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## MASTER'S THESIS

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## **Abstract**

This thesis is about an experimental group writing project among 10<sup>th</sup> grade students of English in a lower secondary school in Norway. Writing is one of the basic skills in the *LK06* curriculum and is important in order to express oneself in school, work and society. The learners involved were a class of students who studied the English specialization subject. Many of them struggled with writing in English. The main aim of the thesis was to find out the effects the group writing activities would have on the students' writing, and motivation to write in English. The students were given four group writing activities to do over a period of six weeks.

The researcher used different methods to study the effects of the group writing activities. First, the researcher conducted a writing pre-test (about a picture story) before the group writing project and a writing post-test (also about a picture story) after the group writing project had ended. The pre- and post-tests were analysed in a quantitative and qualitative manner. The quantitative analysis focused on measurements of writing fluency, accuracy, and grammatical and lexical complexity. These included text length, T-unit length, the ratio of subordinate clauses per T-unit, and the ratio of noun, verb and adjective types per T-unit. The qualitative analysis focused on the texts' structure and some features of writing, namely points of view, and the use of direct speech and dialogue.

Second, a sample of five students were interviewed before and after the writing project. The researcher chose to interview students of different proficiency levels to gain an overall view of the learners' experiences and views about writing in groups. Third, the researcher observed all of the group writing activities.

The results showed that there were a number of differences between the students' writing before and after the group writing activities. Even though the post-tests were generally shorter than the pre-tests, it seemed as if the group writing activities had had a positive effect on the students' writing in other ways. There were increases in the average T-unit length, the subordinate clauses per T-unit ratio, and the noun types and verb types per T-unit ratios. In addition, all of the interviewees stated that they had become more motivated to write in English by writing in groups.

The present study has contributed to the research in the field of students' writing development and motivation to write in English in Norwegian schools, since, to the author's

best knowledge, there have not been previous studies of group writing with EFL students in Norway.

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Scope and aims of the study

This thesis examines the effects of four group writing activities among a group of 10<sup>th</sup> grade EFL learners in a Norwegian lower secondary school. The main aim of the study was to find out the effects of the group writing activities on the learners' writing and their motivation to write. The thesis is based on a case study of one group of learners in a lower secondary specialization class and was conducted within a period of six weeks. In order to investigate the effects of the group writing activities on the learners' writing, the researcher conducted a written pre-test prior to the writing project and a written post-test after the writing project was completed. In addition, a sample of five students were interviewed and the researcher observed all of the group writing activities.

Since writing is integrated in the current *LK06* curriculum as one of the five basic skills, it is important that students get the opportunity to develop their writing skills. The basic skills, including writing, are described in each subject. Writing is an important tool to learn in order to communicate and express oneself in school, work and society<sup>1</sup>.

The study addressed the following two research questions:

- What effects do the group writing activities have on the students' writing?
- What effects do the group writing activities have on the students' motivation to write?

The learners involved in the thesis were studying English specialization (engelsk fordypning), which is an optional subject offered at lower secondary schools in Norway. Learners can choose English specialization as an alternative to studying a second language. The learners had been studying English specialization for three years and were in their third year of the subject. The English specialization class consisted of twelve students with various proficiency levels in English. The learners had different educational and cultural backgrounds. Most of the students had a Norwegian background and four of them had a multicultural background. Thus, these four students studied English as their third language

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.udir.no/Lareplaner/Grunnleggende-ferdigheter/>

(L3). Most of the learners enjoyed writing in English, while some of them were not particularly excited about the subject or the writing skill. Several of the students also struggled with writing in English.

The group writing project was based on four story-writing tasks in class. Story writing seemed to be a suitable genre for struggling writers of English, and therefore the researcher chose stories for the students to write instead of, for example, factual texts. When writing stories, learners are dependent on their creativity and imagination instead of facts. For struggling writers, this might be an appropriate genre because writing this genre is generally something most learners are able to do. The four writing activities were conducted in groups, where the students had to write a text together. Each activity lasted for two lessons and the learners spent eight lessons on writing in groups. The researcher expected the group writing activities to enhance and improve the learners' writing and increase their motivation to write.

The conditions for the pre- and post-tests were the same. Only eight of the twelve learners in the class were involved in the pre- and post-test writing process due to the absence of some students because of illness. The pre- and post-tests were carried out individually, not in groups. This was to study if there had been any changes regarding their writing. The learners were given thirty minutes to write a story based on a series of pictures for each test.

In order to find what effect the writing activities had on the quality of the learners' writing, the researcher examined the pre- and post-tests in a qualitative and quantitative manner. The researcher analysed the texts quantitatively by measuring items of fluency, accuracy and grammatical complexity (Wolfe-Quintero et. al., 1998). In addition, the texts were analysed qualitatively by looking at the writers' use of points of view, paragraphs, direct speech, and dialogue.

A sample of the students from the class were interviewed before and after the writing project. Since the class was a mixed ability group, it was of great importance that the interviews gave an overall view of their views on writing before and after the writing project. Therefore, the researcher had chosen to interview students with different proficiency levels. The pre-interviews were focused on how the students felt about writing in English as opposed to Norwegian, what kind of texts they liked to write, whether or not they liked to write stories, and how they thought they could become better writers. The post-interviews addressed their experiences with writing in groups, what they liked and did not like about the writing activities, whether or not the writing activities had increased their motivation to write, and if they would like to do more group writing activities.



Finally, the researcher observed the students during the pre- and post-tests and during the group writing activities. The focus of the observations was on how the groups worked together when they received a writing task, the discussion during the writing process, and what the learners focused on when writing.

## **1.2 Outline of the thesis**

Following this chapter, Chapter 2 presents the *2006 Knowledge Promotion Reform (LK06)*, which is the curriculum currently used in Norwegian schools. The five basic skills are explained with emphasis on the writing skill. The chapter also explains the role of the English subject in the curriculum and English specialization, since this is the subject that is involved in the study.

Chapter 3, the literature review chapter, gives an overview of important topics related to the study. These are L2 writing, motivation in the classroom, group dynamics, and teaching writing in the L2 classroom. The chapter also explains the T-unit, which is used in the text analysis, and other measurements of writing to do with fluency, accuracy and grammatical and lexical complexity.

Chapter 4, Methodology, offers insight into the methods used in the study, i.e. the quantitative and qualitative research approach. The chapter also gives a description of the school, subjects, writing project, student-interviews and observations made. In addition, issues of ethics and validity/reliability are discussed.

Chapter 5, Results, presents the effects of the group writing project on the learners' writing and motivation to write in English. The writing analysis is shown first separately for each student and then as average scores for the group. The student interviews and the lesson observations are also presented.

Chapter 6, the discussion chapter, discusses the similarities and differences regarding the students' pre- and post-tests and links these to research conducted by other scholars. The chapter also discusses how the learners' attitudes and thoughts on writing in English had changed as a result of the group writing project. In addition, the lesson observations are also discussed.

Finally, Chapter 7 provides a conclusion of the thesis.

## **2. The role of written English in the Norwegian school and the English specialization subject**

### **2.1. Knowledge Promotion Reform (K-06)**

The curriculum currently used in the Norwegian school, the 2006 *Knowledge Promotion Reform* (also known as *LK06*), is the latest reform used in primary, lower and upper secondary school. Since *LK06*, the Norwegian school has based each subject curriculum on five basic skills that are necessary in order to learn and develop in school, work and society. These skills are reading, writing, numeracy, expressing oneself verbally, and using digital tools. They are described in each subject curriculum. The five basic skills are basic to learning in every subject, but are also necessary in order for the student to show his/her competence and gain ‘knowledge promotion through outcome-based learning’<sup>2</sup>. Through the thirteen-year compulsory education in Norway, these basic skills are integrated in the competence aims in every subject, including English<sup>3</sup>.

The *LK06* curriculum contains:

- The Core Curriculum, which covers the different values and aspects of man, such as the ‘spiritual’, ‘the creative’, ‘the working’, ‘liberally-educated’, ‘the social’, ‘the environmentally aware’, and ‘the integrated human being’.<sup>4</sup>
- The Quality Framework, which deals with the principles that should be taken into consideration to make sure that the educational training is in accordance with laws and regulations.
- Subject Curricula, which explain and describe the five basic skills adapted in each subject.
- Distribution of teaching hours per subject

The ‘Framework for (the five) basic skills’ was developed in 2012 by the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. It is supposed to work as an aid to the curriculum,

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.udir.no/Stottemeny/English/Curriculum-in-English/\\_english/Knowledge-promotion---Kunnskapsloftet/](http://www.udir.no/Stottemeny/English/Curriculum-in-English/_english/Knowledge-promotion---Kunnskapsloftet/)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.udir.no/Lareplaner/Grunnleggende-ferdigheter/>

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.udir.no/globalassets/upload/larerplaner/generell\\_del/5/core\\_curriculum\\_english.pdf](http://www.udir.no/globalassets/upload/larerplaner/generell_del/5/core_curriculum_english.pdf)

describing the basic skills and explaining how they can function on different levels, both in primary, lower and upper secondary school. The Framework is also a tool for developing and revising the national subject curricula (Framework for basic skills, 2012).

The Framework for basic skills contains explanations of each skill and how they can be developed. Each skill is divided into different subcategories depending on the type of skill. For example, the basic skill of knowing how to read is divided into ‘understand’, ‘find’, ‘interpret’ and ‘reflect and assess’, while writing as a basic skill is divided into ‘plan’, ‘construct’, ‘communicate’, ‘reflect and assess’. The subcategories are also divided into five levels; level one and two are the basic level, which does not demand too much of the student, level three and four are somewhat more demanding, and level five is the most demanding level (Framework for basic skills, 2012:9,11).

One of the basic skills, writing, is described in every subject curriculum in the *LK06* curriculum. Writing, as described in the Framework for basic skills, ‘involves expressing oneself understandably and appropriately about different topics, and communicating with others in the written mode’ (Framework for basic skills, 2012:10). According to the Framework for basic skills, writing is also a skill that is important in order to convey thoughts and opinions. Being able to master and develop the skill to write is necessary for learning, work life, and participation in social life.

## **2.2. The English subject and the role of writing in the curriculum**

Writing is also an important basic skill to express oneself in English. In the Norwegian school, students study English from the first grade of primary school to the foundation level of upper secondary school. Being able to write (and read) English are important skills in society today. English is a global language that is necessary to master in order to communicate when meeting people from other parts of the world or at home. In order to do so, students must be able to use the language in different contexts and develop their vocabulary and grammar skills (*LK06* English subject curriculum).

The English subject is structured in four main subject areas: ‘Language learning’, ‘Oral communication’, ‘Written communication’ and ‘Culture, society and literature. Each of the main subject areas must be regarded as a whole and seen in relation to one another.

Firstly, ‘Language learning’ makes students aware of the relation between English, one’s mother tongue and other languages. It focuses on the use of language, knowledge about the language and gives attention to the students’ own language learning. The second main

subject area, 'Oral communication', involves using and understanding the English language orally by listening and speaking. In this main subject area, students should get the chance to use English in different contexts, which involves listening and speaking English in different situations. The third main subject area, 'Written communication', focuses on comprehending the English language by reading and writing English. It includes using a range of texts to motivate students and to gain knowledge. In this area, students will be required to write different types of texts and learn the difference between formal and informal written language. The final main subject area, 'Culture, society and literature', involves having an understanding of the culture, literature and society in English-speaking countries. This is important in order for students to understand and respect other peoples' lives and cultures (*LK06 English subject curriculum*).

The basic skills are also integrated into the competence aims in the English subject curriculum. In the English subject curriculum the skill to write is understood as: 'being able to express ideas and opinions in an understandable and purposeful manner using written English' (*LK06 English subject curriculum*). This means that students must plan, formulate and work with different types of literary texts. To develop writing proficiency in English it is necessary to learn orthography and to develop one's vocabulary (*LK06 English subject curriculum*).

### **2.3. English specialization (Engelsk fordypning)**

English specialization is an optional subject offered at lower secondary schools in Norway as an additional subject in English. Students can study English specialization as an alternative to studying a second language. Normally students choose to study another foreign language, e.g. French or German in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. If they choose English specialization, they have to study the subject from 8<sup>th</sup> through 10<sup>th</sup> grade. Although English specialization is a subject offered to all students, it is often chosen by and recommended to students who struggle with reading and writing English.

English specialization, also known as in-depth studies in English, is built on the same kind of academic foundation as in the regular English subject and is supposed to open for deeper studies in English and make students develop their linguistic and cultural competence in the subject. In order to do so, students must be able to master the language in different ways, and to understand that language is used differently in different contexts. One of the

aims in the English specialization subject is also to contribute to students' interest, motivation and self-confidence in using the English language (*LK06*, English specialization subject curriculum). In order to master the English language in different ways, it is important that students are exposed to a wide range of texts, to deliver their own opinions, and to comprehend the messages of others. This is a part of their individual linguistic competence and helps them develop critical thinking (*LK06*, English specialization subject curriculum).

English specialization focuses mainly on two subject areas: 'Exploring language and text' and 'Text and meaning'. The main subject area 'Exploring language and text' focuses on experimenting with the English language through different texts, i.e. spoken, written and composite texts, by using different types of media, and comparing written and spoken English and Norwegian. In the main subject area 'Text and meaning', the competence aims mainly focus on using the English language as a communication tool, getting students to impart their own opinions and experiences in writing, and comparing different types of medias (*LK06* English specialization subject curriculum). The skill of writing is integrated in many of the competence aims in the English specialization curriculum, but since the skills to read and write are related to one another, many of the competence aims contain elements of both reading and writing. Some of the competence aims are:

- read and present his or her own choices of fiction and factual prose
- impart his or her own experience of music and films or theatre to others
- impart media items from his or her own choice of English-language media and prepare his/her own news story
- compare and critically assess various types of English-language sources when it comes to content, copyright and protection of personal privacy

The main subject area 'Text and meaning' focuses on a great range of texts, by using both 'traditional forms of expression', 'such as books, songs, films, and newspapers', and also more modern ways of expression, such as music videos (*LK06* English specialization subject curriculum).

In the other main subject area, 'Exploring language and text', the competence aims have a more linguistic focus, more precisely on language form and meaning. The students are to experiment with the English language through translations, figurative expressions,

comparing the English language to one's mother tongue, and experimenting with different types of genres. In these competence aims, the students are challenged to reflect upon and take a deeper look at how the English language is used to express oneself:

- present proverbs, sayings and figurative expressions in English and compare with his/her native language, and talk about how such expressions may represent different ways of thinking
- compare words and grammatical forms in written and spoken use of the English language
- experiment with simple translations between Norwegian and English, written and spoken, and talk about how meanings change according to the choice of words.
- experiment with different written and spoken forms of expressions in different genres.

English specialization is different from the regular English subject by focusing on using English in creative and practical situations. For example, one of the chapters in the textbook '*On the move 2*' (normally used in the school where the research takes place) is about youth and sports, while another chapter is about cooking. Some of the chapters are also based on history, such as Pompeii, the ancient city in Italy. Other chapters are about English-speaking countries, such as the US and the UK.

Also, the *On the move* book is made to look like a magazine, where each chapter is supposed to portray a magazine cover. This is to make the chapters somewhat more interesting for the students to read. The texts in the chapters are also an easier read compared to texts in the regular English subject. There is a wordlist for every text, which makes it easier for struggling readers to read.

When it comes to the basic skill of writing in the English specialization subject, the *LK06* English specialization curriculum describes being able to write, as well as to express oneself orally, as follows:

*Being able to express oneself in writing and orally* in the in-depth English subject is a key part of developing linguistic competence. These skills are important tools in working on understanding and using English in increasingly varied and demanding contexts across cultures and subject fields (*LK06* English specialization subject

curriculum).

For students to develop their writing skill in English specialization, they need to get the opportunity to express themselves in English by, for example, writing different types of texts and being exposed to a wide range of texts. Furthermore, it is essential that students understand that in order to learn how to write English, they have to read English texts because, by reading, they can get to know how a text is structured and learn how to create their own texts.

### **3. Literature review**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews literature that is relevant to the current thesis. Section 3.2 discusses the differences of writing in L1 and L2 languages and refers to various types of motivation. The advantages, and to a certain extent the disadvantages, of grouping students and how this is linked to Vygotsky's zone of proximal development is presented in section 3.3. Furthermore, section 3.4 presents several traditions of teaching writing in the L2 classroom and assessing L2 writing. In addition, fluency, accuracy, grammatical and lexical complexity, as measurements of writing, are reviewed. Finally, section 3.5 presents research on writing conducted in a Norwegian environment (Bø 2014; Nygaard 2010; Yu 2014, Vigrestad 2006; Drew 2010).

#### **3.2 Second language learners**

Initially, it is important to point out that students of L2 writing are a diverse group, where each learner's needs and use of writing is dissimilar. Grabe and Kaplan (1996) explain how learners of English are divided into two groups between English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL). A student learning English as a second language often lives in a country where English is commonly used in the society or is one of the official languages among the population, for example a Mexican living in America. On the other hand, a student learning English as a foreign language normally lives in a country where English is not commonly used, for example a Norwegian learning English in Norway for academic purposes (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996:23-24). English is the first foreign language in Norway with its own separate school curriculum.

Learning a second language differs from learning a first language due to the different circumstances and conditions regarding a first language. First of all, learning a second language indicates that the learner already has a first language. For the learner, the first language may help or interfere with the second language acquisition. For learners in Norway the first language is very likely to interfere with the second language because of the



grammatical and vocabulary similarity between Norwegian and English. A familiar term when discussing how learners mix English and Norwegian to express themselves in English is called *Norwegianisms*. Some Norwegian learners, when writing in English, use Norwegian ways of expressing themselves and believe that the same word or construction will work in English, for example ‘I have it fine today’ (instead of ‘I am fine today’). Also, when learners write in English they often use words that appear similar but do not have the same meanings in English as in Norwegian. Drew and Sørheim (2009:17) use the term ‘*false friends*’ to explain this typical habit of many Norwegian learners. For example, the word *gift* means a present in English, but poison in Norwegian (Drew and Sørheim, 2009:17).

Another difference between a learners’ L1 and L2 is ‘where the actual learning takes place’ and in what kind of setting (Drew and Sørheim, 2009:17). The learners can learn English in a ‘*natural* setting’, meaning they learn the language by interacting and working with other people. This often occurs when learners move from one country to another and must learn English in order to communicate in the new country. However, for many young learners, learning English happens mainly in an *educational* setting, meaning in the classroom. This makes the L2 learning process more complex because of conditions such as teaching hours, communicating in the second language, the learners’ age, and the fact that they have to learn the second language and its culture at the same time. There are also other factors that can affect the learning process, such as social factors, individual factors, preferences, strategies and, of course, motivation (Drew and Sørheim, 2009:17-18).

### 3.2.1 Motivation in the classroom

One of the aims of this study is to find out whether or not writing in groups can motivate learners to write. An important factor for getting students to write is motivation. It is motivation that sparks an interest in writing and is that drive which makes students want to write. For learners to feel success, motivation is essential.

Brown (2007:85) defines motivation as being a) ‘goals to pursue’ and b) ‘the effort you will devote to that pursuit’. The way one interprets this definition depends on what kind of theory one focuses on. There are many theories and perspectives on motivation. The three most common perspectives are behavioral, cognitive and constructivist (Brown, 2007:85). A behavioral definition emphasizes the focus on rewards. At the same time, a reward can differ from student to student (Brown, 2007:85). Some students see good grades as a reward after a long time of hard work, while others see the learning process as a reward in itself.

While a behavioristic perspective considers rewards as a big part of getting learners motivated, a cognitive perspective, emphasizes fundamental drives, needs and self-control. These ‘drives’, according to Ausubel (1968), cited in Brown (2007), are ‘exploration’, ‘manipulation’, ‘activity’, ‘stimulation’, ‘knowledge’ and ‘ego enhancement’ (Brown, 2007:86). Needs are also essential in order to motivate. Maslow’s (1970) theory of needs, which Brown (2007) discusses, how every human being has needs that must be fulfilled and how these needs can be arranged in a hierarchy. The important factor in Maslow’s hierarchy is that one cannot satisfy the higher needs in the hierarchy before the lower needs are satisfied (Brown, 2007:86-87). Lastly, self-control is important for motivation according to the cognitive view. Here, the focus is on making choices and ‘deciding for themselves what to think, feel or do’ Brown, 2007:87).

A third view on motivation deals with the constructivist theory, focusing on ‘social context’ and ‘individual personal choices’ (Brown, 2007:87). This view indicates that motivation is dependent on situations, tasks and the global context. For example, learning a new language is determined by all of these three levels (Brown, 2007:87).

Motivation is often divided in two types: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic and extrinsic differentiates between inner and outer motivation; the difference between doing something because of curiosity or interest, and obligation or responsibility. Deci (1975) cited in Brown (2007), explains intrinsic motivation as ‘intrinsically motivated activities are ones for which there is no apparent reward except the activity itself’ (Brown, 2007:88). The learners will engage in the activities because they are interesting or fun, not because they will be rewarded. By engaging in intrinsically motivated activities, the learners will get the feeling of achieving something, such as a higher level of competence. In contrast, when doing extrinsically motivated activities, the learners will expect to get a reward of some sort when finishing a task. Rewards such as grades, money and prizes are distinctive for extrinsic rewards. This type of motivation is closely linked to a behavioristic view of motivation (Brown, 2007:88).

One might question which type of motivation is more superior. Researchers such as Piaget, Maslow and Bruner, discussed in Brown (2007), claim that intrinsic motivation is the best type of motivation, especially for the long run. Piaget (1972) claimed that humans search for challenges to conquer. Maslow (1970) believed that intrinsic motivation was of more importance than extrinsic motivation and justified this with his hierarchy of needs. When our basic physical needs, safety needs, and belongingness are met, we are motivated to fulfill our

need of ‘self-actualization’, meaning the need to realize our ‘talents and potentialities’<sup>5</sup>.

Furthermore, Bruner (1962) claims that the key to helping children to learn in a successful way is by removing rewards and punishments (Brown, 2007:89).

In today’s school system, extrinsic motivation is commonly used in classrooms. Students learn that by working hard they will achieve good grades. Competing against their peers and comparing grades is often observed among students of all ages. Often, the reward in a classroom is good grades instead of learning and experience. This can cause students to fear failing and taking risks. By teaching students to learn for their own sakes and not always having rewards, they gain important life lessons, such as self-esteem, belonging, respect and positive learning experiences (Brown, 2007:90-92).

In a second language classroom, there are various ways of giving students tasks that can increase their intrinsic motivation, for example writing texts as a thinking process, where the learners can exchange ideas openly. One can also make the students write their own texts and pass them on to other students. Lastly, one can help help the learners to develop their oral skills by asking them to talk about their own experiences and interests in groups (Brown, 2007:92-93).

In a second language classroom, as with any other classroom, the individuals’ motivation will vary greatly. Cook (1991) examines how L2 learners can be different from one another. Cook (1991) discusses how motivation, in terms of L2 learning, is often divided in two kinds, integrative and instrumental motivation. The learners’ motivation is dependent on the reason why the student is learning the second language. Integrative motivation considers students’ ability to feel a sense of belonging to the target culture and people. If the L2 learner is concerned with, for example, the culture’s literature and seek ways of practising the target language, there is a bigger chance that the student might accomplish aims and goals in the L2 classroom (Cook, 1991:72-73). For example, a language student learning English might want to travel to an English-speaking country read English literature and enjoy speaking English.

Instrumental motivation concerns the student learning the L2 language for other reasons, such as passing an exam, a requirement for a job or studying abroad. For example, in certain professions, speaking English is needed and it is therefore required that the applicants master the language. However, it is important to mention that these are not the only types of motivation. Consequently, L2 motivation is not a choice between these to types of

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/self-actualization>

motivations. Both kinds are necessary and in some cases one might find one or the other type or even a mixture of both. A study of young people in Europe showed that 51% were motivated because of personal interest, 29% were interested in learning languages due to job possibilities, and 14% wanted to learn in order to work, study or live in the country (Cook, 1991:72-73).

Often in a second language classroom, students will have neither the one nor the other type of motivation. They may not always see the importance of learning a second language, as it may not relate to their job, they may not have any contact with the target language, and they may not be interested in learning the language. They may basically not have a reason to learn the language. As a result, if the learners are not motivated, the teacher can face difficulties concerning how to motivate them.

Often, the lack of motivation is connected to the L2 learners' cultural background. Sometimes the learners' background collides with the target language's culture. Learners of a second language might feel that learning the target language 'threatens' their first language, which, is also called 'subtractive bilingualism'. Others might feel that the target language enriches their language repertoire. They are adding new skills by learning a second language. In order for the L2 learning to be a success, it is important that the learners are positive and have an 'additive bilingualism perspective'. However, when learning a second language, some learners might feel that they are losing their identity and therefore sometimes choose not to learn the target language. This often occurs in immigrant situations where groups of people do not participate in society and therefore do not learn the language (Cook, 1991:72-74).

As Drew and Sørheim (2009) argue, motivating learners to learn a foreign language is dependent on the way the teacher teaches the language. The choices of materials, as well as methods, are factors that can influence the motivation greatly. It is important that the teacher makes sure that the lessons are of interest for the students, relevant, varied and challenging enough for all students (Drew and Sørheim, 2009:21).

Clearly, there are many perspectives on motivation and how to get learners motivated. For students learning English as a foreign language, it is necessary to take into these different factors. Students' ability to acquire knowledge varies and it is important to consider this when teaching an L2 classroom.

### 3.3 Social constructivism and group dynamics

Corden (2004) discusses how scholars, both in the USA and UK, argue for the use of group work in classrooms. Researchers in the USA claim that learners increase motivation, they develop social skills and accomplish more in an educational arena by working in groups. Additionally, researchers in the UK argue that learners gain higher self-esteem and achievement through group work (Corden, 2004:138-140). Group co-operation also enhances the ability to work with other peers.

Boughey (1997) studied thirty students with multilingual background at Western Cape University in South Africa. English was not the first language of any of the students. The subjects in the study co-worked in groups and were given writing assignments and written feedback on their work. Boughey (1997) found that each group showed a marked improvement in writing, which were the benefits of group-work (Boughey, 1997:128-132).

When learners work in groups, as they do in the current research, they get to ask questions, reflect and learn from each other. As Pilarcik (1986:223) claims, group activities can encourage learners to participate as ‘thinkers, writers, readers and critics’. This can particularly be beneficial for weaker students because they can get assistance from their peers. The focus will be on them working together as a team and the range of proficiency levels will not be an important factor, but rather how they can co-operate and gain knowledge from each others. If one learner, for example, is having difficulties with coming up with words or does not know how to conjugate a verb, the other students can help him/her, especially if it is a mixed ability group. There is a limit to what the learner can manage alone and what the learner can manage with the help of more skillful peers.

Vygotsky (1978) differentiates between two types of developmental levels: the actual development level and the zone of proximal development (ZPD). The actual development level, as Vygotsky explains, is ‘the level of development of a child’s mental functions that have been established as a result of certain already completed developmental cycles’ (Vygotsky, 1978:85). This level is based on what the child can do on his/her own. For example, a seven year-old learner is assumed to know how to solve problems at a level appropriate to his/her age. However, with some help, the seven-year-old may be able to solve problems normally solved by older learners if the child gets some assistance in the solving process and is shown several solutions to the problem (i.e. reaches his/her zone of proximal development). What learners can do with the assistance of others is also an indication of the level of their mental development. The actual development level differs from the zone of

proximal development, also called ‘potential development’, by focusing on what the learners can learn to do with the assistance of another. The levels go from the first level, which includes finding solutions independently, to solving problems with the help of adults or skillful peers. In other words, what learners can do today with the help of another, they can do independently tomorrow by themselves (Vygotsky, 1978:85-86). Working in groups gives learners the chance to move from the development level to the potential developmental level. It can be an enjoyable activity for many students. It gives them the chance to work together, to brainstorm, plan and produce a text. However, grouping students can be a challenge to the teacher due to the many advantages and possible challenges of group work.

Although there is not a particular or determined way of grouping students, it can be useful to take some factors into consideration before doing so. Working in groups of four or five allows the students to take on different types of activities than those of pair-work. For example, tasks such as writing stories can be suitable for groups of four to five. Groups of this size can make the students show great engagement and make them participate. The groups are small enough to give everyone a voice to be heard (Harmer, 2001:117).

Making students work in groups as opposed to working in a class as a whole can have both advantages and disadvantages (Harmer, 2001:114). One of the many advantages is that everyone gets the chance to say their opinion and participate in the group. It is more private and one is not as exposed as in a whole class context, which can be beneficial for students with low proficiency in English as it gives them the chance to participate at their own level. Group work also permits the students to make decisions without any interference from the teacher. Also, it can give all students the feeling of more or less being a part of a group work, even though some might participate more than others (Harmer, 2001:117-118).

Even though there are many advantages to working in groups, there can also be some disadvantages, such as the sound level. Some teachers might find the loudness of group work disturbing because one does not have the same control in groups as in a whole class. Some students do not like working in groups, they prefer working alone or in pairs or because they are not satisfied with the group’s composition (Harmer, 2001:117-118). Another disadvantage might be that some students in the group become more dominant than others and the group dynamic does not work as well due to the different types of students. Furthermore, grouping students can take longer to organize than, for example, pairs (Harmer, 2001:117-118).

Deciding whether to place students in groups, pairs or in class depends on factors such as the task that the students are to be given. For some tasks, such as letting the students compare answers or answer questions in the textbook, working in pairs might be the best

choice, whereas when writing stories, working in groups would be the best option. (Harmer, 2001:118).

When grouping students, it is important to consider principles such as friendship. If the students are friends, it might be helpful to group them together as opposed to students who do not get along, because that could create disagreement in the group. Another possibility is to group the students by chance, meaning grouping students randomly. One can either group them by giving them a letter from A to Z, or numbers, or ask them to work with the people sitting next to them. Another possibility is to group students according to their proficiency in English, either by grouping stronger students together, or by a mixture of both weak and strong students. By grouping the students based on the same level, one gives the stronger students the ability to get challenged and gives them more demanding tasks. However, in that case the importance of working together, having both weaker and stronger students helping each other, disappears (Harmer, 2001:120-121).

Activities where students of different proficiency levels work together gives them the chance to help each other and learn from one another, especially the less able ones from the more able ones. One such activity is 'Readers Theatre', a well-known reading activity involving group dynamics. Readers Theatre focuses on reading aloud in groups and can be used in mother tongue and in L2 classrooms, such as English (Drew and Pedersen, 2010). The activity is a method where learners read a text aloud in a group which is divided into small pieces. The learners take turns in reading their parts of the text. Some might read more than others based on their proficiency level. This reading activity combines both speaking and reading as it makes the learners read and at the same time use their oral language. Thus, reading and speaking are not the only factors in the activity; listening and thinking are also involved. Initially, every sort of text can be used for RT, such as stories, poems, novels or factual texts, even though stories and folk tales are the ones mostly used. Texts that the learners have written can also be used (Drew and Pedersen, 2010:2-3).

In the RT reading method, before the students perform the text in front of an audience, they read the text several times, because by doing so they will get to know the text and become more secure in reading out aloud. This creates a safe atmosphere and the students are not afraid to read the text for the audience. Also, the students' reading becomes more fluent. Research shows that it is encouraging especially for struggling readers because it gives them a chance to improve their skills of reading (Drew and Pedersen, 2010). Many of them might get the feeling that they are at the same level as better readers.

The aim of another Readers Theatre study (Drew and Pedersen, 2012) was to find the challenges and benefits of using the RT method in two mainstream EFL classrooms and to study how the students and teacher experienced and felt about the three uses of RT. The subjects in the study consisted of two 8<sup>th</sup> grade classes who took part in three variations of RT. The students spent four weeks on each of the variations and then performed their texts for the other students in the last week. Throughout the very first RT cycle, both of the classes used three fictional texts customized to the RT method. Then, during the second RT cycle, the students chose groups of three to five and were given short texts to make suitable for the RT method. Finally, in the third RT cycle, the learners made their own RT texts, where the theme for each group was one of the seven continents. The teacher and the students were interviewed during and after the RT process. After the first RT cycle, the learners' attitudes to RT were generally positive. About four out of five students felt that the combination of reading aloud and dramatization in groups was exciting. Also, seven out of ten students felt that it was fun taking part in RT and about two out of three students wanted to work on another RT project. Moreover, nine out of ten students felt that RT was a good way of practicing oral English and half of the students participating felt that RT had made them feel more confident in using English.

After the second RT cycle, the teacher noticed progress in the groups and the students focused on different areas when working together. Finally, after the third RT cycle, the students' logs revealed that this was the variant they liked best because they were given the opportunity to choose a variety of materials and be creative in the process. All in all, the RT method in the two 8<sup>th</sup> grade classes was a success. The students had a positive experience performing the three variants of the reading method and working in groups played a big role in the success of the method (Drew and Pedersen, 2012).

### **3.4 Second language writing**

#### **3.4.1 Challenges of L2 writing**

Writing is a communication tool to use in order to express oneself. It is 'an act of communication between the writer and the reader' (Drew and Sørheim, 2009:86-87). To master the ability to write is a necessary skill in order to express oneself, to communicate in work life and be a part of society (*LK06* English subject curriculum). Some learners write much and enjoy writing while others do not like writing at all. Because writing is necessary in



many and various contexts, it is important that students get the opportunity to write different types of texts in order to learn how to express themselves in writing (Drew and Sørheim, 2009:86-87).

In order to understand L2 writing, it is important to understand L2 writing practices. Silva (1993) studied the differences between L1 and L2 writing by examining 72 research reports. Forty-one of them concerned ESL (English as a second language) and NES (native English-speaking writers), twenty-seven of them compared L1 and L2 writing, and four of them compared both of them. The subjects of the studies involved learners from a range of different language backgrounds. A minimum 27 of them had a different mother tongue and Arabic, Spanish and Chinese were the major (dominant) languages (Silva, 1993:657, 659). The subjects wrote a variety of essays and the time range was from 20 minutes to as much time as the subject needed on the given tasks (Silva, 1993:650-660).

When writing in a second language, writers have often been advised to use their L1 writing practices, which supposes that L1 and L2 writing are very similar (Silva, 1993:657). There are some similarities between L1 and L2 writing in terms of the writing process, such as ‘planning, writing and revising’ (Silva, 1993:657). Nevertheless, a careful look at L1 and L2 writing shows crucial differences between the development of writing in an L2 as opposed to L1 (Silva, 1993: 657).

The findings of these studies showed that L2 writers spent more time considering what topic to choose, did not plan as much as L1 writers, and had a difficult time achieving the aims they set. The studies also showed that L2 writers were not so productive or fluent when writing, and they used a significant time referring back to their outline of how to arrange their texts. Also, L2 writers reread and reviewed less, and their writing process involved less fluency and accuracy. The research indicated that L2 texts contained more errors, including verbs, prepositions and articles (Silva, 1993:661-663). Additionally, the L2 writers had simpler texts, which contained shorter T-units (Silva, 1993:668)

Silva’s (1993) overview showed that L2 learners often write poorly as opposed to L1 writers. This might have something to do with the fact that writing in a second language can be demanding to many learners due to the interference of the mother tongue. L2 learners may use the same writing structures from their L1 when writing in a second language, which can often result in poorer sentence structures and grammar errors.

### 3.4.2 Teaching writing in the L2 classroom

There are many ways writing can be examined and how these can influence the L2 classroom. Various perspectives on which orientations to focus on in a L2 classroom have been discussed and Hyland (1996) explains some of these traditions of teaching orientations by dividing them into various curriculum options:

- language structures
- text functions
- themes or topics
- creative expression
- composing processes
- content
- genre and contexts of writing

The teaching orientations show different ideas to focus on when teaching writing to L2 learners. 'Language structure' focuses on writing as 'words, clauses and sentences' linked to language rules. This gives the impression that writing is a product of the writer's knowledge of grammatical and lexical structures. Here, the ability to express oneself clearly and accurately is seen as good writing, and not so much the meaning of the text (Hyland, 1996: 3-4).

Another way of looking at writing is focusing on text functions, meaning learning how to use different structures and patterns when writing. Students get to learn how to produce successful paragraphs by writing various types of sentences. This orientation makes the learners focus on patterns and models of writing. However, the meaning and purpose of what the learner produces fades (Hyland, 1996:6-7).

A third way of studying writing is drawing attention to the writer's experience and viewpoints. This makes it much easier for the author to express himself and be creative in the writing process. Students get the space to be personal in their writing and not be affected by the teacher's views or suggestions. To many students this type of writing can be joyful while other students do not enjoy creative writing and might experience difficulties with these types of tasks (Hyland, 1996:8-10).

Using a process model to help the writer in the writing process can also be useful. This gives the learners a step-to-step list on how to start writing by selecting topic,

‘brainstorming’, ‘composing’, ‘revising’, ‘proofreading’ and evaluating their work. This challenges the learners cognitively and makes them evaluate their work (Hyland, 1996:10-12).

One can also focus on content when teaching writing. In L2 classrooms, focusing on themes that the students have knowledge about and are familiar with is a well-known activity. Although many students will be able to relate to the topics, it is not certain that all of the students will be familiar with the subject matter. Another benefit of familiar topics is that they give both students of low proficiency and high proficiency the opportunity to be challenged by ‘varying the amount of information provided’ (Hyland, 1996:14-15).

Finally, by focusing on genre, students write in order ‘to get something done’, by writing texts such as stories, drafts or letters (Hyland, 1996:18). There is a motive, a particular purpose, behind the writing. By focusing on texts such as stories or narratives, the learners allow their imagination to run wild and use their creative skills to write. Learners enjoy writing stories because it gives them a chance to experiment and show their language skills. They are more than willing to write about themselves and share their lives with others. Narratives, where children get to create stories of their own and write about fantasy worlds, are perhaps the most preferable genre for young learners. Additionally, since writing about one’s life and experience is a relatively easy text to produce, personal narratives are very common and important in writing development (Drew and Sørheim, 2009:88).

### 3.4.3 Assessing L2 writing

Assessing learners’ texts can be done in various ways. Assessment is feedback on the students’ work and there are various ways of collecting data on students’ language ability. Assessments can be either formative, meaning a teacher can test students in the learning process by looking at their weaknesses and strengths and what they have learned so far, or it can be summative, meaning the teacher can test the students in order to see how much the students have learned at the end of a semester. Summative assessments often include grading students. (Hyland, 1996:213).

Being evaluated is a part of learning and it can be greatly educational for many learners. Some of the reasons why teachers evaluate concern placement, diagnostic, achievement, performance and proficiency. Firstly, evaluating learners can help the teacher to receive the information that is needed to decide where the students should be placed class-wise. Secondly, teachers can evaluate to expose students’ strengths and weaknesses, or to see

how the students' writing has progressed. In addition, evaluation is necessary for the teacher to examine the learners' ability to write specific writing tasks, such as academic writing. Finally, evaluation is important in order to assess students' competence level (Hyland, 1996: 213-214). Assessing students helps the teacher to get a clear view on the learners' competence and can therefore contribute to helping the students to become better writers.

The quality of an assessment is dependent on the validity and reliability of the tasks that are given. A reliable writing task evaluates the learners' writing consistently during the semester and from the same learner but with different examiners (Hyland, 1996: 215). In addition, the writing assessment 'must assess what it claims to assess' and 'must assess what has been taught' (Hyland, 1996:217). It is important, for the quality of the assessment, that it is both of a reliable and valid measurement.

### 3.4.4 Measures in second language writing

#### 3.4.4.1 The T-unit

One of the interesting findings in how children develop their writing is Hunt's (1970) work on how children's writing is connected to their maturity. Hunt (1965) examined the writing of a group of learners with special emphasis on grammatical structures. The subjects in this study were students in the fourth, eighth and twelfth grade. He started with the fourth grade since this is when most students are ready to write. The eighth grade was supposed to work as a half-way point to see if there were any changes between fourth and twelfth grade. The study stopped at twelfth grade because, if there were any changes, they should appear within these eight years. The students chosen for this study had an IQ score between 90 and 110 (Hunt, 1965:1-2).

According to Hunt (1970), there are three ways in which learners' sentences change in relation to their maturity. Firstly, children write more the older they get. Therefore, a twelfth grade student will write more than a fourth grade student. Secondly, Hunt (1970) stated that their 'sentences become longer' (Hunt, 1970:187), and lastly the use of subordinate clauses increases. His findings give insight into how the use of subordinate clauses becomes more frequent as the children mature. Hunt (1970) also discovered that only adjective clauses increase as the children get older, while noun and adverb clauses do not (Hunt, 1970:187).

Hunt (1970) explained how young learners write independent clauses as opposed to older learners and adults who write subordinate clauses, especially adjective clauses. By

doing so older learners put more information into fewer words. As Hunt explains, they ‘pack more information into fewer clauses’ (Hunt, 1970:188). Hunt (1970:188) calls this the T-unit: ‘the minimal terminable unit or a piece of discourse that can be cut without leaving any sentence fragments as residue’. The T-unit is ‘one main clause plus all the subordinate clauses attached to or embedded within it’ (Hunt, 1965:141). Examples of T-units are: *Alex went to the store* (one T-unit) and *he bought a chocolate bar* (one T-unit). These two examples contain one T-unit each. In order to help learners develop their T-units, it is important to increase their use of subordinate clauses and add more phrases and words (Hunt, 1970:188).

The T-unit is one way of measuring children’s writing and maturity. However, some researchers, such as Bardovi-Harlig (1992), have criticized the T-unit and suggested other options to measure syntactic complexity of writing, such as sentence analysis (Bardovi-Harlig, 1992:394). Bardovi-Harlig (1992) points out many difficulties with the T-unit. One of them is that a T-unit analysis splits sentences that were supposed to be units by the writer and by doing so undermines the length and complexity of the sentence (Bardovi-Harlig, 1992:391). Moreover, a T-unit analysis can separate conjuncts joined by ‘and’, ‘or’ and ‘by’, which can have an impact on the meaning or information that is supposed to be conveyed in the sentence. For example, ‘They do not encourage their children to mix with the opposite sex, but they do let them interact to certain extent’ (2 T-units/1sentence) (Bardovi-Harlig, 1992:392).

For these reasons, Bardovi-Harlig (1992) suggests using a sentence analysis instead. Other researchers, such as Gaies (1980), are also critical to T-units and have tried to view the criticism and give a genuine perspective of the T-unit analysis by referring to several critics. Gaies (1980) reviews the main problems with the T-unit analysis, particularly its relevance to second language data, and questions whether T-unit analysis is a useful and valid measurement (Gaies, 1980:54).

#### 3.4.4.2 Measuring fluency, accuracy, and grammatical and lexical complexity

There are various ways to measure the quality of learners’ writing. These include measuring fluency, accuracy, and grammatical and lexical complexity.

Firstly, fluency is used to measure the second language writers’ production of written language. An important part of developing language is how easily the writer can find the words he or she needs to produce sentences or different types of texts. The more a writer reads and gains knowledge of new words, the more fluent the writer will become when

writing. Wolfe-Quintero et al. (1998:14) refer to fluency as being ‘issues of rate and length’, meaning fluency is ‘more words and more structures are accessed in a limited time’ while the lack of fluency is the opposite. It is possible to measure fluency by counting the writer’s amount of words in a particular time period, not how advanced or accurate the words are (Wolfe-Quintero et al., 1998:13-14).

Fluency is usually measured by counting the length, rate or number of units the writer has produced. The ‘units’ include sentences, clauses, phrases and T-units and there are several ways one can assess the production of these types of units. It is possible to measure fluency by counting the number of words in one production unit. In addition, one can count how many words a writer produces per minute. If the learners are timed when producing texts, which they are in the present study, the number of words they produce can also become a rate measure (Wolfe-Quintero et al., 1998:14). According to Wolfe-Quintero et al. (1998) T-unit length, error-free T-unit length and clause length are the best measurements of fluency (Wolfe-Quintero et al., 1998:29).

Accuracy is also used as a measurement when assessing learners’ writing. It is seen as ‘the ability to be free from errors while using language to communicate in either writing or speech’ (Wolfe-Quintero et al., 1998:33). Wolfe-Quintero et al. (1998) argue how accuracy can appear from three different sources: ‘The degree of accuracy of the language representation itself, the strength of competing representations, and the degree of automatization of language production’ (Wolfe-Quintero et al., 1998:33).

When students learn a target language, which in this case is English, each of these three sources might vary in the learners’ representations. MacKay (1982), cited in Wolfe-Quintero et al. (1998: 33), discusses how there can be ‘trade-offs’ when learners are in the process of automatizing language, meaning there can be more mistakes when learners’ production is slow or fast. Furthermore, when a writer’s production is automatized, the writer will most likely write fewer mistakes or errors. This means that if ‘the underlying system and production’ do not match, that can cause errors in second language (Wolfe-Quintero et al., 1998:33). When the target language is automatized, the writer has no problem retrieving words and terms when producing a text (Wolfe-Quintero et al., 1998:33).

Accuracy can be measured by counting, for example, error-free T-units or the numbers of errors per T-units. Usually there is a time limit in order to see if there have been any changes. It is expected that the number of error-free T-units will increase when a learner becomes more proficient in the target language, but this is not always the case (Wolfe-Quintero et al., 1998: 39,49).

Using measurements such as fluency and accuracy can be useful in this case study in order to examine if there have been any changes in the students' writing. Since the subjects of this thesis are second and third language learners of English, there might be individual differences or similarities in their writing.

One of the main factors of good writing has to do with a writer's use of grammatical complexity in writing. Grammatical complexity deals with 'grammatical variation and sophistication' (Wolfe-Quintero et al., 1998:69). Wolfe-Quintero et al. (1998:69) claims that grammatical complexity concerns the use of 'basic and sophisticated structures', whereas a lack of grammatical complexity is when a slighter specter of these structures are available. When analyzing grammatical complexity, the main focus is not on how many units the learners' produce, but rather on the variation and sophistication of the units. One of the characteristics of grammatical complexity is changing the sentence structures when writing (Wolfe-Quintero et al., 1998:69). There are many ways of measuring grammatical complexity; one of them is by measuring clauses per T-unit and clauses per sentence (general complexity measures), measuring the relationship between independent and dependent clauses, and the relationship between coordination and independent clauses (Wolfe-Quintero et al., 1998:82).

Another factor to consider when assessing learners' writing is lexical complexity. Lexical complexity means that a writer can easily find words that are needed and has no problem using a range of sophisticated and fundamental words when writing. Lexical complexity deals with how the learner can use a varied range of words, e.g. different nouns, verbs and adjectives. Learners that have a large vocabulary will, of course, vary their words more freely (Wolfe-Quintero et al., 1998:101).

### **3.5 Research on English language writing in Norway**

There have been several research studies conducted in Norway relevant to the current thesis. Studies by Bø (2014), Nygaard (2010) and Yu's (2014) study, present helpful and useful data in the field of writing in English among Norwegian lower and upper secondary school students. It should be pointed out that Yu's study was written in Norway, but was about Chinese learners.

Bø's (2014) study involved how learners get feedback on their writing in the upper secondary school. Bø investigated students' and teachers' opinions and attitudes towards

English writing and feedback. The study examined how the teachers gave feedback to students on their English writing and how students received the feedback. Bø also analyzed some of the learners' drafts, and by doing so looked at how feedback can have an impact on the learners' writing development.

Bø used mixed methods, including semi-structured interviews with three teachers. In addition, 83 students were asked to answer questionnaires about their attitudes and beliefs towards the English subject and four of the students' drafts were analyzed. By interviewing the teachers, Bø found that most of them implemented feedback to their students much the same way. They all gave feedback after the students were finished writing a text. Two of the teachers did not expect their students to revise their texts, while one of the teachers practised process-writing, i.e. giving students feedback and making them revise their texts. Although the teachers believed that, for example, working with process writing could be beneficial for students, it was not often used in teaching English writing due to time restrictions. The students' answers from the questionnaires revealed that they often received the feedback at the same time as the grade and without drafts beforehand and the analysis of the texts showed that students who had to revise their texts after getting feedback, improved them.

Nygaard's (2010) study deals with the accuracy of upper secondary school learners. Nygaard examined 190 creative-writing texts written by 95 students in an upper secondary school. The texts were written in one school year during the autumn and spring semester. The mistakes were divided into nine categories, such as spelling, wrong word, concord, wrong order, and punctuation. Nygaard analysed the learners' texts to see if there were any changes in terms of accuracy of their written English from the autumn to the spring semester and what kind of correction strategy was mostly preferred. The texts were divided into three groups where three different correction strategies were used. Also, three of the teachers were interviewed about their attitudes towards the mistakes the students made and what correction strategy they used.

Nygaard found that the students' texts made progress in accuracy and there was an average of 25 % fewer mistakes in the texts from the autumn to the spring semester. The analysis showed that the group which had the fewest mistakes used a correction strategy that combined both underlining and direct correction. The analysis also showed that the most frequent mistakes the learners made were spelling and wrong word.

Yu's (2014) quantitative and qualitative study examines the accuracy and complexity in written English of a group of Chinese upper secondary school students. Yu (2014) analyzed 54 short texts written by 12<sup>th</sup> graders divided the mistakes into three categories: grammatical,



lexical and spelling mistakes, to examine accuracy, grammatical and lexical complexity in the texts. The scholar also interviewed two teachers about teaching English writing and two students about how they experienced learning English.

The text analysis that was conducted showed that the most frequent errors were grammatical and the least frequent were spelling mistakes. Nominal clauses were the type of clause most commonly used and relative clauses were the least used clause-group. When analyzing word types, the most frequently used was noun types and the least frequent adjective types. Moreover, the student and teacher interviews disclosed that when writing English, the students had problems expressing themselves accurately. The interview with the teachers revealed that they had spent much time and effort trying to help the students' improve their English proficiency.

Vigrestad's (2006) study addressed the written English of Norwegian and Dutch students written development. The subjects of the study were 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders in Norway and the Netherlands. The study was based on the students' texts, which were analyzed in order to show measures of fluency and complexity. The students had written texts based on picture narratives, as in the pre- and post-tests in the current study. The analysis of the texts showed that the Norwegian learners scored higher than the Dutch learners in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade. This applied to T-unit length and subordinate clauses per T-unit ratio. However, when the students' texts were tested in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade, it showed interesting differences. The Dutch learners' T-unit length was longer than the Norwegian ones and the subordinate clauses per T-unit ratio were identical.

Finally, Drew's (2010) longitudinal study examined a group of 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> graders' development in written English in a Norwegian primary school. The study analyzed a selection of texts at the end of each grade. The texts were analysed to measure fluency, lexical and grammatical complexity. The study also measured other features of writing, such as length of texts, length of T-units, noun phrases, and verb and adjective types. The results showed that the length of the texts more than trebled from 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grade. The learners wrote much longer texts in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade compared to the 4<sup>th</sup> grade. T-unit length per text increased from 6.6 words in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade to 7.1 words in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. The simple noun phrases per text increased greatly from on average 11.4 in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade to 31.1 in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, as well as the complex noun phrases per text, which more than trebled from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup> grades.

### **3.6 Summary**

Learning a second language can be beneficial while at the same time challenging due to the interference of the first language. This chapter has attempted to explain, discuss and examine L2 writing, namely how learners' L1 can have an impact on the L2 writing, difficulties of learning a second language, and L2 writing in groups. Some of the teaching traditions of L2 writing have also been discussed. Moreover, writing in groups and motivation when writing have been important issues in this chapter. Also, fluency, accuracy, grammatical and lexical complexity measurements have been taken into account, as well as previous research conducted in Norway on writing in schools.

## **4. Methodology**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter will start by explaining the various research methods used in the current study to answer the following research questions:

- What effect do the group writing activities have on the students' writing?
- What effect do the group writing activities have on the students' motivation to write?

Section 4.2 presents different types of research methods, such as mixed methods, qualitative research, and quantitative research. Section 4.3 provides an insight into the school and the subject of the current research, as well as the sampling strategies that were used. In addition, section 4.3 gives a description of how the writing activities were conducted and an explanation of each activity is presented. The observations, the type of interviews that were used, and the interview questions are also presented. Finally, issues of validity and ethics in the research are addressed.

### **4.2 Types of research**

Research methods within the field of applied linguistics are usually divided into three categories: qualitative, quantitative, and a combination of them both, i.e. mixed methods research.

#### **4.2.1 Qualitative research methods**

In qualitative research, there are usually no limitations to how much data one should consider using. Therefore, qualitative data can rapidly become too much and messy. Researchers that are not experienced with collecting qualitative data might struggle to limit their data and consider what is convenient to use or not due to too much data. Even though qualitative data can be messy and too much, it does not necessarily mean that it cannot produce important and

useful results. However, it takes more time to work with such a large data collection and, as Dornyei (2007:125) states, qualitative data is ‘less systematic and standardized in its data collection’ and the ‘messiness’ has to do with ‘a reflection of the complex real-life situations that the data concerns’ (Dornyei, 2007:125).

When choosing a sampling strategy for collecting data, qualitative research is concerned with ‘describing, understanding and clarifying a human experience’, meaning this type of research deals with the features of the individuals’ experiences (Dornyei, 2007:126). The focus is on getting plentiful and diverse information from the individual during the research (Dornyei, 2007:126).

One of the characteristics of qualitative research is that there is not only one type of data that can be used, but rather ‘a wide range of data including recorded interviews, various types of texts (for example, field notes, journal and diary entries, documents) and images (photos or videos)’ (Dornyei, 2007:37). Qualitative research methods are rarely connected to numbers, but rather the use of words. When analyzing the data, such as interviews, it is often transcribed to words.

Another feature of qualitative research is that the research is concerned with the individuals’ attitudes, opinions, and emotions towards a particular topic being researched. It is a subjective view on certain situations, which is also known as the ‘insider perspective’ (Dornyei, 2007:38). Furthermore, when analyzing data in qualitative research, it is the researcher who is the interpreter and therefore it is the ‘researcher’s subjective interpretation’ of the data which becomes the result of the analysis (Dornyei, 2007:38). In addition, sampling in a qualitative research study is much smaller than in a quantitative study (Dornyei, 2007:38).

The current research is partly qualitative and some of qualitative methods, such as interviews and observations, have therefore been used. One-to-one interviews were carried out before the pre-tests and after the post-tests (see section 4.7), and observations were made during all of the writing activities.

#### 4.2.2 Quantitative research methods

One of the most important characteristics of quantitative research is the use of numbers. The focus on the use of numbers, as Dornyei (2007:32) explains, ‘opens up a range of possibilities and sets some limitations for the researcher’. In research, numbers can be powerful and powerless at the same time because, unless one clarifies and gives an explanation of when and

why the numbers are shown, they are without meaning. It is therefore of great importance to give reasons and descriptions for the variables, especially when it comes to boundaries within the variables (Dornyei, 2007:32-33).

Since quantitative research is concerned with numbers, 'the work required to specify the categories and values needs to be done prior to the actual study', meaning the descriptions and questions used must be clarified and not ambiguous in order to collect correct and fair answers (Dornyei, 2007:33). To do so, the participants must have the same understanding of the questions given, which is why quantitative research usually takes more time qualitative research (Dornyei, 2007:33).

Another typical characteristic of quantitative research is statistics. A statistical analysis in a quantitative research context can be 'from calculating the average' to 'running complex multivariate analyses on a computer' (Dornyei, 2007:33).

Quantitative research, as opposed to qualitative research, is more focused on getting 'the common features of groups of people' (Dornyei, 2007:33). Whereas qualitative research centers on individuals, quantitative research is concerned with the individuals' common characteristics (Dornyei, 2007:33). The current research is also partly quantitative; hence, the use of statistical analysis when analyzing the students' texts.

#### 4.2.3 Mixed methods research

Mixed methods research, which this thesis is based upon is, as Dornyei (2007:163) describes, 'The collection or analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study with some attempts to integrate the two approaches at one or more stages of the research process'.

There have been many terms used in describing this type of research, with 'mixed methods research' being the term widely used and accepted. It is a method that has been embraced and exercised by both quantitative and qualitative researchers, especially after the 1970's, when the dissimilarities between the two approaches were emphasized. Using mixed methods, including different perspectives and theories, reinforces and strengthens educational research as opposed to 'mono-method' research approaches. Some supporters of the mixed methods approach might even claim that this approach is better and superior to the use of only qualitative or quantitative methods (Dornyei, 2007:163).

The current research is based upon a mixed method research as it uses both qualitative and quantitative research methods when collecting and analyzing the data. The researcher chose to use a mixed methods approach as it gives the current research a more credible and

trustworthy approach. Using qualitative research characteristics, such as one-to-one interviews, observations, and qualitative analysis of learners' texts, in combination with quantitative research characteristics, such as using tables and counting grammatical and lexical items when analyzing the students' texts, strengthens the validity of the results.

### **4.3 Evaluational research**

The present study may be characterized as 'evaluation research', meaning the research evaluates an educational method. Evaluational research is often conducted when there is a 'need for a decision to be made' (Borg and Gall, 1989:743). The researcher wants to evaluate an educational method or approach. In the present study, the researcher's aim is to evaluate the effect group writing activities might have on the learners' writing and on their motivation to write. Evaluational research is 'done for a limited purpose' (Borg and Gall, 1989:743), meaning the research is for a specific intention, as with the present research.

### **4.4 The data collection**

It is necessary to make decisions regarding the participants of the research. Issues such as selection of participants and collecting data are important to consider when sampling. Thus, it is of great importance that a qualitative study has a sampling plan.

Depending on the research topic and aims, there are various sampling strategies. A homogeneous sampling focuses on choosing participants that have experienced something similar that is useful for the study. Another sampling strategy is typical sampling, where participants are selected based upon their experience, which is relevant to the research, such as in the current research. A third sampling strategy is criterion sampling, where the researcher chooses participants who fulfill special criteria for the research (Dornyei, 2007:127-128).

#### **4.4.1 The school and subjects**

The current research took place in a 10<sup>th</sup> grade English specialization class at a lower secondary school. The subjects of the study were twelve students at the age of fifteen and sixteen. The class was a mixed ability group due to the students' various proficiency levels in English. Almost all of the students had taken the English specialization class since the 8<sup>th</sup>

grade, in addition to the regular English course. For the majority of the students in the class, English was their second language and Norwegian their first. However, four of the students were of minority background and English was therefore their third language.

Even though there were only twelve students in the English specialization class, there was great variation in the learners' English competence and experience with writing in English due to their various backgrounds. The four minority background students had not been educated within the Norwegian educational system like the rest of the students, and therefore often needed extra assistance when writing in English from the start. One of the minority students came from Burma, another from Poland, a third student came from Somalia and the fourth came from Eritrea. They had lived in Norway between three to six years.

#### **4.5 The group-writing project**

The group-writing project consisted of four story-writing activities conducted in groups. The students were given one writing activity per week. Each writing activity was conducted in groups of four and the learners were given one to three lessons (of 45 minutes) per activity. All of the writing tasks were conducted within a period of six weeks. At the end of each writing session, the groups were asked to read their stories out aloud to the others. They were also allowed to use dictionaries when needed during the writing process.

The students were divided into groups based on their proficiency levels. The researcher made sure that each group consisted of four students of mixed competency levels, ranging from those whose current level was grade two, to those whose current level was grade five.<sup>6</sup> The researcher used the same groups in each writing activity.

In the first writing activity, the students wrote a story based on twenty pictures, which the researcher displayed on the blackboard for the students to see. The students were asked to write their own stories in groups based on those pictures. Each picture had to be represented in the story (Drew and Sørheim, 2009:103-104). In order to give the learners an idea of how to write a story like this, the researcher began the lesson by reading a story she had written based on the same pictures. The students spent two lessons writing their stories for this writing activity. When they had finished, they were asked to read their stories aloud for the other students.

When doing the second activity, each group was given a sheet of paper with an

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<sup>6</sup> Grade 1 showing very low competence in the subject, and grade 6 showing excellent competence in the subject.

opening sentence to a story at the top (Drew and Sørheim, 2009:102). Each group began their stories by adding another sentence after the opening sentence. Each group then passed on what they had written to another group, who added a new sentence, and so on. The groups spent two lessons to write their stories and wrote roughly two pages each. This group writing activity was somewhat more demanding than the first because of the challenge of not having any material to rely on apart from the opening sentence. The learners had a starting point, but had to depend on each other to continue the story. The writing of the stories continued until the teacher informed them to finish their stories. At the end of the activity, each group had to more read their stories out aloud for the others.

In the third writing activity, the learners were given an opening sentence to a story and had to add two new sentences to the story before passing it on to the next group, who also wrote two sentences and passed it on again (in a similar fashion to the previous activity). As with the previous activity, the writing of the stories continued until the teacher informed the students to finish their stories. This activity made each group read what the other groups had written (as with the previous activity), and at the same time add something new to each story. Once again they had to read their stories to each other at the end of the activity.

In the final writing activity, the groups wrote a story about a topic the group had chosen. For example, one of the groups chose to write about a specific animal, while another group chose to write about a dark forest. This activity gave the students the opportunity to choose their own beginning, middle and ending of a story. Once again the students were asked to read their stories out aloud for the others when they had finished.

#### **4.6 The student interviews**

Conducting interviews is a common qualitative method for collecting data. It is a familiar research instrument that has been used in many studies. Interviews can be conducted in many ways, but one-to-one interviews are usually categorized as structured, unstructured, or semi-structured interviews.

Structured interviews are interviews where the researcher follows a pre-prepared list of questions, which are to be asked to each interviewee. The focus of the questions is on the topic with which the study is concerned with, and the answers can be compared. In a structured interview, in contrast, there is little or no room for spontaneity for the researcher to respond. With this type of interview very little opportunity is left for the researcher to comment or ask any questions outside the standardized questions. This type of interview is



used in studies where one could use a questionnaire or are suitable when the researcher wants to ask questions that can give specific answers he/she is aiming for (Dornyei, 2007:135).

In unstructured interviews the researcher has not prepared any kind of interview questions, but has thought of some opening questions beforehand. There is very little or no interference from the interviewer. The setting is much more relaxed than in formal settings. The interviewer might ask some questions to give positive feedback on what the interviewee is saying, to make some answers more comprehensible, or to elaborate on what the interviewee answers. This type of interview is suitable, for example, when ‘a study focuses on the deep meaning of a particular phenomena’ (Dornyei, 2007:136).

Finally, a semi-structured interview is a blend of structured and unstructured interviews. In a semi-structured interview the questions are already prepared prior to the conducting of the interviews. However, even though the questions are set, there is room for spontaneity and for the interviewer to ask further unprepared questions. This gives the researcher the freedom to follow up with comments or questions that might arise out of interest. Normally, in this type of interview, all of the participants are asked the same questions. A semi-structured interview is commonly used in studies similar to the current research (Dornyei, 2007:136).

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews when interviewing the learners of the current research. The semi-structured interview was chosen because it uses a mix of both structured and unstructured interview format. The researcher had the chance to ask questions that were prepared to begin with, in addition to those that were not prepared. It gave the interview a certain ‘flow’ and an informal setting, which could give the impression of a conversation instead of an interview. This could make the learners more comfortable when answering the questions.

There were two interviews conducted, one before the pre-tests and one after the post-tests (see section 4.7). Five students with different proficiency levels in English were interviewed: one had been assessed at the level of grade five, two at grade four, and two at grade three. Each interview lasted from three to five minutes. In order to record the data from the interviews, they were audio-taped on both occasions on a phone and on a recorder. This was due to the fact that one can otherwise easily forget what has been said by whom. In addition, writing notes from the interviews can be distracting and does not always capture all the details. By keeping records of the interviews on a recorder and on phone, the researcher had a back-up in case one of the instruments failed (Dornyei, 2007:139).

When interviewing the students, the researcher chose to ask the questions in

Norwegian, since this was the language that they could express themselves best in and speak freely in. By speaking in their mother tongue, or their second language in some cases, there would be less likelihood of misunderstanding or misconceptions of the questions. The students did not hesitate to ask if they did not understand certain words or parts of the questions. Also, they dared to speak longer, and therefore gave longer and more accurate answers, which added to the validity to the research.

The conditions for the first and second interviews were similar. The students did not have a time limit to answer the questions, but some of the questions required longer answers than others. For example, in some of the questions they had to explain why or why not they felt a certain way about writing.

When conducting interviews, it is important to consider the issue of the number of sessions to include. In order to achieve a certain depth of answers, and to gain valuable information from the interviews, it can be helpful to interview the same participants several times. The time between a first and second interview gives the interviewees time to reflect upon their attitudes and experiences with the project (Dornyei, 2007:134-135).

The first interviews were conducted a week before starting the pre-tests. This was to gain insight into the students' views and attitudes towards writing in English. The second interviews were conducted about a week after the post-tests. The post-interviews gave insight into how the students had experienced the group writing process.

In the first interview, the subjects were asked the same seven questions prior to the pre-tests (see Appendix 1). The students were asked how they felt about writing in English as opposed to Norwegian and whether or not they found writing in English difficult or easy. They were also asked if they liked writing stories, what kinds of texts they liked writing, how they thought they could become better writers, and if they could tell about a particular text they had written in English with which they were satisfied.

In the second interview, the students were asked ten questions about their experience with writing in the groups (see Appendix 2). They were asked which activity they enjoyed the most and which one they enjoyed the least, and how they had experienced writing in groups. Other questions regarded their motivation to write in English, whether or not it had increased, how they felt about writing in English after the writing activities, if they felt their writing had improved or not, if they preferred writing in groups or not, and if they wanted to do more group writing activities.

The interviews conducted before the pre-tests were shorter than the ones done after the post-tests. The first interviews lasted for two to four minutes, while the second interviews

lasted between three to five minutes. This could have something to do with the fact that the second interviews had three more questions that required the students to give reasons for their answers.

#### **4.7 Lesson observations**

During the group writing activities the researcher observed the learners' group dynamics, namely how they worked together as a group and how they went about doing the writing tasks. Observations were carried out during every writing activity, from the time they were given the task till they read the texts out aloud in front of the others. When observing the students, the researcher focused specifically on how the groups received the task, namely how they got started with the task and what they then focused on when they started writing. For example, one of the groups focused on getting a good start, and took their time to come up with good beginnings. Another groups focused on the grammatical issues of writing, such as conjugating verbs, in addition to spelling. In addition, the ending of the writing sessions was also taken into account in the observations in order to see how the groups finished a writing task.

The teacher in the current research was also the researcher. This means that the researcher was also responsible for the teaching of the students when carrying out the writing activities. This type of research approach is useful when the researcher wants to get a close insight into the teacher's 'educational environment' (Dornyei, 2007:191).

The researcher made notes from each writing activity. Due to the fact that there were only twelve students in the class, observing each group was not a difficult task for the researcher. Usually, observing classrooms can easily become a hectic task because there is so much to keep an eye on, but since there were only three groups to follow, the researcher was able to make appropriate observations.

#### **4.8 The pre-and post writing tests**

The pre- and post-writing tests were each based on a picture story i.e. a sequence of pictures. The conditions were the same for both of the tests. The lessons for the pre- and post-tests began with introducing the task and explaining precisely what the students had to do to carry out the task, which was to write a picture story individually. The researcher wrote seven words on the blackboard and informed the students that these were key words they could use

in their stories. The key words were supposed to work as a helping hand during the writing process.

For the pre-tests, the learners were given thirty minutes to write their stories. The learners were told to write a story about the pictures they were about to receive. The researcher/teacher handed out a paper with six pictures which showed a story from beginning to end, as in a comic strip (Heaton, 1975). The learners were then told that the story had to be named 'The Tiger' since this was the name of the comic strip and that they should write about what they saw in the pictures (see Appendix 3). The six pictures showed a man climbing up a mountain who suddenly sees a tiger and tries to kill it.

As for the post-test, the conditions were exactly the same as for the pre-test. The learners were given seven key words to assist them in their writing of a new picture story. The researcher/teacher handed out six new pictures to the learners and informed them that they should call this story 'The Landslide' (see Appendix 4), and once more to write whatever they saw from these pictures (Heaton, 1975), and to use their imagination in addition. The pictures showed a family on a bridge waiting for a train. They see a landslide of stones and try to get help. When the thirty minutes were over, the learners were asked to hand in their stories. Some of the students had finished writing their texts and others had not.

#### **4.9 Text analysis**

When analyzing the texts, the researcher focused on how the learners' writing had developed from the pre-tests to the post-tests. The researcher analyzed each learner's pre-text and post-text in a qualitative and quantitative manner. The quantitative analysis was done by counting the words in each text, the number of T-units, the average T-unit length, the number of subordinate clauses, the subordinate clauses per T-unit ratio, the number of noun types, the noun types per T-unit ratio, the number of verb types, the verb types per T-unit ratio, the number of adjective types, the adjective types per T-unit ratio, the number of errors and, finally, the errors per T-unit ratio. The learners' texts were analyzed quantitatively by presenting the data of each text in a table where the quantifiable measures were shown. The aggregate group scores were also shown in a separate table.

The qualitative analysis aimed to find out whether or not there were other changes from the pre-tests to the post-tests by analyzing the students' use of points of view, dialogue, speech, and paragraphs in their stories.

#### **4.10 Validity, reliability and research ethics**

This study has used both qualitative and quantitative research methods and it is therefore necessary to discuss the validity and reliability of the study. Reliability, as Dornyei (2007:50) defines it is ‘the extent to which our measurement instruments and procedures produce consistent results in a given population in different circumstances’. In order to ensure reliability, a member of the English department at UiS checked the researcher’s analysis of the pre- and post-tests. In addition, the researcher used established measurements to analyse the texts quantitatively. When it comes to the interviews, it was of great importance that the pre-project and post-project interviews were conducted in Norwegian. This was to make sure that the learners understood every question asked and to avoid any misunderstandings during the interviews, which contributed to the reliability of the method.

Validity is also an important issue when conducting research. Dornyei (2007:51) explains that ‘a test is valid if it measures what it is supposed to measure’. In general terms, validity refers to the soundness of the research. The present research has built on other studies that have used quantitative measurements of fluency, accuracy and grammatical and lexical complexity (e.g. Hunt 1965, 1970; Drew 2010; Bø 2014; Nygaard 2010; Yu 2014, Vigrestad 2006;). Moreover, the researcher used a mixed methods approach to the study, meaning a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, which strengthens the validity of the research. Even though this was a case study with only twelve students participating (and only eight writing the pre- and post-tests), there is no reason to think that the class was not representative of an English specialization class in lower secondary school. The participants were both boys and girls of different proficiency levels in English, which is typical of such a class.

When conducting research, it is important to consider the participants’ anonymity and privacy. Ethical research makes sure that the participants of the study are respected and their private information is not revealed (Borg, 2010:11). For the current study, the participants involved were fifteen-years-old and therefore did not need their parents’ approval. The participants were informed that this was an anonymous study, and each learner gave their consent to take part in the study. Although the study uses the learners’ information about their ethnic background and experience with English writing, it does not reveal any sensitive information, or information that might reveal their identity.

#### **4.11 Presentation of the data in the results chapter**

In the results chapter, the text analysis will be presented by providing an overview of each learner's pre- and post-test in a separate table. The researcher will address the differences and similarities between the pre- and post-tests in both a quantitative and qualitative manner. The texts will be described quantitatively by presenting the quantitative measures of fluency, grammatical and lexical complexity, and accuracy. In addition, the researcher will comment on qualitative features of the learners' texts. The interview data will be presented by summarizing the students' opinions, attitude and experiences about writing in English before and after the writing project. The way the learners worked in groups and the group dynamics will be presented in the summary of the lesson observations.

#### **4.12 Summary**

To sum up, this chapter has attempted to give insight into various research methods such as qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. Sampling strategies were also discussed, as well as the participants in the study and an explanation of the writing activities. In addition, the conducting of the interviews and how the observations were conducted were described. Furthermore, the conditions for the pre-texts and post-texts were explained. The chapter also described how the texts would be analyzed. Finally issues of validity and ethics were addressed.

## 5. Results

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the present study, which incorporate text analysis, student interviews and lesson observations. Section 5.2 presents the results of the students' pre- and post-tests. The writing analysis will be shown in a separate table for each student. The researcher will comment on each student's pre- and post-writing text in a quantitative and qualitative manner. This is followed by a summary of each of the student interviews, which are presented in section 5.3. Finally, the observations the researcher conducted during the writing activities are described in section 5.4.

### 5.2 Text analysis

#### Student 1

Table 1 provides an overview of the quantitative measures analysed in Student 1's pre- and post-tests.

**Table 1: Analysis of Student 1's pre- and post-tests**

Item	Pre-test	Post-test
Words	326	264
T-units	40	24
T-unit length	8.1	11
Subordinate clauses	4	19
Subordinate clauses per T-unit	0.1	0.8
Noun types	16 (4.9%)	18 (6.8%)
Noun types per T-unit	0.5	0.8
Verb types	35 (10.7%)	27 (10.2%)
Verb types per T-unit	1.3	1.2
Adjective types	10 (3.1%)	2 (0.8%)
Adjective types per T-unit	0.4	0.1
Errors	43	13
Errors per T-unit	1.1	0.5

Student 1's pre-test was longer than the post-test (326 words in the pre-test and 264 in the post-test, respectively). There were far more T-units in the pre-test than in the post-test (43 in the pre-test and 24 in the post-test), and therefore the mean T-unit length had increased from 8.1 words to 11 words in the post-test. The use of subordinate clauses increased greatly in the post-test compared to the pre-test (4 in the pre-test and 19 in the post-test), with a considerably higher subordinate clause per T-unit ratio (0.1 in the pre-test and 0.8 in the post-test). The student also used more noun types in the post-test and the noun types per T-unit ratio increased from 0.5 in the pre-test to 0.8 in the post-test. On the other hand, compared to the pre-test, the ratio of verb types and the verb types per T-unit ratio decreased slightly in the post-test. Moreover, the student used more adjective types in the pre-test (10 in the pre-test and 2 in the post-test) and therefore the adjective types per T-unit ratio decreased from 0.4 in the pre-test to 0.1 in the post-test. Finally, the student made far more mistakes in the pre-test than in the post-test (43 in the pre-test and 13 in the post-test), and the error per T-unit ratio was much higher in the pre-test (1.1 compared to 0.5 errors per T-unit).

The student's pre-test story and post-test story also had some similarities as well as some differences regarding the structure and layout of the stories. Both stories were structured into three paragraphs and were written in the third person point of view. There were no dialogues or direct speech in either of the stories. However, there was a dissimilarity in the endings of the stories. The pre-test story ended with the main character 'Oscar' meeting a hunter, whereas the post-test story ended with the writer portraying the main character 'Mandy' as a legend because he saved many lives.

To sum up, Student 1's post-test was shorter than the pre-test but the T-unit length had increased considerably. The student used more subordinate clauses and noun types in the post-test story, and therefore the noun types per T-unit and subordinate clause per T-unit ratios increased in the post-test. Even though there were fewer verb types used in the post-test, the verb types per T-unit ratio was similar. There were far fewer errors in the post-test than in the pre-test. Finally, the stories were similar when it comes to structure and how the stories were written, yet the endings were different.

## **Student 2**

Table 2 provides an overview of the quantitative measures analysed in Student 2's pre- and post-texts.



**Table 2: Analysis of Student 2's pre- and post-tests**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Pre-test</b>	<b>Post-test</b>
Words	101	64
T-units	13	5
T-units length	7.7	12.8
Subordinate clauses	4	3
Subordinate clauses per T-unit	0.3	0.6
Noun types	10 (9.9%)	12 (18.8%)
Noun types per T-unit	0.7	2.4
Verb types	10 (9.9%)	6 (9.4%)
Verb types per T-unit	0.7	1.2
Adjective types	3 (3%)	2 (3.1%)
Adjective types per T-unit	0.2	0.4
Errors	8	7
Errors per T-unit	0.6	1.4

Student 2's post-test was 37 words shorter than the pre-test. The use of T-units decreased greatly in the post-test (13 in the pre-test and 5 in the post-test), but the T-unit length increased considerably in the post-test (7.7 words in the pre-test and 12.8 in the post-test). The number of subordinate clauses was nearly the same in both tests (4 in the pre-test and 3 in the post-test), but the subordinate clause per T-unit ratio doubled in the post-test from 0.3 to 0.6. The student used proportionately more noun types in the post-test and therefore the noun types per T-unit ratio increased considerably in the post-test as well (0.7 in the pre-test and 2.4 in the post-test). The percentage of verb types decreased slightly in the post-test, while the verb type per T-unit ratio increased from 0.7 in the pre-test to 1.2 in the post-test. When it comes to adjective types, the student used very few adjectives in both tests (3 in the pre-test and 2 in the post-test) and the adjective per T-unit ratio increased in the post-test from 0.2 to 0.4. Lastly, the student made nearly the same number of mistakes in both tests (8 in the pre-test and 7 in the post-test), but the errors per T-unit ratio increased in the post-test (0.6 in the pre-test and 1.4 in the post-test).

In addition, there were hardly any changes regarding other features of the student's writing of the stories. There was no use of paragraphs, dialogue or direct speech in either of the stories.

To sum up, Student 2 wrote a shorter post-test than the pre-test story and the number of T-units decreased greatly from the pre-test the post-test story, while the T-unit length increased considerably. The student's use of noun types increased in the post-test story with a higher noun types per T-unit ratio and a higher subordinate clause per T-unit ratio as well. The error per T-unit ratio increased in the post-test. When it comes to the structure of the texts, there was no clear distinction between the pre-test story and the post-test story.

### ***Student 3***

Table 3 provides an overview of the quantitative measures analysed in Student 3's pre- and post-tests.

**Table 3: Analysis of Student 3's pre- and post-tests**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Pre-test</b>	<b>Post-test</b>
Words	280	194
T-units	40	23
T-units length	7	8.4
Subordinate clauses	8	9
Subordinate clauses per T-unit	0.2	0.4
Noun types	32 (11.4%)	27 (13.9%)
Noun types per T-unit	0.8	1
Verb types	33 (11.8%)	26 (12.9%)
Verb types per T-unit	0.8	1.1
Adjective types	12 (4.3%)	9 (4.6%)
Adjective types per T-unit	0.3	0.4
Errors	6	5
Errors per T-unit	0.1	0.2

Student 3's post-test story was much shorter than the pre-test story and the student wrote fewer T-units in the post-test story (40 in the pre-test and 23 in the post-test). However, the mean T-unit length was longer in the post-test than in the pre-test (7 words in the pre-test and 8.4 in the post-test). The number of subordinate clauses was nearly the same (8 in the pre-test and 9 in the post-test), but with a double subordinate clause per T-unit ratio in the post-test (from 0.2 to 0.4). In addition, the percentage of noun types increased in the post-test (from

11.4% to 13.9%) and there was a slight increase in the noun types per T-unit ratio (0.8 in the pre-test and 1 in the post-test). Even though the number of verb types decreased in the post-test, the percentage of verb types increased, and also the verb types per T-unit ratio (0.8 in the pre-test and 1.1 in the post-test). There was also a slight increase in the percentage of adjective types and adjective types per T-unit ratio. Furthermore, the number of errors made in both tests was somewhat similar and few (6 in the pre-test and 5 in the post-test) and the errors per T-unit ratio was slightly higher in the post-test than in the pre-test (from 0.1 to 0.2).

In addition to the quantifiable items referred to above, there were also some changes in other features of the writing of both stories. One of the main distinctions was how the stories started. In the pre-test story the student started with a classical opening of a story: *Once upon a time there was a man called John*, whereas in the post-test the narrator started by describing the setting of the story: *It was a rainy Saturday morning. Me, Mary and John was standing on a bridge, waving at the train*. A story can obviously start with different types of beginnings, but the beginning in the post-test story seemed more illustrative and expository than the one in the pre-test story.

Moreover, the use of direct speech was used in both stories, yet in dissimilar ways. In the pre-test story, the sentences used for indicating direct speech were shorter than the ones in the post-test story, for example *Hello Pablo*, and *He has killed four people*. They showed a dialogue between the main character 'John' and another man. In the post-test story, the many lines used for direct speech were related to action. The narrator was either shouting or giving orders, for example *Hurry!*, *Now!* and *Stop!*.

Another important feature of the stories was how they were told. In the pre-test story the student used a third person point of view, whereas in the post-test the narrator was telling the story from a first person point of view using the personal pronoun 'I' and describing everything from his or her perspective.

To sum up, although Student 3's post-test was shorter than the pre-test story, there were increases in the post-test in T-unit length and the percentages and ratios per T-unit of subordinate clauses, noun types, verb types and adjective types. There were also some changes regarding the use of direct speech and points of view in the stories.

#### **Student 4**

Table 4 provides an overview of the quantitative measures analysed in Student 4's pre-and post-texts.

**Table 4: Analysis of Student 4's pre-and post-tests**

Item	Pre-test	Post-test
Words	272	184
T-units	29	18
T-units length	9.4	10.2
Subordinate clauses	18	12
Subordinate clauses per T-unit	0.6	0.7
Noun types	16 (5.9%)	15 (8.2%)
Noun types per T-unit	0.6	0.8
Verb types	30 (11%)	22 (12%)
Verb types per T-unit	1	1.2
Adjective types	9 (3.3 %)	8 (4.3%)
Adjective types per T-unit	0.3	0.4
Errors	43	37
Errors per T-unit	1.5	2.1

Student 4 showed a similar trend to Student 3. Student 4's post-test was shorter than the pre-test (272 words in the pre-test and 184 words in the post-test) and the number of T-units decreased from 29 in the pre-test to 18 in the post-test. Nevertheless, the T-unit length increased slightly from 9.4 in the pre-tests to 10.2 in the post-test. The subordinate clause ratio also increased slightly from 0.6 in the pre-test to 0.7 in the post-test. Although the student used almost the same number of noun types in the pre-test as in the post-test (16 in the pre-test and 15 in the post-test), there was a higher noun type percentage and the noun types per T-unit ratio increased from 0.6 in the pre-test to 0.8. The same applied to verb types, with a slight increase in the verb type percentage and the verb types per T-unit ratio. The number of adjective types was nearly the same in both tests, with a distinction of one less adjective in the post-test but with a higher adjective type percentage and adjective per T-unit ratio. Lastly, the student made fewer errors in the post-test than in the pre-test (43 in the pre-test and 37 in the post-test), with a higher errors per T-unit ratio in the post-test than in the pre-test (1.5 in the pre-test and 2.1 in the post-test).

When it comes to other features of the student's writing of the two stories, there were some clear differences in the texts. Firstly, the student chose to write both stories with the use of dialogue. The only difference was where the dialogue started in the stories. In the pre-test,

the dialogue was already in the beginning of the story, challenging the main character to kill the tiger. However, in the post-test the only sign of a dialogue was at the end of the story, when one of the characters commanded the train to stop. Another difference was how the story was told. In the pre-test story, the narrator told the story by switching from the first person point of view to third person point of view. The story began with the sentence *Long time a go I knowed a man named Stiv* and then the story went on by explaining who ‘Stiv’ was and what he had done, such as *The tiger was ready to jump on Stiv but Stiv was faster*. On the other hand, in the post-test story the narrator told the story by using a third person point of view throughout the whole the story. The focus was on the family who were waiting for the train. Finally, the difference in the structure in the texts was also a noticeable factor. The post-test story was divided into five paragraphs, whereas the pre-test story had none.

To sum up, Student 4 wrote a shorter text in the post-test than in the pre-test with fewer T-units. However, the student’s T-unit length and subordinate clause per T-unit ratio were higher in the post-test. Even though the student wrote a shorter post-test story, the percentage of noun types, verb types and adjective types was slightly higher in the post-test, as was the T-unit ratio of each. However, the ratio of mistakes per T-unit was higher in the post-test. In addition, the student’s organization of text, points of view and dialogue use were different in the post-test story.

### **Student 5**

Table 5 provides an overview of the quantitative measures analysed in Student 5’s pre- and post-tests.

**Table 5: Analysis of Student 5’s pre- and post-tests**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Pre-test</b>	<b>Post-test</b>
Words	218	166
T-units	22	20
T-units length	9.9	8.3
Subordinate clauses	14	9
Subordinate clauses per T-unit	0.6	0.5
Noun types	26 (11.9%)	17 (10.2%)
Noun types per T-unit	1.2	0.8

Verb types	22 (10.1%)	20 (12.1%)
Verb types per T-unit	1	1
Adjective types	9 (4.1%)	3 (1.8%)
Adjective types per T-unit	0.4	0.2
Errors	47	29
Errors per T-unit	2.1	1.5

Student 5's pre-test was longer than the post-test (218 and 166 words respectively), but the number of T-units was almost the same (22 in the pre-test and 20 in the post-test). Therefore, the T-unit length decreased from 9.9 words in the pre-test to 8.3 words in the post-test. The number of subordinate clauses decreased from the pre-test to the post-test (14 in the pre-test and 9 in the post-test), and the subordinate clause per T-unit ratio also decreased slightly from 0.6 to 0.5. When it comes to the word classes of nouns, verbs and adjectives, the student used more noun types in the pre-test than in the post-test (26 in the pre-test and 17 in the post-test), with a higher noun type per T-unit ratio in the pre-test than in the post-test. However, the number of verb types was roughly the same (22 in the pre-test and 20 in the post-test) and the verb types per T-unit ratio was identical. Furthermore, the number of adjective types decreased greatly from the pre-test to the post-test. The student used six more adjective types in the pre-test and the adjectives types per T-unit ratio decreased in the post-test from 0.4 to 0.2. Finally, there was a great distinction between the errors made in the pre-test and in the post-test. The student made 18 more errors in the pre-test than in the post-test and the errors per T-unit ratio decreased from 2.1 in the pre-test to 1.5 in the post-test.

In addition to the above items in the texts, there were also some changes in the way the student wrote the two stories. In the pre-test, the student chose to start the story from an objective point of view, explaining what was happening in the story, whereas in the post-test the student started the story by using direct speech. The student's pre-test story began with the sentence *There was a man called John*, whereas the post-test story began with *Let's go out and play. Watch out!* The beginning of the post-test started off with an action and showed more excitement than the beginning of the pre-test. When the story began with an action, it made the reader excited about what was to come and how the story would continue. The use of dialogue continued throughout the post-test story. Another difference in the texts was how the learner chose to structure the texts. The pre-test the story was written without the use of paragraphs, whereas in the post-test the student divided the text into three paragraphs, making the text appear more organized.

To summarize, Student 5's pre-test was shorter than the post-test but the number of T-units was roughly the same. The number of subordinate clauses, adjective types and noun types per T-unit had slightly decreased in the post-test, while the number of verb types per T-unit was identical. However, there was a decrease of errors per T-unit in the post-test. In addition, there were also changes in the post-test regarding the structure and use of direct speech.

### **Student 6**

Table 6 provides an overview of the quantitative measures analysed in Student 6's pre- and post-texts.

**Table 6: Analysis of Student 6's pre-and post-tests**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Pre-test</b>	<b>Post-test</b>
Words	231	160
T-units	31	19
T-units length	7.4	8.4
Subordinate clauses	9	8
Subordinate clauses per T-unit	0.3	0.4
Noun types	24 (10.4%)	18 (11.3%)
Noun types per T-unit	0.7	0.9
Verb types	23 (10%)	15 (9.4%)
Verb types per T-unit	0.7	0.7
Adjective types	5	3
Adjective types per T-unit	0.1	0.1
Errors	9	6
Errors per T-unit	0.2	0.3

Student 6's post-test was 71 words shorter than the pre-test and the student wrote fewer T-units in the post-test than in the pre-test (28 in the pre-test and 17 in the post-test). However, the T-unit length increased from 7.4 words in the pre-test to 8.4 words in the post-test. The number of subordinate clauses was somewhat the same in both tests (9 in the pre-test and 8 in the post-test). There was no significant change in the subordinate clause per T-unit ratio (0.3 in the pre-test and 0.4 in the post-test). When it comes to types of nouns, adjectives and verbs, the student used fewer noun types in the post-test than in the pre-test (28 in the pre-test and 19

in the post-test), but the noun type per T-unit ratio was almost the same in both tests (1 in the pre-test and 1.1 in the post-test). The verb and adjective types per T-unit ratio was identical in the pre- and post-tests, and the errors per T-unit ratio was very similar (0.2 and 0.3 respectively).

In addition to the items presented above, the student chose to start with the same T-unit in both texts: *It was early in the morning*. However, there was a difference in the use of paragraphs. The student's pre-test story was divided into many paragraphs, some of them only consisting of three or four lines, which made them very short. On the other hand, the post-test story was not divided into paragraphs, but was written as one whole paragraph, which may not have been too inappropriate in this case since this story was shorter than the first one. Another difference was the use of direct and indirect speech in both stories. In the pre-test, the student wrote the story from a third person point of view, emphasizing the main character's actions and thoughts about the tiger. For example, *He was so happy, The only thing John saw was the lion hit the tree and It was bigger and longer than John had seen*. When it comes to the post-test story, the student once again used the third person point of view to tell the story. However, there was more use of direct speech regarding what the characters were saying. For example, *Stop the train, stop the train!, The underground is blocked and You can't drive longer*.

To sum up, there were several differences as to how the student wrote both stories. The post-test was shorter than the pre-test, but the T-unit length had increased. There were only minor differences in the other measures analyzed between the pre- and post-tests. Finally, there were also some changes in the use of direct and indirect speech in the two texts, as well as the use of paragraphs.

### **Student 7**

Table 7 provides an overview of the quantitative measures analysed in Student 7's pre- and post-texts.

**Table 7: Analysis of Student 7's pre- and post-tests**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Pre-test</b>	<b>Post-test</b>
Words	194	172
T-units	17	13



T-unit length	11.4	13.2
Subordinate clauses	12	8
Subordinate clauses per T-unit	0.7	0.6
Noun types	16 (8.2%)	13 (7.6%)
Noun types per T-unit	0.9	1
Verb types	20 (10.3%)	13 (7.6%)
Verb types per T-unit	1.1	1
Adjective types	7 (3.6%)	5 (2.9%)
Adjective types per T-unit	0.4	0.3
Errors	12	11
Errors per T-unit	0.7	0.8

Student 7 wrote slightly fewer words in the post-test than in the pre-test (a difference of 22 words) and 4 T-units fewer in the post-test. However, the T-unit length increased from 11.4 words in the pre-test to 13.2 words in the post-test. There was only a minor difference in the subordinate clause per T-unit ratio, from 0.7 in the pre-test to 0.6 in the post-test. Moreover, the student's use of types of nouns, adjectives and verbs showed some minor differences from the pre-test to the post-test. There was a slight decrease in the post-test in the percentage of noun, verb and adjective types, and there was only 0.1 difference in the noun, verb and adjective types ratios per T-unit between the pre- and post-tests. Finally, the student had nearly the same number of errors in the pre-test as in the post-test (12 in the pre-test and 11 in the post-test) and the errors per T-unit ratio was almost the same (0.7 and 0.8 respectively).

The student's pre- and post-tests also showed some differences in the structure and format of the stories written. The student chose to use paragraphs in both stories, which created structure and order in the texts. However, one of the main differences between the tests was the use of dialogue. In the pre-test the use of dialogue and direct speech was already shown in the first paragraph. The text was written in the third person point of view. However, the dialogue, which happened between the main character 'George' and another man, showed the reader what George was thinking. For example, *George walk up in to the kafe and asked: does anyone know the way up to the mountain?* In the post-test, the text was also written from third person point of view, yet there was no direct or indirect speech. There was more description of action, which created excitement and engaged the reader into reading more. For example, *The tunnel that the train whent through was destroyed, and every one screamed. Someone run towards the train to see if it was far away, but it was not.*

To sum up, there were hardly any changes as to the student's use of subordinate clauses, word classes and errors. However, there was a noticeable increase from the pre-test to the post-test in the length of T-units. In addition, the post-test contained more use of description of action and setting than in the pre-test.

### **Student 8**

Table 8 provides an overview of the quantitative measures analysed in Student 8's pre-and post-texts.

**Table 8: Analysis of Student 8's pre-and post-tests**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Pre-tests</b>	<b>Post-test</b>
Words	156	189
T-units	18	13
T-unit length	8.6	14.5
Subordinate clauses	8	14
Subordinate clauses per T-unit	0.4	1.1
Noun types	14 (9%)	22 (11.6%)
Noun types per T-unit	0.7	1.7
Verb types	13 (8.3%)	17 (9%)
Verb types per T-unit	0.7	1.2
Adjective types	6 (3.8%)	2 (1.1%)
Adjective types per T-unit	0.3	0.1
Errors	6	3
Errors per T-unit	0.3	0.2

Student 8's post-test was longer than the pre-test (156 in the pre-test and 189 in the post-test). The T-unit length increased considerably from 8.6 words in the pre-test to 14.5 in the post-test. The number of subordinate clauses also increased from 8 clauses in the pre-test to 14 clauses in the post-test, and the subordinate clause per T-unit ratio increased greatly from the pre-test to the post-test (0.4 in pre-test and 1.1 in the post-test). There was also a noticeable difference in the student's use of types of nouns, adjectives and verbs. The student used far more noun types in the post-test (14 in the pre-test and 22 in the post-test), as well as more than double the noun type per T-unit ratio in the post-test compared to the pre-test (0.7 and 1.7 respectively). There was a slight increase in the number of verb types used in the post-test

as opposed to the pre-test. The student used 4 more verbs types in the post-test (13 in the pre-test and 17 in the post-test) and also the verb types per T-unit ratio increased considerably from 0.7 in the pre-test to 1-2 in the posttest. However, there was a marked decrease in the percentage of adjective types used and there was a lower adjective types per T-unit ratio (0.3 and 0.1 respectively). Furthermore, the student made fewer mistakes in the post-test than in the pre-test (6 in the pre-test and 3 in the post-test), and as a result there was a small difference in the errors per T-unit ratio (0.3 in the pre-test and 0.2 in the post-test).

The student's pre- and post-tests also showed some differences regarding other features of the writing in the stories. Firstly, there was a clear distinction in how the student had structured both stories. The pre-test story was shorter than the post-test one, but there were many more paragraphs in the pre-test story. The pre-test story consisted of five paragraphs (consisting of one to three sentences), which were very short. The text's structure did not give the impression of a story, but much rather an informal note or letter due to the several unnecessary short paragraphs. On the other hand, in the post-test story the student structured the text into two paragraphs. Even though they were relatively long paragraphs, this nevertheless gave the text a better structure. Another noticeable feature in both stories was the points of view used. Both stories were written from a first person narrator's point of view, describing and explaining actions and emotions.

To sum up, there was a considerable increase from the pre- to the post-test in the T-unit length and the ratio of subordinate clauses, noun types and verb types per T-unit. There was a noticeable reduction in the percentage of adjective types, the ratio of adjective types per T-unit and a slight reduction of error per T-unit. Moreover, the student used the first person point of view in both stories, and there were more (very short) paragraphs in the pre-test story than in the post-test story.

### *Aggregate scores of the whole group*

Table 9 provides an overview of the aggregate scores for the whole group.

**Table 9: Aggregate scores of the pre- and post-tests**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Pre-test</b>	<b>Post-test</b>
Words	1778	1393
T-units	210	135
T-unit length	8.5	10.3

Subordinate clauses	92	82
Subordinate clauses per T-unit	0.4	0.6
Noun types	154 (8.7%)	142 (10.2%)
Noun types per T-unit	0.7	1.1
Verb types	186 (10.5%)	146 (10.5%)
Verb types per T-unit	0.9	1.1
Adjective types	61 (3.4%)	34 (2.5%)
Adjective types per T-unit	0.3	0.2
Errors	174	111
Errors per T-unit	0.8	0.8

As shown in Table 9, the students wrote on aggregate shorter texts in the post-test than in the pre-test. However a reduction in length seems to have been balanced by greater fluency (T-unit length), and grammatical and lexical complexity in a number of ways. Firstly, the average T-unit length increased in the post-tests from 8.5 words to 10.3 words. This is a noticeable increase in a short period of time and can be compared to the increase in T-unit length in other studies (e.g. Hunt, 1965; Drew 2010). Hunt (1965) found that T-units with L1 learners increased from 8.6 words in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade to 11.5 words in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Drew (2010) found that T-units with L2 learners increased from 6.6 words in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade to 7.1 words in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. The post-tests also showed that the students used relatively more subordinate clauses, which partly explains the increase in T-unit length. The aggregate subordinate clause per T-unit ratio increased by 50 per cent, from 0.4 in the pre-tests to 0.6 in the post-tests. In addition, the aggregate number of noun types per text increased from 8.7% in the pre-tests to 10.2% in the post-tests. At the same time, the aggregate noun types per T-unit ratio increased from 0.7 in the pre-test to 1.1 in the post-tests. There was an increase in the aggregate ratio of verb types per T-unit from 0.9 in the pre-tests to 1.1 in the post-tests. However, the aggregate adjective types per T-unit ratio slightly decreased from 0.3 in the pre-tests to 0.2 in the post-tests. The aggregate errors per T-unit ratio was identical in both tests (0.8).

To sum up the qualitative analysis, there was variation in the structure and organization of the students' pre- and post-texts. The use of points of view, paragraphs, direct speech and dialogues were the main features that changed in their writing of the texts. Some of the students, such as Student 1 and 2, did not show any clear differences from their pre-test

to their post-test in terms of structure. Others, e.g. Student 5 (e.g. more description of action) and Student 7 (e.g. use of paragraphs), showed differences from the pre- to the post-test.

## **5.3 Interviews**

### 5.3.1 Interviews with Christine

#### *Pre-project interview*

In the first interview (pre-project), Christine was asked how she felt about writing in English and replied that she felt it was difficult at times because she did not consider herself a strong English writer. It was difficult to produce text with complex words, but she hoped that this would eventually get better with time. Christine thought that writing in English was a challenge also due to the fact that words are pronounced differently in English.

In her opinion, it was sometimes easier to write in Norwegian than in English, but it all depended on what she was writing and the type of text: 'If I do get some ideas about the text I am writing, then it is easier to write in English, if do not I find it difficult'.

Christine believed that there were certain types of texts that were easier to write in English than in Norwegian, such as fantasy stories, where one had to use one's fantasy and creativity, and also fiction stories, where one was not dependent on genre characterization. This, according to Christine, created excitement in the texts instead of focusing on the characteristics of the genre. Christine claimed that factual and non-fiction texts were easier to write in Norwegian because they were based on facts. When it came to which types of texts she liked to write most, Christine did not hesitate: 'I like writing fantasy and action texts where I am dependent on my own creativity and fantasy'.

Christine also enjoyed writing stories, which she had become interested in more recently and again stressed the fact that stories are not usually based on facts and that was why she liked to write them. When answering how she thought she could become a better writer, Christine claimed that reading English texts was a good way of learning English, especially focusing on the pronunciation of words.

Christine was also asked if she could name a text she had written which she was satisfied with. She had written about a young girl moving to a new town and meeting abnormal people. The story was written in English and was inspired by her favourite TV show.

Christine also added that group writing activities could improve her written English, but it depended on which groups she ended up with and how they worked together. Although she preferred writing alone, she thought that the group could help her in learning unfamiliar words.

#### *Post-project interview*

Christine was also interviewed after the group writing activities and was asked how she experienced them. She thought that the process of writing in groups was somewhat challenging:

I felt that our ideas often collided with one another. Everyone had their own ideas as to how we should write the text and it was at times difficult to get across my ideas of how the story should be written.

When discussing what she liked about the writing activities, Christine explained that she thought it was fun and educational to write stories in groups. She said that she sometimes thought it was challenging to write stories in English on her own, and therefore felt that it was easier to write in groups than alone.

Although Christine had enjoyed writing in groups, there were also some difficulties concerning the writing activities. She sometimes had difficulties understanding how the other students wanted to write the story and how they wanted to put it together.

Christine found the first activity, where the students had to write a story based on displayed pictures, to be the one she liked most. As Christine explained: 'In the first activity we had resources to write a story. We were inspired by the pictures and got ideas on how to write the story'. She also enjoyed the activity when they all had to write stories and pass them to the next group because she liked sharing ideas and the writing of the other students' stories was exciting.

Her experience with writing in groups was generally positive as opposed to working on her own. She expressed her frustration of producing texts alone, as it was difficult and time-consuming.

I use much more time figuring out what I want to write when I am writing texts in English alone. When I am writing with other people, everyone can come with their ideas and then we can glue the story together based on those ideas.

Furthermore, Christine was asked if she felt the writing activities increased her motivation to write. She said she had become more motivated to write in English now, but it all depended on what type of group she was in. In addition, Christine said that writing stories in groups gave an outlet for her creativity: ‘It is difficult for me to figure out ideas to use in the stories and to be creative. When we all had to write a text, it was easier to write the story’.

She felt that not all of the students in the group were focused on the writing activities all the time and this affected her motivation to write in groups. Christine also pointed out that she now mastered writing in English better. After doing several writing tasks in groups, she felt that she could now manage to produce longer texts by herself.

Christine now preferred writing in groups because she believed that by writing in groups there were several ideas to rely on and she was not only relying on her own writing. She finally added that she would like to do more group writing activities in the future.

### 5.3.2 Interview with Isak

#### *Pre-project interview*

Isak was a student with a high proficiency level in English. He mastered the language very well, and stated that he had no problems reading or writing in English. However, Isak mentioned that he managed oral English better than written English. He thought that it was easier to express himself in English as opposed to Norwegian because it was easier to find complex words and terms in English: ‘If I am going to find a difficult word in Norwegian, then I usually know the word in English’.

Isak thought that writing in English could be both difficult and effortless at the same time. It all depended on what type of text he was writing. According to Isak, whether or not writing texts in English was challenging depended on the type of texts to be written:

It depends on what I am writing. An easy text to write in English is retelling a story, but writing a non-fiction text or article is usually demanding. Then I have to think about the words I should use.

Isak considered factual texts to be the type of texts he liked to write most because they were challenging. In contrast, he did not like writing stories. He thought that using your own creativity and figuring out what to include in a story could be enjoyable, but at the same time it depended on what type of story it was. In order to become a better writer, Isak explained

that it was necessary to write and speak English every day. He mentioned that playing games on the Internet and speaking with other players online had helped him to improve his English skills: 'In primary school I was ahead of my peers in English because I talked to other players online and read articles about games on the internet'.

When asked if there were any texts he was particularly pleased with, he mentioned an article he had written about the Olympic Games in his regular English class.

### *Post-project interview*

Working in groups had been a fun experience for Isak. When he was interviewed after the writing activities he said:

I thought it was a lot of fun! There was more variety in writing in groups, more creativity in the classroom. We had time to cooperate and figure out how we wanted to write the text. I liked it that if one of us was not good at writing, then the other one could do that task. Everyone in the group participated in the writing, regardless of proficiency levels.

On the other hand, even though every group member participated in the writing activities, Isak felt there were some challenges to make everyone participate at all times. He also added that he liked the activity where they wrote a story based on pictures best because: 'We could construct the story according to the pictures given. We had a framework for what we were supposed to do'.

Isak explained that the activity of choosing a topic of their own was another one that appealed most to him. He thought that it was a good activity because it gave room for creativity and one could decide how to start and end the story. However, he felt that the writing activity of passing their stories on to the next group was chaotic and, in his opinion, forced them to write about a specific topic that the others had started.

Isak felt that the group writing activities had increased his motivation to write and said: 'I have become more motivated to write and more motivated to work in groups with other students and write texts in English'. Writing in groups over a period of time was also one of the factors that motivated Isak: 'It is like when you become better and better in something, it becomes more fun to do it'.

Isak showed excitement when commenting on writing in English after the group writing activities. He explained that one of the great advantages with working in groups was



how they had all helped each other when one of them did not know the pronunciation or the spelling of a word. By working in groups when writing, they had the opportunity to use both Norwegian and English. Isak explained:

There is always one who knows how to write or pronounce the word. That is why I think it is so great writing in groups with students of different proficiency levels. I learned something from them and they learned something from me.

Isak also felt that his writing had improved after writing in groups with other students. He explained that, of course, it had not done wonders for his written English, but he had learned new words and got to know what group-work was like. He added that he preferred working in groups as opposed to working alone, even though the former type of work does not always give the best result.

Finally, Isak was asked whether or not he would like to do more writing activities in groups, and he did not hesitate to answer: ‘Yes, I would like to do more group writing activities’.

### 5.3.3 Interview with Peter

#### *Pre-project interview*

Peter explained in the first interview that he liked the English subject. He explained that he learned English faster than Norwegian, which is his mother tongue. He believed that learning words in English was much easier than learning words in Norwegian even though his vocabulary was much more expanded in the latter. He generally wrote more in English as well.

When explaining how he felt about writing in Norwegian, Peter claimed that it was more challenging learning new words in Norwegian. He was more exposed to written English than written Norwegian, and it was therefore easier to write in English because there were fewer rules to deal with in English.

Although he liked to write fantasy texts and non-fiction stories, Peter preferred writing factual texts: ‘I like to write fantasy stories, but at the same time it is easier to write factual texts because stories take longer to write.’

When questioned on how he thought he could become a better writer, Peter answered that it was important to read and write English texts.

One of the texts Peter had written which he was satisfied with was the 'Tiger' story he wrote for the pre-test. He added that writing stories gave him room to choose what he wanted to write about.

### *Post-project interview*

Peter thought that the group writing activities were a positive experience that helped him to expand his vocabulary in English. Peter explained: 'I thought it was a great way of learning new words. It was a positive experience which helped me learn words that I did not know of.' According to Peter, working in groups had helped them when writing stories.

Peter had enjoyed and preferred working with other students than working alone: 'The group-work was fun and the fact that we did not work alone helped. We were not only dependent on ourselves, but also of other students working'. The difficulties Peter faced during the writing activities had to do with what they were going to write and how they would agree on what should be written in the story: 'It was important that everyone's suggestions were heard and that everyone came with ideas as to how to write the story'.

When it came to which activity Peter liked most, he did not hesitate to answer. He explained that the writing activity where they had to pass the story to the other groups was his favourite. This activity had created excitement and humor in the storytelling. Peter explained: 'I liked the activity where we had to pass down the stories because it was funny to see what the other students had written and because the story ended up being funny and weird'. The least likeable activity, according to Peter, was due to the lack of prompts to use when they had to start with a blank page. They had no one else except for themselves to depend on, and this made the writing activity more demanding than the others.

In Peter's opinion, writing with the other students was an educational experience and, according to him, his group was the best one in the class. When commenting on whether or not it had increased his motivation to write, Peter explained that it had made him somewhat more motivated due to the joy of working in groups.

Peter felt that the writing activities had taught him important strategies for writing a text. He explained: 'I have learned how to structure a text'. He mentioned that the other students had helped him to acquire new words. Because of working in groups, he sensed that he had become a better writer by learning new words.

Furthermore, Peter was asked if he preferred to write in groups or work on his own and answered: 'I prefer working in groups. It is better because then I get great ideas that I can write with others. I like working with students of different proficiency levels'. Finally, Peter

mentioned that he would like to do more group writing activities because he thought it was fun working in groups.

#### 5.3.4 Interview with Andre

##### *Pre-project interview*

Writing in English was not a significant problem for Andre. According to him, English is a subject he managed well. Andre explained:

I think it goes well because I master the language well. I can write sentences and I am able to write English better now than I did before. I watch movies with subtitles on, which makes me learn English better.

Andre's mother tongue was Chin, but he still felt that he was able to express himself well when writing in Norwegian, even though it was his second language, which made English his third. By speaking to other Norwegian-speaking students, his Norwegian had improved.

Although Andre felt that he could manage to write English well, the main challenge had to do with spelling words. He often knew how to express himself, but knowing which words to use and writing them was an obstacle for him: 'There are some words that can be difficult and some that can be easy. Sometimes there are words I know about but do not know how to write down'.

Andre found writing stories the best type of texts to write. He enjoyed writing stories because it was easier to create excitement so that others would read the story and because, when writing stories, one could decide how to construct the story.

In order to become a better writer, Andre thought that he had to read many English articles and to learn new words every day. He added that learning five new words each day could be a useful way of learning English.

Finally, when asked if he could tell about a text he had written which he was satisfied with, he answered that there were many texts, and he could not name only one he was pleased with.

##### *Post-project interview*

When Andre was interviewed at the end of the group project, he was excited to say that he had enjoyed writing stories and working in groups. He especially liked how they all had to participate in order to write a story. In Andre's opinion, writing a story together was what

made the activities interesting. He commented on how everyone's opinion had to be heard before they started writing the stories. This made everyone take their take on the story, which created engagement from all of the students in the group. According to Andre, there were no disadvantages of working together to write a story: 'I did not think there was anything difficult in working together. It was like if I did not know a word, then someone else in the group knew. And we corrected each other's grammar and we all had to come up with words we needed to use in the story.' Andre also commented that one of the things he had learned, in addition to learning new words, was how to conjugate verbs.

Of all the activities used in the group writing project, Andre liked best the activity where the students had to pass the story to the other groups because the story turned out to be so humorous. The activity he enjoyed least was writing with pictures displayed on the blackboard. He found it difficult to write according to the pictures they were given because this gave him boundaries for what they should write in the story

Andre experienced writing with other students to be an educational way of learning. He also stated that working in groups had increased his motivation to write because he now had new ideas for how to structure and write a text. Andre explained how the group writing activities had affected his attitude towards writing in English. Even though he felt that he could manage writing English well before, he now felt more secure because he believed he had become a better writing.

In Andre's opinion, his writing in English had improved by doing the group writing activities. Andre liked working in groups, but he could also work on his own if necessary. He said he would like to do more group writing activities.

### 5.3.5 Interview with Jakob

#### *Pre-project interview*

Jakob was a student of low proficiency in English. English was his third language and he often struggled with understanding words in class and needed help when writing texts in English. Hence, when asked how he felt about writing in English, he answered:

It is difficult. I am learning English and Norwegian at the same time, and therefore it is a challenge to learn both languages. I find words and sentence structure the most difficult part of learning English.

Jakob felt that writing in Norwegian was easier than writing in English due to the fact that Norwegian was the second language he had acquired. He preferred writing in Norwegian because he did not struggle as much. He did not like to write in English. At the same time, Jakob stated: 'I do not like to write in English but it all depends on what type of text I am writing'. He commented that stories were the type of texts he liked to write most: 'Stories are more enjoyable to write because it is much easier to figure out what I want to write'.

Jakob wanted to become a better writer in English and stated that he needed to read various types of texts in English in order to do so. Jakob enjoyed working both alone and in groups.

### *Post-project interview*

During the second interview, Jakob showed enthusiasm about having worked with the other students. He explained: 'It was a lot of fun! And it was really educational to listen to the others' advice and ideas on how to write a text'. What he liked most about the writing activities was the group-work, and how they all had to agree on how to write the stories. There were also some difficulties regarding the writing process. Jakob mentioned that he struggled with spelling some of the words in the stories, but at the same time he had other students to help him.

There were also some activities that were more fun than others:

The activity I liked most was when we were going to write a story together without any help. The activity I enjoyed least was to write with pictures because it was difficult to create a story in accordance with the pictures given us. I think it is better to use one's own creativity when writing stories.

Writing with other students was a great experience for Jakob. The process of writing stories with other students was both educational and enjoyable at the same time. Jakob had found it easier to write in groups than by himself due to his struggle with spelling complex words.

The group writing activities had had an impact on Jakob's writing as he felt that writing in groups had increased his motivation to write. It was such a delightful activity. Jakob believed that his writing had also improved, for example with sentence structure. Another aspect of his writing that had improved was that he had now learned new words and therefore could express himself better in English.

After experiencing the writing activities in groups, Jakob preferred to write in groups from now on. He explained: 'It is easier to write in groups now because my English has improved and I have learned new words from writing in groups'. According to Jakob, he was now more confident about writing in English because he felt that his vocabulary had somewhat expanded by writing stories with other students. Jakob concluded the interview by saying he would like to do more group writing activities.

## **5.4 Observations**

The researcher observed the students during all of the writing activities. The researcher's focus when observing was to see how the students worked together, how they received the various writing tasks, and how they wrote the stories for the writing activities. In addition, the stories are shown in Appendix 3 and 4.

### **5.4.1 The first group writing activity**

In the first group writing activity, the aim was to inform the students about the group writing activities and to introduce the first group writing activity, which was to be done in the first lesson. In the second lesson, the students started to write straight away, as they had already been informed about the activity.

The researcher, who was also the teacher, started the activity by displaying 20 pictures on the blackboard for the students to see. The researcher informed the students that this lesson was about writing in groups. The researcher explained the task for the students and informed them that the main aim for the lesson was for them to figure out how they were going to write a story based on those pictures.

In order to give the students an example of how a story like that should be written, the researcher read a story that had been written using the same pictures the students were given. As the researcher read the story, she made sure to point to the pictures in order to show the students that they also needed to use all of the pictures in their story as well. When the task had been explained and demonstrated, it was time for the students to get started with the writing activity.

The researcher had planned the grouping of the students prior to the writing activity and therefore knew which students were to be grouped together. When the students were placed in their groups, the writing of the stories started. As the students started writing in their

groups, the researcher noticed that this was something they were not used to doing. As far as the researcher knew, the students had been writing stories in their regular English course, so the genre was familiar. In addition, the English specialization class had been writing certain types of texts in their 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> year. However, even though they had been writing stories in their regular English classes, this type of group writing was not something they seemed to have much experience with. The students spent some time studying the pictures and discussing in their groups what to write in the beginning of the lesson. While they were writing, some of the students went up to the blackboard to take a closer look at the pictures.

While they were writing, it was not difficult to notice the discussion on how to write a story based on pictures. Each group had a similar pattern towards the use of pictures in the story. Firstly, the students discussed how to start the story. The researcher observed that the groups' main concern was to find an appropriate beginning to their story. They debated about which picture to start with and which one of them should write. After deciding on the writer and picture, the rest of the writing of the story went relatively easily. The groups worked well together, even though they consisted of students with different proficiency levels.

Another interesting observation was how the groups were concerned about the content and language of the story. It took some time for them to write the story due to their concern with the quality of the story. From what the researcher observed, they were more anxious about how to write a good story using the pictures than writing a long text.

Even though the students were allowed to use dictionaries during the writing of the stories, they still asked questions to the researcher/teacher. The questions were mainly about translating Norwegian words into English. The researcher helped the students with finding words and translating them when asked. The students were otherwise left alone to figure out themselves how and what to write for.

At the end of the second lesson, the groups had finished their texts and read them aloud. When reading their stories aloud to the class, the students decided to read one section of the story each. This was not something the researcher had told them to do, but what the groups had decided. All of the students had to listen to the other groups reading their stories and applauded when they were finished.

Although each group had spent the same amount of time on writing their stories, there was variety in the length of the texts. The first group had written one and half a pages, the second group two pages, whereas the third group had written half a page. There were also some differences in the structure and content of the stories. Group one and two had chosen to divide their texts into paragraphs, which created a better organized text. Group three, on the

other hand, had decided to write their story as one paragraph. It is worth mentioning that their text was also shorter than those of the other groups.

Another difference in the texts was the beginning of the stories. All three of the stories started with a different type of beginning, but at the same time in a familiar way to how a story usually starts. Group one started with *It was a long time ago, a family were going on a trip to there cabin*, while Group three started with ‘*There once was a boy who sat in a good chare*’, Both of these beginnings remind one of a typical story beginning. However, Group two’s beginning was somewhat different. Their story began with *A family of four was packing for theyre winter holiday*. This type of beginning differed from the other two because it did not give any indication of when the story had happened.

When it comes to the length of the texts, the stories were, as mentioned above, of different length. Group three had written the shortest story and Group two the longest. Even though the stories were of different lengths, one of the interesting factors was how the students had managed to create excitement in the stories. One might assume that the story group three wrote took longer to arrive at the events of the story since it was the shortest text. This was, however, not the case. It did not take more than four lines before there was action in the story, for example *His grand fhater walked in to the room with his prowd golden watch. (...) They went to the wood and trained*. There were many events happening one after another, whereas in the stories of the other groups, the events happened more gradually. For example, in Group one’s story, it was not until the second paragraph that there was a sign of some sort of action happening: ‘*(...) when he saw us he droped the picture and walked away..*’. The authors in these groups had focused more on describing the circumstances than actions.

#### 5.4.2 The second group writing activity

The second group writing activity started with the researcher explaining the task for the students. The same groups were used for the second activity as the first, with the exception of some individual changes because some of the students were absent due to illness. The students spent two lessons on writing a story on this writing activity.

The groups were given a piece of paper each with an opening sentence to a story at the top. Each had group had a different opening sentence for the text they were about to write. The students were informed that they were going to write a story with the help of an opening sentence, which they were handed. The first group was given the sentence: *When I woke up I tried hard to remember what had happened*, the second group was given the sentence: *There was a strange noise coming from the room next door* and the third group: ‘*Please sit down,*



*Mrs Jones*'. Each group then had to elaborate on the given sentence and come up with their story. The researcher assigned the opening sentences randomly to the groups, meaning the students were not allowed to choose which one they got.

When working in their groups, the researcher noticed that the writing process was faster this time than with the previous activity. The students knew how to get started and there were no questions regarding the writing activity. The groups showed excitement and interest in writing the new story. The researcher could clearly see that they put great effort in trying to link the opening sentence with the story they were writing.

Another interesting observation made was how the students discussed their stories. Group three was focused on the pronunciation and spelling of certain words, such as *said*, *can't* and *late*. When it came to spelling, nouns and verbs were the word classes this group was frequently uncertain of. The researcher noticed that they needed some time figuring out which words they wanted to use and when to use them. Although the students of this group did not know how to spell certain words, they still chose to use them instead of leaving them out or using words they were more familiar with. This group had one student with the highest proficiency level in the class, and this student was somehow given the job as the leader of the group. The student often helped the other students in the group whenever they were struggling with spelling words, and he found new words to use. At the same time he also let the other students have a say in the writing process, and did not invade too much space in the group.

It seemed as if the writing process went slower with Group one. There was a slow tempo of discussing the content of the story and agreeing on what should happen next. For this group, there was also one student who took the role as the leader of the group and made sure that the other students were focused and participated in the writing. However, this group was more confident about their grammatical skills and did not hesitate when it came to the spelling of words. When they eventually started to discuss their story, the writing of the story went well and they managed to produce a text as long as the other groups.

The researcher also observed that there was a difference in how the students worked together depending on their proficiency levels. The researcher noticed that several of the students with a high level of proficiency tended to fall behind when it came to the writing of the stories. Many of them had problems with finding words to use, especially noun types. On the other hand, the weaker students or students with a lower level of proficiency were more creative and had no problems with coming up with new words or new events in the stories. The writing of this type of story seemed to be more of a challenge for the strong students than the weaker ones. This applied specifically to two of the groups.

An interesting difference from the first writing activity was the students' ability to rely on their group. They did not ask as many questions to the teacher as they did in the first writing activity. Even though they still had questions, mostly regarding translating words from Norwegian to English, they asked their peers instead of the teacher. They also used the dictionaries more deliberately. At the end, the groups read their stories out aloud and again decided to read one section each.

In addition to the points above, the groups also had some differences in the writing of the stories. One of the differences was the length of the stories. Group three only wrote half a page in the previous writing activity, and thus they had the shortest text of all the groups. However, for this writing task, Group three wrote one and half a pages. Group one wrote just over one page, whereas Group two wrote almost two pages.

The stories also had different types of genre. Group three wrote a story based on a school environment. The main characters were students and teachers. Group one's story included criminal behavior, whereas Group two decided to use the element of fear into their story. The type of genre used in the stories affected their endings. The story about crime ended with the main character figuring out the puzzle he was in, which gave an interesting ending to the story: *He gave it to me and said that the man who hit me in the head in jail.* Group two's story about the main character being haunted ended in a mysterious way: *The house is still haunted and no one knows who killed us.* Finally, the story about school had a sad ending for the main character: *The police found finger prints on the baseball bat that belonge to Mr. Jones. Shortelig after the innciden Mr. Jones got sentenced to life in prison.*

In addition, none of the texts was clearly divided into paragraphs, but one of the groups had sectioned off parts of the texts. Group three had marked their paragraphs by drawing a line after the word and punctuation.

Finally, the use of point of view was an interesting feature of the stories. Group three's story changed somehow from the third person point of view to first person point of view. The students had used the third person point of view in two paragraphs, and then turned to the first person point of view in the third paragraph. Group one had used the first person point of view throughout their story, and so did Group two.

#### 5.4.3 The third group writing activity

As with the previous activity, the aim of the third writing activity was for the students to write a story beginning with an opening sentence. Each group was given a piece of paper with an

opening sentence to a story. The students' task was to continue the story by adding two new sentences to the story and passing it on to the next group, who also had to add two sentences and pass it on again. The groups were given different sentences. The first group's opening sentence was *As soon as she walked in, she felt the tension*, the second group's opening sentence was *Someone must have seen him, because the police were at his door*, and the third group's opening sentence was *As I looked out of the window, I saw something strange*. As with the previous activity, the students spent two lessons on writing the stories.

The students started with the task quickly and knew what to do, but spent some time wondering what to write. The researcher noticed that there was a big discussion in each group concerning how to link the opening sentence with the story they wanted to write. Some of the issues of discussion were the point of view and main character(s). However, it took some time before they started to write. The first sentence was written after circa ten minutes of debating.

It was clear that this type of writing activity was exciting for the students. They showed great enthusiasm for writing their stories. However, it was problematic making sure that the students were finished at the same time when passing on their stories to the other groups. Some of the groups had to wait for the other students to finish in order to continue the story. Nevertheless, all of the students got the opportunity to see what the others had written. This was also time-consuming, as the groups first had to read what was given to them and then write their part of the story. It sometimes took time to understand what the previous group had written. On the other hand, the students did not seem to mind reading and writing at the same time. From what the researcher observed, they enjoyed the process of both reading and writing.

Two of the students wanted to switch groups prior to this group writing activity. This was because they felt they did not work well in their groups and thought it would be more interesting if they were put in a different group. The teacher rejected their suggestion because the plan of keeping the same groups was to see how the students worked together during all of the writing activities.

It was also interesting to observe how the groups worked on writing their part of the story. Writing only two sentences before passing the text on was a challenge for some students. The struggle for them was to restrain themselves from writing more than two sentences. There was also a challenge of deciding what to write when there were so many ideas about the story. The researcher noticed that the groups had to take turns on who should write what, and which idea they should use first.

When they continued their stories in the second lesson, the students needed some time to read what had been written of the stories so far. Each group was given the first text they had started with, and the writing of the stories continued smoothly. The writing process went faster in the second lesson compared to the first.

At the end of the second lesson, the students had finished writing their stories and were allowed to read them aloud to the other students. This time the reading of the stories was different because the students had participated in the writing of all the stories. Even though the students knew all three stories, they were thrilled about reading aloud the stories for the others. Each group had to read the text they had started with in the first lesson. The students enjoyed reading the stories, which ended up being weird and funny.

There were also some differences in the length of the texts in this writing activity, as with the previous ones. As this activity required the students to pass their stories on, it was not easy to tell the contributions of each group. However, all of the texts were relatively long: one of the stories was more than one and a half pages and the two others were two pages. This meant that these were the longest texts the students had written so far.

The texts were different to the previous ones regarding the content and structure. Firstly, there was much more use of direct speech in these stories. For example: *Why didn't you answer me when we knocked on the door? the police said.* Other examples were *It is only mine!*, *We will not leave the house* and *Do you want to dance with me?* The students had also capitalized some of the letters to express an exclamation or an order.

In addition, the students had used the first person and third person point of view in all of the stories. They had used the point of view given in the opening sentence in all of the stories. An interesting similarity between the stories was the use of describing actions instead of circumstances of characters. This was also a change from the previous stories. It seemed as if the students were more concerned with explaining what was happening in the story rather than giving an illustration or description of the place or people. Every story started immediately with an action after the opening sentence. The first story continued with: *She saw a man with a beautiful smile. He stood on her right side, it was prince David.* The second story continued with: *The police knocked on the door a few times. After not getting an answer they broke down the door' and the third story with: There was a man.. he had a chicken nugget.*

#### 5.4.4 The fourth group writing activity

For the last group writing activity, the students were asked to write a story based on their own choice of topic. The students had to agree on characters and point of view they wanted to use in their stories. The researcher stressed the importance of working together in groups and agreeing on the choice of topic. The students had to work in the same groups as they had done with the previous activities, but on this occasion there were some students missing due to illness, so the researcher therefore had to regroup some of them. As with the previous activity, the students spent two lessons on writing stories.

As the writing of the stories progressed, the researcher noticed that the groups worked differently with their stories. Group three, which consisted of a strong leader who helped the other students in the group, had no problems figuring out a topic for their story. The group worked together as a team and each one had to come up with their own suggestions for a topic. After making sure that everyone's proposals were heard, the group started to discuss which topic they wanted to use. One of the students wanted to use several topics in the story, but the teacher clarified that they could only use one of them to write the story. This group also decided to let all of the students take turns on writing the text. This was not something they had done before, and it made all of the students participate in the writing.

The first group, which also consisted of one leader helping the other students in writing the text, had no problem starting the writing activity straightaway. This group had to exchange some of the students due to illness, and therefore some of them were new to the group. Even though the group had changed, it did not create great differences in the group dynamics. The group chose their topic quickly after the task was introduced. However, there were some difficulties making decisions about the story. This group spent more time discussing and debating on what should happen in the story.

The second group consisted of the same students as in the previous writing activity. One of the interesting observations was how the group started their writing process by drawing a mind map. They did not start right away with writing the story. When asked why, they explained that it was easier to make a mind map first. This was to display all of their ideas and to organize them before starting the writing process. When they were finished, the researcher noticed that this group made sure they spent some time deciding which idea or topic they wanted to use. When the topic was chosen, the students started to write.

From what the researcher observed, all of the groups had started to write their stories within the first 15 minutes of the lesson. All of the groups had written about half a page

within 20 minutes after the writing task was presented. Even though the three groups started differently, they all managed to write half of their stories within the first lesson. Group three had a structured plan on the order of events in the story, while Group two spent most of the time discussing what should be written. Group one had some trouble getting started.

In the second lesson, the students finished writing their stories and read them out aloud, as with the previous activities. When reading the stories, the groups once again decided to read one part of the story each. The students spent less time getting started with this activity and it seemed as if this task was easier than the previous ones.

There was variation in the length of the stories the students wrote. Group one wrote roughly one and half a pages, Group two one page, and Group three wrote one and half a pages. In addition, there were some interesting differences in how the stories were written. One of the obvious differences was in the structure. The structure of Group three's story differed from the other two in the sense that they used drawings in their text. After two paragraphs, there was a drawing of a map. There was a compass, a mine, and sketches of people with the words 'danger'. The map was supposed to help the main character 'Michael' in finding the 'gold mine'. Group two had not used any drawings, but simply divided their text into paragraphs. Group one had written the story as one whole paragraph.

The stories also had a similar type of beginning, as with the first writing activity. The groups once more started their stories by referring somehow to time. The story Group one wrote started with: *It's was a long time ago, his name was Arthur. He was fifteen years old and very poor*, whereas Group two's story began with: *It was a bright summer morning. The sun shined through the window*. Group three's story started with: *In a time when gold was very valuable. There was a man who owned a special gold mine*. Another similarity was how they all used the third person point of view in their stories.

To sum up, the groups' writing appeared to develop during the several weeks of writing stories. Something that drew the researcher's attention was how the students gradually got more and more used to writing stories together. Even though some of the writing activities were challenging, especially in the beginning, they all managed to write stories for all of the activities. There was also a change from the first to the last writing activity, especially when it came to the length of the texts and the structure.

## **5.5 Summary**

This chapter has presented the results of the current thesis: the text analysis of the pre- and post-tests, the student-interviews, and lesson observations carried out by the researcher. The texts have been analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. Furthermore, the five student interviews have been presented, in addition to the observations from the group writing activities.

## **6. Discussion**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the results which were presented in Chapter 5. First, the main findings from the text analysis are discussed in section 6.2, emphasizing the distinctions between the pre- and post-tests. The findings of the student interviews and lesson observations are discussed in section 6.3 and reflect upon whether or not the group writing activities had increased the students' motivation to write. Finally, section 6.4 addresses the findings and limitations of the study.

### **6.2 The effect of the group writing activities on the students' writing**

The first research question addressed how the students' individual writing would be affected by the group writing activities. This question was researched by conducting a pre-test prior to the group writing project and a post-test after the group writing activities were finished.

There seemed to be a number of similar features in the post-test texts. Even though almost all of the students wrote shorter texts than in the pre-tests, there were differences in the post-tests in several of the other features that were analysed.

One of the differences regarding Student 1's post-test was an increase in the average T-unit length of 2.9 words from the pre-test. The student's use of subordinate clauses also changed considerably. There were 15 more subordinate clauses in the post-test than in the pre-test. Such a difference did not occur with the other students. One of the reasons why there was such a difference from the pre-test to the post-test is likely to be the group writing activities. When interviewed, the student mentioned that he had enjoyed working in groups and that he especially liked writing stories. The researcher noticed that the student was eager to write when the task for the post-test was given. By working in groups, the student may have got insight into how other students resolved a similar task, and when doing so the student may have learned from the others about the use of subordinate clauses, new nouns and error correction, as all of these aspects had improved. Student 1's post-test consisted of a considerably longer subordinate clause per T-unit ratio (0.1 and 0.8) and the noun types per T-unit ratio had increased. In addition, the student made fewer mistakes in the post-test compared to the pre-test.



One of the grammatical features which changed in Student 2's post-test was also the T-unit length, which increased substantially from 7.7 in the pre-test to 12.8 words in the post-test (an increase of 5.1 words). The subordinate clauses per T-unit ratio doubled from the pre-test to the post-test. In addition, the student used more noun types in the post-test than in the pre-test, and the noun types per T-unit ratio also increased considerably. The post-test also consisted of a higher verb types per T-unit ratio.

Student 3's post-test was in some ways similar to the previous two students. This student also increased T-unit length in the post-test. In addition, the subordinate clause per T-unit ratio doubled in the post-test. Furthermore, the noun, verb and adjective types per T-unit ratios also increased in the post-tests.

In the post-test, Student 4 had an increase in the T-unit length of 0.8 words. There was a slight increase in the subordinate clause per T-unit ratio. There was a higher noun type percentage in the post-test and the noun types per T-unit ratio increased from 0.6 to 0.8. There was also an increase in verb and adjective types. Moreover, the student's errors decreased in the post-test.

Student 5 was one of the few students, who did not show any increase in terms of T-unit length or subordinate clause per T-unit ratio. The same applied to noun types and adjective types per T-unit. This student's verb types per T-unit ratio was identical in both tests. However, there were fewer errors in the post-test than in the pre-test.

There was also an increase regarding the T-unit length (of 1 word) in student 6's post-test. The student used almost the same number of subordinate clauses in both tests, but there was a higher subordinate clause per T-unit ratio in the post-test. In addition, there was an increase of noun types per T-unit ratio. The verb types and adjective types per T-unit ratio was identical. Furthermore, there were fewer errors in the post-test.

Student 7's post-test consisted of T-units that were on average 1.8 words longer than in the pre-test. There was, however, a slight decrease in the subordinate clause per T-unit ratio in the post-test. The noun types and verb types per T-unit ratio were similar in both tests, as was the ratio of errors per T-unit.

Finally, Student 8 was the only one who wrote a longer text for the post-test than the pre-test. In addition, the student had a substantial increase of 5.9 words in T-unit length from the pre-test. There was also a noticeable difference in the subordinate clause per T-unit ratio. In addition, the student used 8 more noun types in the post-test and there was a considerable increase in the noun types per T-unit ratio in the post-test, which might indicate that the student may have learned new words when working in groups. This also applied to the verb

types and verb types per T-unit ratio. In contrast, there was a decrease in the number of adjective types and adjective types per T-unit. In addition, the student halved the number of mistakes in the post-test, in spite of writing more.

As shown above, almost all of the students' post-tests showed several gains according to the analysed measures. The average T-unit length increased in the texts of seven out of eight students. The average subordinate clauses per T-unit ratio increased in the texts of six out of eight students. The average noun types percentages increased in the texts of six out of eight students, as did the average noun types per T-unit ratio. The average verb types percentages increased in the texts of half of the students and the average verb types per T-unit ratio increased in half of the students' texts and remained identical with two of the students. Furthermore, the average adjective types percentages increased in three out of the eight students' texts and the average adjective types per T-unit ratio also increased in three out of the eight students' texts. Finally, the average errors per T-unit ratio decreased with three of the students.

One of the main differences regarding the pre- and post-tests was that seven out of eight students wrote shorter texts, which is one measure of fluency (Wolfe-Quinter et al., 1998). The researcher had expected that the students would write longer post-tests, but this did not happen even though the same circumstances applied for both tests, i.e. the learners had 30 minutes to write a story based on six pictures with the help of key words given by the teacher.

One possible explanation why most of the students wrote shorter post-tests is that they may have become tired of writing after such an intense period of writing stories several weeks in a row. All this writing may have made them less enthusiastic to write a longer text than necessary in the post-tests. Another explanation is that the transition from the writing four consecutive texts in groups to then writing a story by themselves could have influenced the length of their texts. They may have become used to writing in groups and depending on each other to write a text. When the group writing project was finished, they had to write alone in the post-test, which was a big difference from writing in groups, where the writing was shared. A third possibility is that the students spent longer thinking about what to write and how to write it in the post-tests. One does not know if the group writing activities may have had long-term effects on the amount they would write, but it seems that the short-term effect was shorter texts. In contrast, the group texts became longer during the project compared to the individual texts.

Even though most of the students wrote shorter post-tests, there were differences compared to the pre-tests regarding the other measure of fluency (i.e. T-unit length) and the grammatical and lexical complexity of the texts they wrote. One of the most noticeable differences concerned T-unit length. In the post-tests, the T-unit length had increased in all of the texts (with the exception of Student 5) from an average of 8.5 words in the pre-tests to an average of 10.3 words in the post-tests (i.e. average increase of 1.8 words). To put this finding into perspective, one can compare it with other scholars who have studied T-unit length, for example Hunt's (1965) research on T-units and writing maturity. Hunt (1965) investigated the writing of L1 learners in the fourth, eighth and twelfth grades. His study showed that the learners wrote longer T-units the older they got. Hunt (1970) explained that the older learners wrote longer T-units, for example by using more subordinate clauses. Thus, T-unit length was linked to the learners' maturity. The T-units in the learners' texts increased from 8.6 words in the fourth grade to 11.5 words in the eighth grade (an increase of 2.9 words per T-unit). Thus in the space of four years, Hunt's students only wrote T-units that had increased by 1.2 words more than the students in the present study.

Drew's (2010) research on young learners' development in written English also showed an increase in T-unit length as the learners became older. Drew (2010) examined how learners' written English developed from the 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grades in a Norwegian primary school. The results showed that the young writers' T-unit length increased from 6.6 words in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade to 7.1 words in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade, meaning there was an increase of 0.5 words in two years compared to the increase of 1.8 words in 6 weeks of the students in the present study.

Vigrestad's (2006) research on writers of English in two countries, namely Norway and Netherlands, also showed similar findings about increase in T-unit length. The study was based on picture narratives, which were written by Norwegian and Dutch learners. Vigrestad's (2006) findings showed that there was a great distinction between the learners' average T-unit length from the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> grade. The Norwegian learners' average T-unit length increased from 8 words in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade to 9.8 words in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade, meaning a difference of 1.8 words. The Dutch learners had an average T-unit length of 6.9 words in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade and 9.5 in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade. Their T-unit length, from 7<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> grade, increased more than the Norwegian learners (an increase of 2.6 words).

Compared to Hunt's (1965), Drew's (2010) and Vigrestad's (2006) research, the present study shows a considerable increase in T-unit length despite the fact that the analysed writing took place in a much shorter time span than in the other studies mentioned above. Since the group project did not last longer than six weeks, there was not much time for the

students to develop their writing. Nevertheless, in that short period of time, they still managed to increase their T-units by 1.8 words from the pre-tests to the post-tests, which was, for example, the same increase among the Norwegian 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders (over three years) in Vigrestad's (2006) study.

In addition, and related to the T-unit length, the subordinate clauses per T-unit ratio also increased from the pre-tests to the post-tests. Hunt (1970) shows that the more mature writers become, the greater the tendency to use more subordinate clauses. In the present study, the subordinate clause per T-unit ratio increased considerably from an average of 0.4 subordinate clauses per T-unit in the pre-tests to 0.6 subordinate clauses per T-unit in the post-tests, i.e. an increase of 50%.

The use of more subordinate clauses affected the length of T-units in the students' writing. Hunt (1970) shows that more subordinate clauses result in longer T-units. According to Hunt, as students mature, they tend to use more subordinate clauses in their writing. Since T-units can become longer by using subordinate clauses, the use of subordinate clauses in writing is therefore linked to T-unit length.

A possible explanation for the increase in subordinate clause per T-unit ratio in the present study is that this was something the students had learned when writing in groups. The learners may have picked up from each other how subordinate clauses can be added to main clauses. During the post-project interviews many students said that they learned from writing in groups. Isak explained that he had learned from the other students. Peter stated that he had learned new words, and Jakob felt that his English had improved.

Furthermore, there were also differences in the use of word classes from the pre-to the post-tests. The increase in noun types was a noticeable finding. Six out of eight students used more noun types in the post-test. This may have had something to do with the different picture story task that was given in the post-test. However, the group writing project may also have had a positive effect on the use of different noun types. The learners may have learned new noun types in their groups and used some of them in the post-tests.

Furthermore, the verb types per T-unit also increased in the post-tests, which could also be a result of writing in groups. This may be because the students wanted to explain the actions of the stories. During the observations, the researcher noticed that the learners were concerned with what the characters should do. Many of the stories, which the students wrote in groups, were based on what the main characters were doing. This might have had an effect on the learners' writing during the post-tests and a consequent increase in verb types, which they may have learned from the group writing activities.

Working in groups can have many beneficial affects for students when it comes to writing (c.f. Boughey, 1997), and can be compared to the benefits gained in reading from Readers Theatre, which provides the learners with the chance to improve their reading skills by practising reading in groups (Drew and Pedersen, 2010; 2012). In Readers Theatre, the learners get to work in groups and read the same text several times. This makes the learners' reading more fluent and provides a safe atmosphere when reading. This method has improved learners' reading skills and can be compared to the group writing project in the present study. Both methods focus on working in groups with students of various proficiency levels, and how the learners involved can improve their reading skills (in the case of Readers Theatre) and their writing skills (in the case of group writing).

By working in groups the students seem to have learned from each other. The group dynamics is of great importance in this context. The students were grouped based on their proficiency levels. Each group consisted of students of different levels of proficiency in English. In this way, the students would learn from and help each other in order to write the stories. Vygotsky (1978) argues how students can reach their zone of proximal development with the assistance of their teacher or peers. In the present study, the students seem to have learned from their peers by writing stories together. They seem to have learned to use more subordinate clauses and new words from each other, hence the increase of subordinate clauses, noun types and verb types in the post-tests.

Moreover, there were also some changes regarding the structure of the learners' texts, individually and in groups. The students wrote longer texts in groups than for the pre- and post-tests (with the exception of Student 8). One possible explanation for this might be that the learners wrote longer stories in groups due to the fact that they were more people and they all had to add a part to the story. They could share ideas and assist each other in the writing of the stories. When writing the individual texts the learners wrote alone and had no one to help them. It could also be that the students wanted to focus on the content when writing individually, instead of the length of the texts.

In contrast to an increase in noun and verb types, most of the students used fewer adjective types in the post-test, with only three out of eight students increasing their use of adjectives. However, the decrease in adjective types was relatively small, as was the actual number of adjective types in both corpora. One possible explanation for this decrease might be that the students were focused on other aspects of their story. Some of students, such as Student 6, were concerned with emphasizing actions and thoughts instead of describing settings and circumstances.

### **6.3 The effect of the group writing activities on the students' motivation to write**

The second research question examined how the writing activities would effect the students' motivation to write. This question was researched by conducting student interviews and by observing the students during the four group writing activities. The students were interviewed before and after the writing project. In the post-project interviews the students were asked how they felt about writing in groups and whether or not the writing activities had increased their motivation to write.

The results of the interviews gave interesting insight into the students' attitudes towards writing before the group project and how their attitudes had changed as a consequence of the project. In the pre-test interviews, the students had various and dissimilar answers concerning their attitudes and beliefs regarding writing in English.

In the pre-test interviews many students found writing in English to be challenging. The first student, Christine, explained that she felt it was difficult to write in English, partly because she did not see herself as a great writer of English. She hoped that her writing would improve with time. It seemed as if Christine did not have much self-esteem when it came to writing English texts. In her opinion, writing was a complex process in which she did not always succeed. Christine felt that writing in her mother tongue was easier than writing in English. It is reasonable that Christine believed her written Norwegian was better than her written English. Writing in one's mother tongue is usually easier than writing in a second language. Drew and Sørheim (2009) discuss how Norwegian learners may struggle with learning English due to the similarities in grammar and vocabulary between the two languages. Occasionally, young Norwegian learners of English may combine both languages and believe that the words and expressions in Norwegian are the same in English. This can create challenges and confusion when writing in English. Silva (1993) found that L2 learners had far more difficulties with writing than L1 learners. According to Silva's (1993) study, L2 learners' writing involved less fluency, the texts contained more mistakes and the L2 learners spent more time on choosing topic and arranging their texts.

Student five, Jakob, also had difficulties with his writing skills in English. He stated that learning English was difficult due to words and sentence structure. Since Jakob was learning Norwegian at the same time as English, he struggled with acquiring both languages. It is understandable that Jakob found learning two languages at the same time to be strenuous and demanding, especially since he is a L3 learner of English.

In contrast, there were also some students who felt that they had no problems writing in English. Isak stated that he could express himself better in English than in Norwegian. He explained that he found it easy to express himself in English as opposed to Norwegian due to his expanded vocabulary in English. Isak's positive attitude towards English could have something to do with his proficiency level in the subject. Isak is a student who manages the English language very well and therefore might feel more sense of achievement than other students. When learners master a subject, it is more likely that they will enjoy the subject as well. Peter had a similar attitude to Isak towards writing in English. He experienced English to be a subject where learning was fun. In comparison to Norwegian, Peter claimed that learning new words was easier in English although his Norwegian vocabulary was more expanded. Peter's attitude towards writing in English showed that he was interested in the subject and that he liked to learn English. Finally, Andre explained that he felt his English skills were quite good and that he managed the subject well enough. As with Jakob, English was Andre's third language. Still, it did not seem that Andre perceived that as an obstacle when learning English.

From the impressions of the interviews prior to the group project, it seems as if some of the students had positive viewpoints towards writing in English, while others felt that the English subject was demanding and challenging. There could be various reasons for the students' answers. One could be that not all students find English to be an exciting subject. This might have something to do with their different previous experiences with writing in English. Isak and Peter explained that they managed the English subject well. A student's motivation can be of great importance when it comes to writing. Some students love to write and are excited to write in English, while others do not enjoy writing at all.

After the experience of the group writing activities in groups, the students' attitudes towards writing in English had changed considerably. First of all, all of the students who were interviewed were excited to say that they had enjoyed writing stories in groups and they all wanted to experience more group writing. However, Christine, said that there was a challenge of discussing ideas and deciding what to write. This could be due to the different group compositions. The researcher noticed during the observations that some of the groups needed more time than others to get started with the activities. It is plausible that this might have had something to do with the group dynamics. The researcher observed that Christine's group had some difficulties getting started with some of the activities and that Christine often had to come up with ideas herself.

Harmer (2001) discusses the advantages and disadvantages of working in groups. Harmer (2001) states that one of the advantages of group work is that it gives students the opportunity to state their opinions and participate in the group. This could be beneficial, especially for the less proficient students, because they are given the opportunity to take part in the writing and express their opinions, which can be frightening for them to do in a whole class setting. For Jakob, this seemed to give him the chance to show his creativity in writing, while at the same time getting help with his spelling and learning new words from the others in the group. Vygotsky (1978) explains that by working together, students can learn from more skillful peers, which may also be what happened in the case of Jakob and the learners in his group.

All of the five students who were interviewed felt that the group writing tasks had increased their motivation to write (c.f. Corden, 2004). Jakob felt that the writing activities had increased his motivation to write due to the improvement in his writing. He had learned more about how to structure his sentences and had acquired new words. Andre explained that the group project had helped him to get new ideas on how to structure a text. Peter said that it was the joy of group work that made him more motivated to write. For Christine, using her creativity in writing was exciting. She explained that her motivation was dependent on the students in her group, meaning it was important to be put in a group where everyone participated. Finally, Isak said that writing in groups for a period of time was what made him more motivated.

It also seemed as if the writing activities in groups made the students more confident about their writing. The students had enjoyed writing in groups and working with the other students. Their motivation seemed to have increased because they had succeeded in writing stories together. Since the learners had succeeded with the group writing activities, it seemed to make them motivated to write more.

When observing the students working in groups, the researcher noticed that the groups were eager and enthusiastic to discuss what and how they wanted to write their stories. Whenever the learners had trouble understanding or translating a word, they would ask their classmates instead of the teacher. They seemed to trust each other and depend on their group. In addition, some of the less proficient students sometimes helped the other learners if there was difficulty finding words. This probably gave the weaker learners a boost in their self-esteem, showing that they could contribute to the text. The learners also had to read their texts aloud for the other students after every writing activity. Each group read their stories by dividing their texts in sections and then reading their part. When the groups were finished, the



others would applaud them for reading their stories. The learners sharing each other's stories and applauding each other's performances showed that they acknowledged each other's work and appreciated listening to each other, which also seemed to be a motivational factor.

Brown (2007) differs between two types of motivation: intrinsic (motivation because the activity is interesting) and extrinsic (motivating because there is a reward). In this case, the learners seemed to be motivated because they were interested and engaged in the activity. The researcher observed that they asked each other questions and exchanged ideas when writing. The group writing activities were intrinsically motivating. Although the group writing activities did not have a reward at the end of the project, the students had experienced a new way of learning and had improved their writing skills at the same time. This seemed to boost the learners' self-esteem and made them more comfortable with writing in English, especially for the reluctant and shy learners, such as Jakob.

Some of the students also claimed that writing stories was the best type of genre to write because they could use their creativity. When writing in groups the students were able to participate in the writing by adding their part of the story and giving suggestions to what should be written. As Brown (2007) points out, motivation can be fostered by writing texts as a thinking process where learners exchange ideas. By doing so, the students seemed to get a sense of joy and pride when writing, especially as L2 and L3 learners.

#### **6.4 Findings and limitations of the study**

The main findings of this study were that writing in groups generally had a positive impact on the students' writing and on their motivation to write in English and that group writing therefore has potential in EFL classrooms. Even though the students' post-tests were shorter than the pre-tests, there was greater fluency (T-unit length) and complexity of the language in the post-tests. The T-unit length increased in all of the post-tests except for Student 5, which corresponds with Hunt's (1965) and Drew's (2010) studies on the increase of T-unit length as a sign of development. In addition, the subordinate clause per T-unit ratio increased with the exception of Student 5 and 7. Moreover, the noun types and verb types percentages increased as well.

Five of the students were interviewed to find out if and how they were motivated after writing in groups. All of the students stated that their motivation had increased due to the group writing activities. The students explained that they had enjoyed writing stories in groups, had enjoyed working with their peers, and that they had learnt more words and how to

improve their grammar. This supports Brown's (2007) and Harmer's (2001) research on motivation in group work.

Writing in groups was a positive experience and had a positive effect on the students' writing and motivation to write. However, in a regular teaching situation it might be best to use these kinds of writing tasks on different occasions, instead of one after the other in an intensive period, which was what happened here for the purpose of the research. Group writing activities could, for example, be distributed according to topics the class is learning about. The intensity of several group writing activities following each other may make some students fed up with writing, which did not seem to be the case with the present group, but could be with others. Letting learners explore their creativity and use their fantasy in writing is an important classroom activity. Writing, according to *LK06*, is one of the basic skills and group activities such as the ones used in this project are one way of letting learners explore their creativity and use their imagination.

Finally, it is important to note the limitations of the present study. This case study was conducted at a lower secondary school with twelve pupils in an English specialization class within a period of six weeks. This study is limited as it only involves a small sample of students. Due to the small number of students, one cannot generalize the findings. At the same time the outcome of the research was beneficial for many of the learners concerned, especially the less proficient ones. In lower secondary schools in Norway (and other levels), these kinds of writing tasks might be useful for many students who are in need for activities that can encourage and motivate them to write.

The study is also limited concerning the student pre- and post-texts. The research was conducted in six weeks, which is not much time to expect any improvements in a student's writing. However, the students still managed to develop their writing and increased their motivation to write. In a short amount of time, the learners' writing and attitudes towards the subject changed to a certain extent. It would be interesting to see what the long-term effects of the research would have been if the students' writing had been researched over a longer period of time and their writing had shown more long-term gains from the group writing project.

## 7. Conclusion

The present thesis has examined the effects of group writing activities among 10<sup>th</sup> grade EFL learners. The study was conducted within a period of six weeks with a class of twelve students studying the English specialization subject in a lower secondary school in Norway. The main aim of the study was to find out the effects of four group writing activities on the learners' writing and on their motivation to write in English.

In order to investigate the effects of the group writing activities on the learners' writing and motivation, the researcher conducted a writing pre-test before the writing project and a similar writing post-test after the writing project. In addition, the learners were interviewed before and after the writing process, and the researcher observed them during the lessons spent on writing.

The present thesis was a case study that used a mixed methods approach, meaning a combination of both quantitative and qualitative research. The qualitative research involved the pre-project and post-project interviews conducted by the researcher, and the lesson observations. The quantitative research involved text analysis, which was carried out by measuring aspects of fluency, grammatical and lexical complexity, and accuracy of the texts. Some qualitative features of the texts were also analysed.

The main findings of the comparison of the pre-and post-tests showed a number of positive outcomes. Although most of the post-tests were shorter than the pre-tests, there were gains in several other aspects of the students' writing. The average T-unit length, subordinate clause per T-unit ratio, noun types and verb types per T-unit ratios all increased with many of the students.

The interviews before the writing project were focused on the learners' attitudes and beliefs about writing in English. Five of the twelve students were interviewed. The interviews after the writing project focused on the learners' experiences of writing in English in groups. The pre-interviews revealed that most of the students liked to write stories instead of factual texts because they preferred to depend on their own creativity instead of facts. Most of the learners enjoyed writing in English, but some of them felt that they struggled with producing texts in English.

The post-interviews showed that the learners had become more motivated to write after the group writing activities. Many of them mentioned that they had enjoyed writing

stories in groups. The students stated that it was educational working with other students because, for example, they had learned new words. At the same time, one of them mentioned that it was challenging at times to hear everyone's opinions.

During the lesson observations, the researcher noticed that the learners worked well together even though the groups consisted of students with different proficiency levels. The researcher observed that the groups gradually became more confident with writing stories and structuring their texts.

The present study has contributed to the field of EFL students' writing development in English with its focus on group writing which, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, has not been researched much before, and not in a Norwegian context. The study has provided data on the kinds of effects working in groups can have on learners' writing, in this case especially through established quantitative measures of fluency, grammatical and lexical complexity, and accuracy. It has also shown what effects writing in groups can have on learners' motivation to write in English.

More research is needed on EFL education and writing development in general in Norway. This was a case study of the effects of group writing during a relatively short period of time. It has shown that group writing can have a positive effect on EFL writing and motivation to write. However, a longitudinal study of the long-term effects of writing in groups on learners' writing and motivation would be an interesting follow-up.

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# **Appendices**

## **Appendix 1 Student Pre-test Interview Guide**

### **Opening remarks**

The purpose of the pre-project interview was to find out the students' attitudes and views on writing in English. In addition the learners were interviewed in Norwegian.

1. How do you feel about writing in English?
2. How do you feel about writing in Norwegian?
3. Do you find it easy or difficult to write in English? Explain.
4. What kinds of texts do you like writing most? Why?
5. Do you like writing stories? Why/why not?
6. How do you think you can become a better writer?
7. Can you tell me about a piece of writing in English you are satisfied with?

## **Appendix 2**

### **Student Post-test Interview Guide**

#### **Opening remarks**

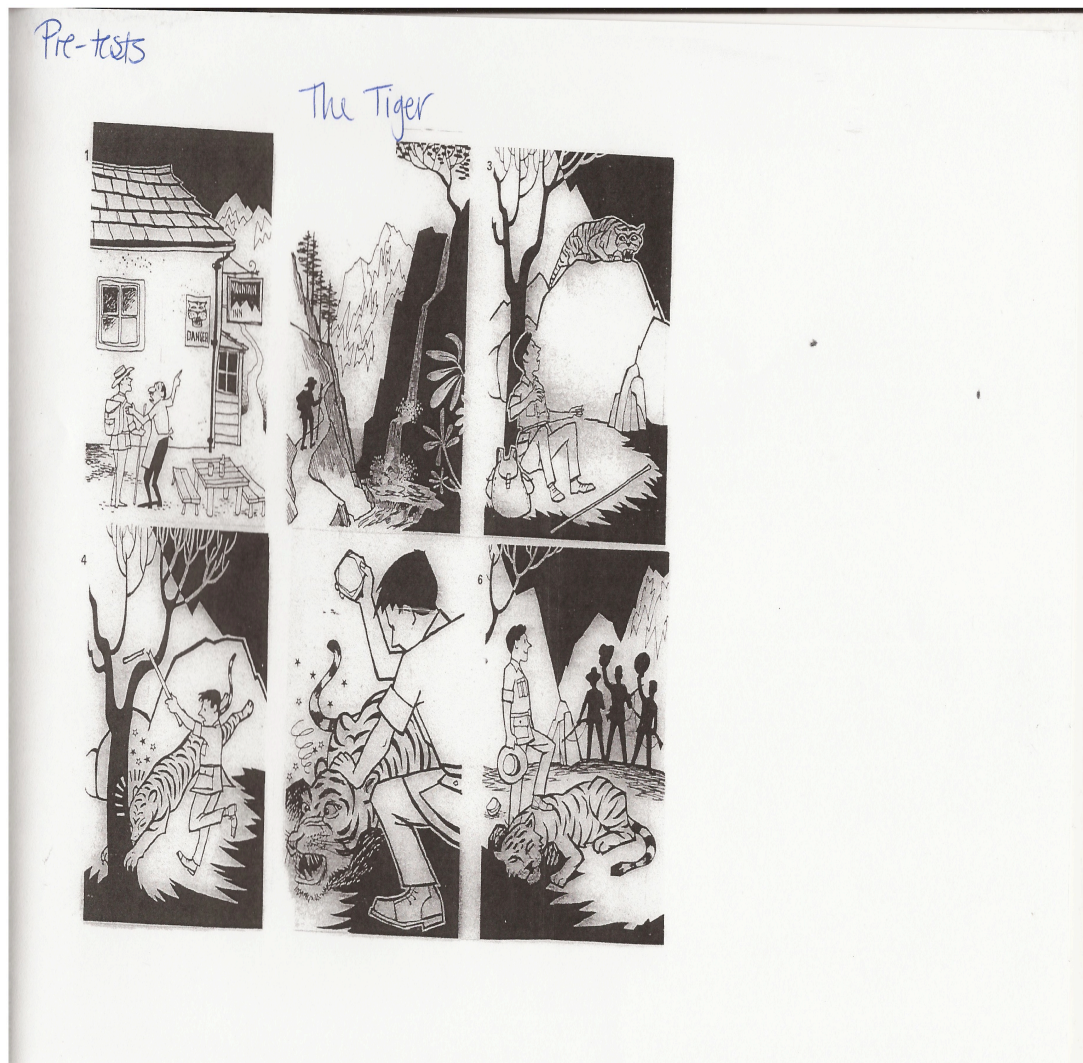
The purpose of the post-project interviews was to find out what the learners' had experienced during the group writing activities and whether or not they felt more motivated. The post-interviews were also conducted in Norwegian.

1. How did you experience the group writing activities?
2. What did you like about the writing activities?
3. What did you not like about the writing activities? Difficulties?
4. Which activity did you enjoy the most/least? Why?
5. How did you experience writing together with others?
6. Have the writing activities increased your motivation to write? Why/why not?
7. How do you feel about writing in English after doing the writing activities?
8. In your opinion, has your writing improved after doing the group writing activities? If so, in what way?
9. Do you prefer writing in groups or writing on your own? Why?
10. Would you like to do more group writing activities?

### Appendix 3 Illustrations used for the pre-test

#### Opening remarks

Prior to conducting the pre-tests, the learners were informed that they had 30 minutes to write a story based on the pictures given and to call their story 'The Tiger'. The researcher made it clear that dictionaries were not allowed. In addition, the learners were given some keywords to help them get started. Those were: *tiger, mountain, man, tiger, danger, alone, trip, scared*.



## Appendix 4 Illustrations used for the post-test

### Opening remarks:

The learners were once again given 30 minutes to write a story based on the given pictures. They were told that the story must be called 'The Landslide'. As with the previous tests, the learners were given some keywords to assist them in their writing of the stories. Those were: *tunnel, family, road, rain, train, collapse, house*.



## **Appendix 5**

### **Student 1's pre-test**

It's was a long time ago, a man called Oscar. He was a very active man. He write a lot of a book a bout tiger, and he like to go to a mountain there is queit. One day he want to go to mountain and try to fishing there. The man told him that he should not go there becuase it's vey dangerous. Oscar was not scared because he didn't fear any kind of animal. He go and there was a lot of animal. He hear a sound from a bird, monkey and a lot of many thing. He was very tired and take a break of a quite reviour. He sat dow and eat a food that he take with. He heard a weird sound and he was wondering what it was. The look a round and there was a tiger. He tried to hide to a tree but it's ws late. The tiger come closer and closer. He don't know what he going to do.

There was a stick on the ground and he picked up. He said don't come closer but the tiger don't speak and idn't understand. Tiger come closer and closer. Tiger attacked him and he bomb. Insteaded of to bite a man, tiger bite a tree and the man take a stone from a ground and he trow on the tiger head. Oscar thought that trying to bite him again but the tiger bomb again. While the tiger fell dow on the ground, Oscar pick up a bigger stone trow to his head. The tiger is dead.

Oscar tried to take a tiger to a town but he meet a hunter and they told him that this tiger was very dangarous. The hunter said to him how he killed and he explain to them how he killed the tiger.

### **Student 1's post-test**

It's was a long time ago, he name was Mandy. He lived in a small village. He is waiting for a train because he need to get to work. Strangely he saw a lot of rain from another side there he staniding. He look at his watch and it's was ten o' clock. The train coming soon. Suddenly there was a lot of rain and he saw a stone collapse in the tunnel. There was a lot of stone and if the train crashed it, many people will died. Mandy was really scared. He run to the train station and try to call train driver but it didn' workd. He don't have not so much time tight now.

he has only five minutes to stop the train. Mandy going to a road and standing to wait a train. The train was coming soon. He saw a train that coming. Mandy told to the people who is waiting for the train to hold up there hands so the train driver can see. Everybody hands up there hand and shouted t the train driver to stop the train. The train driver saw that a stone collapse in the tunnel and stop the train.

Everybody go out to the train and thank to Mandy. Everybody was glad that they didn't crashed to the stone and fell very happy. After that many people trying to get away a stone that collapse. When they are finsihed everybody could take a train to the town and Mandy is know as a legend because he saved many popel live.

### **Student 2's pre-test**

it was a boy. His name is Jaamal. He is 16 years old. One day He went to mountain som trip. jaamal was alone, And The mountains was dangers. jaamal meet a tiger when he was on The top of moutain. jaamal was tired Then he sat under tree, And he tok a break to eat a foot. The tiger tried to eat jaamal but jaamal was smart enough. He beat The Tiger befour The Tiger eat him. When jaamal beat The Tiger, They come hunters and They ask him how he beat The Tiger. And he answer I am smart enoug.

### **Student 2's post-test**

Froday is a happy day, and all people like to trivel, but it is only who Than have money van trovel. This family is more then five person to parents and tre childrens. They born in south Afrika (Bad Legende) street and They want travel to Canada. This family are one of The richest family in south afrika. They take train to Canada.

### **Student 3's pre-test**

Once upon a time there was a man called John. He was very brave. He was very brave. JOhn had walked for four hours. He got very happy when he finally arrived to a house. 'Good morning! said Said the man who was working there. John knew very well. He was a friend of his father. 'Hello Pablo' John ran towards him and gave him a good .buddy-hug'.

They talked for hourd. But suddenly the hole energy changed. 'Have you heard about the tiger?' Pablo asked with a shaky voice. John looked at him like a question-mark. 'He has

killed four people.' Pablo continued. John closed his eyes, and suddenly he felt anger. 'Well, I'm going to fix that' John said and began to walk up the hill. The hill was very steep, and John felt tired.

When he finally got to the top he decided to take a break. He sat down under a tree. John looked at the dark stars. 'I'm gonna get you' He whispered with his eyes closed.

But suddenly he heard a noise. Not just any noise, but the tiger! He got up and grabbed the stick. The tiger ran towards him. His eyes were black and he had a scar beside his left eye.

John tried to punch him with his stick, but it broke. The tiger walked slowly, towards him while growling. John turned around. 'a rock!' He shouted. The tiger jumped on him. But John took his rock and punched him with all his power. The tiger was dead. A group of hunters had watched the whole thing. 'Wow!' They said. John felt proud. 'Now my job is done.'

### **Student 3's post-test**

It was a rainy Saturday morning. Me, Mary and John was standing on a bridge, waving at the train. Our grandmother Suzie was on the train heading back home. The rain poured down at us, and before we knew it our clothes were soaked wet.

The train drove fast under the first tunnel. All three of us ran to the other side to get a closer glimpse of the train. 'Hurry!' Mary screamed while pointing at something. I gasped when I saw it. The second tunnel was destroyed by a rockslide. The rain had stopped, and now the sun was burning our neck.

'We have to stop the train! Or else it will collapse on the train!' I screamed while dragging Mary and John over the fence. All of us ran through the train tracks as fast as we could. We held out hands out to give the train a warning signal. Now the train was driving towards us. 'Stop!' We screamed from the top of our lungs.

the train slowly stopped. All the people inside the train looked out the window. Everyone was shocked. They couldn't believe their eyes. 'We saved them.' I said with a proud voice.



### **Student 4's pre-test**

Long time ago I knowed a man named Stiv. He was a simple man, but he was afraid of trying new things. One day he decidet to go on a trip in the mountains. He packed his bag and start to go. When he haw walkd a while a man stopped him. The man sayd 'You see that? If you are brawe you can show it now! The man who can catch/kill the tiger is the moust brave men ever!' Stiv decidet to do it. Iven he know he was scare to deadt. He start to go up the mountains. The nature then he heare something. 'Grrrrr!' that sayd. he look back and ther was the tiger! The tiger was ready to jumo on Stiv, but Stiv was faster. The tiger jumped on the three and hit his head. First he just stend there and didn't know what to do. Then the tiger moved and Stiv get a rock and hit the tiger in the head. 'I killed the tiger?!' he shout out. Some men hear that and run to Stiv. Stiv just stand there and didn't know what happen.

The other man just stand there and stare at him. The could belive that a so simpel scared men could do something heroick like that. The tiger start moving again so Stiv hit him with a rock som time to me shor. The other mar start aplaude Stiv. When Stive come home he had a trufe and that stood on it 'THE BRAVEST MAN ON THIS PLANET'

### **Student 4's post-test**

The family longbottom juste to wink to the people in the train everytime it past the tunnen near their house.

The train come alway at the same time everyday. The family like too wink to the people in the train becuase they think they will make they day better. Some people wink back with a big smile on they face. That make the famliy glad.

One day when the train pased the tunel, it start to rain. The family run in too th house, but on the way they get very wet.

The next day they come out and wait on th etrain, but the tunnel was full off stones. There was an huragan out tonight that have destroy the road. the family run down and wait on the train. When the gein to se the train they start to run too it and shout 'STOP THE TRAIN YOU CAN'T DRIVE THERE!'

The train stopped and people in the train start to wonder what is happening. The family tells what happened and they call someone that they need to fix it. People thanked the family.

### **Student 5's pre-test**

There was a man called Jon. Jon traveled to the rainforest in Brazil to find an adventurer. After walking in several hours he stopped with a little store where he bought some water and a chocolate to get some energy. He saw some mountains in the distance. This is perfect the adventurer I had. Then Jon started to walk through the mountain and then a man stops him and tells him that it is very dangerous and that there are many people that have died up there because of the tiger but that did not stop Jon so he started to walk. It was so quiet and beautiful the only houses are from the borders and a river. After some hours of walking the sun is going down and the night is rising up so he finds a place to sleep it is a nice open place besides a mountain. I woke up by a rock falling over and making a big noise Jon jumped up and saw a tiger with a blood trail behind him, the tiger attacks and Jon jumped back so the tiger runs in to a tree and gets knocked out 3 hunters walk out of the woods and thank Jon for his help with the tiger and Jon just keeps on walking in to his adventurer.

### **Student 5's post-test**

Let's go out and play. Watch out! the train is coming, let's wave to the people on board yelled one of the 3 kids. -Kids it's coming big storm get in the house quickly yelled their dad. The big dark cloud comes faster and faster and quicker and quicker, after 9 minutes it fits up every horizon. It's raining more than ever and it sounds like the roof is going to collapse. After 1 hour the cloud is already gone and ran out again. ohh no the rail road is blocked by a bunch of rocks what do we do? asked one of the kids. We have to tell dad.

'The next train is going to be here in 5 min so we have to move quickly, we have to tell the person that tells the train if the tunnel is clear or not said dad in a hurry We started running with the rail road.

there in the distance, the train. 'Stop! Stop' the train slows down and we tell them what we saw.

### **Student 6's pre-test**

it was earley in the morning a man called Johan was goin to help a baker in Japan. The baker had no people in his bakeri becuase of the tiger Johan was going on a trip over the mountain and in to the forest.

Johan started the trip next morning. The only thing he had was a bag with food and a stick he used.

When he had come over the mountain he walked in to the forest and there he found a foot mark from the lion. Then was is only to wait for the lion. RThe clock was tikking and then he heard something. It was the lion.

The lion jumped. John got away, the only thing John saw was the lion hit the tree. It was bigger and longer than John had seen But was it killed?

The big lion was allreadykilled this was easier than John though from the start. He took up a stone and hitted the lion in the head because then coud they see that it was John that killed the lion.

The people in the town was hearing som wisling. It was John, he had killed the lion. He was so happy and the town had no problem more. The baker was so happy and John got money for it. The money did he use on a house in the same town.

### **Student 6's post-test**

It was early in the morning. One family were watching the trains that drove thought the underground. After ten minutes it began to rain and the family began to run to their house but when they ran over the underground they saw that the road was bloacked. They ju,ped donw and ran to the station. Mr. Owen watched on his watch, itwas then minutes to the train to come to the station. Mr Owen known this because one of his friends was vomming to the town to reparate Mr. Owens motocyycle. Around the corner the train station was, he ran and creamed 'stop the train, stop the train!'. The train stopped and Mr. Owen walked to the train and said 'the underground is blocked! It is stones infron of the underground, you can't drive

loner'. The trains was there for a long time and the traindriver was so happy, and it was a happy ending of the day.

### **Student 7's pre-test**

Once upon the time there was a young man calld geourge with brown hair and blue eyes. He had decided to walk to the mountain calld The Tiger mountain. The Tiger mountain was the dangerest muntain to go on. The one how is going up will never come back. A few kilometers from the mountain there was a kafee. George walk in to the kafee and asked 'does enyone knoe the way up to the mountain'. than one man said 'yes, but if you go up to the mountain than you might not come home again' George said, 'I know but I have heard that if it is very nice up there'. The man said, 'den I will show you he way'.

It tok ten min to walk to the begining of the mountain. George was so happy that he was there. George gave the man some money and than George began to walk. One houar later he stoped becuase he was hungry, and start to eat. Suddenyl he heard a roar. It was the tiger. The tiger hump down right in to the tree. Georg tok a stone and hit it in the tigers head.

### **Student 7's post-test**

There are a little town far away from the big cities. The little town had one town station and that was the sentral of the town. Every singel half year a train come, to visit the town. Those dates are very importante for the town. There is always a big selebration when the train comes. The 1st julie the train come and the town had made a hughe selebration and the next day the people who visit the town took the train home.

31 Desember 1050 the train was on th eway to the town. But last night there was a storm. The to tunnle that the train whent trough was destroyed, and every one screamed. Someone run towards the train to see if it was far away, but it was not. Many people tryed to stop the train befor itwas too late. But it was too late, the train could not stop. 50 people died that day and sins then no one have ever lives og visit the town.

### Student 8's pre-test

It was a butifule day whit a summer breeze.

I was taking a vacation from work.

It's hard to be a lion dentiist.

So much work removing **maggofs** from from lions **tehh**. Its disgusting even for me,

But enyways. I was on a vacation in Africa. It was awesome but saorry. I was almost on the top of the mountain. I needed **a tif** stop before i continued. So i rested and i was on my way but of the old cafe. when i got stoped by an old **italian** man. He said it was extremely dangerous to walk **fulher** upp the mountain. I didnt listen. How hard can it be. So i started walking.

meld to stop. I was relaxing by a tree. Thinking of life. When suddenly a tiger apered. it tried to jup and get me whit its clows. I jumped away and it hit his head in the tree. then i started

### Student 8's post-test

The day was Sunday, and we had just fared well to out grandparents, Show leftleft whit a train to go back to norhen England. After the train left my little sister **wtoc slod ih** on the light whit my granfa. started talking about what they shuld do in the holyday. I vompia didnt leave until tomorrow he didnt go home that day becouse he fell he needed more time whit his grandson and granddaughet. I looked up and saw that a storm was **afrohning**. We needed to get insid but when we ran over the bridge a lightning strike hit the tunneling brige and it colapsed. My dad looked at the time and the next train was comming in 15 minutes we had to warn them.

The storm settled and we started to run along the railway hacers. After some running we met a train **deper**. me and my sister started yelling on the new train **opiotched**. Thank god they sinenld and the train sloly stoped meres frome the collapsed tunnel. When we got home, we told my grandpa everything. **Hevvon hoffer** we saved the **honnengers** from the upcoming acident.

## Appendix 6

### Group writing activity 1

#### Group 1's text

It was along time ago, a family were goint on a trip to there cabin. when they got to the cabin they noticed it was alot of snow there. is was also a smal lake there, they were tree persons and one dog.

on the way up to thw moutain a man was standing in the way and in his hand he had a picture and on the picture there was a girl with red messy hair, when he saw us he doped the picture and walked away when he was gone they walked out to look at the picture and went back to the car as they got to the car one of them notched a slip of papaer he saw something was written one it and read it out loud.

'warning dont dive her DANGER!!!'

But they drived up o the cabin any way. When they opened the door and it was clock on the floor, but they was to tired to think so they just went to bed,

the next day, they woke up they noticed they were moved into the same room one of the persons tried to move but noticed it was looked in hand coff

they tryed to take of the hand case but they couldn't.

As theypanicked they saw a sword hanging on the wall, ass he tryed to take the sword down, a girl with messy hear and a white dress appeared in the mirror. She had some pictures in her arms, and his son and the other showed a woman and her son. It was us. She sudenly disepard and the han coff just diseppeard.

## **Group writing activity 1**

### **Group 2's text**

A family of four was packing for their winter holiday. They were going on a ski adventure. First they had to fly on an airplane to get to their favourite place. The airplane went 10.09. When they got to there there was a woman waiting for them. The woman was the owner of the cabin. She was going to show them around. When they got to a store they noticed something mystical. A man was doing something with a scall.

The next day a man got killed. The family got worried, but they didn't want to leave so soon.

The family Huggings called the police and told them about the mystical man with the scalls. The next day the man got arrested. But they made a huge mistake! It wasn't the man with the scall, it was another man called Kjell who was the murderer.

The same day the family went to a show on a boat. It was very fun because they got a break from all the drama.

After the boat show they went to a car show. It was very busy there. The dad of the family noticed something mysterious. A man with black clothes stood in the corner of the stage. The man had a sword in his hands. He jumped on the stage and pulled the sword towards the audience. First they got excited, but then the sword-man stabbed a man through the heart with his sword. Everybody screamed and they tried to escape. But it was too late. The man with the sword killed the whole family and dumped them in the sea.

The whole thing was arranged by a rich man that wanted revenge.

## **Group writing activity 1**

### **Group 3's text**

There once was a boy who sat in a good chair. He loved to look out of the window to see the bright blue sky. When suddenly his grandfather walked in to the room. With his proud golden watch. He offered him if he would like to go hunting. They went to the woods and hunted. When they spotted a deer. The grandfather suddenly pulled the trigger, but the deer moved.

Then they heard a scream. There was a lost girl behind the deer. The boy quickly called the police.



## **Appendix 7**

### **Group writing activity 2**

#### **Group 1's text**

**When I woke up I tried to remember what had happened.** I got some flashback from last night, but I can't remember it clearly. In those flashbacks I can see a man with black clothes and a mask. He had a wooden bat in his right hand and he had a big tattoo on his left hand. The tattoo was a big dragon. The dragon was black and red. I thought I had seen this tattoo before, maybe in the club. I think it was the same man that served me last time when I was in the club. I had a Rolex and an expensive watch on me. I think he hit me with a bat because he wanted to steal the Rolex and my expensive stuff. When I was about to go home from the club, he suddenly hit me with a bat on my back. I fell down on the ground and it hurt a lot. While I fell he took my personal accessories including my phone, Rolex and my necklace. When I woke up I was in the hospital, the police and the doctor was around me.

One of the police officers had my Rolex, my phone and my necklace. He gave it to me and said that he took the man who hit me in the head in jail.

### **Group writing activity 2**

#### **Group 2's text**

**There was a strange noise coming from the room next door.** I was home alone on a dark autumn evening. The noise got close and closer then it stopped. Under the door I saw a dark shadow standing in front of the door. Suddenly the door opened slowly. The door gave a creaking sound. I began to smell like something had died. The door got slammed. And then it was just me and a cold breath on my neck. I completely froze. Now someone was grabbing my feet, and I was dragged backwards. I tried to hang on to the desk-foot. But it was too strong. I couldn't see anything but I felt it. It was a demonic strange energy. After I was dragged out of the room it got dark....

I opened my eyes and I was in a room. It took a while before I realised that I was in my old house where my mother had passed away. The room was empty and the door was closed. Something red started to drain down the concrete wall. I didn't understand what was

happening. before I knew it, a dark shadow told me to jump out the window. The voice was so deep and powerful, that I felt the need to do it.

I climbed on the window sill and jumped out.

The house is still haunted, and no one knows who killed us.

## **Group writing activity 2**

### **Group 3's text**

**Please sit down, Mrs Jones** we need to have a talk about your behavior over the last week. You have been acting strange. Some students have told me that you were talking a lot about tier arms and illegal drugs. What do you think about your behavior. Mr. Jones looked surprised over how the teacher knew. - Who told you! Asked Mr. Jones. - I can't tell you. said the teacher.

'I am going to call your parents' said the teacher. 'Why', said Mr Jones. The teacher started dialing the number, but was interrupted by Mr. Jones. When a football hit the window, she swiftly reacted and turned towards the window. Mr Jones saw the chance and quickly grabbed an old baseball bat that was lying in her office. He swung the baseball bat in her face. Then he ran swiftly out the door and went home to his parents.

'Why are you home so late' asked mother 'I was at a friend's house' run up to his room. the mother saw that something was wrong she called some of his friends parents. all of them said that they didn't have visitors today. the mother called the teacher office, but she didn't respond.

She decided to walk over to the school, and have a meeting with the teacher. she went straight to the teacher's office. When she opened the door she fell in horror, she screamed and called the police. Mr Jones swung the baseball bat so hard that her skull cracked. The police found fingerprints on the baseball bat that belonged to Mr Jones. shortly after the incident Mr Jones got sentenced to life in prison.

## Appendix 8

### Group writing activity 3

#### Group 1's text

**As soon as she walked in, she felt the tension.** She saw a man with a beautiful smile. He stood on her right side, it was prince David. He had black curly hair and dark brown eyes. His t-shirt was green. My name is princess Alexandre can't you see my beautiful. I'm 15 years old and I live in this castle. - Do you want to dance with me? David asked. Yes of course Alexandra replied. - You are now my lady. David answered while looking in her eyes. She looked back and smiled. At David. After the dance everyone went home. and the bed was waiting for me. David was on his way back home, when suddenly he was gone.

He was supposed to call me, but he didn't. My eyes began to fill up with tears I cried the rest of the night. But then I saw a light. I walked to the window where I saw the light and saw it was a grey car outside. It was David. But he wasn't alone. There was a man, there, he had a gun. Alexandra was little scared because a man has a gun. The man pulled up his gun and aimed right at Alexandra. She hid behind the wall, but it was too late. They already shot her. She died in the hospital later.

### Group writing activity 3

#### Group 2's text

**Someone must have seen him, because the police were at his door.** The police knocked on the door a few times. After not getting an answer they broke down the door. R.I.P. DOOR. The man inside screamed - NOO! that was my favourite door! My door was so expensive and awesome. - Why didn't you answer when we knocked on the door? the police said. - I was cooking some... chicken, the man said with a strange voice. - Give us chicken, or we will leave! Yelled the police. I was still mourning for my door. I said, 'you will never get my... chicken. - It is only mine! - We will not leave the house. The police went into the kitchen. They didn't see one chicken, only a drug machine. It was a drug machine disguised as... chicken. It was big and brown. It also smells like chicken nuggets.

The police wanted to taste the chicken. - Wait! The chicken is still cold! The chicken was cold on the outside and warm inside. It was perfect for me, the police officer took and ate the

chicken up. -noo! my chicken... screamed the man The police looked at the man while humming. The man started to cry and ran out. He took the chicken on the way out. And ran to the bus. He took the bus to the city to buy some more chicken. He was really scared that the police officer was going to follow him. But he fell asleep on the bus. When he woke up he realized he was in a different city. The city was named chicken., and There was K.F.C. every where He look so happy and ate all of that.

### **Group writing activity 3**

#### **Group 3's text**

**As I looked out of the window, I saw something strange.** There was a man... he had a CHICKEN NUGGET, it was big and brown. it seems delicious. I looked closely and saw that he held some sauce in the other hand. The sauce was chillie sauce, but it was'nt chillie sauce it was... soya sauce! It was even better than chillie sauce. Now I'm just thinking about chicken nuggets, so I need some CHICKEN NUGGETS NOW!! I went to mas donalds, and bought some chicken nuggets. When I came home, the first thing I did was eat the nuggets with the chillie sauce. (NOT THE SOYA SAUCE!) It was delicious but I found out that it was soya sauce! I ate all the nuggets. up, but I wanted some more so I went back to mcdonald and got some more nuggets.

With BBQ sauce. But they gave me chilli sauce by mistake. It was delices. I drove back home and played some video games. after an hour with video games I fell asleep. When I woke up the man was still there. The man held some frize with senep. But it was'nt senep but soya saus. And I eat it up. So I really wanted some frize whit BBQ sauce. But they haven't BBQ sause. They have just chilli sause. but it wasent chilli saus it was soya sause. I drove back home. When I came home I saw that it wasn't chili sause, it was BBQ sause But when I tasted it, it was actually chillie sause. It tasted so good!

## **Appendix 9**

### **Group writing activity 4**

#### **Group 1's text**

it's was a long time ago, his name was Arthur. He was a fifteen year old and very poor. One day his grandfather told him to go to the town. Arthur was going to the town because he was going to fight in a tournament. The winner will get teen million coins and get the job to protect princess. It's was very challenging for him because he was only fifteen year old. When he went to the town, there were alot of a dtrong guys and and he was the only one who is thin. Peple told to him that he shoul not dothis challenging because he was too weak. Arthur doe'st care because he been pratice to fight his whole life and good at it. He started a fight with a big man and he won it and he foughted the whol day and in the end he was in the final. The final was the next day, the one he was going to fight with was Gylfrid. Gylfrid was a big man with big mucles and he was 35 years old. Arthur eneded to win this fight because he need to save his family and buy a bigger house. His father was in a prison because he stole something. the day was here and they stand face to face. the game started. Arthur got beaten at up in the fisrt round. But he think about his family and got up and won the second round and now is the final round, he have to win this fight. The juge ring the bell and they begin to fight again. Arthur slide to Gylfrid foot and he fell down to the ground Arthur beat him up while he fall down and win the game

Finnaly he won and he can save his father and his family. Arthur got the job too in the town and he will get to protect the princess. The all town know him well and every body is Proud of him. He is know one of the best fighters in this town. He walked home with the money and the job. The family was now rich and a happy ending.

### **Group writing activity 4**

#### **Group 2's text**

It was a bright summer morning. The sun shined through the window. But suddenly I heard a strange sound. It sounded like something was scraching on the door. I quickly changed my clothes and opened the door. I looked down and saw a black cat. The cat looked at em with big blue eyes. I was just about to pick it up, but my grandmother shouted to me. I ran down the stairs and ate my breakfast.

When I walked out the door I noticed something on the ground. It was a note! The note said: Meet me at the park, 9 pm. Who is this person? I thought while walking to the store. When I was at the parkingplace I only saw a black car crossing the road.

The clock was 8:55 pm and I ran to the park. There stood a boy. He had dark hair and brown eyes. He held the black cat while stracking it softly. He smiled and I was just some step from him

then I heard a loud noice, and everything got black...

#### **Group writing activity 4**

##### **Group 3's text**

In a time when gold was very valuable. There was a man who owned a special gold mine. It was special becuse the gold that was predused always got stolen. The mans name was Jack and hes grand sons name was Michel.

yesterday the gold mine was vaicded, and hes grandfather disappeared, Michel was devastated. In tears he started to searched his office. When he stumpled in to a cupboard and the cupboard fell over. when looked up, he saw a note flying down. He picked the note up and he read it. It said: Hay, who ever finds this note will get a quait a suprise. I have hidden away lots of goald, but it is hidden in the dark foret. Here is a map.

Michel got excited. He cant belive it. He started to look for The goald. michel sow on The map The There was a danger. but he didnt care He was despred for money, becouse His mother was sick and The medicine was very expencive.

He started walking to the foorest.

Michel walked for HOURS, he followed the man

but then he saw something moving in the wood. to be continued