.

I den forbindelse lurer jeg på hvordan du forstår denne setningen: ”lesning av litterære tekster kan fremme en dypere forståelse for andre og oss selv”?

R: Ja, man må jo tolke. Man kan si at det som er mest lest er noveller og til en viss grad dikt. Noen ganger lengre romaner. Så for det første skal man jo tolke det litterære verket. Det som står skrevet mellom linjene. Sette det inn i den virkeligheten karakterene lever i. Det kan være fiksjon, som en Harry Potter-virkelighet, eller det kan være en historisk virkelighet. Men så vil jeg jo gjerne knytte det opp mot oss, og vår virkelighet, dersom det er mulig. Hvordan ville du ha oppfattet dette? Hvordan reagerer denne karakteren? Jo, kanskje han er redd? Hvordan ville du ha reagert? Men så bruker jeg jo også kortere tekster, som eksempelvis sangtekster. Hvordan kan dere bruke disse sangene når dere skal i arbeid? Kan dere bruke noe av dette her, som barnelitteratur? Hva er typisk for det? Så tolker vi. Så tenker jeg jo at de også kan bruke litteraturen, om ikke nødvendigvis på engelsk, men barnelitteratur med barnene de skal arbeide med.

I: Forstår. I spørreskjemaet krysset du av på at du brukte flere typer materialer. I spørreskjemaet skrev du at fant det hensiktsmessig å kombinere materialer:” Together, these materials may complement each other. For example, factual texts may inform learners about the other culture’s tradition, history, while movies may offer learners’ a personal insight.”

R: Ja, og jeg tenker jo det at film kanskje er særlig viktig. Det har med det personlige å gjøre. Å relatere seg til andre som gjerne er veldig forskjellige fra oss. Men det er klart at noen ganger så gjør denne fjernheten, om jeg kan si det sånn, det vanskelig for elevene å relatere seg til tematikken. For eksempel, jeg har hatt elever som tidligere har lest "100 strålende soler".

Dette var da 1.klasse, studiespesialiserende. Den kan være veldig vanskelig for noen, noe som ikke er så rart, man har gjerne ikke så mange knagger å henge tematikken i denne boken på. Men forhåpentligvis så skaper jo denne boken en økt kulturforståelse. Hvordan det er å være ung muslim i Midtøsten? Altså, hvorfor ser de verden slik de gjør? Slike spørsmål er veldig viktige å stille.

I: Er dette en diskusjon du også kunne hatt med de elevene som tar yrkesfag?

R: Jeg forventer ikke at de skal lese lengre romaner. Elevene sliter mer med språket. Men kommer inn på det på andre måter. For eksempel gjennom tolkning av noveller og sanger.

I: Jeg har nå gjerne lyst å spørre om deg om du kan fortelle litt fra en time eller flere hvor du tok tak et eller flere kulturelle temaer.

R: Ja, vi så nettopp filmen ” *Green Street Hooligans*”. Den er veldig god. Den finner sted i Manchester, rundt 80/90-tallet. Det er en film som er typisk britisk. Vi finner jo bare fotballhooligans i England. Så denne filmen gir et veldig realistisk bilde av en kultur som har preget, men også fremdeles preger, England. Det har jo såklart vært tiltak. I denne filmen følger vi en amerikansk karakter, som studerte journalistikk ved Harvard, men så blir han sparket ut. Han reiser så til England, tar del av denne kulturen, og det blir et slags kulturkrasj. Derfor studerte vi forskjellene mellom det britiske og amerikanske kulturen. Den er ordentlig god, den amerikanske karakteren stakkars, han var ikke vant verken til å drikke svært pints med øl eller å slåss.

I: Akkurat. Hvilken påvirkning tenker du disse timene hadde på elevenes kulturforståelse?

R: For elevenes kulturforståelse tenker jeg at denne filmen gav elevene en fin innføring i grunnleggende forskjeller mellom USA og England. Det er jo

faktakunnskap som er grei å ha med seg. Men også selvfølgelig i dette med hvordan det er å være en hooligan.

I: I spørreskjemaet krysset du av for at du synes det var vanskelig å måle elevenes kulturforståelse, hva kommer dette av?

R: Jo, når man tar tak i kultur, blir det jo et prosjekt som ligger nært til dette med danning. Det er jo ikke bare elvenes faktakunnskap som gjør dem dannet, men også deres holdninger og verdier, og det er sånne ting som ikke lar seg måle. Det er jo derfor det har vært så mange debatter rundt dette med økt testing i skolen. Man må prioritere danning, ikke bare utdanning.

I: Skjønner. I spørreskjemaet skrev du at du pleide å oppmuntre til refleksjon rundt kulturelle forskjeller. Kan du forklare hva slags type forskjeller dere pleier å vie mest oppmerksomhet?

R: Ja, det kommer jo godt frem i lys av denne filmen, da fikk jeg frem noen sentrale forskjeller mellom amerikansk og britisk kultur. Men vi ser jo også på forskjeller innad. Folk tenker jo ulikt om for eksempel ulvens rolle i Norge. Det trenger ikke å være de store tingene. Men det er jo likevel noe som holder oss nasjoner sammen. I Norge har vi skiturer, kvikk-lunsj og lignende. Vi har en felles kulturarv. For å forstå kulturelle forskjeller blir det viktig å få dette frem, altså å skape en forståelse av hvordan engelsk talende folk forstår hverdan og hvordan vi ser verden.

I: Interessant. Vi skal nå gå litt innpå utfordringer knyttet til å ta tak i kulturelle spørsmål. Du skrev i spørreskjemaet at de materialene du velger ut kan være for vanskelig for elevene. Så da lurte jeg litt på hvor vanskelig du egentlig tenker det skal være for elevene å jobbe med kulturelle spørsmål?

R: Det bør være vanskelig, men det er klart at noen ganger, som jeg var innpå, så kan det være vanskelig for elevene å sette seg inn i annen virkelighet. Vi har blant annet lest ”Drageløperen”. Elevene kunne velge

mellom denne og ”1000 strålende soler”, angående krigen i Afghanistan.. Det var jo lenge siden den krigen var. For de elevene som er 16, de klarer ikke alltid å huske den. Men det andre er og at en del elever også kanskje rett og slett sliter med å forstå hva vi skal gjennom språkmessig. Det er kanskje forventet på yrkesfag at det kan skje, fordi elever som går på yrkesfag normalt i større grad vil slite med allmennfag.

I: Skjønner, påvirker dette måten du tilnærmer deg kultur på?

R: Det gjør nok det. Som jeg sa velger jeg heller mer lettfattlige tekster eller sanger i disse klassene.

I: Stemmer. Vi skal nå gå inn på det å ta tak i mer sensitive kulturelle temaer. Er det noen kulturelle temaer du unngår? Hvorfor eller hvorfor ikke?

R: Sensitive temaer. Enkelte temaer er jo veldig tidsaktuelle, men læreboken styrer nok litt her. Vi lærere bruker den nok i enda større grad enn hva vi liker å tro at vi gjør. Men det finnes jo enkelte tekster, for eksempel sangen ’Strange Fruit’, den dukker opp i læreboken. Men det å diskutere denne problematikken, det kan jo være, for eksempel dersom man har afrikanske innvandrere i klassen. Denne slaveperioden var jo noe de levde seg gjennom, dette med at svarte folk ble klynget opp. Det kan være ubehagelig å ta tak i et slikt tema i et klasserom hvor de fleste er hvite nordmenn. Dersom det er afrikanere i klassen, om disse synes at dette blir ubehagelig, da er det kanskje best å droppe det å diskutere denne perioden. Man skal være forsiktig med enkelte temaer, og man må se gruppen an. Jeg har flere elever som har kommet fra fremmedkulturelle bakgrunner, slike temaer kan jo være veldig personlige.

I: Kan du forklare dette nærmere?

R: En ting er at det finnes elever som kommer med mindre nyanserte, ofte ironiske, sidestikk som fremmedkulturelle elever kan bli såret av. Hvordan

skal man ta tak i dem? Det er ikke alltid så lett, særlig i yrkesfag. Der er det en slik dårlig humor. Noen kan misforstå, eller ta det alvorlig, og det skjønner jeg jo. Dersom elevene da føler seg uglesett, må man jo gjøre noe som lærer. Men det handler også om andre ting som er særlig relevant i forhold til denne problematikken. Det kan være homofili. Det er typisk at elever sier f. eks” jævla homo”. Det finnes en ukultur for dette. Man må prøve å utfordre, men på grunn av denne ukulturen blir det fort vanskelig kjenne igjen sånne kommentarer. Andre ting elevene kan finne på å si, er spørsmål som” er du feminist?”

Det er jo selvsagt viktig å ta tak i slike spørsmål. Trump kommer med sine kvinnefiendtlige kommentarer, så dette temaet engasjerer - også hans rasistiske kommentarer. Men skal man diskutere slike spørsmål blir det fort veldig mye drama. Det har nok litt med modenhet å gjøre. I 3. klasse går det derimot å diskutere slike temaer mer i dybden.

I: Ja, forstår. Er det noe annet du synes er utfordrende knyttet til å ta tak i kontroversielle temaer?

R: Det jeg først kommer på er at elever kan misforstå. Jeg er veldig glad i å bruke ironi, da kan enkelte elevene bli veldig provoserte.

I: Ja, så du tror at holdningene dine gjerne skinner gjennom på enkelte temaer?

R: Ja, det tror jeg nok de gjør. Noen ganger er jeg ikke nøytral, og det er heller ikke mitt mål å være 100% nøytral. Jeg er jo påvirket av mitt ståsted, de verdiene som jeg er vokst opp med og som er veldig forskjellige fra andre verdier som finnes der ute.

I: Har dette en sammenheng med hvordan du i spørreskjemaet krysset av for at du ofte tenker over ditt kulturelle ståsted?

R: Ja. Det har med å møte seg selv i døren. Selv om dette gjelder for meg, snakker dette egentlig til mine erfaringer? Er det annerledes for elevene? Det jeg ser er jo ikke nødvendigvis det samme som elevene mine ser, som tar del i denne fremmedkulturen. Så det å være klar over dette er noe jeg prøver å tenke over slik at jeg ikke trækker over noens grenser.

I: Har det alltid vært sånn?

R: Ja, jeg tror det?

I: Skjønner.

R: Ja, man skal være forsiktig med hvor man trækker, og spesielt når man tar tak i sensitive temaer.

I: Tar du tak i sensitive temaer i den graden du skulle ønske?

R: Nei. Jeg vet at jeg ikke tar tak i dem i så stor grad som jeg burde, men det er jo flere grunner til dette til dette.

I: Ja, hvilke faktorer er med på å påvirke dette, tenker du?

R: Bortsett fra lærebøkene, så har det også litt med språket til elevene å gjøre. Mange elever sliter rett og slett med å forstå begrepene som blir brukt, altså ordene. Mange elever sliter med å lese engelsk. Det finnes elever som blir helt knust etter å lese en side eller to i engelsk, som oftest på yrkesfag. Da er de ferdige, det er et problem. Det er jo forventet at elevene skal kunne dette på videregående nivå. Men hva skjer etter vg1 med svake elever? Jo, de velger ikke kjemi, de velger ikke fysikk, de tar internasjonal engelsk. Et fag som jeg tror jeg er et ganske tilgjengelig fordi at temaene er så relevante. Blant annet grunnet studier i utlandet og gjennom media. Vi kommer innpå de litt eksotiske landene som er interessante å se nærmere på. Men tredje året er veldig mye tyngre. Da er det veldig mye politikk. Jeg synes jo det er veldig gøy.

Men elevene, de sliter. Noen sliter med å lese, selv om de går tredje året. Det er veldig vanskelig å forholdet seg til, fordi at du har eksamen på den andre siden, skriftlig, som jeg ikke har kontroll på, fagplanen og det som blir forlangt der. Så som lærer må man prøve å sy det sammen til svake elever.

I: Opplever du dette spriket i forventninger også på vg1-nivå?

R: Ja. Jeg tenker jo egentlig ikke at kravene bør være mindre. De er jo tross alt på videregående skole. Man kan ikke hele tiden løse problemer med å senke kravene. Til slutt blir det jo sjetteklassenivå. Men det kan noen ganger være litt vanskelig. Så da har du igjen dette med å skulle tilpasse. Det finnes elever med kjempe høy kulturforståelse, men så har du de som i mindre grad forstår. For eksempel, hadde vi en novelle nylig på helse- og oppvekstfag, vg1. Den het ” Butterflies”. Har du hørt om den?

I: Nei, den har jeg ikke hørt om.

R: Den handler om en maorijente som går på skole og bor hos besteforeldrene. Så sier bestefaren at «nå må du følge med, gjøre som frøken sier». Ja, han sier at lærerne ser på utdanning som viktig. Men poenget blir da at denne jenta skal skrive en historie, hvor temaet blir at hun dreper sommerfugler.

Så stiller jeg spørsmålet: ” hvorfor gjør hun det?”. Dette var noe læreren hennes reagerte på. Dette var jo helt forferdelig. Altså - ” hva er det som skjer her?”. Kulturelle forskjeller mellom maoriene sin kultur og kulturen i New Zealand.

Og svaret på hvorfor hun dreper sommerfugler handler om at læreren kjøper salathodene sine på supermarkedet. For henne er ikke sommerfuglene et problem, fordi hun handler på supermarkedet. Mens maoriene har en gård, hvor sommerfuglene ødelegger avlingene. Så da får man innsyn i kulturforskjeller gjennom noe så lite som sommerfugler. Men det var jo klart

at elevene hadde vanskeligheter med å forstå dette. Det har med kulturforståelse å gjøre, men også deres språkforståelse. For noen var denne teksten vanskelig. Det var ikke alle ordene som gav mening.

I: Skjønner. Påvirker elevenes språkforståelse også hvordan du tilnærmer deg vanskeligere temaer?

R: Ja det gjør det. Særlig på yrkesfag som nevnt. Problemet er jo at på yrkesfag har man mye mindre tid. Da blir det mindre rom for å tilnærme seg temaer som er vanskelige. Jeg hadde jo likt å diskutert vanskelige spørsmål, men språket kommer ofte i veien.

I: Akkurat. Da tror jeg at jeg har fått informasjonen jeg trenger. Tusen takk for at du tok deg tid. Har du spørsmål til det vi har diskutert så langt?

R: Ja, hvilken retning skal denne oppgaven ta? Vi har jo snakket om tilnærminger til kultur, og det er jo selvfølgelig mange materialer man kan bruke, og som man gjerne bør bruke. Noen materialer er kanskje mer objektive, gjør elevene mer engasjerte. Men jeg vil nå påstå at vi lærere er ganske så avhengige av læreboken. Det kan jo hende at vi legger til materialer, det er jo nødvendig for å ikke simplifisere ting, men, ja, læreboken er jo veldig styrende i forhold til teamene som gjerne blir tatt opp.

I: Ja, det er interessant. Jeg vil avgjøre hvilken retning denne oppgaven tar etter at jeg har analysert datamaterialet.

R: Fornuftig.

I: Men da ønsker jeg å takke deg for at du satte av tid til både spørreundersøkelse og intervjuet.

R: Jo, det er vel gjerne vanskelig å få tak i lærere til å stille til intervju?

I: Ja, det er det. Men det er jo forståelig. Dere har jo det veldig travelt.

R: Ja, men nå nærmer det seg jo ferie, så sånn sett passet dette tidspunktet ganske bra.

I: Så bra. Men som sagt; ta kontakt dersom det er noe du lurer på.

R: Ja.