



READING AND WRITING WORKSHOPS IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

A longitudinal study of the workshop-based method in a Norwegian 8th grade EFL class.

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Nora pointed to 'The World's Greatest Short Stories', and said:

One day, my story is going to be in that book.



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Abstract

The current study is based on the implementation of a reading and writing workshop-based program in the English as a foreign language (EFL) lessons of a Norwegian 8th grade class of nine pupils. Seven of these pupils constituted the research group. These seven pupils were followed throughout their school year of English lessons with the applied workshop method.

The aims of the research were to observe the development of the pupils' English writing competence, motivation and attitudes towards reading and writing in English, and their motivation and attitudes towards the English subject in general.

The implemented program was largely based on Atwell's (1998) workshop approach. However, while Atwell's program was designed for a first language context, the current study was carried out in a second language one. Important components of the reading and writing workshops in the study were, firstly, the pupils' own choice of books to read and texts to write. Secondly, the pupils drafted and received pre-product feedback concentrated on a few specific points. Thirdly, direct instruction was limited to short mini-lectures, where the focus varied, e.g. from to how to come up with titles, to different reading strategies. Finally, the pupils shared their reading with each other, and published their texts in a class book.

The data from the research period was collected through classroom observations, the pupils' reading journals, and sample texts. There were also two separate semi-structured interviews with each pupil at the beginning of the autumn semester. A questionnaire and follow-up pupil conference about the autumn semester was carried out at the beginning of the spring semester. Finally, an evaluation of the whole project was carried out through a questionnaire at the end of the school year in June.

The findings from the current study showed that all of the pupils improved their English writing after the year of workshop-based teaching. The features of the pupils' writing that improved varied, and appeared somehow to target the distinct feature(s) which each pupil struggled with the most.

In terms of motivation and attitudes, the pupils who appeared to be positive and motivated for reading and writing at the beginning of the year were still positive by the end of the year. The pupils who appeared negative or neutral at the beginning of the year had not changed their views much after the autumn semester. They were, however, clearly more positive at the end of the spring semester. All of the pupils were positive towards the English subject in

general after the year of workshop-based teaching. What the pupils specifically mentioned as positive differences between the workshop-based teaching and regular teaching, were that they did not use a textbook, that they were not assigned with tasks, and that they were allowed to make more choices themselves about their reading and writing.

Reading and writing skills are heavily emphasised in the English subject curriculum. The current study has referred to previous studies and scholars who call for changes in Norwegian EFL education towards a more efficient teaching of reading and writing. To the best of the author's knowledge, the reading and writing workshop-based program has not been adapted to EFL lessons previously. The fact that this was a longitudinal study spanning one year has strengthened its contribution, which has been to implement and research a method that could potentially offer a successful approach to the teaching of English reading and writing in Norwegian schools.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 The study and its aims

This case study has researched the implementation of a reading and writing workshop-based teaching method in the English as a foreign language (EFL)¹ lessons of a Norwegian 8th grade class of nine² pupils. The classroom research followed the development of seven of the nine pupils throughout an entire school year of English lessons based on the implemented method. The aim of the study was to identify the possible challenges and benefits of the workshop-based method in the English lessons of the research group in order to find out how this approach would function in an EFL context. The study addresses the following research questions:

1. What was the impact of the workshop-based method on the pupils' written English?
2. What was the impact of the workshop-based method on the pupils' motivation and attitudes towards reading and writing in English?
3. What was the impact of the workshop-based method on the pupils' pupils' motivation and attitudes towards the English subject in general?

The implemented method was largely based on Atwell's (1998) reading and writing workshop method. However, a major difference between Atwell's method and the method applied in the current study was that Atwell's program took place in a first language (L1) context while the current study was carried out in a second language (L2) one. Important components of the reading and writing workshops in the study were, firstly, large amounts of reading and writing based on the pupils' own choice. Secondly, the pupils drafted and received pre-product feedback concentrated on a few specific points at a time. Finally, the pupils shared their reading with each other, and published their texts in a class book.

The researcher and the teacher in the study were the same person, and the teacher was new to the class. Data for the research was collected through classroom observations, pupils' reading journals, sample texts of the pupils' writing, and from pupil interviews and questionnaires.

¹ English has the status of being a foreign language in Norway, meaning it is not spoken in the immediate environment of the learner. This abbreviation will be used interchangeably with the term 'second language' (L2), although they have their formal distinctions in terms of exposure outside of the learning institution. This is because second language is a common term in literature that also applies to foreign language learning. L2 will therefore serve as a reference to both second and foreign language.

² Only seven of the nine pupils participated in the study.

The current Norwegian national curriculum, the *LK06*, places great emphasis on reading and writing skills in all subjects, including English. At the same time, there is concern that the predominant textbook-based instruction in Norwegian EFL classrooms does not provide pupils with the adequate reading and writing skills (Hellekjær (2007; Helland and Abildgaard (2011)). The contribution of the present study is that it has implemented and researched a method that could potentially offer a successful approach to the teaching of English reading and writing in Norwegian schools. To the best of the author's knowledge, a reading and writing workshop-based program has not been adapted to EFL lessons previously. The fact that it was a longitudinal study spanning one year has strengthened its contribution.

1.2 Outline of the thesis

Following this introduction, Chapter 2 provides background on the EFL teaching in Norway by describing the requirements to EFL instruction according to the national curriculum, and then how EFL teaching is commonly approached in Norwegian classrooms.

Chapter 3 offers a detailed description of the organization and principles of Atwell's (1998) workshop method and how it carries the potential to meet the requirements of the *LK06* curriculum.

Chapter 4 addresses the theory of emergent literacy, which proposes that children can develop literacy in the same natural way that they develop their oral language, based on the need and desire to communicate. It also addresses social interactionism, explaining how learning is socially-based and that learners gradually master more demanding challenges on their own after interacting with more expert adult. The Monitor theory describes what the conditions should be in a learner environment that supports language acquisition. These theories are interconnected and give a theoretical foundation of how the workshop method can promote language learning for L2 pupils. The chapter also addresses extensive reading in an L2 context and the teaching of L2 writing before it finally refers to related research in Norwegian EFL classrooms.

Chapter 5 elaborates on the methodology of the research, while Chapter 6 presents the results as a narrative account of the school year with workshop-based EFL teaching. In Chapter 7, the results are discussed in the light of the theory and literature reviewed, before a conclusion is reached in Chapter 8.

2.0 Background

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide a picture of EFL teaching in Norway. In section 2.2, it describes what requirements the EFL instruction needs to comply with according to the national curriculum. Section 2.3 describes the regular approach to EFL teaching in Norwegian classrooms, before the workshop method is elaborated on in Chapter 3. Chapters 2 and 3 combined therefore provide an overview of the nature of the reading and writing workshop method, and how it deviates from regular EFL teaching in Norway.

2.2 The Knowledge Promotion *LK06* curriculum

Norway has a national curriculum which applies to teaching in primary and secondary schools. The national curriculum contains sets of competence aims for each subject, and the English subject curriculum constitutes the framework within which the teacher needs to execute his or her teaching. In the year 2006 the *Knowledge Promotion in Primary and Secondary Education and Training* curriculum (hereafter referred to as *LK06*), was introduced as a replacement for the previous curriculum, *L97*. The *LK06* curriculum introduced what Hellekjær (2007: 23) considers as major changes to EFL instruction in Norway. The *LK06* requirements for pupils' English competence after grade 10 are relatively high, and ambitious competence aims are set for the English subject on all levels³.

LK06 emphasises reading and writing skills considerably more than its predecessor, the *L97* curriculum. In the *L97* curriculum, reading and writing appeared more as tools to reach aims related to communication and culture, rather than having intrinsic value of being aims themselves. The *LK06* national curriculum, in contrast, focuses more on reading and writing as skills instead of tools. The curriculum introduced five basic skills. These are being able to read, being able to express oneself orally, being able to express oneself in writing, numeracy, and

³ There are different sets of competence aims for the end of year 2, 4, 7, 10 in compulsory education. In upper secondary education, there are competence aims for the first year (Vg1) programmes of general studies and for the second year (Vg2) of vocational education programmes.

digital skills. These five basic skills are to be taught across all subjects, in addition to the subject-specific competence aims.

2.2.1 How reading and writing are highlighted in *LK06*

By making reading and writing into basic skills in the *LK06* curriculum, English reading and writing skills were given increased recognition. According to the *LK06* English subject curriculum, reading and writing are, together with the other basic skills, integrated in the competence aims, where they contribute to the development of competence in the subject, while also being part of this competence.

The English curriculum describes being able to read in the English subject as creating meaning from different types of texts. It refers to reading as acquiring insight and knowledge, as using different reading strategies, and the fluent reading of English texts of varying lengths and complexity.

Being able to express oneself in writing in English is described as expressing ideas and opinions through planning, formulating and working with texts. The curriculum places emphasis on the communicative aspect of writing in English, and that the pupils should write in various ways with different purposes according to the objectives and recipients.

The English subject in *LK06* was originally divided into three main subject areas: ‘Language learning’, ‘Communication’, and ‘Culture, society and literature’. A revision of the English subject curriculum in 2013 divided the main area of ‘Communication’ into ‘Oral communication’ and ‘Written communication’. Written communication was further related to both specific literacy skills, reading strategies and conventions, but also for pupils to develop the joy of reading and writing. Reading and writing can be used as tools to achieve, for example, competence aims in the main area of ‘Culture, society and literature’, such as describing and reflecting on the conditions of indigenous peoples in English-speaking countries.

LK06 prioritises reading and writing in EFL classrooms. Hellekjær (2007) expected both improved pupils’ skills and investments in literary materials in schools to follow up the strong focus on the implied increased amount of reading in EFL lessons. He predicted that the major changes in the national curriculum, such as the introduction of basic skills and the ambitious competence aims, would require changes in Norwegian EFL instruction.

Helland and Abildgaard (2011) therefore performed interesting research when they compared the English language skills in two groups of grade 6 and 7 pupils. One group was taught during the *L97* curriculum period, and the other group during the *LK06* curriculum period. The *LK06* pupils had been given English instruction over a total of three more years than the *L97* pupils, and had received a larger amount of instruction hours per year. The researchers naturally expected that the *LK06* group would have performed better than the *L97* group. The results showed, however, that this was not the case. This was a reason for great concern among educators since the *LK06* curriculum was considered a strengthening of the English subject.

One possible explanation of the results of Helland's and Abildgaard's research is the problem that Drew (2009: 110) points out: the national reforms of the curriculum have not been followed up by the appropriate education of teachers. Drew, as well as Helland and Abildgaard, therefore conclude by emphasising the potential for improvement in English teacher education in Norway.

2.3 EFL teaching in Norwegian classrooms

Pupils in Norway have English as a subject for all ten years of compulsory education, and later from one to three years of upper secondary education. In their spare time, pupils are exposed to English on a regular basis through the Internet, music, movies and TV, and computer games. English is the only mandatory foreign language in compulsory school. Two formal grades are given to pupils when ending their compulsory education in grade 10, one based on their written skills, and one on their oral skills in English. Pupils in Norway should have received a total of 588 hours of English after their first ten years of school. The following section will describe, in a general manner, what is known from research about English teaching materials in Norway.

2.3.1 Textbook-based lessons

Regular EFL teaching in Norway is heavily textbook-centred (Drew, 2004; Charboneau, 2012; Hellekjær, 2007). The textbooks normally contain shorter texts or excerpts of books for intensive reading⁴, and often also grammar exercises and written and oral tasks. This textbook approach

⁴ Intensive reading can be defined as close and thorough reading for a certain purpose, either to exemplify linguistic features in the L2, or to teach specific reading strategies (Hafiz and Tudor, 1989: 5).

generally leads to all pupils reading the same texts, though some textbook series provide texts and tasks in two or three different levels, for example *Stairs* at the primary level.

The positive side of the textbook approach is that it is a relatively well-known way of organizing learning materials for pupils from one year to the other, while the teacher can maintain a certain progress and ‘tick off’ that the whole class has been through a topic. However, it leaves little to the choice of each individual pupil. Many pupils consequently spend time reading texts that they may not have chosen themselves, instead of being allowed to choose their own texts to read based on their interests.

Why the textbook is preferred

There are several reasons why the textbook appears to be the preferred material for EFL instruction among Norwegian teachers. First of all, Mellegård and Pettersen (2012: 214) found through interviewing primary and secondary school teachers that they had great confidence in textbook publishers’ claims that their books met the competence aims in the curriculum. These attitudes correspond to Grabe’s (2009: 340) conclusion that textbooks generally tend to be uncritically used as the solution to English instruction rather than as one resource among others.

Second, the textbook approach offers what might be considered a time-saving program. The school has already purchased the textbooks, and they provide pre-planned lessons and activities in different topics according to the competence aims (Charboneau 2013: 58).

Third, teachers might have mixed ideas about allowing, for example, extensive reading⁵ to be a part of in-class time (see section 4.4.3). As Day and Bamford (1998: 47) put it, the teacher likes to teach. The traditional teacher role is one of an active teacher. While the pre-planned lessons in the textbook demand this traditional active teacher’s role, the teacher role in a reading class community, which Atwell (1998) advocates (see section 3.2), would be quite different.

On the other hand, it is not only the attitudes of teachers that determine if they would prefer a textbook in their instruction. Providing alternative material is necessary for the teacher to be able to make choices about which teaching materials to use for different purposes. A textbook should be only one of several sources of material. A large quantity of graded and/or

⁵ Extensive reading can be defined as the reading of a large number of texts for overall meaning and pleasure instead of careful and close reading for details (Day and Bamford, 1998:8).

authentic English titles, for example, can be available for pupils to practise extensive reading. Charboneau (2012: 59) found that relatively more teachers used a combination of the textbook and extensive reading when more books were actually available in their classroom. Only one third of the primary school teachers who participated in Charboneau's study said that they had enough material to offer pupils level-appropriate reading material. At the same time, the *LK06* curriculum places great emphasis on providing differentiated learning for pupils. This should give schools a clear incentive to invest in English books of different levels.

2.3.2 The effects of textbook instruction

Scholars such as Lehmann (1999) and Hellekjær (2005) express concern that many Norwegian students struggle with English reading and writing skills. In their opinion, the current instructional programs traditionally used in Norwegian schools do not sufficiently prepare students for further academic studies in English. English reading skills are important for students pursuing a number of different academic paths, as many different disciplines rely on literature published in English.

Grabe (2009: 340) argues that textbooks for teaching have a number of limitations. They seldom incorporate fluency practice or encourage further extensive reading. Mellegård and Pettersen (2012), in their study, nevertheless found that teachers preferred textbooks, and that they also felt a time pressure to get through the whole textbook and all its activities within the year. The risk of this pressure to complete all the texts and activities is that it becomes the main focus of the teacher, which limits the teacher's ability to focus on each individual pupil's needs instead (Charboneau, 2013: 58).

Consideration to pupils' individuality is also the basis of another argument as to why textbooks should be used more sparingly. Charboneau (2013: 52) also argues that it is more manageable for teachers to adapt reading instruction to a level that is appropriate for the individual pupil through extensive reading than would be possible with a textbook alone.

2.4 Summary

Reading and writing skills are heavily emphasised in the *LK06* curriculum, which led to scholars such as Hellekjær (2007) expecting major changes in Norwegian EFL instruction. This does not seem to have happened. EFL teaching in Norwegian classrooms is often heavily textbook-

centred (Drew, 2004; Charboneau, 2012; Hellekjær, 2007). It is questionable whether EFL instruction generally provides pupils with English reading and writing skills at a sufficient level. The national reforms of the curriculum have generally not been followed up by measures to ensure that all EFL teachers in Norway are appropriately educated, so that they are able to bring about the necessary changes in EFL instruction.

3.0 The nature of the reading and writing workshops

3.1 Introduction

The workshop method applied in the current research is based on the innovative reading and writing workshop method developed by Nancie Atwell, the founder and a teacher at Center for Teaching and Learning in Maine, US. Atwell was the first classroom-teacher to receive major research prizes in the field of language arts, and was the winner of the Global Teaching Prize for 2015 (Global Teacher Prize, 2016).

Atwell's program was developed over several years in the 1980s for L1 learners (Atwell, 1998). The background of the program was that Atwell felt that every method she had implemented in her teaching over several years as a language arts teacher was inadequate to improve pupils' language and literacy skills.

Atwell's teaching of writing at the time was a more traditional task-based method than that of her future workshop method. Atwell found it frustrating that the majority of the class did not manage to live up to her expectations, yet she believed that clear instruction and assignments from the teacher were necessary for her pupils to write well (Atwell, 1998: 7). One of her pupils, Jeff, had learning disabilities and was at a low proficiency level in reading and writing. In class, Jeff would sketch when he was supposed to write. Instead, he composed at home and brought finished texts to school. Atwell was frustrated that Jeff would not write in her classes, and made various assumptions to explain why. Finally, Jeff told Atwell that he simply needed to write in his own way. Jeff in particular initially inspired Atwell to implement the workshop method (Atwell, 1998: 6).

In her book *In the Middle*, Atwell (1998) describes in detail the pedagogical foundation of her approach and the procedures in her language arts lessons. Her approach provided the framework for creating the workshops in the current study. This chapter will therefore first in explain what principles the method builds its reading and writing instruction on (section 3.2). Second, section 3.3 will explain in detail how Atwell's workshops are organized. Third, section 3.4 will highlight the different conditions between Atwell's program and the one implemented in the present research. Finally, section 3.5 will describe how the reading and writing workshop method can meet the English subject competence aims before a summary of the chapter is given in section 3.6.

3.2 Essential elements behind the workshop method

Pupils' own choice, reading and writing in a great volume, and giving feedback are three essential principles of Atwell's (1998) reading and writing workshops. First, pupils choose what books they would like to read and what they want to write about in their texts. Atwell advocates what can be called a holistic approach to language arts, where the personal growth of pupils is an important element. Adolescence is a particularly important and critical time in pupils' intellectual and emotional development (Atwell, 1998: 54). Atwell regards reading and writing not only as tools for literacy, but also for the development of personality, empathy and cultural understanding of the world in which the pupils grow up. By choosing what books to read, pupils can learn about themselves and the world through texts that are relevant to them.

Allowing the pupils to choose their reading and writing makes the workshop method pupil-centred in the sense that the pupils are free to pursue their own ideas and transform those ideas into becoming the primary content of the course. The pupils' own choice of reading also has a major impact on fluency, reading rate and comprehension due to the pupils' increased motivation (Atwell, 1998: 37). A similar idea applies to text production. The pupils choose to write the kinds of texts that assist them in processing their world and that help them to understand and teach themselves while trying to teach their readers through their stories made up by the actions and reactions of the 'people on the page' (Atwell, 1998: 3). For pupils to manage to work in this way with their writing, Atwell also emphasizes the importance of a real audience for pupils' texts. Texts should not be produced primarily to be evaluated and graded by a teacher, but rather for the purpose of being read. It is therefore important in Atwell's teaching to encourage pupils to take their reader into consideration, and to use the class community to share pupils' text, as well as attempting to make real publications. It is only by writing for an audience that writing can be truly meaningful to the pupils (Atwell, 1998:15). Graves (1985) explains how audience-awareness promotes the development of pupils' writing. Pupils need training in developing their perception of audience from themselves as a first audience, and to their class community as second audience. The second audience plays an important role in improving pupils' writing (Graves, 1985: 193).

Second, Atwell promotes reading and writing in great volume. According to Atwell, teachers should allow more in-class reading even though there is much to be covered in the

curriculum, simply because silent reading is such a beneficial activity to improve fluent reading skills (Atwell, 1998: 31). Atwell's pupils started requesting more time for silent reading as Atwell implemented reading in class in addition to for homework. Atwell (1998: 110) even states that reading is the most important homework an English teacher can assign because the best readers are those who read frequently. Atwell taught her pupils that there is no proper way to read, but that they were allowed not to finish a book before abandoning it for another one. The same applied for skimming or skipping parts of a book. The classroom was filled with books and the pupils became accustomed to talking about what they read together to develop a reading community of pupils who enjoyed reading. Enough time has to be set aside for reading in class to create a reading environment where the pupils have time to talk together about their reading, and to ensure that they have the possibility of being hooked on books (Atwell, 1998: 97).

Time also needs to be set aside for writing, since Atwell recognizes that growth in writing is slow (1998: 93). Atwell (1998: 91) argues that only by making reading and writing high-priority activities in the classroom can she expect pupils to develop the habits of the minds of writers. In other words, the ambitions that a teacher has for her/his pupils must comply with the types of activities for which the teacher chooses to dedicate classroom-time. If reading and writing skills are significant aims, as is the case with the *LK06* curriculum in Norway, then time should be set aside for pupils to read and write.

Finally, pupils should be given feedback to their reading and writing. It is not enough to give the pupils a book and provide the time to read it in order to call the lesson a reading workshop. There must also be interaction revolving around what the different pupils are reading, during which pupils are allowed to socially interact and share their experiences with each other in order to be motivated to read more (Atwell, 1998: 40). The class then becomes a social reading community, which requires a different role of the teacher. The teacher is an equal member in the reading community since Atwell's focus is that also the teacher should learn everyday about her pupils. The teacher learns what the pupils need in order to advance and progress. At the same time, the teacher has to use her/his experience as a reader and writer in the workshops to fill the role of the more resourceful person who responds to pupils' reading in order to maintain their interest, but also to make sure that they are moving ahead and do not stagnate.

The reading journal is a notebook that functions as a regular written dialogue revolving around what pupils are reading, and with follow-up questions. This was a method developed to

be able to respond to individual readers. The follow-up questions in the reading journal from Atwell to her pupils are relatively few, in order not to appear as a test, but more of a dialogue. The following are some examples of questions that Atwell wrote to her pupils in their reading journals (Atwell, 1998: 284):

How do you feel about this book?

What did you think of the writing?

What do you think the author tried to achieve?

These kinds of questions are meant to trigger and encourage an active and critical reader, and might also help pupils become more aware of their own writing.

The workshop also includes short mini-lectures of between five to 20 minutes for each lesson. In these mini-lectures, different topics concerning reading and writing are taught. The range in topics is wide from, for example, attention to learning and reading strategies, grammatical features, tools for writing poetry, form and genres. Atwell makes decisions on what topic to conduct mini-lectures on based on what occurs in the pupils' drafting that can appear to be relevant for them. A great deal of the instruction in mini-lectures aims to enable the pupils to become more aware of their readers, which suggests a high focus on writing as primarily a communicative tool.

If the mini-lecture concerns, for example, literary form, functions, or other tools, Atwell illustrates with examples to what she is drawing the pupils' attention. In other words, she provides a model for the pupils according to the learning theory of social interactionism (see section 4.3).

Atwell's feedback to pupils' writing is given continuously as pupils are working on their texts. The feedback is not given when the text is finished, and the pupils are no longer conscious of their work, but is set into a system with personal checklists with individual common errors. The teacher also moves around and confers with pupils about their writing as it progresses. Atwell argues that it is unlikely that the pupils keep previous post-product feedback in the front of their mind for subsequent text production. According to Atwell (1998: 220), feedback from the teacher after written work has been handed in therefore comes too late. Atwell's pupils keep their own record of their common mistakes based on the feedback from the teacher. These records of common mistakes should assist pupils in becoming more aware of the language when

revising and editing their own writing, and thus advance to the next step of what they can do without assistance (see section 4.3).

The writers in a class are on many different levels. In the writing workshop, the teacher moves around the class and conducts individual teaching by paying close attention to the work of each pupil at a time. This enables the teacher to meet each individual pupil at their level and find out what they need to know to progress.

3.3 Atwell's organization of the workshops

Atwell's (1998) reading and writing workshops are organized in 90-minute blocks, four days per week. Each workshop includes both reading and writing and normally consists of the following: a daily poem; a short mini-lecture on relevant topics related to workshop procedures, literary craft, conventions of writing, or strategies for reading; independent writing and conferring; a brief read aloud from a novel or short story; and between 15 to 20 minutes a day for independent reading. The pupils are assigned with one hour of writing for homework each week, and 30 minutes of reading every night.

Atwell's workshop method is a highly organized program. The classroom is arranged with a purpose to foster pupils' reading and writing with inspirational citations on the walls. The classroom provides everything that is needed for writing. The classroom also has its own library with hundreds of titles appropriate to different reading levels. The different areas of the classroom serve different purposes; one part of the classroom is assigned to be a conference area where pupils can sit together to discuss each others' writing. The pupils' writing takes place at their desks, while reading can happen anywhere in the classroom, and pupils are often found lying on the floor with a pillow. Each pupil keeps six different folders to keep track of reading, spelling, daily writing, texts and lyrics, homework, and permanent writing.

Rules and expectations are presented in the beginning of the school year, and pupils also have a copy of rules and expectations in their folder to remind them of the behaviour that is expected of them. The teacher keeps records to keep track of pupils' reading and writing. She notes down what title and page pupils are on in order to check that reading homework has been done. She also keeps track of what pupils are working on with their writing each lesson in order to be better prepared to assess pupils from lesson to lesson by knowing what it is that each pupil is attempting to write about.

3.4 Differences between Atwell's workshops and the workshops in the current research

The above section accounts for how Atwell's workshops are practised. However, there were limitations in the framework in which the current study was carried out, and the workshops in this research were therefore not identically organized to Atwell's. This section elaborates on which conditions in the study were different from Atwell's original workshop method.

First, Atwell's teaching was practised in a L1 setting, while the current research was carried out in an EFL classroom. One difference, therefore, is the proficiency of the pupils' language skills. Second, the pupils at the Center of Teaching and Learning, which Atwell founded, are accustomed to this way of working in language arts programs, whereas to the pupils in the current research, the workshop method was a completely new way of organizing and thinking about their learning.

Perhaps the most significant difference was the amount of time provided for the workshops. Atwell had four or five days of workshops of 90 minutes each week available. Atwell puts great emphasis on the amount of time set aside to achieve the benefits of the workshop method. In fact, she suspects that without at least three writing workshops a week, and preferably four or five, it will be difficult for pupils to sustain their own writing project and to behave as writers.

The aspect of time was naturally a factor that could not be changed due to the distribution of hours in the curriculum in Norway. The current research only had the regular amount of 150 minutes of English per week at disposal, which could not be increased. Even though the amount of time spent in Atwell's program could not be matched, the current study is based on an approach that has never before been implemented and researched in Norwegian EFL classrooms, or to the best of the author's knowledge, elsewhere in EFL classrooms.

3.5 The *LK06* curriculum and the workshop method

Hellekjær (2007: 29) seems to take for granted that because of the ambitious competence aims in the English subject, pupils from grade 6 upwards will need to read far more English than has previously been the norm. Educators will surely recognize from *LK06* that time must be set aside to ensure that pupils are fluent readers of English before they can become strategic readers

(Hellekjær, 2007: 28). However, in Vignjevic's (2011) research, a selection of 30 EFL teachers in lower secondary level were asked how often their pupils read different genres. The genre that teachers used the least frequently in their teaching was the novel. The most frequent genre was online texts (websites). Also, Vignjevic found that the textbook was generally the preferred teaching material for most lower secondary teachers.

Extensive reading over a continuous time period improves reading skills (Elley and Mangubhai, 1983), as well as vocabulary and writing skills (Hafiz and Tudor, 1989). However, according to a survey conducted in 2003 among primary EFL teachers (Drew, 2009), extensive reading was not implemented in most EFL classrooms in Norway. The survey also found that reading and writing were practised to a less extent than what the former national curriculum (*L97*) stated it should be. Although this was a survey carried out in primary schools, there is little reason to believe that this practice would differ a great deal when pupils reached lower secondary school. The current national curriculum (*LK06*) emphasizes reading and writing even more than the previous one did.

The workshop method applied in the current study introduced a great amount of both reading and writing into EFL lessons. In fact, the pupils never used a textbook. Only the teacher consulted the textbook a few times for ideas on topics and poems.

A number of the English subject competence aims in the *LK06* curriculum can be achieved through the workshop method based on the implementation of extensive reading, and time set aside weekly for text production. For example, many of the competence aims applying to grades 8-10 from the area of 'Written communication' specifically address different strategies, purposes and skills of reading and writing. Moreover, some competence aims from the area of 'Culture, society and literature' specifically address literature from English-speaking countries. The flexibility of the workshop method also facilitates the integration of the remaining competence aims regarding the societies and history of English-speaking countries. In terms of the competence aims in 'Oral communication', oral activities can be integrated in every lesson. As well as the competence aims of 'Language learning', these apply as much to the workshop program as they do to other forms of EFL teaching.

3.6 Summary

The main principles behind Atwell's workshop method is for pupils to read and write extensively and based on their own choice, and to have the opportunity to revise their writing from feedback, as well as to write for a real audience. The main differences between Atwell's workshop method and the one implemented in the current study were that Atwell's method was applied to a L1 context, while the current study took place in a L2 context. Also, the amount of time available for the workshops in the current study was considerably less than what Atwell had. The workshop method carries the potential to achieve a number of the competence aims in the English subject curriculum for grade 8-10.

4.0 Literature Review

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will present theory and research relevant to the current study. The research aims of this study were to find out how the pupils' English competence developed throughout a year of reading and writing workshop-based teaching, how the workshop method affected their motivation and attitudes towards reading and writing in English, and also towards English as a subject in general. To be able to discuss the research results in relation to these aims, it is necessary to address some of the literature on related areas of learning theory.

First, the chapter begins by explaining how language and literacy is developed, why it is important that educators are conscious of the social communicative purpose of literacy, and how this social element is present in Atwell's (1998) workshop method. Second, since Atwell's teaching was carried out in a L1 context, while the teaching in the current research was conducted in a foreign language one, the similarities and differences between learning a L1 and L2 will be addressed, along with a reasoning for transferability of methods in L1 and L2 teaching. Finally, some of the research that has been carried out in Norwegian EFL classrooms relevant to the current research will be presented in section 4.5 before a summary of the chapter is provided in section 4.6.

4.2 Emergent and early literacy

Until the 1970s, the predominant view of teaching reading and writing was that it was something children were ready to be taught when they reached school age (Teale and Sulzby, 1986). The teaching would then be highly systematic and sequential. This isolated completion of irrelevant readiness tasks would carry on for years before pupils were exposed to meaningful composing and would be allowed to attempt any meaningful writing themselves (Cambourne, 1983: 22). Researchers such as Goodman (1980), Smith (1971), Halliday (1973) and Cambourne (1983) started to question how this systematic teaching of reading and writing could be justified when there were children who entered school who were conscious of literacy and its use. Some children even knew how to read before they started school.

Research was initiated which considered the development of literacy as a natural process which starts early in a child's life, and not something that children become ready to learn at the age of five or six (Hall, 1994: 19). This natural process led to the term 'emergent literacy'. Emergent literacy proposes that literacy is acquired much in the same way as oral language (Hall, 1994: 22). This means that the child can develop knowledge and abilities with literacy, as long as an appropriate context is provided for a natural development of these skills (Hall, 1994: 22). The motivation within the child for the emergence of literacy was supposed to be the same motivation that supported the development of oral language, namely the need and desire to create meaning.

Children are motivated to develop literacy at a young age because they expect print to make sense (Hall, 1994: 18). This may appear logical when considering the amount of printed material that surrounds people in everyday life in the highly literate Western society. The background of emergent literacy is, in other words, the social and communicative value of literacy in western culture. Halliday (1973: 24) claims that emergent literacy develops in the same way that children become proficient users of language without having any linguistic awareness. This suggests that children who are fluent L1 speakers may not be aware of formal rules or grammar, but have a sense of when their language is used correctly or incorrectly. Literacy, like oral language, is primarily a tool to make meaning, while formal aspects of language are secondary. This means that learning the structures, words and sounds, is primarily realisation of the potential to create meaning. In other words, language is the tool, meaning is the focus, and communication is the objective.

Cambourne and Kamler (Cambourne, 1983) wished to test the theory of emergent literacy. They performed a study where they tried to create an environment for the teaching of literacy in a kindergarten similar to the natural surroundings for the development of oral language. While children develop their oral language, they are constantly surrounded by the target language input. They listen to speech models of the language they are developing provided by speakers who are more proficient than they are. Plenty of opportunity for practice is provided, and encouragement is provided when attempts to communicate are being made by the child, without expecting the child to be at an adult or expert level from the very beginning. Children learning how to talk are often given meaning-focused feedback in a non-threatening way. If a child points to a dog and says 'Dat cat', the adult may respond with 'No, it is a dog,' focusing

primarily on the error in meaning, while simultaneously recasting a grammatically correct response.

The two teachers of the kindergarten group in the above-mentioned study tried to implement the conditions of a natural learning situation by surrounding the children with meaningful print on the walls of the rooms, reading these together with the children, and playing games with the texts. The teachers wrote in front on the children, thus providing them with models and then gave them time to write about whatever they were interested in. The children were encouraged to try their best in attempting spelling. Some of the children's texts were even 'published' after being transformed to conventional form.

The results of the study showed that this kind of approach to leading children into literacy had great potential (Cambourne, 1983: 26). The children's reading and writing improved to what was normally beyond the expectations of kindergarten children. More interestingly, the children seemed to choose many different strategies to solve their writing task. Some started by making drawings of what they wanted to include by connecting meaning to images, while others started to copy the print from their surroundings in order to master the graphic shapes and pencil control. In other words, children solved different kinds of problems to reach their objective of composing a meaningful narrative-like text.

The findings from Cambourne and Kamler indicate that the development of literacy is a socially motivated individual process, which needs to be supported by the right learning conditions instead of a strictly teacher controlled and systematic process. Similar theory has been put forward concerning L2 development, namely the idea that language can be acquired naturally through extensive exposure to input, for instance self-selected texts, and with only minimal formal instruction (Elley, 1994: 376). This will be further addressed in section 4.4.2 about the 'Monitor theory'.

4.3 Social Interactionism

While emergent literacy is a theory that explains how children come to develop literacy, one of the predominant theories of how children develop their L1 is 'Social Interactionism'. One of the most important scholars behind social interactionism is the Russian psychologist Vygotsky (1978). Vygotsky (1978) argues that social interaction is the basis for language development. The child learns from observing and mimicking the more resourceful adult or teacher, who

provides support in the learning process and then withdraws as the child is able to carry out a task on his own. During this process, according to Hall (1994), language development is socially motivated, meaning that children acquire language based on the need to be social and to communicate with their adults.

The principle of social interactionism is that what a child can do with the support of an adult today, he can perform on his own without the support tomorrow (Drew and Sørheim, 2009: 17). This is how Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the 'zone of proximal development' originated. The instruction given by the more resourceful adult must be targeted to the area outside what the child is already able to do on his own and what is too advanced for the child to accomplish at the present time. For example, at one point during childhood parents may practise with their children the pronunciation of simple words such as *mummy* and then later, *dog*. It may be years until parents start to correct irregular verb endings, such as *hit* as opposed to *hitted**. Parents are usually aware that children cannot be taught to be fluent in language at once, and instead they keep track of the children's zone of proximal development. This view of how children develop their L1 is, according to Drew and Sørheim (2009: 17), also important for the understanding of how a L2 is acquired, as will be further discussed in section 4.4. The following section will show how social interactionism is evident in Atwell's (1998) workshop method.

4.3.1 Social interactionism in reading and writing workshops

It is evident in several ways that social interactionism is a learning theory that explains how learning is expected to happen in the workshop method. Atwell (1998: 218) describes her approach to responding to pupils as showing them how to build on 'what they do know and can do'. Clearly, Atwell builds on Vygotsky's principle of the 'zone of proximal development', where understandings and strategies can become apparent in a learner's mind in cooperation with a more competent person, and then gradually become internalized within the learner as he/she is gradually given less assistance by the more competent person (Barton, 2007: 135). This is evident in the way Atwell gives her pupils feedback on their texts to guide them into improving their writing. It is also evident in the way Atwell uses her expert knowledge about reading and writing by, for instance, drafting in front of her pupils, to provide both model texts but also model behaviour of how experienced readers and writers behave (Atwell, 1998: 21).

Atwell compares her approach to reading and writing instruction to teaching her daughter how to set the table. She provides a model for how a table is set with her daughter watching, and gradually lets her daughter participate more the following days until she can set the table on her own, and might even fold the napkins in a new way. This procedure is linked to the theory of social interactionism where the more resourceful adult can go from providing the model to supporting the child in its practices, while the child gradually improves, to withdrawing completely and watching the child master the task on their own, and possibly even going beyond the model, as in the table setting. This requires that the teacher is a role model for the learners. It also involves cooperation between the adult and the learner to enable the teacher to identify the pupil's zone of proximal development.

It is based on this that social interactionism promotes a community of learners where both adults and pupils are responsible for learning to occur. This is what Atwell (1998) does when maintaining both written and oral dialogues with pupils as they work on their individual writing. This dialogue guides her as a teacher, and enables her to adjust her contributions according to the pupils. A classroom model provided by this theory clearly breaks with a teacher-centred method where the principal role of the teacher is to pass on knowledge to the pupils, who are passive recipients. As Atwell (1998) claims, it is an approach which calls for change in language classrooms, where teachers must take on a different role and find themselves passing on more responsibility to pupils in order to create a more community learning-based relationship between pupils and teachers.

4.4 The application of the workshop principles to a L2 context

Atwell (1998) recorded results from her teaching for decades, which provided her with the evidence that her approach was successful in teaching reading and writing in a L1 classroom. The current study, however, applies the method to an EFL classroom. This section therefore first describes the different learning conditions in a L2 context as opposed to a L1 context, and discusses how successfully methods from a L1 context can be adapted to a foreign language one. The section then accounts for how the workshop method relates to a foreign language context by exploring what we know about L2 reading and writing.

4.4.1 Language and literacy development in L1 and L2 contexts

It is a long and complex process for human beings to acquire a language as a child. However, as Drew and Sørheim (2009: 15) remark, children around the world seem to develop language in a remarkably similar way. This means that the L1 acquisition process develops in a similar way, regardless of what kind of language is being developed.

The conditions for learning another language are quite different from when developing a L1. First, learning another language means that a first language already exists, which can both assist and interfere with the process of acquiring another language. This happens when languages have similarities in structure and vocabulary, and learners can use their linguistic L1 knowledge to produce target language output. On the other hand, learners can be deceived to believe that, for instance, phrasal verbs in Norwegian can be directly translated to English, causing the production of expressions such as ‘I have it fine today’ (Drew and Sørheim, 2009: 17).

Second, the L1 is developed in the natural setting of growing up, while the acquisition of another language in most cases happens within an educational context of a school or another learning institution (Drew and Sørheim, 2009: 18). This means that the learner has to seek additional input of the target language outside the institution because the language is not necessarily a natural part of the surrounding society. This affects both the type and amount of input learners are exposed to. In foreign language learning, input is normally ‘planned, restricted, gradual, and largely artificial’ (Elley and Mangubhai, 1983: 55). In addition, the teachers providing target language input are usually less proficient in the language than L1 teachers. The age of the L2 learners is also in most cases different from when learning their L1.

Finally, the social necessity of fluency in the target language in order to communicate is often absent when learning another language, since learners have their L1 to fulfil this need. A different kind of motivation must therefore be found when learning another language. The challenge to language teachers, according to Elley and Mangubhai (1983: 55), is therefore to reduce the differences in the development of the L1 and the target language in order to make instruction more efficient.

Similar to the previous assumptions about how children acquire literacy in a hierarchical and sequential order (see section 4.2), one view of L2 learning has been that one must first learn structures, practise these structures in communication, and then fluency is developed (Hatch 1978, cited in Krashen, 1982: 21). Also, in the context of L2 acquisition, Krashen’s (1982; 21)

input theory proposes that we acquire language by looking for meaning and acquiring structures as a result. Horst (2009: 43) suggests that there exist parallels between the learning of a L1 through ‘communicative speaking tasks’ and learning in, for instance, L2 extensive reading contexts, which in the same way aim to provide learners with comprehensible input. Where oral language in the environment provides the input in emergent L1 literacy, reading can provide input in L2 development (Hafiz and Tudor, 1989: 5). These processes can therefore be said to resemble each other, which allows for the assumption that the process of developing L2 literacy can be similar to the development of a L1, and that successful methods can largely be transferrable between the two.

The following two sections will further explore L2 reading and writing instruction based on research. These elements are also prominent in Atwell’s (1998) approach. First, extensive reading based on Krashen’s (1982) Monitor theory will be addressed. Extensive reading has led to positive results in L1 teaching (Atwell, 1998), and has also provided similar positive results in L2 teaching (Day and Bamford, 1998). Second, the teaching of writing can be divided into six different areas of focus according to Hyland (2003), which will be elaborated on.

4.4.2 The Monitor theory

The Monitor theory was introduced by Krashen (1982). Krashen initially makes a significant distinction between language ‘learning’ and ‘acquisition’. ‘Acquiring’ a language relates to the way children naturally develop their L1. It is a subconscious process where the language acquirer is not necessarily aware that he or she is learning a language, but rather focuses on the use of the target language for communication. ‘Learning’, in contrast, is conscious language knowledge, where formal rules are taught, practised and discussed (Krashen, 1982: 10).

The Monitor theory explains how both acquisition and learning can complement each other in L2 development. The acquisition system is responsible for fluency and the production of L2. The learning system, on the other hand, plays its part in making corrections in language, either before or after the production, for instance when pupils go through their own composing of texts and are able to identify the mistakes they have made due to their knowledge about formal language rules (Krashen, 1982: 15).

Three conditions must be met in order for pupils to do this (Krashen, 1982:16). First, pupils must have sufficient time to put the conscious rules to use, which is not common in oral

conversations. Second, the focus has to shift from meaning to the correctness of what is being said. Normally, people are more preoccupied with what they are saying rather than how it is said. Third, pupils must know the rules in order to use them correctly. The optimal use of the Monitor is for learners to use it as a supplement to their acquired knowledge. The role of the Monitor is therefore limited compared to the one of the acquisition system, which suggests that supporting acquisition should be central in L2 instruction.

Krashen's (1982) 'input hypothesis' is a part of the Monitor theory and offers an explanation of how language is acquired. According to Krashen (1982: 21), the input hypothesis is a counterpart to traditional pedagogical assumptions that, by learning structures, we can apply them in communication, and finally achieve fluency. The input hypothesis instead emphasizes 'comprehensible input' and addresses the importance of understanding meaning in communication, similar to the theory of emergent literacy (see section 4.2). According to Krashen (2004: 150), we have confused the cause and effect in language education if we believe that skills must first be taught in isolation, so that they can later be implemented in reading and writing. This breaks with the general idea of why a person learns its L1, namely to be able to communicate with a focus on meaning.

Furthermore, another part of Krashen's Monitor theory that is of significance to the current study is the 'affective filter hypothesis', which highlights factors that make students more or less open to L2 acquisition. The filter refers to the mental process of language acquisition, where certain factors may interfere with the process. Students' motivation, self-confidence and anxiety are three important categories of factors that will influence the efficiency of L2 instruction. High motivation, self-confidence and low anxiety are important factors for successful language acquisition.

4.4.3 Extensive reading in L2 context

Extensive reading often consists of reading whole books of the reader's own choice. It is based on the Monitor theory elaborated in the previous section, in which Krashen advocates extensive reading. Krashen (1982: 31) claims that real acquisition comes only from comprehensible input in a low anxiety environment where students are motivated and confident. When practising extensive reading, the aim is to focus on the meaning of the text. At the same time, according to

Krashen (2004: 136), the reader develops language subconsciously according to the input hypothesis.

Several studies have been carried out to gather evidence of the potential benefits of extensive reading in L2 teaching. Considerable evidence shows that consistent extensive reading done over a long period of time leads to both better reading comprehension and improved abilities in several other language areas (e.g. Elley and Mangubhai, 1983; Elley, 1991). Some studies are presented in this section. Day and Bamford (1998) summarize several studies on extensive reading in L2 contexts and find that extensive reading programs have beneficial results. Pupils gain both increased motivation to learn the target language and also to read in general, and advance in various aspects of language proficiency, such as vocabulary and writing (Day and Bamford, 1998: 33).

In one of the earliest studies of extensive reading, Elley and Mangubhai (1983) studied the effects of an extensive reading program on the English language skills of nearly 400 primary school pupils in a two-year period in Fiji. The pupils exposed to the extensive reading program made significant improvement compared to those being taught through an audio-lingual approach. After the first year, improvement in receptive skills were visible, while after the second year, improvements spread to all other language aspects, including oral and written production (Elley and Mangubhai, 1983: 65).

In another study, Hafiz and Tudor (1989) studied 16 Pakistani-born students in the UK who spoke Punjabi at home but who were taught in English. The students were set to read for one hour on a daily basis for 12 weeks, and had over 100 available graded readers to choose from. Compared with two control groups, these students showed impressive gains when tested in reading comprehension, vocabulary, and writing.

These findings suggest that L2 learners, like L1 learners, can benefit greatly from extensive reading in all aspects of their target language. It is precisely the spread of effect to other language skills which Elley (1994: 404) finds to be the most striking about research on extensive reading. Krashen (2004: 11) even comments that although the correlation between the reported amount of extensive reading and literacy development is not large in all studies, it is impressively consistent. A general summary of the research on extensive reading can be captured by the following citation from Elley (1991: 375), stating that children exposed to extensive reading programs are ‘consistently found to learn the target language more quickly.’

Reading has many advantages in addition to providing language input, such as acting as a source of new ideas and information, and also being an enjoyable activity, or what Krashen (2004: 29) calls a ‘flow’ activity that one is deeply and actively engaged in while perhaps even losing the sense of time. This is the basis of what Atwell (1998) refers to as the ‘Reading Zone’ in her reading workshops. When pupils are drawn into a story and are fully engaged in their reading, they forget about their own reality for a while, which is why both Krashen and Atwell emphasise pupils’ opportunity to choose their own literature.

Krashen is also a strong advocate of the relationship between reading and writing, arguing that extensive reading leads to competence in writing (Krashen, 1984: 28). Or, as Drew and Sørheim (2009: 75) put it, reading is the most important input when producing writing. Tsang (1996), as well as Hafiz and Tudor (1989), showed how extensive reading does indeed improve writing skills. Krashen (2004: 133) explains this by arguing that pupils subconsciously acquire better writing style from reading, which explains why several studies have found that an increase in writing quantity does not affect the quality of the writing, while reading does (Krashen, 2004: 135). Perfetti (1994: 876) confirms this, claiming that the only way to learn how to organize texts is to read many of them.

4.4.4 The teaching of L2 writing

To become able to compose written text in a new language is one of the most challenging aspects of developing that language, according to Hyland (2003: xiii). Hyland divides the different aspects of writing into six different focus areas for teaching, which separately offer different mind-sets about acquiring writing skills and ways of organizing teaching. These six different areas are:

- Language structures
- Text functions
- Creative expressions
- Composing process
- Topics and content
- Genre and context of writing

Hyland (2003: 2) remarks that it is uncommon for language teachers to rely strictly on one of these seven orientations, but rather to adopt a blend of methods including a wider range of orientations. It is, however, common that one of these areas is predominant in the way that language teachers conceptualize how pupils learn to write, and therefore how they organize their teaching. It is relevant for the current study to identify which focus area is more or less predominant in Atwell's workshop method, and also to investigate if there are one or several focus areas that seem to be more efficient in the teaching of L2 writing according to Hyland.

Focusing on language structures

In a writing class with a focus on language structures, writing is primarily a combination of syntactic and lexical forms. Writers must learn and later master the rules of these in order to create accurate and successful expositions of texts, which are the main criteria for good writing for teachers focusing on language structures (Hyland, 2003: 4).

Instruction in this orientation typically first involves the teaching of new grammar rules or vocabulary, which is secondly used to manipulate fixed patterns by filling in gaps. Third, learners use the new rules to imitate model texts, also called 'guided writing'. The final step is free writing, where pupils use the patterns they have used to write, for instance an essay (Hyland, 2003: 3). These techniques are commonly used in writing classes at a low proficiency level to build confidence for novice writers (Hyland, 2003: 4), and many L2 writers learn how to write in this way. Hyland (2003) warns against the difficulty for writers to transfer the controlled and often short writing of sentences to realistic contexts where learners are expected to write longer texts about different topics. Most teachers include formal elements in their teaching to some degree, and Atwell's (1998) use of pupils' personal spelling list can be said to belong to this orientation.

Focusing on text functions

Particular language forms carry particular functions of meaning. Paragraphs can be a typical element of teaching in a more functional approach, as can the structural entity in composition, such as introduction, body and conclusion. Model texts are often provided to give an example of how language is used to complete certain functions in order to help pupils understand their use and later apply them in their own writing (Hyland, 2003: 7). Atwell (1998: 177) also addresses functional writing in her mini-lectures and includes topics such as ways of organizing information and arguments, or the use of transitional words in narratives and essays. An

exclusive focus on function, however, detaches the writing from the personal experience of the writer, which is an overall idea in Atwell's (1998) workshop method.

Focusing on creative expression

One predominant area in Atwell's workshop method appears to be what Hyland (2003) terms 'creative expression'. Teachers emphasising this focus area in their teaching of writing will consider writing as a creative process used to develop pupils' reflections and to express themselves. The teaching is organized around the pupils' opinions and personal experiences. This orientation suggests that writing is personal and, according to Hyland (2003: 9), must be 'learned' instead of 'taught'. Teachers must allow pupils the time, space and stimuli to explore their own ideas, where teachers focus more on responding to these ideas rather than on formal errors. As Hyland (2003: 10) comments, creative expressivist teaching strongly relies on a teacher who is also a creative writer himself/herself. To some degree, Atwell (1998: 331) confirms this when she argues for the importance of the teacher as an experienced role model for writing, and her teaching includes both her own composing and reading large amounts of teen literature. However, this is where Atwell parts with creative expressionism, since according to creative expressivists, teachers should not provide models (Hyland, 2003: 9). Atwell's approach is therefore more socially-based, meaning that writing is not only an individual creative process, but also communicatively based.

Focusing on genre and context

The teaching of writing through focusing on genres means that writing has a purpose. Knowledge of genre is necessary to find the appropriate genre for the purpose of the writer. Readers have literary schemes or expectations according to different genres, and writers must be aware of these in order to convey their information in an efficient way. According to Hyland (2003: 18), the communicative aspect of composing is central in the genre orientation. This is also evident in Atwell's teaching, where pupils are taught to be aware of their readers, and that the use of genres is a measure to help the reader along. Pupils are taught purposes and characteristics of different genres (Atwell, 1998: 168). Pupils also make a list of the audiences towards whom they are likely to direct their writing. Based on this, it is evident that the element of communication and context are strongly present in Atwell's approach.

Focusing on the composing process

The process of writing is another area that is evident in Atwell's approach. In the teaching of writing as a process, pupils are familiarized with different steps of composing, such as brainstorming for ideas, drafting, responding to feedback and revising. Teaching writing as a process, according to Hyland (2003: 10), has its advantages when it comes to recognizing what teachers can do to help pupils improve their writing. The orientation of composing processes acknowledges that there are various cognitive stages that writers must go through when producing, and that revising and drafting are important for pupils to develop their content and expression. In accordance with this orientation, Atwell (1998) emphasises her pupils' drafting and feedback both from the teacher and peers. Through drafting and feedback, one can argue that pupils become accustomed to focusing on the quality of their writing instead of generating content to finish their text, which tends to be the main concern of novice writers according to Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987), as cited in Hyland (2003: 11).

Focusing on topics and content

Focus on content as an orientation to teach writing means to provide interesting themes and topics for pupils to write about. Because pupils possess personal knowledge or the motivation to learn about topics which they are likely to be interested in, it is more likely, according to Hyland (2003: 14), that pupils will be able to write meaningful texts in which they are interested. Sometimes it can be necessary for teachers to provide the necessary background material or schemata to enable pupils to produce texts on a topic, and many textbooks are organized around different topics (Hyland, 2003: 14). Hyland also points out that focus on topic or content as a method of teaching writing gives the opportunity of tailoring teaching to pupils at different proficiency levels by adjusting the amount of background information provided. It also allows for the integration of other aspects of writing, for instance using the different stages of process writing or language structures and functions. This can be said to resemble the way Atwell's writing workshops are constructed. In Atwell's approach, however, the teacher does not provide the topic or theme. Instead, pupils choose for themselves what to write about, which is likely to cause an even stronger affect in motivation.

The need for a synthesis

It is evident that Atwell's approach relates to all of Hyland's (2003) six focus areas of written skills to varying extents. Atwell's approach can therefore be said to represent a synthesis of many orientations, instead of applying one or two predominant ones.

As mentioned in the introduction to this section, even though it is not common for the teaching of writing to be organized according to simply one of Hyland's focus areas, it is common that one or few dominate the mind-set of a teacher. The pitfall for educators relying too strongly on one orientation is that pupils will lack experience with equally important elements from the other orientations. A heavy focus on the teaching of strategies on how to write does not provide writers with the knowledge of different types of text to choose between (Hyland 2003: 13), or the competence to choose the type of text most suitable to the purpose of the composition and the intended audience. Although accuracy and explicitness are desired, it is not enough to only practise these, since a written text always has a communicative setting. No feature can be a universal marker of good writing because good writing is always contextually variable (Hyland, 2003: 5).

If writing, according to Hyland (2003: xv), includes both composing skills, knowledge about texts, context and readers, pupils must preferably master several skills in order to become proficient L2 writers, and teachers must preferably include the wide range of focus areas in their teaching in order to facilitate their pupils' progress. It is important that language conventions for expressing meaning are acknowledged, but also that pupils' creativity is stimulated. Atwell (1998) and Hyland (2003) are united in their advocacy that writing is an activity that should be meaningful to pupils.

Hyland (2003) calls for more combined courses where orientations in teaching writing can complement each other's potential weaknesses. The aspects of Atwell's workshop method, which have elements of all of Hyland's six focus areas of L2 writing, can be said to represent such a combined approach.

4.5 Related research in Norwegian EFL classrooms

There is limited research carried out in Norwegian EFL classrooms that can be compared to the current study. Implemented methods have been followed through case studies, but to the best of the researcher's knowledge, none of the same longitude or nature as the current study, which implemented an experimental method in all of the pupils' English lessons over a full school year.

Seven relevant studies of different categories will be presented in this section in order to situate the current study within previous research on EFL instruction in Norway. The studies of Drew (2009) and Myrset (2014) both concern L1 methods applied to L2 contexts. The case study of Gilje (2011) concerns EFL reading. The case studies of Bø (2014) and Maier (2006) concern EFL writing, as do the more quantitative studies of writing by Vigrestad (2006) and Nygaard (2010).

Drew (2009) set out to investigate the implementation of the *Early Years Literacy Programme* (EYLP) in Norwegian third and fourth grade EFL classrooms. The method was originally created for L1 English teaching in Australia, and involves the organization of learning stations, which the pupils rotate to and fro in homogeneous groups of three-four pupils. The stations involved silent reading, oral activities such as role-play, computer activities, and one station managed by the teacher where the pupils read aloud from one of the many available short English books of various levels.

The experimental EYLP school was compared with two control schools that used different approaches to EFL teaching. Data was collected through classroom observations, teacher interviews and pupil tests. Drew's (2009) aims were to see how the different schools approached EFL teaching in primary education, what the challenges and benefits of using the EYLP would be in early EFL teaching, and finally how effective the EYLP would be in promoting the pupils' EFL language skills. The findings showed that the 44 pupils in the experimental school made greater progress from the autumn to the spring in listening, speaking, and reading and writing skills than the 51 pupils from the two control schools.

In another study, Myrset (2014) implemented a L1 method in a L2 context. Readers Theatre is a group reading aloud activity where pupils first rehearse texts and then perform them. Myrset (2014) studied a Norwegian 6th grade class of 27 pupils and two teachers who experienced two variants of Readers Theatre: first pre-written scripts, and later self-created scripts by the pupils. The Readers Theatre method proved to have potential in Norwegian EFL classrooms. This was also confirmed by Drew and Pedersen (2010), who found that the method had potential with pupils of different abilities. They also found that Readers Theatre was a low anxiety activity (Drew and Pedersen, 2010: 17). Myrset (2014), in his study, found that the pupils enjoyed the activity and seemed to engage in the project with enthusiasm. Myrset (2014: 2), found that the pupils' fluency, pronunciation and word recognition increased considerably,

which was confirmed by the two teachers. The pupils' confidence in reading and performing also seemed to increase.

Although the *LK06* English curriculum emphasizes reading by defining reading skills as one out of five basic skills that should be integrated into all subjects, it does not specify how the teaching of reading should be approached, and so many decisions are left with the teachers' cognition. Gilje (2011: iii) defines teacher cognition as a teacher's practice based on beliefs, knowledge and context, along with the decisions the teacher makes in the classroom. Gilje (2011) wanted to explore teacher cognition in relation to the teaching of reading in EFL classrooms at the intermediate level in Norway to see how teachers implemented reading in their teaching.

Eight 6th grade EFL teachers were interviewed, and they all had positive attitudes to the use of the textbook in their teaching of reading, and therefore used it on a regular basis. This showed how the teachers' cognition corresponded with their choice of material. Teachers varied in the ways they worked with a text in the classroom, but very few used self-assessment tools such as the *European Language Portfolio*⁶ (ELP). Gilje (2011) found that abilities regarded as important in the development of reading skills were not necessarily addressed by teachers, even though both the textbooks and the curriculum addressed them. This suggests, according to Gilje, that teacher cognition might take precedence over curricular requirements, and she therefore stresses the importance of a teacher education that enables teachers to make conscious decisions to promote efficient teaching.

Maier (2006) aimed to investigate the changing practice of teaching written English in Norwegian lower secondary schools by interviewing five male and five female teachers, who had all experienced the three recent curricula at the time: *M74*, *M87* and *L97*. Maier's findings showed that most of the teachers believed that the teaching of writing was shifting towards an emphasis on fluency and away from formal correctness in written language. The textbooks had become more interesting and challenging, and increasingly addressed the teaching of genres. As a result, all of the teachers believed that their teaching had changed. The researcher, however,

⁶ The ELP is a document for language learners to record and reflect on their language learning and intercultural experiences. Its aim is to support the development of learner autonomy, plurilingualism and intercultural awareness (European Language Portfolio (ELP), 2016).

anticipated greater changes when considering the development of writing pedagogy (Maier, 2006: 1). As an example, process writing and ICT (Information Communication Technology) were little used. One possible explanation Maier presents is the lack of opportunities for teachers to update their teaching practice through, for instance, in-service training.

Bø's (2014) study on writing aimed to investigate pupils' and teachers' attitudes towards English writing in an upper secondary school in Norway. The study also addressed what kind of feedback pupils were provided with, and how that feedback influenced their further development in written English. The results showed that teachers mostly gave post-product feedback, and only one of the three teachers in the study required the pupils to revise their texts when receiving their feedback (Bø, 2014: 1). Methods such as process writing, multiple drafts or peer feedback were not common in the teaching of English writing, although teachers agreed with the benefits of such methods. Bø claims her research confirms other research on the area, stating that pre-product feedback is neglected due to the lack of time for teachers to provide it.

Feedback on written English in upper secondary was also the object of the research of Nygaard (2010), who analysed 190 texts written by 95 pupils in an upper secondary vocational school during the spring and autumn semesters of one school year. The distribution and frequency of mistakes in the pupils' writing were categorized, and the study aimed to see whether pupils improved their accuracy from the autumn semester to the spring, and which correction method that seemed to be the most favourable. The results showed that all of the pupils reduced their mistakes from the autumn to the spring by an average of 25% fewer mistakes. The type of correction method and the use of computers in composing were especially linked to the results. Nygaard comments on the generally low level of accuracy in written English when pupils enter upper secondary education (Nygaard, 2010: 3), and calls for changes in English language teaching in primary and lower secondary education to improve the situation.

Vigrestad (2006) in her comparative study analysed 198 picture narratives from pupils in both Norway and the Netherlands. The aim was to compare the pupils' written fluency and complexity in the two countries. In order to compare the two groups, features were categorized in, for instance, text length, T-unit length, and different subordinate clauses. Relative, adverbial and nominal clauses were analysed. The texts were also evaluated holistically. Norwegian pupils began their English teaching up to five years earlier than the Dutch pupils (at least at the time of the research) (Vigrestad, 2006: 1), and in most areas, Norwegian 7th graders scored higher than

the Dutch 7th graders. Interestingly, however, the differences were significantly reduced in the comparison with 10th graders. Vigrestad linked the findings to different conditions in terms of similarities and differences in pupils' L1 and English, and also directly to the quality of EFL teaching in Norway and the Netherlands.

4.6 Summary

The summary of the theories and research that this thesis builds on can be categorized into four parts. First, the theories of emergent literacy and social interactionism were accounted for. Supporters of emergent literacy claim that there is much in common with the natural way in which children develop their L1 orally and the early initiated natural process of developing literacy through meaningful input if provided with the right learning conditions. Social interactionism is a predominant language learning theory that can explain how meaningful input affects learners' language development. It suggests that the aim of the learning process is socially-based for learners in order to be able to communicate, and the process itself is social. Children learn through interacting with an expert adult through mimicking and gradually mastering the task individually as the expert adult hands over more responsibility. Social interactionism has a strong presence in the workshop method.

Second, the transferability of L1 to L2 teaching was explored. Even though the context in L2 learning is often quite different from that of L1 learning, the process of acquiring a language is transferable, and therefore also the learning principles. Krashen's (1982) Monitor theory, which is much related to the theories of emergent literacy and social interactionism, explains how language can be acquired through comprehensible input, such as extensive reading of texts in the target language.

The teaching of L2 reading and writing were further explored in order to explain the learning benefits from a program organized in a way such as the workshop method.

Extensive reading is the reading of large amount of books of free choice based on the theory that language is acquired through the input from reading, which is, in turn, beneficial to other aspects of language proficiency, including writing. Extensive reading has in many former studies proven to be highly efficient in improving reading and writing skills. The teaching of L2 writing can be divided into six different focus areas with their proper sets of structures and

methods. A synthesis of the various orientations, according to Hyland (2003), will be the most beneficial. Atwell's workshop method can be said to represent such a synthesis of focus areas.

The final section of the chapter summed up seven studies of related research in Norwegian EFL teaching. The studies of Drew (2009) and Myrset (2014) confirm that L1 methods can successfully be applied to L2 contexts (see chapter 4.4). The findings of all seven of these studies can be considered to strengthen the importance of the current study, which emphasises extensive reading to promote both reading and writing skills, and content-based writing with pre-product feedback.

5.0 Methodology

5.1 Introduction

The study followed the English lessons of a class of nine⁷ 8th grade pupils for a full school year in the period of August 2014 until June 2015. The purpose of this chapter is to present the research methods applied in the study. The class followed the reading and writing workshop-based method throughout the year. The aim of the study was to observe how the pupils' English competence developed throughout a year of reading and writing workshop-based teaching and how the method affected their motivation and attitudes towards reading and writing in English, and also towards English as a subject in general.

The chapter explains how the research aims were to be addressed and why this approach was chosen. The chapter is therefore divided into sections that deal with different aspects of the research. Section 5.2 explains the nature of the research as both a case study and also as an evaluation study. Section 5.3 describes the school where the research was carried out and the selection of subjects for the study. Section 5.4 explains in detail the content of the reading and writing workshops, which the English lessons consisted of for the selected class. Section 5.5 provides an overview of the research methods. Section 5.6 deals with the validity and reliability of the research. Section 5.7 addresses the ethical dilemmas tied to the research. Finally, section 5.8 provides a summary of the current chapter, before section 5.9 explains how the research data will be presented.

5.2 The nature of the research

The research is classroom research, meaning a study where the classroom is the main research site (Dörnyei, 2007: 176). It involved seven pupils in all of the English lessons in the 8th grade class over a full school year. Classroom research was initiated in the 1920s and 1930s in the United States based on the investigation of efficient teacher behaviour. Even though classroom research has been modernized since then in terms of methods and expectations to how the results can generally lead to a conclusion, there is still a common objective which connects all

⁷ Only seven of the nine pupils participated in the study.

classroom research: To identify and understand factors which promote or prevent learning in a classroom (Lightbown, 2000: 438).

This study can be characterized as both a case study and an evaluation study. These two approaches will be further elaborated on separately along with a justification for why these approaches combined were considered the most appropriate tools to achieve the aims of the study, and what these methods generally have been used for previously.

5.2.1 Case study

In educational research, the case study has had a long history according to Borg and Gall (1989: 402). The case study can be characterized as the detailed study of a single subject, group or phenomenon based on the premise that the results could be transferable to other similar cases. More specifically, the research can be termed ‘observational case study’. In the case of this study, it could be hypothetically possible to claim that other 8th grade classes would respond similarly to the workshop method. However, due to the fact that one cannot know exactly how general or typical the selection of subjects are, it will not be possible to draw any general conclusions from the results, but rather form new hypotheses that will need further research. The new insight and information from the individual case can therefore be valuable in itself.

In this case, there was the opportunity to perform a longitudinal study. This provided the possibility of careful observation of the development of each individual pupil, and group dynamics, over time. The fact that it was a longitudinal study means that a large amount of in-depth qualitative data was collected. In addition, the implemented workshop method carried several unfamiliar elements for the pupils. For example, not only were they taught without a textbook, but they also spent a considerable amount of time on extensive reading. Nor were they were not given a formal grade until the end of semester. The reading and writing workshop method has not previously been researched in EFL classes in Norway. Thus, Dörnyei (2007: 155) suggests that the case study approach is recommendable when exploring what is yet unknown territory.

As is common for a case study, this study therefore sets out without a hypothesis, but instead observes how the case develops over time. The results from the case study, on the other hand, can be useful in forming a hypothesis to test with further research on the background of its results.

5.2.2 Evaluation research

The purpose of evaluation research is what separates it from educational research, whereas the methodology of the two approaches is often shared. Evaluation research sets out to make a judgement regarding the value and often efficiency of the object of evaluation (Borg and Gall, 1989). The object that is being evaluated can be a number of factors present in the educational institution, for instance program, curriculum materials, organization, teachers, and also pupils. The evaluation results have value for decision makers, such as politicians or school boards, as they convey information about the efficiency of, for example, curriculum materials, such as a newly-developed multimedia package, compared to its costs. The results can enable the decision makers in political processes to make knowledge-based decisions in their budget, prioritizing a legislation. This, according to Borg and Gall (1989: 743), is the main reason why there has been an increase in demand for evaluation research.

With respect to this study, the approach has been used to evaluate the reading and writing workshop method in English classes throughout the year, with the aim to research the efficiency of the method, its benefits and its challenges alike. In this way, the results might enable one to draw conclusions about the method as an alternative to other ways of EFL teaching in Norwegian classrooms.

5.3 The school and subjects

The school where the research was carried out is situated in a rural area, and is a grade 1-10 school of approximately 120 pupils in total. The 8th grade consisted of nine pupils. Of these, four were girls and five were boys. One pupil moved to Norway from Germany at a young age and was fluent in Norwegian. All the other pupils were born in Norway.

Among the class of nine pupils, a sample of seven pupils, three girls (given the pseudonyms Maria, Nora and Olivia) and four boys (given the pseudonyms Ben, Fredrik, Tom and Ulrik) participated as subjects in the study. One pupil chose not to be a participant, whilst another was not present most of the lessons due to other pedagogical arrangements for this pupil. The researcher also had the role of being the teacher, who was new to the class. In addition, one extra teacher participated in the lessons. The responsibility of the extra teacher was mainly

giving close attention to pupils with an Individual Education Program⁸ (IEP). Among the research subjects, two pupils had an IEP, one due to dyslexia and the other due to learning difficulties in English. Data was not collected for the research from the two pupils who did not participate in the study. The workshop teaching, however, was also given to the two pupils outside the study because the researcher and the teacher was the same person. The remaining group of seven subjects represented pupils with different levels of ability.

The school principal gave permission for the research to be carried out in the target class. This involved permission to implement the experimental workshop method in all of the class's English lessons throughout the year, and also permission to gather data from the teaching for research. Both the parents and the pupils gave their written consent to the latter (see Appendix 2), and they were given an oral presentation of what the English lessons would consist of with the implementation of the workshop method, as will be explained in the following section.

5.4 The content of the workshops

All of the English lessons for the 8th grade during the whole year were integrated into the study. For the autumn semester, the lessons were spread over three different days, one lesson of 60 minutes, and the two remaining of 45 minutes each. As for the spring semester, the two lessons of 45 minutes merged together on one day for practical reasons. The spring semester hence consisted of one lesson of 60 minutes, and one of 90 minutes a week.

This section will describe in detail what was practised in the classroom during the reading and writing workshops, how new vocabulary was taught, how oral training was integrated, and how the pupils' learning was assessed.

Before going into detail about the different components of the reading and writing workshops, an overview of their common structure will be given. First of all, the reading and writing workshops were structured roughly in the same way. The lessons would start by either a poem of the day, the teacher reading aloud from a book, or by a book talk. The book talks were informal recommendations of books that might be interesting to the rest of the class. In the beginning of the autumn semester, and other times throughout the year, the teacher participated in the book talks, as did the pupils. Other times, the pupils took turns talking briefly about the

⁸ Individual Education Program is a written document for pupils with special education needs. The IEP should state the pupil's learning needs, what the school provides, and how progress will be measured.

book they were reading and what score they would give the book on a scale of 1-10. Whenever the pupils heard of a title they might like to read in the future, they were encouraged to note down the title in a *Someday List* in the very last page of their notebooks, in order to easily keep track of new books to read once they had finished a book.

The lesson would then go over to a mini-lecture on a related topic, either for reading or writing, depending on the focus of the lesson. The teacher tried to limit the mini-lectures to 5-15 minutes, although 15 minutes easily turned into 20. The purpose was to briefly go through a topic that would be related to as many readers or writers as possible in the class. As the semester developed, it was possible to include topics that the teacher considered to be a challenge to several pupils, for instance the correct spelling of *with*, instead of *whit**. Since the correction in Word does not underline this misspelling, several of the pupils made this mistake. The usage of paragraphs was another topic that was included in the mini-lectures on the background of drafts handed in by the pupils.

5.4.1 Reading workshops

The weekly lessons of 60 minutes were dedicated to reading workshops throughout the school year. Examples of topics that were used for mini-lectures in the reading workshops were, for instance, how to pick a book, the rules for the reading workshops, and how to write the reading journals. They also included metacognitive topics, such as why reading is important and how to increase reading speed.

Finally, pupils were given the remainder of the lesson to read books of their own choice. The teacher had invested in a classroom library through personal funding, together with the English titles available from the public library, lent out to be displayed physically in this classroom. The class library soon included over 150 titles, and sometimes the pupils would make requests to the teacher to acquire one particular title for them which was not available in the class library.

Among the titles were books of many levels. Some were adapted versions and some were authentic English teen novels. Some titles offered the audio-book, which was especially intended for pupils with dyslexia or learning disabilities, in addition to the paperback. The pupils were allowed to take books home with them and were given a weekly assignment to read at home for

30 minutes. The teacher did not keep a record of whether or not all of the titles were put back in the library.

While the pupils read, the teacher walked around to take notes of what page the pupils were on in their book. In this way, it was possible to keep track of who did their weekly reading for 30 minutes at home and who might skip it. Another aspect that Atwell (1998) mentions is that teachers can discover abnormality in reading speed among their pupils, which might prove to be previously undiscovered reading difficulties or dyslexia.

The pupils had folders with one separator for reading and one for writing. Here they kept sheets with rules and expectations from their teacher for the workshops, as well as records of all the titles they had read and the date when they had either finished or abandoned them. The pupils were told through mini-lectures that they were allowed to abandon, skim or even skip parts of a book.

The classroom was decorated with encouraging citations about reading and writing found both on the Internet and in the appendix of Atwell (1998). There was also a shelf with the words 'Books We Love' over it. Some pupils used this as a display to encourage others to try a good book they had read, while most pupils simply put their title back in the classroom library after they had finished it.

Almost every two weeks in the autumn semester, the pupils handed in a reading journal on the digital learning platform. The reading journals were used more sparingly in the spring semester in order to create more variation. In this journal, they wrote a certain number of words about the book they had been reading lately. It could include what they thought about the way the book was written, the characters, and how exciting they thought the story was. For some pupils, it was enough to summarize what they had read so far. The teacher would answer each pupil's reading journal briefly with follow-up questions about their reading experience. This procedure proved to be a good way to assess the pupils' reading. It opened up for a dialogue revolving on whether or not pupils were struggling to understand the book they had chosen or whether they had developed a strategy when encountering unfamiliar words; what techniques they noticed that the author had used; what types of genres they seemed to prefer, and so on.

5.4.2 Writing workshops

In the autumn semester, the two separate lessons a week of 45 minutes were dedicated to writing workshops. As these two lessons merged to become one unit after New Year, the full 90 minutes were still dedicated to writing workshop.

As already described above, the introduction to the writing workshop was no different from the reading workshops. The teacher tried to make a clear distinction between the two, either by saying whether this was a reading or writing workshop in the beginning of the lesson, or by writing on the board which of the two today's lesson would be. It was also specified on the pupils' weekly schedule. The kind of workshop of each weekday (i.e. reading or writing) remained the same every week with the intention that pupils would be better prepared for what would happen when they entered the English lesson of the day. Typical topics for the mini-lectures in the writing workshops were how to develop an idea, how to find a title, what is characteristic of free verse poetry, and how to use the feedback given by the teacher in their writing.

All of the pupils at the lower secondary level in this school had a laptop computer at their disposal provided by the school, which they were free to bring back home. The computer turned out to be a handy tool in the composing, handing-in and receiving feedback on their texts given by the teacher. It is also more likely that pupils will benefit from training in writing on a computer as opposed to writing by hand in their working life. The last half of the lesson was dedicated to individual writing. Pupils would work on a text of their own choice, both in topic and genre, but were required to produce different kinds of texts over time in order to try different techniques with their writing.

Pupils were taught how authors developed an idea, techniques when describing a setting, writing as a process, but also how some writers deviate from different stages of the process and find their own way that works for them, and how this is perfectly allowed. In this way, all of the pupils were writing on their individual texts in many different genres all the time. They would eventually have to try out different genres, since one of the requirements was to hand in three different kinds of texts at the end of each semester. Other than this, pupils were free to spend the majority of their time on their own choice of genre. The pupils were also encouraged to read each other's texts and give feedback on specific points that the writer requested in advance.

5.4.3 New vocabulary

The pupils were not given a set of new words by the teacher to study as they might in a typical Norwegian EFL classroom. There was, however, a vocabulary test almost weekly. Each individual pupil had a personal spelling list. In this list, they were told to add each unfamiliar word they came across in their reading, or words that they either had to look up the spelling of or had misspelled in their drafts handed in to the teacher during their writing. In this way, each pupil had a set of individual new words that would be relevant to him or her. The pupils chose five words each week that they had to learn the meaning of and the correct spelling of for the vocabulary test. The pupils then performed their own corrections, and gave themselves a star if the word was spelled correctly, or attempted it again if it was not.

Challenges soon occurred with this method of learning new vocabulary, which places a significant responsibility on each learner. Although the group as a whole became more and more used to leaving their reading or writing in order to note down new words on their spelling list, some pupils noted down few or hardly any new words, and would choose already-known vocabulary for the weekly vocabulary test. Others would repeat words from previous weeks instead of finding new ones. This approach to teaching new vocabulary should therefore be more closely monitored by the teacher in order to succeed.

5.4.4 Oral training in the workshops

Oral language is another category of competence aims in the English Subject Curriculum after grade 10. Pupils receive one formal oral grade in English in addition to a written one. To improve oral language, new vocabulary can be developed through input, which literature offers in the workshop method (see section 4.4.3) in addition to all of the English language input children and young adults are exposed to daily in Norway through music, movies, TV, Internet and games.

Written and oral language are therefore closely connected. Still, practice is crucial for developing and improving fluent English speech. The main focus, and perhaps too much of it, was given to the reading and writing of English in this class, while pupils were encouraged to communicate in English instead of Norwegian. This option was not available to all the pupils, however, as might be the case in many classes composed of pupils representing the whole range of levels. Information was therefore often given in both languages to make sure it was

understood by everyone, which in turn affected the overall norm in the class of attempting to communicate in English whenever possible.

In the autumn semester, the question of oral training in the workshops was reviewed. The question was whether the time spent on oral training should not be prioritized more, and after this, one oral part was always integrated into each lesson, either at the beginning or at the end of the class. This part could include a game, a task, discussion questions, or a film clip that the class was asked to give their opinion on, or summarize afterwards.

Each semester had one bigger oral project. In the autumn semester, the pupils were asked to give an oral presentation about one of their own texts, or a book or an author they liked. In the spring, the pupils were paired to prepare a presentation based on the documentary 'Bully'.

5.4.5 Assessment

Traditionally, pupils receive formal grades throughout a semester for various tasks or regularly handed in assignments, which then leads up to one final semester grade. In this English class, pupils did not receive any formal grades until the end of the semester. They only received oral feedback on their work and were given the opportunity to revise their work based on the advice given by the teacher.

Only at the end of each of the two semesters were any formal grades given to the pupils. The pupils were told in detail how the semester grade in written English would be evaluated. The pupils' record keeping, their reading journals, a semester term paper and three optional texts were the basis of their grade in January and then again in June. One of the requirements for the pupils' written texts was that they had to be in three different genres. The pupils regularly handed in drafts of their writing to the teacher. The teacher then gave the pupils specific feedback in two or three bullet points. The feedback was individual for each pupil, and was based on, for instance, common errors in grammar or spelling, or it could be based on form or content. This feedback was noted down on a personal checklist which the pupils kept in their folders, so that they could have a tool to eliminate their common mistakes in future writing. For the semester test, which is a full day of English writing, both the checklist and notebook were allowed aids.

The reading journals allowed the teacher to pay close attention to each pupil's progression, and to find out what they were interested in to recommend new books or ask them to pay close attention to certain things in what they were reading.

As described above, one of the most positive discoveries for the researcher about the reading and writing workshops, and the way they were organized in terms of assessment, was how it facilitated getting to know each individual pupil as a reader, writer, and learner of English, and to adapt teaching to each individual pupil. As a result, all the pupils were constantly working with relevant tasks, and on their level to help them advance to the next step.

5.5 Research methods

Section 5.2 described in detail why both the approach of a case study and evaluation study would be favourable to achieve the aims of the study. It also described how evaluation studies often adopt the research methods of the case study. According to Borg and Gall (1989: 402), it is common for a case study to use a variety of qualitative data-collection methods, as has consequently been the case for this study. Both the size of the sample of subjects and the nature of the research determined that qualitative methods were most appropriate.

First, the nature of the case study is that one is dealing with a complex phenomenon where the aim is to gather as broad, and at the same time in-depth information, as possible. In the case of this study, the implementation of an alternative teaching method, without a hypothesis, means that the researcher does not know what to expect, and therefore sets out to register as much as he can about how the method works. As Dörnyei (2007: 126) points out, the goal with the data collection is to provide as varied and rich insight into the phenomenon one is investigating as possible, in order to maximize the new impulses that can be gained from the study.

Secondly, the study has not limited what can be potential data, and qualitative methods are more suitable when entering such research where anything can be of potential empirical importance.

5.5.1 Semi-structured interviews and questionnaires

Interviews can be said to be a common routine for communication. Dörnyei (2007: 134) suggests that might be the reason why interviews are the most commonly used method in qualitative

inquires, although there exists a wide range of qualitative data-collection methods. Throughout the school year, three separate interviews were conducted with the pupils and they also answered three questionnaires. All the interviews and questionnaires were in Norwegian to reduce the risk of the pupils misunderstanding the questions. On some occasions a pupil would ask about the meaning of a question, but there can be no certainty that all of the pupils asked for clarification every time they were uncertain about a question. It was therefore attempted to make the questions simple and unambiguous.

All of the interviews were what one might call semi-structured (Dörnyei, 2007). This means that the researcher developed an interview guide to make sure that all the subjects were asked the same questions, but that the interview was flexible enough to allow for the elaboration of new information that might occur during the interview. The pupils were asked the same broad questions, and while there might be some questions that some pupils found difficult to answer, or more or less skipped or only answered briefly, there were some topics that the pupils could elaborate on. Some pupils might bring new aspects into the interview, which the researcher could then follow up with improvised questions. Dörnyei (2007: 136) therefore uses the word ‘exploratory’ to describe the semi-structured interview.

The pupils were always interviewed individually both because it was preferable since the questions were based on their personal experiences and opinions, and they should therefore be kept away from their peers’ influence. Moreover, it was practically possible to carry out individual interviews with such a small sample of subjects.

The first two interviews were based on a prepared set of questions. Both sets of questions were based on questionnaires developed by Atwell (1998: 494-495). One interview had a set of questions about reading, while the other interview was based on a set of questions about writing. The interviews took place at the beginning of the school year with the maximum of a few weeks interval. The extra teacher was responsible for the class while the researcher interviewed one pupil at a time in a smaller group room next to the classroom. The first two interviews lasted between 5-15 minutes, depending on how much each pupil elaborated their answers. These two interviews aimed to map the pupils’ previous experience with reading and writing before the experiment started. Questions asked in the interview concerning reading were for example (see Appendix 3):

How many books would you say you have read in the last year?

How often do you read at home?
In general, how do you feel about reading?

Similarly, questions asked in the interview concerning writing included (see Appendix 4):

Why do people write?
What kinds of response help you most as a writer?
In general, how do you feel about what you write?

The third interview was conducted at the end of the autumn semester in the middle of January⁹. This interview was based on two questionnaires that were filled out on paper and handed in by the pupils prior to the interview. The two questionnaires were filled out at the same time. The interview that followed then revolved around the pupils' answers to the questions in the questionnaire. One of the questionnaires was about the pupils' writing during the semester. Examples of the ten questions in this questionnaire are (see Appendix 5):

How did you come up with the ideas for what to write about?
What new things did you try as a writer?
If you could, what would you have done differently in the past semester?]

The other questionnaire was about the pupils' reading during the semester. Examples of the nine questions in this questionnaire are (see Appendix 6):

How many books did you finish reading?
What have you learned about yourself as a reader?
What is your goal for the next semester?

The purpose of this follow-up interview was to evaluate the pupils' development in English reading and writing, and for the pupil, in cooperation with the teacher, to come up with new goals to work towards for his/her English reading and writing for the next semester. This created a more bidirectional discourse than the two interviews early in the autumn, and will therefore be referred to as the 'mid-year' pupil conference in subsequent parts of the thesis.

The goals midway through the year could be anything from focusing more on spelling, reading more at home, writing longer texts, and trying out different genres. In consultation with

⁹ In the research school, the autumn semester ended in the middle of January, and not in December which is more common in Norwegian schools.

the teacher, all of the pupils managed to set a new goal that they would work towards, and most of the pupils seemed to have enough self-insight to quickly see just what they should put more work into. The teacher, for her part, explained the basis of the pupil's formal semester grade, and gave suggestions on how the pupil could improve in the following semester.

The third and final questionnaire was a final evaluation on paper given to the pupils towards the end of the spring semester in June. A follow-up interview was not carried out for two reasons. First, the researcher believed the pupils had become more accustomed to answering these types of questionnaires. Second, and most importantly, the researcher did not want to give the pupils the feeling that they were being confronted if their answers in the evaluation of the workshop-based EFL teaching were negative. The questions were based on their achievements during the semester, and their general opinions about the workshop method that had replaced their normal English lessons that year. Questions asked included (see Appendix 7):

Have you enjoyed the English lessons this year?

Do you believe that your English has improved? What/How so?

If you could, what would you have done differently during the English lessons this year?]

In addition to the interviews and questionnaires, data was also collected from the researcher's observations, and from sample writing from the pupils.

5.5.2 Unstructured participant observations

Other research data that was collected were the observations by the researcher, which were written down. The type of observation can more specifically be coined by the terms that Dörnyei (2007: 179) calls 'unstructured participant observation'. Unstructured observation refers to a non-specific focus. The researcher has not prepared specific observation schemes of what he/she is looking for, but rather enters the classroom to make observations and record field notes to decide later which part of the observations will turn out to be significant for the research.

Because of the pupils' individual work in the last part of each reading and writing workshop, the researcher had sufficient time to take notes from classroom observations after the pupils had settled with their work.

Participant observation refers to the observer as a full member of the group, and as a participant of the activities. This is not a common form of classroom observation, according to

Dörnyei (2007: 179). One can suspect that the reason for this is due to the setting of the classroom. There are not many scenarios, apart from on a higher education level, where one can imagine the researcher as a natural part of the group in the role of a pupil/student. The remaining natural part of the setting then would be the teacher. In this study, the researcher and teacher were the same person. Therefore, given that the requirement that participant observation is participation in the setting, this study can be said to meet those requirements, since the teacher was a natural part of the classroom setting.

5.5.3 Sample texts

Finally, samples of the pupils' writing were collected throughout the year as research data that could monitor the development of their writing and language development. The pupils' reading journals, drafts of texts of pupils' own choice, and the full-day semester test¹⁰ from both the autumn and spring semester were collected. The pupils submitted a portfolio of three texts at the end of each semester. One sample text by each pupil from the first and the last portfolio will be compared and evaluated in a holistic way in the results chapter.

A holistic evaluation of the texts will include looking at features such as the content, and also how the pupils' expressed themselves in their writing. In addition, formal correctness, complexity of syntax, and the use of form and structure according to genre will be considered.

The comparison of texts will try to provide an impression of the development in the pupils' English writing competence from the end of the first semester to the end of the second semester. The individual feedback given to each pupil will be summarized to reveal if the development was in any way related to what feedback the pupils were given. Other examples from the pupils' writing will also be included in some cases to give an impression of what genres and content the pupils' writing involved.

5.6 Validity and reliability of the research

Both prior to, during and after the research period, the question of validity and reliability arises in the choice of methods. It is crucial that the researcher is preoccupied with these questions. If the researcher has obtained data through methods which cannot provide valid and reliable

¹⁰ Full day semester tests are common in English, Norwegian and Mathematics, and sometimes even other subjects in Norwegian secondary schools at the end of both the autumn and spring semesters.

interpretations of the data, then little credibility can be lent to the final conclusions and results of the research.

Validity is defined by Ary et. al. (2010: 141) as the extent to which data from a method enable one to draw meaningful and coherent interpretations. Validity therefore deals with the connection between the theory and the data provided through the research, and the interpretations drawn from it. Most importantly about the collected data is that they can provide as appropriate an interpretation and conclusion as possible. There has to be sufficient data to support the conclusions. Does the research achieve the aims it set out to? Did the methods chosen for the research answer the research questions, or did they, in fact, turn out to answer something completely different? In the case of the current research, several methods were used to collect data. This then strengthens the validity of the research.

Reliability is defined as the extent to which the scores on a certain measurement are indeed consistent in measuring what it was alleged to measure (Ary et. al, 2010: 141).

There were particularly three different areas which the researcher had consider with a critical view. These three areas were firstly the double role of the teacher/researcher in the study, the validity of interviews in general and more specifically the execution of the interviews with the pupils in the study and, finally, the general validity and reliability of a case study. These three areas will be further addressed.

5.6.1 The role of the researcher

The teacher and the researcher in the class were the same person. Dörnyei (2007: 194) refers to the benefits from a close cooperation between researcher and teacher. The job of a teacher is after all to be a natural and continuous observer and evaluator of everything that goes on in a classroom. A full time teaching job can take up time, which meant in this case that the data-collecting process had to be manageable without being too time-consuming. At the same time, the teacher had to collect material in order to document the pupils' work and progress and in order to give a formal grade at the end of each semester. In this way, the same material collected by the teacher to meet normal documentation requirements was used by the researcher in her role as researcher in the study.

Moreover, the researcher believed in the workshop method, and so there was a risk of the researcher entering the study wearing so-called 'blinders', and in fact looking for the results that

the researcher wanted. Borg and Gall (1989: 408) also refer to the danger of researchers allowing expectations or preconceptions to affect their observation research. The researcher in the current study was aware of this before the research period started, and therefore took care to write down both positive and negative incidents in the classroom as they were observed in order to be as objective as possible. One also needs to consider the ‘Hawthorne’ effect (Elley and Mangubhai, 1983: 65). This is the effect of the teacher’s expectations, in this case high expectations, which could in turn have a positive effect on the pupils and give an amplified positive outcome. A class and teacher that implements a certain experimental project can be motivated and enthusiastic enough to increase learning regardless of the method. In a sense, one can compare this to the placebo effect in medicine, where belief in the medication, in this case the method, is enough to achieve the wanted results.

With respect to this study, the risk of the Hawthorne effect could be said to have been greater had the research period been shorter than it was. Also Elley and Mangubhai (1983: 65) comment that, according to their experience, the effect of novelty ‘wears off in a matter of days or weeks.’ Since the study was longitudinal, it is not very likely that the class would have managed to maintain a motivation during the whole year based solely on the fact that the method was something new and different.

5.6.2 Validity and reliability of the interviews

According to Dörnyei (2007: 139), it is recommended that interviews are recorded with both audio and image. This was, however, not done when conducting the interviews in the current study. Instead, notes were taken during all of the interviews based on the pupils’ answers. This can in the worst case have led to potentially valuable information being left out from the data collected from the interviews. However, it never proved to be difficult to take notes during the interviews, and therefore it is not likely that information was lost.

Other potential weaknesses about interviews as a research method concerned how the pupils might respond to the interview situation itself. Here, some might be shy and hold back information, while others might want to show themselves in a good light, and even answer what they think the teacher might want to hear. One example of the latter could have been pupils’ answer to the question: ‘In general, how do you feel about reading?’, where one may suspect that

most pupils would expect their teacher to be impressed if they answered that they quite enjoyed reading, as opposed to not liking it.

The recorded answers to the question, however, show that pupils were quite honest in answering this question, and so there is reason to believe that the pupils were also honest when answering the other questions. Secondly, it is no unfamiliar situation for pupils to be questioned by their teacher, since pupil-teacher conferences is a regular routine in Norwegian schools. It was only during the first two interviews that the teacher was a relatively new and unfamiliar person to the pupils. When the remaining interviews and questionnaires were conducted, the teacher had established a close relation to the pupils, since the teacher, in addition to being the English teacher, was also the primary contact teacher for the class. This strengthens the reliability of the pupils' answers, since there is reason to believe that pupils may be more shy and withdrawn with an unfamiliar researcher from outside the institution.

5.6.3 Validity and reliability of case studies

The research sample was a small one in terms of validity since it was based on only seven subjects. On the other hand, the validity of the research is strengthened by the rather longer duration than what is normal for a Master's thesis. One full school year enabled more reliable data on the development of the workshop method than if it had been implemented in a similar or perhaps even larger sample of subjects over a few weeks.

It is uncertain whether the pupils had a learning outcome that would actually outdo other EFL teaching methods, since there was no control group. It is, however, safe to say that the study provided impressions of both strengths and challenges of the method, which will be presented and discussed later in the thesis. More research is needed in order to answer questions such as whether EFL teaching in Norwegian classrooms should be organized in a different way, whether the reading and writing workshop method may be an efficient alternative to other methods, whether pupils generally learn more using the workshop method than through other methods, and whether pupils will be more motivated and positive to the English subject using the workshop method.

5.7 Ethics tied to the research

In any study which performs research on persons, and perhaps especially where children and teens participate, there will be ethical questions tied to the research. Initially, there was the ethical question of whether or not it would be responsible to devote a class's entire school year to the research, since it was an alternative method of which the teacher could not foresee the outcome and results. In the *LK06* English subject curriculum, however, reading and writing are central for the majority of the competence aims after grade 10. In other words, the content of the workshop method can be legitimized by the English subject curriculum. In addition, the teacher was keen to try out the method, and would likely have conducted a similar method regardless of the study. The main difference would then have been that more thematic content would have had to be included throughout the year in order to cover the curriculum competence aims regarding Culture, society and literature. However, some knowledge of culture and society was also achieved through reading authentic English teen literature.

Another question of ethics was related to the pupils' knowledge about the ongoing research and their own involvement. It is known that subjects can change behaviour if they know that they are under observation, as was the case in this particular study. The researcher never considered performing the research without letting the pupils know about it. Since the research data is about the English education of these pupils, it would have been highly unethical not to inform them. Both pupils and their parents were therefore asked to give their written approval of the participation.

Parents were informed of the content of the English lessons the forthcoming year, and how it would deviate from normal instruction. Information was also provided in writing after the approvals were collected, and pupils were informed orally about the method in class. Because of the length in the study, it is unlikely that pupils changed their behaviour because of the observations. This might be a risk during observations that last for a short period of time, but already as the research period stretches over several days, pupils are likely to disregard that they are being observed and thus behave as they normally would do.

Ensuring the pupils' anonymity was an important element for the researcher. Teachers generally have high requirements for securing any sensitive pupil information, such as scores or observations, and the school had strict routines for usage of the individual teacher laptop

computers. They always had to be locked if unattended, and were always behind locked office doors over night, although the researcher brought her computer home almost every day. Papers from pupil interviews or questionnaires were organized in a folder that was kept in the office at all times. The current research has been approved by The Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD) (see Appendix 1), which is the Data Protection Official for Research for all Norwegian universities.

5.8 Summary

This chapter has explained how the current study was both a case study and an evaluation study. The research was performed in the English lessons of an 8th grade class of nine pupils, where seven were the research subjects. The regular teaching was replaced by reading and writing workshops based on Atwell (1998). During the workshops, pupils spent most of their time reading books and writing texts based on their own choices. They also participated in regular oral activities, procedures for learning new vocabulary, and were taught on different topics related to reading and writing through mini-lectures.

The research methods for collecting data were unstructured participant observation, pupils' reading journals, sample pupil texts, and also three semi-structured interviews and three questionnaires. In terms of validity and reliability, the small sample of subjects prevents the generalisability of the results. On the other hand, the duration of the study, in addition to the application of several research methods, strengthens its validity and reliability. The pupils, parents and school were informed about the research and gave their consent to participate in the study, and several measures were taken to ensure the pupils' anonymity. The Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD) has approved the research project (see Appendix 1).

5.9 Presentation of the data

The data from the research will be presented in the form of a chronological narrative during the school year. This approach to presenting the research results has been chosen to give an impression of how the school year developed through the workshop-based EFL teaching. The results chapter will therefore be divided into sections presenting the autumn and the spring semester.

The section with the results from the autumn semester will begin by presenting the two semi-structured interviews from the beginning of the school year, then the researcher's classroom observations, and finally the pupils' reading journals. The consecutive section with the results from the spring semester will first present the mid-year pupil conferences, followed by the classroom observations, the pupils' reading journals from the spring, and finally the pupils' final evaluation of the year with the workshop-based EFL teaching. The final section presenting results from the research period will compare pupil texts from the first and the second semester.

6.0 Results

6.1 Introduction

The aim of the thesis was to follow the development of seven 8th grade pupils' English writing competence throughout a year of reading and writing workshop-based teaching. It was also to find out how the workshop method affected the pupils' motivation and attitudes towards reading and writing in English, and towards English as a subject in general. The class' regular EFL teaching was replaced by the reading and writing workshop-based method for a full school year.

It is the researcher's view that an impression of how the school year developed with the workshop method is best presented as a kind of narrative from the beginning of the workshop implementation in August to the end of the school year in June. The results from the pupil interviews, participant observations, reading journals, questionnaires and sample texts will therefore be presented chronologically. Not all classroom observations will be reported. The researcher has selected the lessons that she felt provided the most useful data to report. The lessons were selected with the intention to provide a general impression of both challenges and achievements during the year of the workshop method.

Section 6.2 presents the results from the autumn semester and section 6.3 from the spring semester. It is important to note that the autumn semester in this school ended in mid-January. The results from each semester are categorized according to the type of data being presented, e.g. the pupil interviews and the classroom observations. The pupils' development in writing over the year will be presented in section 6.4, where samples of the pupils' first and final portfolio submissions will be compared. Finally, a summary of the current chapter will be provided in section 6.5.

6.2 The autumn semester

6.2.1 The first two pupil interviews

During the first few weeks of the autumn semester, two initial interviews were conducted with the pupils. The interviews were individual and based on prepared question guides. One question guide concerned reading (see Appendix 3) and the other concerned writing (see Appendix 4). The pupils were interviewed on two separate occasions. This was in order to keep the interviews

short and focused solely on either reading or writing. The interviews were conducted in Norwegian and each interview took approximately 5-15 minutes. The aim of the interviews was to map the pupils' previous experiences and attitudes towards reading and writing before the workshop implementation started.

The pupil interview about reading

The interview about reading started by asking the pupils about how many books they guessed they owned, how many books they believed there were in their home, and how many books they would say they had read in the last twelve months. The pupils on average believed they owned around 20-30 books, apart from Nora who said she believed she owned 500 books, and Fredrik at the lower end of the scale, who believed he owned seven or eight books. All of the pupils believed there was a range of 50-80 books in their homes, apart from Nora again, who believed there were about a thousand books in her home.

Most of the pupils believed they had read from six to eight books in the past twelve months, apart from Maria who answered ten. Maria, however, added that she hardly ever finished a book, but only started new ones. All of the pupils believed they had learned how to read in school, apart from Ben who said his grandmother had taught him when he was four or five years old. Fredrik also added that his parents had helped him to read in addition to being taught in school.

The pupils were asked to list as many reasons as they could come up with to answer why people read. 'Because they want to', was the most common answer, and also 'To find out what the text means'. Maria said that 'Some like to read, and it makes them smarter'. Nora added that if nobody knew how to read, we would only be able to communicate orally. The pupils believed that knowing the meaning and pronunciation of words were the things one had to know in order to be a good reader. Maria and Ben added that one had to like the book one read, or to know what types of books one might enjoy.

The last part of the interview revolved around the pupils' personal reading preferences and experiences. The pupils named the kinds of books they liked to read and the names of their favourite authors, if they had any. Only Fredrik (Roald Dahl) and Ben (Bjørn Sortland) mentioned one author. Most of the boys either did not know how they decided on which books to read or, like Ben, simply started to read to see if the book was interesting. The girls, on the other hand, either noticed the book's cover or read the blurb at the back of the book.

Surprisingly, all of the pupils had reread a book at some point, and had different reasons to do so. Nora had reread a book to try to understand the story better. Ben reread comics and considered them equally entertaining the second time. Fredrik reread factual books about his interests. Maria mentioned her favourite book when she was younger, which she had reread several times. It was about a girl who went to the hospital, and Maria said it helped her through her own hospitalization as a little girl.

Most of the pupils answered that they read almost every day, while Maria answered that she read 'When I have to'. The last question asked the pupils how they felt about reading in general. Maria was the only one who answered that she thought reading was boring. Nora answered that she enjoyed it because it made her forget about other things, while the others answered that it could be fun if what they read was interesting.

The pupil interview about writing

The interview about writing started by asking whether the pupils considered themselves writers, which none of the seven pupils did. Most of the pupils answered that people learn how to write by being taught by teachers in school, or by practising, while Ben added: 'By learning the alphabet and then putting the letters together'.

The pupils were asked to list as many reasons as they could come up with to answer why people write. Fredrik, Nora and Olivia pointed to the communicative aspect of being able to write. Maria added that it was useful in many ways and that 'You need to be able to write in order to have a job'. Ben and Tomas, on the other hand, answered that some people wrote because they enjoyed it. Ben, however, added: 'In some places people have to write. For instance here, in school, we have to'.

When asked what one needs to do or know in order to write well, some pupils focused on knowing words, verbs and grammar, while Olivia answered, 'It takes practice to become good at writing'. Fredrik also answered about becoming a good writer: 'One would need patience'. Ben focused on the fact that in order to write well, one must have a good imagination and a desire to inspire others. Ulrik said that a good writer must be inspired himself, and 'Find their own style of writing'.

The last part of the interview revolved around the pupils' personal writing preferences and experiences. When asked what kind of writing they liked to do, all three girls either did not

know or did not have any particular preferences. The boys mentioned writing about facts, fantasy and humour, while Ulrik answered that he always preferred to write on a computer. Most of the pupils said the ideas for their writing came from their own heads. Ulrik added that his ideas came from the things he was interested in, and Maria answered, 'From movies and books'.

The pupils were also asked what kind of feedback could help them the most as writers. Ulrik answered that he preferred to have his feedback from a teacher, while Maria preferred feedback from other pupils. The pupils expected response on both spelling and content. Several also mentioned that the feedback should focus on positive things that they had accomplished as writers.

When asked how often they wrote at home, some mentioned texting to friends on their cell phones, doing homework, or writing while playing computer games. Ben and Tom said that they rarely did any writing at home.

Finally, the pupils were asked how they generally felt about their writing. This was one of the most interesting questions for the researcher in terms of mapping how confident the pupils were in writing in general. Tom was satisfied with his own writing, but said that he did not know if it was any good. Maria and Ben answered that they were sometimes satisfied, but that their writing was not always good. Maria was often happy with the endings in her writing. Ulrik answered that he would like to write better. Olivia was often content with her writing. Fredrik and Nora pointed out straight away different challenges they faced in writing, such as spelling and capital letters. Nora, however, added that she was often happy with the content of her writing.

6.2.2 The autumn classroom observations

The school year started in the middle of August. The first few weeks in the English lessons were spent explaining and incorporating reading and writing procedures, such as getting to know the use of the notebooks, the different folders, how to write reading journals, and so on. The materials for writing were provided on a shelf in the classroom, a classroom library of over 150 titles was provided, a shelf with the heading 'Books We Love' was hung in front of the classroom, and inspirational quotes concerning reading and writing were hung on the walls.

The pupils had just started 8th grade and were motivated and eager to have moved up to lower secondary. They were excited by the idea of following a different English course and

welcomed the idea of not using a textbook, which they had been used to from previous years. The teacher spent several mini-lectures in August and September explaining the importance of reading in English and motivating the pupils to read. The class discussed together why and how reading matters to people both in their personal and professional lives. Mini-lectures were also spent teaching genres and why genres matter to the pupils as a tool to communicate efficiently with their readers.

In the writing workshops, the class brainstormed how to come up with ideas to write about. The pupils were told that they would be writing texts based on their own choice of genre and topics and that they were encouraged to gradually try to write different kinds of texts. The pupils seemed motivated from the start and everyone started out with a clear project in mind for their writing. The teacher quickly realised that patience was required in the settling of routines in this different way of working in English lessons. Procedures, rules and purposes were therefore explained repeatedly by the teacher over the first few weeks.

The teacher read aloud to the pupils in the workshops from examples of genres, e.g. from a novel or different poems. In early September, the class was taught about rhyming poems and free verse poems and how choice of words was important in causing an effect in poems. The class seemed surprised that a poem could be free verse. Ben in this lesson commented that he disliked rhyming poems. Other topics of mini-lectures in the earliest writing workshops were coming up with good titles, writing as a process, and drafting in particular. In a writing workshop in the middle of September, the teacher drafted a story based on the ideas from the class, for which Ben wanted to create an ending and title.

After the semester start, where everything seemed new and exciting, some pupils then had a setback in terms of motivation. Olivia was one of these pupils. Olivia had dyslexia, and was one of the lower proficiency-level pupils in the class due to her struggle with syntax, in addition to grammar and spelling.

Olivia was struggled get started on her writing in the beginning of the year. The teacher therefore prepared some writing tasks for her to get her started. The tasks were based on factual topics that she had said she was interested in. Olivia agreed to try these tasks, but clearly did not enjoy them. She finally asked permission to attempt something of her own choice instead, which the teacher encouraged her to do. Olivia started by writing down a short romantic passage she had heard spoken in a movie, which the teacher later put up on the wall over Olivia's desk.

Olivia carried on composing a few romantic poems by the end of September, a topic that kept appearing in all of her composing throughout the year.

In her reading, Olivia started out by selecting short graded readers. She seemed to enjoy the fact that she could finish these books rather quickly. The teacher, however, soon realized that the content was too childish for her, which Olivia agreed with since she normally enjoyed romantic and supernatural young adult novels in her L1. In a reading workshop, Olivia browsed through the classroom library and came across *Fallen* by Lauren Kate. This was the first book of 480 pages in a series of four books. She told the teacher that she had read *Fallen* in Norwegian, and that this might make following the story easier, even though it was a long authentic novel. The teacher encouraged her goal but told her not to feel disappointed if the language turned out too difficult. They agreed that the teacher would provide her with the audio book as a reading support.

The pupils were encouraged to request new titles that the teacher would order for the classroom library. This caused excitement each time new titles arrived throughout the year.

In the reading workshops during the autumn, the class talked about their reading and reading habits together. They discussed how, where and when they read. Both the teacher and pupils performed small book talks with the entire group, during which they rated and recommended books. One pupil recommended a graded reader edition of *Robinson Crusoe* in a book talk in the middle of September. This led to several pupils writing it down on their list of books they wanted to read later on. The classroom book talks could lead to lively discussion of reading. In one lesson, Ben talked about a book he was reading in Norwegian that he could not put down until 1 a.m., after reading it for two hours, because it was so exciting.

Maria struggled to maintain her motivation for reading. She set out quite engaged in a book saying, 'This is a really good book', but then in the next class said she did not like reading and that it was impossible for her to find a book she liked. Ulrik, a few weeks into the autumn semester, figured out that he could transfer the genre he liked to read in Norwegian into English reading and requested the ordering of a new book. Tom quickly discovered *The Klaatu Diskos* series by Pete Hautman that he quickly became completely engulfed in, and ordered the second book of the series.

By the end of September, the pupils who had had a setback in motivation to write had regained it and everyone had a piece of written work they were working on. The teacher quickly

noticed how eager the pupils were to talk about and share their writing with each other. For instance, in a class in late September, Ulrik whispered to Tom, wanting to know what he was working on. Soon after, Ben told Ulrik to come over to read what he had written.

Some of the pupils seemed focused on the number of words they had produced. During one lesson, Ulrik exclaimed that he had already written over 300 words, 'And they haven't even gotten to the camp yet'. The teacher was under the impression that the pupils had become used to writing and reading in English and that they were more exposed to the language than what they had been used to. Maria commented in the following lesson on how it had become easier in her opinion to write in English than in Norwegian. Nora and Olivia agreed and added that they had started 'Thinking in English' when they were writing.

When it came to Fredrik's writing, he was working on alternative tasks at a lower proficiency level. Fredrik had an IEP in English. The two teachers had discussed that his vocabulary was too narrow for him to produce longer texts, and that he should do shorter topic-based tasks to build his vocabulary. The teacher made individual arrangements with Fredrik about handing in drafts and reading journals, which seemed to be overwhelming to him, as he worked at a much slower pace than the rest of the pupils. He therefore did not write all of the reading journals and some drafts, but had enough work simply to complete some of them. In reading, he struggled to concentrate, although the use of audio-books seemed to be a great help against outside distractions.

In the reading and writing workshops, the class continued to share their reading habits and discuss how readers chose which books to read. In October, the teacher told the pupils that sometimes readers skip parts of books that they do not find that interesting, and that it was always allowed to abandon a book if they did not enjoy it. All of the pupils had prepared presentations based on books or authors they had read or on texts they had written themselves. These would be presented throughout the autumn semester starting from October.

In the middle of the autumn semester, some pupils began to request time to write in the reading workshops, which they were allowed to do. In some lessons, half of the class would be reading and the other half writing. It was the teacher's impression that the pupils took responsibility for their time in English lessons and enjoyed working in the workshops, which allowed them to make choices and take more responsibility. Prior to a writing class early in

October, two pupils cheered when they realised it was English class, and Olivia, who was proud to have finished two long poems, exclaimed ‘Finally something fun’.

The teacher addressed different steps of process writing in mini-lectures in October, and focused on how pupils could polish up their language. The teacher in a following lesson used a model text to show how she edited her text by using four different points to check. The points dealt with capital letters, concord, the use of paragraphs, and looking up words that could be misspelled. This was the kind of feedback the teacher planned on giving pupils after reading their first drafts. Her hope was that they would be able to use these few concrete points and integrate them in their future writing. The pupils were told they would be given feedback in bullet points after the autumn break in the middle of October. When the pupils started their individual writing that lesson, Nora seemed demotivated: ‘My story is taking forever, but I don’t want to shorten anything down’. The teacher suggested that she could take a break from her story and start something new and possibly shorter, like a poem or a song, and that maybe the road ahead in her story would seem clear to her later on.

Another element of process writing the class was taught in a later lesson was using peer editing. Peer editing meant asking classmates for feedback when editing their texts. The girls seemed especially interested in using each other for peer editing. Olivia asked Nora in a lesson in early October to read her story, but first Nora had a peer conference with Maria. Maria read Nora’s story and marked her mistakes in switching back and forth between the past and present tense, saying ‘This reminds me of what we talked about in class yesterday, remember? Is it happening now or yesterday?’ After she had finished reading Nora’s story, Maria exclaimed: ‘This story is going to make me cry. Will we get to know what he is so afraid of?’ Nora seemed pleased, and answered: ‘I don’t know yet, I was thinking about it yesterday but I don’t know what it is myself yet’.

After the autumn break in the middle of October, the pupils received their feedback based on their first draft. They could decide for themselves whether they wished to finish the draft they had handed in, or start a new parallel text and put the previous one aside if they were tired of it. Ulrik decided to start something new. He said he was going to hand in ‘the best story ever’, which would earn him a good mark. Tom read his bullet points in the feedback given by the teacher and exclaimed, ‘I knew it!’ He continued writing on his story instead of editing his text according to the list of points in the feedback. He told the teacher that he would do that on the

bus, 'Because that is the easy work where you don't need to think so much'. Most of the other pupils used the list of points in their personal feedback to edit their text in that writing workshop. Olivia complained that she was stuck and had a conversation with the teacher about what she could do in the next lesson in order to move on. The next writing workshop therefore started with a brainstorming on how to move on when pupils had writer's block during their composing.

In some of the reading workshops in late October, the class discussed different ways to read different texts and how that sometimes called for an adjustment of their reading pace. The pupils were taught how to train their reading. They read faster and faster for one minute while following the lines without being able to register the meaning, and then went back to a pace where they were able to register the content of what they read.

In November, it was clear to the teacher that some focus needed to be spent regularly on motivating the pupils to start new texts when some of them had finished longer ones. Different ways to start a story were taught in the mini-lectures of the writing workshops to try to inspire the pupils. Several were struggling with coming up with ideas on what to write about. The teacher therefore brought a pamphlet of *101 writing prompts* to a writing workshop in the middle of November for pupils to search through for inspiration. This was helpful to a few pupils when they could not come up with ideas of their own, even after brainstorming together with the teacher. In one lesson, Nora pointed to a book called *The World's Greatest Short Stories* and said 'One day my story will be in that book'.

Towards December, the pupils were freer in terms of managing their individual time in the reading and writing workshops. Some chose to work on texts, some read books, and some worked on their oral presentation. For their presentation, most of the pupils chose to make a poster about their topic, which was put up on the classroom wall. Throughout the entire autumn, Tom had been quite engaged in the text he was writing. He had started to refer to his text as 'his book', since he said that that was what it would end up as when he was finished. In one of the lessons in late November, he refused to put away his text when the English lesson was over and it was time for lunch break. Instead, he continued his composing during the lunch break.

The pupils produced texts at a different pace. When it was time to hand in a second draft at the end of November, some pupils had finished their texts from the previous draft, while some said they 'got tired' of the text and put it aside unfinished to start on something new. Only Tom and Nora handed in the same text from the first draft as a second draft. They had both written

several pages since the previous draft was handed in. Tom commented in a class in late November that he would accidentally start to write in English when he was supposed to be writing something in Norwegian.

In the same lesson, Olivia said she was stuck and without further frustration simply said, 'I am not sure what is going to happen with the mother, so I need a break'. She started working on her oral presentation instead. Her second draft was an unfinished thus far five-page long story. It was about a girl who turned up with a memory loss after she had been missing for two months. The title of her story was *Lost*, which appeared to the teacher as a brilliant title. The teacher told her how impressed she was by the long story she had begun. Olivia then confided in the teacher that in the beginning of the year she had been quite intimidated by the idea of spending a considerable part of English lessons writing. Olivia and the teacher talked about how much she had actually written in English since then, although she had not foreseen it as possible in the beginning.

Nora had finished her story, which became almost eight pages long. In a reading workshop, Nora read her story aloud to the class, which created much enthusiasm. Her classmates became curious about the open ending and then started to speculate about what really happened. In the feedback on the draft submitted in November, the teacher told Nora to be proud of her story and to notice how well her ending worked when she presented her story in class. Fredrik handed in a factual text about tractors. He was generally interested in farming, animals and machines. Fredrik was at a low proficiency level in most school subjects and said he generally disliked schoolwork. He had, however, been working very engaged on this text.

The first lesson after the Christmas break started with an oral discussion in class about a short film clip that the pupils had watched in English. This was a task used several times when starting a lesson, both as a warm up exercise, but also as inspiration for writing. Later, all of the pupils turned to their individual work.

Ben said he had completed his text and the teacher asked him if he had gone through his checklist when editing, to which he answered that he was not sure. He leaned over to watch Tom's computer screen and started to correct Tom's spelling without Tom asking him to do so. Ben occasionally appeared to struggle in terms of making an effort compared to the other three boys in the study. In some of the workshops, Ben appeared quite focused, while in others he needed more guidance from the teacher to sustain his work. Both Ulrik and Fredrik were

especially dedicated to their texts in that particular lesson, while Maria said she had no idea what to write about, and seemed to have the same challenge as Ben. Nora and Olivia proved to have a good influence on each other, talking eagerly about their texts all the way through the break.

The end of the semester in this school was not until the middle of January. Therefore, in the following reading workshop two pupils gave their oral presentations, while some pupils made the last revisions on their texts before handing in their portfolio, and others read. Ben seemed interested in a series of graded Shakespeare books with colourful illustrations and commented that they looked interesting. He appeared easily affected by the appearance of the books. Olivia started the graded reader *Romeo and Juliet*. She revealed that she was quite motivated to read this lesson, saying that her goal was to read *The Game of Thrones* next year, which is a series currently consisting of five books of over 500 pages each.

Nora recently finished the graded reader of *The Turn of the Screw*, which she discussed with the teacher in another reading workshop in January. She wanted to know how the teacher thought that the boy in the story really died before starting on the graded reader *Oliver Twist*. Maria started *The Book Thief*, which the class had watched the movie of earlier in the autumn in a different subject.

Towards the end of the first semester, the pupils handed in three texts of their own choice in a portfolio that would create the foundation for their formal semester grade. The teacher used the portfolio and other notes to discuss the pupils' development in the English subject together with them in the beginning of the spring semester.

6.2.3 The autumn reading journals

The first reading journal

All of the pupils' writing, apart from their notebooks, was done on their personal school computer. In the beginning of September, the pupils handed in their first reading journal. At that point, all of the pupils, apart from Fredrik, had read either close to or more than 100 pages of English text. Some had read graphic novels or authentic English novels, while five of the pupils had read one or several graded readers. The reading journals formed the teacher's first impression of the pupils' writing. The following were the instructions given to the pupils when handing in their reading journal in the virtual learning platform:

Briefly, what are you reading about? What do you like? Is there anything you don't like? Is it easy to read? Did you get right into the story? What would you tell someone about your reading?

Most of the first reading journals were short, some even shorter than half a page, which was the length the pupils were asked to write. Some reading journals were simply summaries of what the pupils had read. Nora's text consisted of loose sentences in bullet points and lacked the structure of a whole text. Ben plagiarized most of his first reading journal and only put in a small part about how he enjoyed there being pictures on most of the pages, which made reading easier. He also wrote a comment that he did not like having to read for 30 minutes for homework every day.

Maria's writing in her reading journal appeared to be at a high proficiency level, with few formal mistakes. The following sentence was the introduction to Maria's first reading journal: *I read a short story about a man that was going to Varley Grange, but his friend told him not to because terrible things could happened.* Here, only the last verb was incorrect morphologically. The content in Maria's reading journal was also more in accordance with what she had been asked to write. Maria was a pupil who would turn out to do brilliantly in terms of correct language with few formal mistakes, but who would struggle with inspiration for content and sometimes the general motivation for reading and writing.

The second reading journal

Near the end of September, the pupils were asked to hand in their second reading journal. Ulrik's first entry had only been about 80 words long and it was the same length this time. He was reading *Harry Potter*. He had previously read it in Norwegian and claimed it was easy to read, although it took some time. The following excerpt shows that he enjoyed the reading: *I like the book because it is wizards and a very good story I like the character and I just like it all. It is nothing I do not like whit this book.*

Maria had also been reading *Harry Potter*. She borrowed her sister's English copy to read at school. Again, Maria's formal language was at a high proficiency level, but her entry was short, only 77 words. She was asked to try to lengthen her reading journal for next time. Maria commented on *Harry Potter* being her favourite books on several occasions later in class. In this journal, she wrote: *Since I have seen the movie I got really easy into the book.*

Nora had read a graded reader version of *Forrest Gump*, which she said she did not like because *It doesn't tell haw it al stared whit the girl.*

Ben wrote a reading journal on his own this time, of 168 words. He had read *Robinson Crusoe* after the recommendation of a classmate. Ben proved he had a wide vocabulary, while his main challenges were verb tenses and concord, in addition to punctuation:

Than he swimmied to an island. and build an house of wood he finds on the island. there is a lot of trrees and fruit there too. and he find some goats and hens and make a farm where he have the animals, he have milk from the goats and eggs from the hens, and meat.

Tom continued to write his reading journal as a summary of the plot. He was therefore encouraged by the teacher in her feedback to also write about what he liked in his book, and why.

The pupil with dyslexia, Olivia, was the pupil who seemed to reflect the most on her reading experience this time. The following is from Olivia's second reading journal: *I am in love with Patch. In my mind hi is so perfect. When I am riding it I live in said the book as Nora.* Olivia tended to use Word to correct her spelling, but it resulted in a word with a different meaning, such as the case of *riding* from the above example, where she really meant *reading*. She was advised to use digital tools to help her identify her misspellings. One of the software programs could read her text aloud to her. This would, on the other hand, require that she was able to identify the correct pronunciation of the word she needed.

The third reading journal

Before the autumn break, the pupils handed in their third reading journal. Ulrik was still handing in short reading journals, this time of 66 words and missing full stops after sentences. This suggested to the teacher that he spent little time completing his reading journals. Instead of summarising the plot, however, he answered the question about what he liked about the book he read.

Nora had enjoyed reading *What My Girlfriend Doesn't Know*, which was about teen issues like love and bullying. However, she wrote that it took a few pages before she got into the story or, as she put it in her reading journal, *You don't understand in the beginning but in 2-5 pages you will understand.* It was assumed she was referring to the story, since she also commented that it was easy to read, but boring in the beginning.

Ben had been reading one of the *Goosebumps* series, and said he liked it even though there were no pictures in the book. He also left a cliff-hanger in his reading journal, the way readers do to awaken interest for a recommended book:

Last time he got very mad. When theyr mom have to go to the airport their dad have to drive her. She have 2 friends with her too. Casey really wanna see what it is in the basement. But her friends is sceptick about it. But they join her anyway. And there is something down there. You gonna find it out when you read it.

Olivia's reading journal kept getting longer. Early in October, she handed in an entry of 293 words. Olivia had some syntax errors, which appeared to be influenced by Norwegian, for example, 'An angle is they that is in the haven and are they as are breaking the people in the world'. The most apparent mistake here is the wrong use of *that* and *as* influenced by the Norwegian relative pronoun *som*, where Olivia should have used *who*. At the time, she was at the end of *Finale*, commenting that she was upset that this was the last book of the series. She talked about her book frequently with her classmates and the teacher in class.

The teacher was happy to see that Tom had finally included some reflections around his reading, as he was asked to do after the previous reading journal, in addition to merely summing up the plot. The following is an excerpt from his third reading journal: *I think this book is weary good. I often use a loot of time reading because I have to read it over again because I don't relly understands watt is happening.* Tom seemed to be quite engaged with the series he was reading. Yet, the above remark might suggest that the level of the book's difficulty was a little above his proficiency level.

The fourth reading journal

The fourth reading journal was handed in near the end of October. All of the pupils who handed in an entry, besides Ben and Olivia, were given feedback saying their entries were too short and needed to be longer the next time. Ben had chosen a new *Goosebumps*, which was only a little scary in his opinion.

Olivia had finished reading *Finale*. She summed up how the plot ended and repeated how much she loved the book. Olivia had been offered the chance to write shorter than what was expected of the others because of her dyslexia, which made writing quite time-consuming for her. Nevertheless, she was the pupil who wrote the longest reading journal entries.

Nora had picked up another book from Sonya Sones after finishing *What My Girlfriend Doesn't Know*. She appeared to enjoy it and said it was easy to read. The story revolved around a young girl who had to move to her famous father, whom she did not know from before. That topic later appeared in a text that Nora wrote herself.

The fifth reading journal

In the first week of November, the fifth reading journal was handed in. Ulrik was handing in increasingly shorter entries, this time of only 43 words. It was clear that he hardly put any effort into the content. The following was Ulrik's entire hand in for early November:

*I am reading pingles dagbok dont know the name in english
A good book you learn much that is good to know
Easy to read and I got right in the story
But I cant tell much because I have just read 15pages.*

As can be seen from the above text, Ulrik did not pay attention to punctuation, and verbs and subjects were missing.

Nora's entry was also short and built up in the same way as before with bullet points. She had been reading the graded reader *The Shadow on the Stairs*, which she said was easy to read. In the teacher's opinion, this was shorter and easier than what pupils of her English reading proficiency level normally would read. Nora appeared to be reading quite a few of the shorter English books at the time and seemed to find it difficult to find a book she really liked. This became clear by her comment in one of the workshops the following week, where she exclaimed that *All the books I have read have been either boring or I have not been able to get them, even though I understand the words.*

Ben kept writing longer reading journals, and seemed to enjoy *Captain Underpants* because it contained illustrations and not that much text on each page.

Olivia handed in a reading journal in a Word document, but seemed not to have paid attention to the underlining in Word. The percentage of words misspelled in Olivia's entry handed in the first week of November was 30%, as opposed to 10% in the two previous reading journals. When asked how this came to be, Olivia admitted that she had written her entry in a hurry. She said she had not revised her reading journal after writing it and before handing it in.

This had some value to the teacher as insight into how many mistakes Olivia would normally be able to eliminate by revising on her own, and with the help of the Word software.

The final autumn semester reading journal

The final reading journal for the autumn semester was handed in at the end of November. Maria handed in the same reading journal as the one that she had submitted at the end of September. This confirmed the teacher's suspicions that Maria was struggling with her motivation in terms of both reading and writing, even though she was the pupil in the class with the highest language proficiency level.

Nora was encouraged to read *The Hunger Games*, since she had read the series in Norwegian and had seen some of the movies. The teacher was relieved to see that she finally appeared engaged in the book after spending time on short graded readers and failing to engage in her reading. Nora said *The Hunger Games* was easy to read and that there was nothing she did not like about the book. Nora's reading journal for the end of November was also more than twice as long as her previous entry.

Fredrik had been granted exemption from handing in reading journals. The teacher considered that Fredrik should spend more time reading instead of handing in reading journals. However, by the end of November, Fredrik wanted to hand in a reading journal because that was what his classmates were doing. He wished to do as many as possible of the same tasks that the rest of the class did. He chose to write his reading journal about a book that he had previously read in Norwegian and liked. The following is an excerpt from his reading journal:

It's a reading about a boy so are very great boy. And it coming a boys so are very bad, and him steal bottle, they ar not empty. I laik dis book and I are very content. I fond not ay don't lig vid this book. This book are easy this book are for the children. The book are very funy.

Fredrik was able to focus on the reflections on his reading that he was asked to give, and not only to summarize the plot. The excerpt shows that Fredrik had challenges in verb concord (e.g. *this book are*) and syntax (e.g. *And it coming a boys so*), where Norwegian appeared to interfere with his English.

It was clear that Olivia had taken measures in her spelling before handing in her reading journal since the last time. At the end of November, her misspelling percentage was down to under 5%.

6.3 The spring semester

6.3.1 The mid-year pupil conferences

When the autumn semester had ended in the middle of January, the teacher wanted an occasion for the pupils to reflect on their own work and effort in the past semester. She also wanted the pupils to set themselves a new goal in English to work towards in the spring semester. The pupils were therefore given a self-evaluation in the form of two questionnaires with open-ended questions. One questionnaire regarded reading (see Appendix 3) and the other regarded writing (see Appendix 4). The pupils filled out the two separate questionnaires, one after the other, and handed them in to the teacher.

The teacher brought the pupils' answers to a conference she had with each pupil early in the beginning of the spring semester. The conference was based on both the pupils' answers to the questionnaires and on the teacher's own notes. The purpose of these conferences was to talk about how the pupils had experienced the previous semester. The teacher started the conference by telling the pupils about their strengths. The pupils were then told what they should focus on in their English learning, both orally and written. The teacher finally agreed with each pupil on an individual goal to help them advance both in reading and writing.

In the questionnaires, when asked how the pupils had used their list of writing territories or reading territories in the past semester, all of the pupils answered either that they had not used them at all, or very little. The teacher suggested this was because she had not sufficiently guided the pupils into using the lists interactively as sources for ideas. She still believed that creating them in the beginning of the year had been valuable metacognitive tasks. It had made the pupils visualize a complete picture of the role of reading and writing in their lives.

When asked how much the pupils had read and written in the previous semester, Tom said he had finished writing two fantasy texts and had read three fantasy books. It was new to Tom to write as lengthy texts as he had been doing the past semester. The ideas for his texts had come from the books he had read. Tom did not believe he had learned anything particular about

reading or writing, but said that the reading workshops had inspired his stories and motivated him to start reading again. When asked what he had learned about himself as a reader, he said 'That I like to read'.

When asked what his goals were in reading and writing, he answered that it was to read and write even more. The teacher told Tom that he was very creative in his writing and that it was her impression that he was not intimidated by writing long stories. He was also very descriptive in his writing. Tom's goals in writing became to pay closer attention to spelling, to separate between the past and present tense, and to use his checklist more actively in his writing. In reading, he quickly engaged in his series of books and knew what his preferences were. He agreed that he should put more effort into the reading journals in the following semester.

Olivia said only one of her texts from the autumn semester was completely finished and that she had completed four books. *Finale* was her favourite book. When asked what the writer did in that book, she answered that *She made me fall in love with the boy*. She also answered that something new she tried herself as a writer was to use her own life and experiences in her writing.

Olivia said she did not learn anything about reading the past semester and that the reading workshop did not help her. She said she had learned about herself that *I really don't like to read*. She said she learned about writing *That it is hard*. She also said that the writing workshops were useful to her because they taught her different ways of moving ahead when she had writer's block. If she could, she would have worked more with her texts and read from the beginning of the *Hush Hush* series, which she put as a potential goal for the spring semester. In their conference, the teacher told Olivia how well she created emotional and passionate texts and that she had improved significantly in double checking spelling and meaning.

They talked about how Olivia had been nervous about the workshop method at the beginning of the year. The teacher mentioned that Olivia had a good way of planning her reading since she knew what she liked and how she was able to reflect on her reading in the reading journals. The teacher emphasised how important English reading was for Olivia's language. Olivia's goal was therefore to focus on reading and to stay concentrated on that in the reading workshops.

Ulrik said he had finished two humorous texts and that he had many that were still unfinished. He had finished reading four books, of which *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* was his

favourite because of the story and illustrations. Ulrik said it was new to him to write long texts in English. He said his ideas came from his own head, or that he was inspired by names to start stories based on them. When asked what he had learned about writing, Ulrik answered that he believed the writing workshops had helped him improve his spelling. He had learned that he did not read very fast, but the reading workshops had helped him in finding new books to read.

Ulrik would have read more and finished more texts if he could have, and these became his new goals. The teacher told Ulrik that she thought his texts were creative and funny and that he seemed to be quite engaged in his writing. He had also implemented some of the feedback in his writing. She said he should continue to pay particularly close attention to verb conjugation. She also advised him to try to add more description into his texts, which would create a good supplement to his texts.

They agreed that Ulrik knew what he liked to read, which caused him to plan ahead and to spend his time wisely in the reading workshops. He was advised to work more on the reflections on his reading in the reading journals and to write them longer.

Nora said she had finished two texts in the autumn semester and that she had read about 25-30 books in all kinds of genres. *The Hunger Games* were the books she liked the most because of the story and the characters. When asked what new things she had attempted as a writer, she answered: 'I tried to write using the words that I had just learned'. She said the ideas for her writing came from books or movies, but also that she had dreamt what she would write about.

Nora had learned that writing was easy once she got started and the writing workshops had helped her spelling. She had learned that reading also helped one's spelling and that her reading pace would increase the more she read. She had learned about herself as a reader that she needed a certain thrill in the books she read. Her goal in reading was to abandon books she found boring instead of continuing to read them. In writing, she wished to write more, but also to increase her correctness.

The teacher praised Nora's dedication to both reading and writing. She told Nora that she was good at making internal processes in her characters come across in her writing. Nora was advised to add more description and to use her checklist more actively. During the conference, Nora thought back to the previous school year and exclaimed 'I remember last year, when I felt like I couldn't write the easiest things in English. I could never have imagined that I would be

writing texts of 2000 words!’ The teacher told her to be proud of what she had achieved and agreed with Nora that increased correctness should be her new goal. She should also pay close attention to spelling and the distinction between the present and past tense.

Fredrik said he thought he had finished writing four texts and had read about ten books, although he was not certain what genres they were. He could not rename the book he had liked the best, but said that it was about fishing. He said that he came up with his own ideas for writing and believed that he paid most effort to the texts where he could write about something that he was interested in.

Fredrik said he had not learned much about reading, but that it was useful, even though it was boring because he was not interested in reading. He had learned to spend more time on the texts he wrote. In the conference, the teacher said she was impressed by the long texts he had managed to write in English. In his future writing, Fredrik needed to learn the difference between *is/are*, and *has/have*.

Fredrik and the teacher talked about his reading and whether or not he found the books he read difficult to understand. Fredrik said he did not and it was neither a problem for him that the books were short. They talked about what the content should be in the books Fredrik would like to read, which could be topics related to farming, tractors and old tractor models. The teacher later ordered a book about old tractor models, which Fredrik carried around to read also outside English lessons. He later confirmed that he also read the text and did not only look at the illustrations in the book, as the teacher feared he might.

Maria said she finished three texts that were either factual texts or stories and that she did not finish any books, but abandoned them all and then started new ones. She said the reason she had not finished any books was that she was not interested in reading. Maria said she had not learned anything particular about reading in general, but that she herself was a better reader than she thought. Not surprisingly, she wished she had finished more of the books she had started in the autumn instead of abandoning them, and this became her new goal in reading.

In trying something new as a writer, Maria said she had tried harder to engage in her own texts. She had her ideas for writing from movies or TV series. Maria had learned that she was better at grammar than she had realised. The writing workshops had helped her in providing example texts of how good texts were produced. Her new goal in writing was to write longer texts.

The teacher acknowledged Maria's formal correctness and ability to separate between the past and present tense. The teacher advised her to focus more on the content and to make her texts come more alive by using different literary tools as tricks. Maria's possibly unusual challenge was that her content and lack of dedication to her writing would hold her back, although her language was at a high proficiency level.

In reading, Maria and the teacher discussed her restlessness in reading workshops and that it was hard for her to find a book she liked and could sustain. Maria's motivation had several times during the previous semester struck the teacher as quick to turn around in an instant. They discussed whether the length of books intimidated her and that perhaps collections of short stories could be a start. The teacher said that Maria's new goals in both reading and writing would require her to dedicate more and to think and reflect carefully about her reading.

Ben had finished three texts the past semester and had read seven books. His favourite had been Roald Dahl's *Revolting Rhymes*. He had learned nothing about reading, nor was there anything that had been useful to him in the reading and writing workshops. He had however, learned that writing could be both fun, and a little difficult. He had learned about himself that he would too easily give up on a book if it did not seem interesting. His goal in reading was therefore to finish more books instead of abandoning them.

Ben had his ideas for writing from his own imagination, but one also came from the teacher's pamphlet of *101 writing prompts*. There was nothing he would have done differently the previous semester, but his new goal in writing was to write better and longer texts. In the conference, the teacher commented that Ben had a wide vocabulary and had few errors in grammar and tense. He was advised to think about how to create the best endings instead of the easiest ones, and to try to vary his sentences. Ben also needed to make a clear distinction between *was/were* and *has/have*. The teacher shared her concern with Ben that he seemed to be struggling to find something interesting to read that really engaged him, and they both agreed that he had the potential for improvement in the reading workshops.

6.3.2 The spring classroom observations

The third week of January was the beginning of the spring semester. The teacher tried to motivate the class in the new semester start by telling them to be proud of what they had achieved so far and to set themselves new goals based on that. The teacher commented that it

was time to put even more effort into the work the pupils had already put into English lessons, since they were now used to the new way of working in these lessons. The pupils' checklists were emphasised as an important tool to improve their writing.

As related in section 5.3.1, the teacher had conferences with all the pupils about how they felt the previous semester had been, and what they needed to work more on in the spring semester. The pupils wrote down their new goal for English lessons in their notebooks and were told not to ignore it, but to work towards it in the spring.

In the middle of January, some of the pupils were struggling to get started with the new semester. Others had uncompleted work from last semester, which they resumed. The teacher would occasionally include a Power Point slide of inspirational images as writing prompts.

In a reading workshop, the teacher read a short story aloud to the pupils and then asked questions for the class to discuss. The teacher's focus was the effect of the use of senses when describing in a story. Nora referred to the class discussion on sounds and smells in stories and said the book she was reading had many examples of that, which were very efficient in her opinion.

Ben requested to write a story in pairs. The following lesson the class therefore sat in groups with 'post it' notes, which were passed around in the group. The pupils added or removed adjectives from a noun phrase to see the difference. The feedback from the pupils was that they enjoyed this interactive activity and would like to do it again. During the individual writing, Ben needed a word in his text, and then put it in his spelling list once he found it. Ben and Ulrik were having a hard time not to get involved with each other's writing when they were supposed to be working individually.

In mini-lectures in February, the teacher addressed forms of language, such as why pupils should not use *very*, *really* or *kind of*. The pupils seemed to enjoy coming up with better alternatives for those words in a short model text. In a reading workshop, Ulrik presented a book to the teacher that he had brought from home, which he planned on reading once he was finished with his current one. Nora abandoned her book, upset that she did not understand anything of it. In the middle of February, Nora appeared to be more motivated for writing than reading. She was quite engaged in her story: 'I'm actually grossed out by my own story because it is so creepy'.

Maria had been advised by the teacher to try writing an argumentative text and was brainstorming with the teacher for ideas for a topic. In that writing workshop, Ben wanted Maria

to read his text. In the same lesson, all of the pupils took turns to read the poems of another pupil that were put up on the wall. It appeared that the pupils were quite interested in knowing about each other's writing. For instance, Ulrik asked Ben to read the beginning of his story.

During this lesson, Fredrik spent some of his time doing oral exercises with the other teacher. They would converse about daily topics, such as what he did last weekend, what his family was like, and about what he had been reading lately.

At the end of this lesson, the pupils played the game *Alias* as an additional oral activity. Pupils had cards of eight words they had to explain to their group without saying the actual word. The others had to guess the right word. This game created much enthusiasm and competition between the groups and was used several times by the teacher, as also was watching short video clips for oral discussion.

A few minutes were spent weekly on a spelling procedure where the pupils had chosen new words that they would learn how to spell correctly. The teacher, however, noticed that some pupils came unprepared for the weekly spelling activity. They would instead choose words they had learned earlier, or words they knew from before.

The focus of the next mini-lecture in late February was the workshop rules. This was to ensure that everyone had a good working environment and to limit the pupils' wandering around. The class was reminded that there were clear rules for where the pupils should be at a given time. In that lesson, Ulrik happily exclaimed that he had already written two texts and three poems since January. He wanted to tell Ben about one of his texts, but the teacher told him to share it with the rest of the group instead. In that way, Ulrik could easier follow the rules and not disturb Ben in his writing, while still sharing his writing. However, Ulrik did not want to share his text with everyone. The teacher recognized that there was a big difference for Ulrik between sharing his writing with the whole class and only with his friend. Maria had been struggling to get started with an argumentative text, but she had now started to do research on animal testing.

In the reading workshops in March, the class learned about different reading strategies and how to read for homework and information. They discussed how to scan, take notice of subheadings, pictures, and paragraphs. There was a vivid discussion about how the different pupils read for homework. Ben called himself lazy because he just scanned the text for the answers to the questions. The teacher told him that he was only able to do so because he was a fluent reader, which seemed to catch Ben by surprise.

In a reading workshop, Nora said she noticed how some books had more than one author, and that she found it hard to understand how authors could cooperate with each other on a book. The class discussed that issue for a while and came up with possible challenges and advantages. In their individual reading that lesson, Ulrik put away a book that he said was too difficult for him. Olivia agreed that it was important for her as well that the book she read was easy enough. The teacher then explained why it was important that the pupils did not attempt to read too difficult books, since that would make following the story difficult and not help them develop fluent reading skills in the same way.

Later in the spring, Nora and Maria both encountered the concept of *high school* in their reading. They asked if the teacher could explain the difference between the educational systems in the next lesson. It occurred to the teacher that reading both graded readers and authentic novels in English offered many occasions to discuss features of English-speaking societies and history, which was one of the competence aims in the English curriculum.

Ben and Ulrik were becoming visibly more used to looking up words and writing them down in their spelling list. Ulrik, however, often used Ben as an aid to finding the words he needed, which interrupted Ben who was trying to start a new text. The teacher therefore moved Ulrik's desk to keep him from losing his focus and disturbing the other pupils.

The teacher repeated how to write reading journals. The pupils were encouraged to think of their reading journals as communicative and to answer the questions they had been asked by the teacher as a response to the previous reading journal. Ben said: 'I don't like writing reading journals'. The pupils were allowed to start writing their reading journals in class.

The teacher started sensing that the assignment of the reading journal was becoming too unvaried to motivate the class. Consequently, only two reading journals were assigned in the spring semester, whereas six had been assigned in the previous semester. The teacher wanted to maintain the pupils' motivation and instead introduced a new purpose for writing in early May, which manifested as the 'book writing project' (see the following italicized heading in the current section).

The pupils were increasingly becoming used to finding new vocabulary to write down in their spelling list, while a few had a hard time breaking away from their writing in order to locate their spelling list. In a writing workshop in the end of March, the teacher reminded Tom to put the word *would* in his spelling list and Tom answered that he was just on his way to do so. The

pupils were about to hand in their next draft and in that lesson the teacher repeated how the pupils could use their checklists in their editing. Some common difficulties were also addressed in the class, such as the distinction between *was* and *were*, the spelling of *with* instead of *whit**, and generally looking up unknown words.

The pupils enjoyed most of the interactive activities, such as the reading of a short story as a Readers Theatre¹¹. In a writing workshop, Ben was struggling to move ahead in his text and the teacher and he agreed to ask the class for ideas on how his text could continue in the next writing workshop. Maria encouraged Ulrik to try to write a factual text as she was doing.

Other interactive activities the pupils enjoyed doing in the workshops that focused on communication were filling out information gap tasks in pairs, giving each classmate a written compliment in English, and discussions in both pairs and with the whole class about different topics, questions, or video clips they had seen. The pupils regularly talked about the books they were reading and filled out both reading and writing records to keep an overview of what they had read and written.

In the middle of April, the class started watching a documentary called *Bully* about bullying in American primary schools. The teacher chose this documentary because it was a serious and relevant topic for the pupils. It also offered several opportunities for conversations and reflections on the content of the movie. Furthermore, the pupils in the following lessons assisted the teacher in developing evaluation criteria on an oral conversation. The pupils then prepared an interview together in pairs based on the topic of the movie they had seen and talked about in class.

After the book-writing project, which will be elaborated below, the final English lessons in June that school year were spent getting the pupils' final text ready to submit into their portfolios for formal evaluation and to prepare the pupils for a final full-day semester test in English. Full-day semester tests are common in English, Norwegian and Mathematics, and sometimes even other subjects in Norwegian secondary schools at the end of both the autumn and spring semesters. In English, pupils are often given a topic-based pamphlet the day before to both inspire and give hints as to what kind of writing tasks the pupils can expect to be able to choose from on the test day.

¹¹ Readers Theatre is group rehearsal and reading aloud of a text, which integrates both speaking, reading, listening and thinking (Drew and Pedersen, 2010: 2).

The class looked at the evaluation criteria to see how their writing would be graded, and discussed what specific things they could do in their writing to try to write according to how they were being measured. The pupils were allowed to bring their checklists and notebooks to the semester test and the teacher encouraged them to use those tools to edit and improve their texts. The preparation pamphlet given to the pupils on the day before the semester test included texts, such as songs, poems and pictures. The teacher had attempted to give the pupils inspiring and open tasks to choose from and the pupils later commented that they had enjoyed the English semester test the most.

The book-writing project

Towards the last two months of the school year, the teacher came across a website where classes could create a book together. After they had created the book, a sample of the finished class book would be printed and shipped to the class in order for them to make final revisions. The foundation of the website was commercial, as it allowed classes to purchase a minimum number of copies to sell and earn funding for their class. Irrespective of whether the class ordered the minimum number of copies, which the current class found out they could not, the class was still allowed to keep the printed sample copy of their book.

The pupils created their own private account so that each pupil, in addition to the teacher, had exclusive access to the chapters uploaded by themselves. The class worked on the composing of their class book for several weeks and each pupil had to add at least seven separate texts because of a required minimum number of chapters for the printing of the book.

The class community worked together to agree on a title. They also had a designer competition where pupils who wanted to participate created a front page which they presented to the rest of the class. Nora and Maria wrote the foreword of the book together, which they read aloud to the rest of the class to make sure no one had any objections. The class book project was, after all, a community project to which all of the pupils should have an equal ownership. The foreword was the following:

This book is written by 8th grade; we are nine pupils who have written this book. We have been waiting for a month. In this book, you will find short stories, poems, recipes, jokes and book reports.

We started writing this book because our English teacher wanted us to get better at writing stories; we have all gotten better at writing stories and poems. All of us have been writing one poem, one book report and one story, and four other optional texts.

We have all been enjoying writing this book, it will be so much fun reading our own stories in an actual book. We want to thank our teacher for giving us this opportunity to write an actual book, Thank you so much Hanne Marte.

The writing of an *actual* book, as Maria and Nora wrote in the above foreword, provided a new and more realistic potential audience for the pupils. It gave new purpose to their writing. The book writing activity caused the pupils to pay close attention to form and correctness, since the pupils agreed that there could hardly be any formal language mistakes in a printed book.

The pupils edited their chapters digitally and received continuous feedback from the teacher, who had full access to all of the chapters. Writing a book led to the pupils being enthusiastic and motivated from the very start of the project and until the excitement when the class book arrived in early June. The teacher overheard Maria, Nora and Olivia talking with their friends in other years in the break, where they told them that: ‘We are actually going to make a real book!’

6.3.3 The spring reading journals

As mentioned above in section 5.3.2, only two reading journals were assigned in the spring semester, mostly due to the prioritization of the book writing project, which the teacher felt offered positive variation.

The first reading journal

The first reading journal for the spring semester was submitted in the middle of February. Fredrik did not submit an entry since he had an agreement with the teacher to focus on his texts if the amount of work became too much. However, neither did Ulrik, who was expected to do so. All of the pupils who handed in a reading journal this time wrote almost, or more than 200 words. Both Olivia and Ben wrote their reading journals based on a book they had read in Norwegian that they had liked.

Maria finally wrote a lengthy reading journal of about 300 words. It was clear that she had paid attention to answering the questions in the instructions provided by the teacher. She had been reading *The Book Thief*, which she thought was good: *I really do like this book, especially*

since I am from Germany and I really do not [know] so much about the 2nd world war, and the book does tell me a little bit about what happened, and how it was to live during the 2nd world war. Maria said that she believed the book might appeal more to pupils of her age if it had not been so long.

Tom had finished Hautman's trilogy and had now started on Pablo Coelho's *The Alchemist*. He said he enjoyed the book, but that he hoped there would be more *action* as the book progressed. The teacher in her feedback to Tom explained how the book was more of a philosophical journey than an action-filled novel. Tom was reminded that he was allowed to abandon the book for another at any time.

The final reading journal

The second and final reading journal was submitted by the first week of March. These entries were more according to the length that the teacher had encouraged the pupils to attempt in the autumn. This time, many of the pupils also spent more time answering the questions that the teacher had asked them in their previous reading journal. This allowed for a much more communicative reading journal, where the pupils' opinions were in the focus and where the teacher was able to learn more about the pupils' reading. For instance, the teacher had asked Maria how she felt about the character named Rosa in *The Book Thief*. Maria, in her reply, reflected through an entire paragraph why she believed that Rosa acted the way she did, and how she developed as the story progressed:

I feel like that Rosa is actually a really kind person, but she is just afraid to show it at first. Because she is all about to get Liesel to be a good girl, and if Rosa isn't as strict as she is maybe Liesel wouldn't learn that fast. Rosa is getting a lot happier after a while, and I feel like as Rosa is getting to know Liesel she is getting even more like a nicer person.

Maria eventually abandoned this book. The teacher suggested in the conference she had with Maria in the beginning of the semester that she could try reading collections of short stories if she found it difficult to sustain the long stories in novels. Maria disagreed that short stories were any better to her. In this last reading journal, however, she reported that she had started *Girl Online*, which she said she thought had a good beginning: *I have a feeling that I am going to like Girl Online a lot!*

Ben wrote his reading journal about Jeff Kinney's *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, which he enjoyed *Because it is the same problems I get into that he gets into*. In other words, Ben could relate to the character and the plot he was reading about. Ben also added that he had read most of this series in Norwegian and that he enjoyed the illustrations. He also said that he believed he was quick to abandon a book if the beginning did not capture him right away.

Ulrik had also been reading a *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*. In his opinion, the diary genre made the book different from other novels. He emphasized that the book was funny: *I would say that I have found a book I really like*.

Nora was reading a trilogy that seemed to inspire her writing. Nora confirmed this in her reading journal and said that because she loved the story, it had inspired her. Nora also said she did not think it was difficult to find new books to read.

Olivia once more handed in a reading journal about a book she was reading in Norwegian because she had had a hard time understanding the book she was reading in English. She had been certain that she would like this book, since she had liked another novel by the same author that she had read earlier. This witnessed a growing awareness in Olivia about who she was as a reader in general, which would be valuable information to herself in developing a love for books, even though her dyslexia had prevented her from enjoying reading in the past.

Tom did not put away *The Alchemist* but was instead close to the end of it by now. He said he enjoyed it after all, but had high expectations about the ending, and was hoping that the book would fulfil them.

6.3.4 The final pupil evaluation of the workshop-based lessons

One of the last things the class did in the school year of English was to complete a final written evaluation of the year of workshop-based English lessons in the form of a questionnaire. The evaluation comprised of a questionnaire with open questions on paper (see Appendix 7).

All of the pupils had enjoyed the English lessons that year. Ben added that he had enjoyed reading in class the most. All of the pupils were positive to the workshop method being different from regular English lessons. Nora had enjoyed doing something different from normal, and said that she enjoyed this way of organizing English lessons. Ulrik said that he thought the workshop approach was much more fun than regular English lessons. Ben also added: *I think we have learned more by having checklists and getting feedback on what we can do better*.

When asked what was positive about the English lessons that past year, three pupils answered that not using a textbook had been positive. Olivia said she was happy that they did not have to complete tasks and that they were allowed to make more choices themselves. Tom said he was positive about *The new way of learning, and the teacher*. Nora said *I have learned more. I have found out that reading books is fun and that you learn a lot from it*.

When asked if there had been anything negative about the English lessons that past year, only Ben and Fredrik answered something other than *Nothing*. Ben said it had been negative to come up with texts to write and then editing them, while Fredrik said he had been bored.

Of all the pupils, only Nora believed that her English language had not improved. Dyslectic Olivia said she had been writing more and that she thought her grammar had improved. Ulrik said his English reading and writing had improved. Ben said: *I understand more of what I am reading, and I recognize the mistakes I have made*. Fredrik thought both his writing and pronunciation had improved.

The pupils who would have done something different if they could have in the English lessons the past year said they would have written more or/and read more. Nora said she would have focused on finishing more of the texts she had started, while Ben said he would have used his spelling list more. Only Ben had a comment to what the teacher could have done differently in the English lessons, which was to assign less writing. The others answered either *Nothing* or that they did not know.

6.4 The sample texts

In addition to studying the pupils' motivation and attitudes towards reading and writing, and towards the English subject in general, the study also aimed to study how the pupils' English writing developed throughout the school year of reading and writing workshops. In the current section, pupils' sample texts will therefore be presented and analysed. The pupils submitted a portfolio of three texts at the end of each semester. One sample text by each pupil from the first and the last portfolio will be compared and evaluated in a holistic way.

The comparison of texts will try to give an impression of the development in the pupils' English writing competence from the end of the first semester to the end of the second semester. The individual feedback given to each pupil will be summarized to reveal if the development was in any way related to what feedback the pupils were given. Other examples from pupils'

writing will also be included in some cases to give an impression of what genres and content the pupils' writing involved.

The pupils wrote and handed in a large number of texts. The researcher gathered an average of 10-12 sample texts from each pupil over the year. It would have been interesting to study each pupil's development from one text to the other throughout the year, and perhaps consider that development in relation to the feedback given by the teacher and the content of the reading and writing workshops in the period between the sample texts. Each of the sample texts could also have been studied in relation to the genres the pupils were reading while writing the various texts to see if the pupils were influenced by what they read, as some of the pupils said they had. Such a study, however, would require a larger framework and capacity than that of the current thesis.

As stated, an example text of each pupil from the submitted portfolios in both semesters has therefore been selected for study in the present section. Even though samples from the pupils' writing throughout the whole year will be referred to, formal language correctness will only be compared in similar types of texts written for the same purpose. This is because it would be less reliable to compare a text that the pupils knowingly handed in unfinished as a draft with a text that was considered finished and ready to be evaluated. It would, for instance, be likely that the pupils would pay closer attention to the formal language before a final hand in than before handing in a work-in-progress text.

A holistic evaluation of the texts will include looking at features such as the general content and the pupils' presence in their texts through their own voices. Some pupils may have used their writing as a medium to express themselves and some may have developed their own style of writing. The teacher had emphasised the awareness of the reader of the text, and this awareness will be an object of investigation. In addition, formal correctness, complexity of syntax, and the use of form and structure according to genre will be considered.

6.4.1 The first portfolio texts

The pupils were asked to select three of their finished texts to hand in as final texts to be evaluated in the portfolios at the end of both semesters. Some pupils handed in two texts if one of their texts was particularly long.

Although other sample texts might be referred to, only one portfolio text will be analysed in detail for each pupil. The texts from the end of the first semester will be presented first, and from one pupil at the time. Following this, the texts from the second semester will be presented, along with an impression of the writing development for each pupil.

Ben

Ben's final portfolio at the end of the first semester consisted of three short stories. This was a positive development in his writing, since Ben had spent quite a few writing workshops earlier in the autumn on a factual text with repetitive information. It had been a text about tanks, structured in bullet points in different categories, such as type, weight and speed. The teacher had informed Ben in her feedback that his English was quite good, but that this text did not allow that to come across.

One of Ben's portfolio stories was a humorous one called *The Dumbest Bank Robber in the World*. He had gotten the idea for this text in the teacher's pamphlet of *101 writing prompts*. It was a bizarre and funny story filled with action about an unsuccessful bank robbery. Ben had previously handed in that story as a draft in November, and had received feedback on it before the final hand in. This allowed the teacher to see what changes Ben had made on his text before finally handing it in for evaluation.

The teacher had advised Ben to vary the way he started his sentences in his story, since some passages were a listing of events starting with the pronoun *he*. Ben therefore replaced the personal pronoun with the proper noun *James* in some places. He was also asked to try to use commas more, which he did not do in his revision. Furthermore, Ben was corrected when writing *didn't knew**, where the teacher had explained that he only needed to conjugate the auxiliary verb. He had revised this into *didn't know* in the final product. Other than that, Ben only had two verbal errors.

Finally, Ben was also advised to use paragraphs in his text, which he had not done in the draft, but which he did in the revision. Although he only made minor changes, Ben addressed all of the three points for editing provided in the feedback. Furthermore, Ben was advised early in the autumn that he should try to avoid beginning his sentences with the conjunction *and*. Only once did he commit this error in all of his three portfolio texts.

Ben was generally accurate in his sentence structure and only occasionally misplaced words or chose a wrong word. He also successfully used phrases showing a wide vocabulary such as *All day long* and *The police threw him into jail*. However, Ben tended to write texts consisting of short sentences, such as in the following excerpt from his story:

He had no food and no money, and he had to beg on the pavement all day long. His dinner was food in the trashcans. James was very dumb and did it bad on school. He was 25 years old when he had a plan. James going to rob the biggest bank in Alaska! However remember he was very dumb. He jacked a taxi and drove to the bank.

His text, however, also included quite a few compound and some complex sentences, such as *He couldn't run away because he had broken both of his legs*.

Maria

One of Maria's portfolio texts was a Christmas story. The first draft she submitted in the autumn had also been a Christmas story, but this one was completely different from the first. This was interesting because some of the feedback Maria received after her first draft was that she should develop her story further, particularly concerning the characters introduced in the story. The story eventually submitted in her portfolio was a first person narrative that gave much more insight into the characters than Maria's first Christmas story.

Maria was by far the pupil with the highest level of language proficiency in the class. She had few errors in syntax and wrote more complex than simple and compound sentences. This gave the impression of sophistication in her writing. Maria did not make a single concord mistake but, on the other hand, went back and forth between past and present tense in her story several times.

Maria began her story in an appropriate way: *Hi, I am Emily! My family loves Christmas we are celebrating Christmas every year. We could not have imagined a year without Christmas, but this year everything was different*. However, she struggled with the content and was without a clear plot and progression in the remainder of the story.

Her story was only one and a half pages long, and yet Maria included passages that were too long containing confusing details that lacked a function in the story. These details revolved around how long the family spent and what they packed before going on their trip, and on three

separate occasions around meals during the day: *So we went down stairs to get some food, because we really needed some food. After we went to sleep, because it was really late.*

This altogether created an impression of a story without coherence. The ending came suddenly as if Maria had run out of time or patience with her text and had simply left it with the finishing lines: *The next day we didn't do anything, because we were driving home again. We were packing our stuff, and got showered. But we are driving back again soon, I think in a week or so.*

Fredrik

Fredrik only submitted one text in his portfolio in each semester. However, he had handed in two other drafts on different occasions, so the teacher knew he had written more. His first portfolio text was a factual text about two of his favourite country singers, although the text was clearly not finished as he had only written about one of the two singers. Fredrik had written about 110 words and his level of English proficiency was low. It was occasionally challenging to understand what he had intended to say in his writing.

Fredrik's English was heavily influenced by Norwegian syntax, for instance in the sentence: *On the concert the are ca 10000 people so are on the concert and hurd him.* The example shows Fredrik's wrong use of the conjunction *so*, which he seemed to mistake for the Norwegian relative pronoun *som*. Instead, he should have chosen the English relative pronoun *that* or *who*.

In his text, Fredrik appeared to consistently make errors in concord, which made the teacher suspect that he had never really mastered that feature of grammar. When writing on his computer, Fredrik found it difficult to use the Word program for correction. In this sample text, he had for some reason turned off the setting that corrected grammar and spelling.

Nora

In her first semester portfolio, Nora handed in a romantic and mysterious story about a heartbroken teenage girl who was struggling to recover from the loss of her boyfriend, whose cause of death was unknown. The story began in the middle of the action where a boy was running screaming from a house. Nora had handed in this story twice as a draft during the autumn. She used both action and dialogue as her story progressed.

In the first feedback Nora received, she was told she had a good beginning that made it impossible not to continue reading her story. In a part of the story, Nora had written a long dialogue where 16 short spoken sentences were listed. The teacher focused on that issue in her feedback to Nora, asking her to include more description of what the characters were doing while talking together, *So that you don't have only their talking, but also something that makes the reader see the things that happen in his head.*

Nora had chosen to write her story in the past tense, which she mastered well with only few mistakes in verb tense. She was asked to revise her verbs and the teacher suggested that Nora read her text with verb tense in mind to avoid any slips. However, neither of these issues had been edited by Nora when she handed in the second draft of the story. The only point in her feedback that she had paid attention to was to start a dialogue with capital letters, a point on which Nora had made a few corrections. She had also made other smaller changes, such as exchanging the conjunction *but* with *however* and the spelling of *to* with *too* in the right places.

When Nora handed in her second draft of the story, several pages had been added to the story. The feedback this time advised her to focus on the simple present and past tense of *to be* and to be consistent in her use of citation marks in her dialogues. She was also given a list of eight specific words that she had misspelled which the teacher encouraged her to add to her spelling list. In the final text submitted in her portfolio, however, none of these points had been addressed. This time Nora had instead addressed a point from the previous feedback. She had revised some verbs that the teacher had pointed out to her when she had handed in the previous draft.

Nora still had a total of 70 verb concord and tense errors in her submitted portfolio story. She also had some errors of syntax, punctuation, spelling and word choice, especially regarding prepositions. In her spelling, Nora appeared to be somewhat faced with the same challenge as Olivia. While she paid close attention to any underlined words in the writing software, she failed to choose the word with the correct meaning. This caused frequent occurrences of misspellings, such as *den* instead of *then*, *god* instead of *good*, and *way* instead of *why*.

However, Nora had her own style of writing which allowed her to create quite a captivating story with a well-developed plot, story progression, and turning point. It appeared that Nora and Maria had the complete opposite challenges. Maria struggled with content, while Nora had the content, but struggled with formal language correctness.

Ulrik

Ulrik submitted two humorous short stories in his portfolio at the end of the first semester. His sense of humour was obvious in his writing and there were some quite bizarre elements in his stories. For instance, in his story called *The Room*, a wizard magically turned a bear into a beer. The class had spent some time in mini-lectures early in the semester coming up with a title for a funny short story and then to trying to write one together while the teacher took notes as the pupils suggested humorous things that could happen next. This seemed to have inspired Ulrik.

In her feedback to Ulrik, the teacher wrote that she thought he was good at inventing funny points to add to his story. As points to work on in his writing during the autumn, Ulrik was asked to use citation marks and capital letters in the beginning of dialogues. Ulrik had no errors related to this when he handed in his portfolio texts. However, like some of the other pupils, also Ulrik switched back and forth between the past and present tense in his story.

Olivia

Olivia had been told that she was not required to write the same length as the other pupils because of her dyslexia. Olivia, however, was the pupil who handed in the largest portfolio in terms of written words. Her portfolio consisted of about 3500 words. Two of the texts were collections of poems, and the third text was a story of almost seven pages. The vast amount of text she had produced testified how engaged she had been in her writing after she had started writing texts based on her own choice.

In one of the portfolio texts, Olivia had written five separate lists, all in the category of ‘10 Things’. The first one was called *10 Things I Hate About You*, while the others contained things she hoped, loved, wanted, and missed. She used her writing to express herself despite her challenges with spelling, grammar and syntax. The following is a sample sentence from Olivia’s text: *I hope you never get love in your life, because if I am not yours no wan else can.*

As can be seen from the example above, Olivia would occasionally use complex sentences, and had a good way of varying between complex, compound and simple sentences in her texts. Her main challenge was with spelling, verb tense and concord. She also used wrong words in her sentences, such as *a boy stand back me and took my hand but I cannot see him.* Here, Olivia most likely meant to use the preposition *behind* instead of *back*. The example also

shows her switching from the present (*stand*) to the past tense (*took*). Moreover, there is an error in concord with the third person singular in the case of *stand* instead of *stands*, or *is standing*.

Olivia had previously handed in the text called *10 Things I Hate About You* as a draft, which she received feedback on. The teacher praised Olivia for her creative style. One of the three points Olivia was advised to revise was to read her writing aloud to herself to try to identify misspelled words that had a different meaning than she intended. In the revision, Olivia had not made changes in this respect. She had revised the two other points, which were more specific. They concerned the word order in *and try to not cry* which she revised to *and to try not to cry*. She also successfully separated between the possessive adjective *your* and the verb contraction *you're* by avoiding the contraction and rather spell out *you are*. Other revisions Olivia had made were related to content and not the feedback from the teacher.

Olivia's writing was quite emotional and personal and it came across to the teacher early on from Olivia's writing that she found a way to use English writing to explore feelings, love and sexuality, which are, after all, important topics for maturing teenagers. Olivia did not seem to let her low language proficiency level hold back her writing. In Olivia's case, it would be interesting to see if her dedication and amount of writing would lead to a progression in correctness by the end of the year.

Tom

In his portfolio, Tom submitted a list of things he liked to do when he was bored and a story of almost five pages. Tom quickly engaged in reading a fantasy series and he had written a fantasy story of his own. The story was about two struggling brothers who finally got a job. One of the brothers found a ring, and when he put it on, he found himself in a forest where he met a mysterious old woman who sent him on a mission. Tom was one of the few pupils who used descriptions in his text. The following is an example from his first draft: *We was going to sleep, the moon was weary beautiful this night it was shining like the sun, I was looking at the moon a last time before I fell asleep.*

Tom had quite a few misspellings when he handed in the first draft of his story. Although he had used the correction function in Word, he had chosen words with a different meaning than what he had intended. For instance, he had chosen *hose* instead of *house*, and *weary* instead of *very*. He also made the spelling mistake of *whit** instead of *with*.

Tom was praised for his start of what seemed to be an exciting story. The teacher suggested that he, like Ulrik, read the last passage slowly to himself before he moved on, so that he could listen to the written language. The teacher suspected that language-focused reading might gradually help Tom in identifying errors by himself. He was also asked to pay attention to which verb tense he was writing his story in and to focus on the grammar rule of *to be* (i.e. *was* or *were*) in the simple past tense.

When Tom submitted his second draft of the story, he had made revisions since the last time, but to a little extent in relation to the feedback he was given by the teacher. He had improved sentences and punctuation in a few places. He had, however, changed most of the pronouns in the story, and had clearly decided to tell the story from a third person narrative instead of a first person narrative, which he had started out with.

The teacher this time credited him for his descriptive writing in his story, and said that his main focus should be on ‘polishing’ his language. He was instructed to especially pay close attention to possessives, and once more the difference in the singular and plural simple past of *to be*. He made quite a few mistakes in this respect, for instance *Spice and his brother was going home*. In fact, Tom made the mistake of using *was* instead of *were* consistently throughout his story, a total of 12 times. Only once on the last page did *were* occur correctly together with the plural subject *books*.

In the final portfolio submission, Tom had made many revisions regarding both spelling, verb tense and capital letter in his story. These revisions were, however, only made to the first half of his story.

Tom was already familiar with using complex and compound sentences, which allowed him to vary sentences in his text. The evident challenges he faced from his first portfolio text were a large number of errors in punctuation, verb tense and concord. He also either chose wrong words for his sentences, or words were missing.

In the example, *We walk up the road to our home we felt happy now we have some money to buy food*, all of the mentioned features are evident. There should have been a full stop between *home* and *we*. He had written *walk* and *have* in the present tense, although most of his story was told in the past tense. Furthermore, in the above sentence Tom had switched to the first person pronouns *we* and *ours*, although his story was told through a third person narrative.

6.4.2 The final portfolio texts

Ben

For his final portfolio evaluation in June, Ben handed in a food recipe, a short story, and a book report. The book report was about 320 words long and was about a series that he had read in Norwegian which he liked, or as he wrote in his book report: *I love the books because it is so much action in it. The author of the book makes me feel like I am in the book.* Ben had talked about this series in a reading workshop where he explained how he had stayed up late the previous night reading. It was an informative book report, where Ben started with a paragraph describing how he had come across the books. The second paragraph gave a short summary of the characters and appropriately summarized what to expect in the series:

The settings is in different locations in every book. The family have made a list of where they want to go on vacation. Therefore, in every book they are traveling to other countries. However, on every place they are traveling to, they get into trouble. In the start of the books, it starts with David's dreams, and what happens in David's dreams happens the next day.

In the passage above, Ben also showed an understanding of what a setting was. The final paragraph explained why he liked the book and to whom he recommended it. At the end of his book report, Ben added that *I think it would be cool if they made a movie about this books.*

Ben still had a few formal errors, mostly in verbs, for example distinguishing between *have* and *has*. His English writing, however, seemed to have become much more fluent, helped by the fact that he wrote longer and more varied sentences. In his story from the end of the previous semester, over half of the story was made up of simple sentences. Only five of 29 sentences were complex. In his book report in June, in contrast, his sentences were longer, and there was an almost equal distribution of simple, compound and complex sentences.

Maria

One of Maria's final portfolio texts in June was a book report on *The Fault in Our Stars*. Maria's book report was quite the contrast to how she had previously expressed her feelings about reading. On several occasions during the past year, Maria had said she did not enjoy reading. The beginning of Maria's book report suggested quite a different situation:

I really can't tell how much I love this book. Liking this book makes me feel kind of smart, because I never really liked a book before this. When I am reading the book I feel like I am in another little world where the time just flies away, sometimes I've been reading for hours but it feels like just a few minutes. The author John Green has really taken my reading to another level.

The Fault in Our Stars is about a young girl with cancer. Maria seemed taken by the characters of the book, particularly the protagonist. Interestingly, Maria also handed in a story in her final portfolio that seemed inspired by *The Fault in Our Stars*. Also in her story, there was a girl who, just before her prom, accidentally discovered that she had been living with cancer. Compared to Maria's first portfolio story, this one was of a quite different calibre.

Maria had previously been writing short texts and appeared to be intimidated by writing long texts. In contrast, this story was almost five pages long and contained a much more elaborate plot, progression and turning point than her Christmas story did. While her previous story hardly had a turning point and ending, the final story in contrast had a dramatic one. The protagonist was ready to leave for her senior prom, which the whole story had built up to, but was instead rushed to the hospital, where she died.

The teacher could sense Maria's wittiness and passion in this story. Maria had previously struggled with the content of her writing. However, it appeared that once her reading finally managed to inspire her, that same inspiration became evident in her writing. Well-written passages demonstrated a wide vocabulary and proficiency level, as in the following: *The dress she found was on Ebay.com and it was one of those dresses were you just wanted to spill your drink over your computer, and A few weeks ago I was afraid that I wouldn't get to go to my senior prom, but now I am afraid that I am going to die.*

Maria had gone back and forth between present and past tense in her previous portfolio story. Although errors in tense were not completely eliminated, they were now dramatically reduced.

Fredrik

Fredrik's final portfolio text in June was a factual text about different car models that he liked. This time, Fredrik had his own strategy when composing his factual text. He had started out by writing the information in Norwegian. Finally, he had translated it into English below. Both of Fredrik's portfolio texts were short. In Fredrik's case, the researcher has therefore chosen to

compare his two texts from the test days of English writing. These texts were also submitted in the end of both semesters, but were lengthier than his portfolio texts and therefore gave more reliable data.

The researcher was curious how Fredrik's writing had developed. The results according to the two texts compared were unambiguous, showing that Fredrik's writing had improved in all areas. The two texts from the English writing days were both just above 700 words long. In the latter text from June, Fredrik had reduced his number of errors regarding spelling, verb concord, punctuation, and the use of Norwegian words, where he did not know the English, one by at least 30% or more.

In the sample text from the first semester, Fredrik had showed that he did not master negation in his writing. He wrote *not can** instead of *can/could not*, and *not need** instead of *do/did not need*. In the sample text from the second semester, while these errors were still present, half of the verbs in negation had been used correctly, as opposed to none in the autumn. This suggested that Fredrik was beginning to master this grammatical feature.

Another apparent feature of Fredrik's writing development was the length of his sentences. The majority of the sentences in his text from the autumn were simple ones, with approximately 25% compound sentences, but no complex ones. In the text from June, 50% of the sentences were compound, and there were even four complex ones, such as *Its so hot so my dad take on a shorts and if he have a shorts so its weary hot*.

The teacher noticed that Fredrik had several positive experiences related to English writing that school year. He was motivated to write about topics that he found interesting. He was in particular proud of the lengthy texts he managed to write during the full-day test of English writing at the end of both semesters.

After a writing workshop in the spring semester, Fredrik exclaimed in the classroom 'Why can't we just have English the whole school day?' It is possible that Fredrik's English learning benefitted from this increase in motivation and the teacher was certain that he would have progressed and enjoyed English had he been able to follow the workshop method further, and pursued the reading even more, in which he was not particularly engaged.

Nora

Nora's final portfolio text in June was a story about a girl who lost her family in a car accident. She had previously handed in the story twice as drafts, but had not completely finished it when she finally submitted it. After reading Nora's first draft of the story, the teacher advised her to use a software that read her text aloud and could help her identify correctly-spelled words with the wrong meaning in her text. In the second draft, it was clear that she had taken appropriate measures and corrected some of these errors. She had also revised many of the verbs from the present to the past tense, but had also overlooked many. In the feedback on the second draft, the teacher had advised Nora to spend time reviewing the past or present tense, and pointed out some misspelled words.

In the final text, Nora had made corrections to some of the vocabulary in her text, but not all. She had made no further revisions to verbs. Nora appeared to focus more on revising her content than on the formal language, and often made small changes in dialogues in her texts. In her first portfolio story, she completely rewrote a whole page from the previous draft before the final hand in.

From the first portfolio text to the last one, Nora's syntax and fluency had improved somewhat, and she used phrases and expressions more successfully. The following is an excerpt from Nora's last story, which demonstrated a certain level of language control:

Four words that are stuck in my head, I have to say goodbye to my friends and Branden (my boyfriend, but not anymore, because I have to move) the only good thing whit this is that I am going to get a fresh start, no body know that my family is dead.

Nora still had the same number of errors in concord. She also still had errors in verb tenses, and kept switching between the past and the present tense. Her spelling, however, had clearly improved. Nora had made less than half the number of spelling errors compared to the portfolio text at the end of the previous semester. The number of errors in spelling was measured in relation to the number of words in her text. Furthermore, while the previous portfolio story had twice as many simple sentences as compound ones, the second story had an equal number of simple and compound sentences. The number of complex sentences remained unchanged.

Nora had a distinct way of expressing the inner processes of her characters. In this story, her protagonist felt she had caused the car accident since she had pleaded with her father to turn

the car around and go back for her shirt: *I sit down beside him, and just look at him, and cry. Cry because this is just my fault, cry because I do not want them to be dead, just cry.*

Ulrik

At the end of the spring semester, one of Ulrik's final portfolio texts was a new funny story. In his story called *The Sunny Sunday*, Ulrik experimented with first syllable rhyming words such as *sunny*, *Sunday* and *sunshine*, as in the following: *I spent my sunny Sunday at "The sunny beach of sunny". It was so sunny that I needed "Anti sunny Sundays cream".* In the second portfolio text compared to his first, more of Ulrik's sentences were complex rather than simple ones, for instance: *When I woke up the next morning, I saw a lot of rain outside.*

It was also evident that Ulrik did not seem to switch back and forth between the past and the present tense as much as he had done at in the first portfolio text the previous semester. This led to a reduction of errors in verb tense by 75% in Ulrik's second story.

Other language feedback he had received when he had handed in the story as a draft in March related to his spelling of *God* and *heaven*, which he had spelled correctly in the final product.

At the beginning of the school year, it had been clear that Ulrik was not used to paying attention to the use of paragraphs in his text. This point was made to him in his feedback in November, and once more in February. The portfolio text Ulrik submitted in the autumn only had two separate paragraphs. However, this was another feature he had improved in his text in June, where he had used five paragraphs in an approximately equally long text as the first one.

Olivia

Olivia's portfolio in June consisted of a book report and a story about a young girl who became a victim of human trafficking. It was a dramatic story which ended in tragedy. The story was written as the diary of the protagonist. In a reading workshop, the class had talked about the effects when a book is structured as a diary. It is possible that this inspired Olivia's choice in structure.

Olivia had handed in this story twice as a draft and received feedback from the teacher. The first feedback focused on her misspelling of *whit** instead of *with*, and the verb phrase *I am*

going, which she misspelled in two different ways: *I are gone** and *I am gone**. Olivia had addressed both of these issues when handing in her second draft.

In the second feedback, Olivia received a list words she had misspelled, and with their correct spelling. Surprisingly, Olivia did not revise any of these words before finally submitting her portfolio in June.

Her correctness in the final portfolio story was compared to the portfolio story from the previous semester. Olivia's language seemed more fluent and correct since she had dramatically reduced the number of wrong or missing words in her sentences. She had almost halved the number of errors in verb tense and concord. Spelling was the one feature that had not improved, but it is possible that Olivia's challenges in spelling were linked to her dyslexia, while her improvement in other areas were linked to her English language proficiency.

Olivia's writing appeared to be more sophisticated for two reasons other than more formal correctness by the end of the year. First, her writing in the spring semester contained over twice as many complex sentences as her writing had done in the autumn. Second, the stories Olivia had written in autumn had contained long listings of dialogue without much description. The two stories Olivia wrote in the spring focused more on plot and character development, and only included short dialogues in a more natural way as the story progressed.

Tom

In his final portfolio, Tom handed in a short story about a mountain climber, a book report, and a poem. Interestingly, for the two drafts during the spring semester, Tom had handed in two different short stories.

Tom's book report was about Rick Riordan's *The Lost Heroes*. The book had been a Christmas gift to Tom, and he said he read the full 550 pages in five days. Tom had written an informative book report. He had spent an equal amount of text describing why he liked the book as he did, summarizing the plot. It had been a challenge for Tom to say something about his reading experience when he first started writing reading journals in the autumn. His book report, on the other hand, was filled with reflections: *When I read the book I really felt like seeing it all like a movie, and I recommend this book to people that can read weary large books and are hungry for some adventures.*

Tom's writing in the autumn showed the ability to vary the way he constructed his sentences. This had developed further in June, and in his portfolio texts his sentences had become longer. He was also using both compound and complex sentences slightly more frequently, although he had also been able to use these in his writing in the autumn. Some features of Tom's writing had not changed much. For instance, Tom still misspelled *with* as *whit**. However, other elements in Tom's writing had developed significantly.

The three features he had struggled with most in the portfolio text from the autumn were the features that had improved the most. Tom had fewer than half the errors in punctuation and wrong or missing words in his texts, as he had in the end of the autumn semester. The improvement in verb tense and concord was even more impressive. While he had made 25 mistakes related to verb tense and concord in his portfolio story in the autumn, he had only made six of these errors in his story in June.

6.5 Summary

The current chapter has presented the results from the study in a way that provides a picture of the progression of the school year with the workshop method. The pupils read several books each and they gradually became more reflected about their reading in the reading journals they wrote. They wrote several texts based on their own choice of topics and genres. This resulted in all of the pupils continuously working on different texts, which allowed the feedback from the teacher to be directed more specifically to the proficiency level of each individual pupil.

From the beginning to the end of the year, all of the pupils' English writing showed a positive development. The development in pupils' writing was visible in many different areas, from content and structure of a story, to grammatical features, such as increased correctness in verb tense and concord.

At the beginning of the year, none of the pupils had identified themselves as readers or writers. At the end of the year, in contrast, several of the pupils were amazed at what they had accomplished, especially in English writing, which they had not imagined they could do previously. Some said their writing had improved and that they were more able to recognize the mistakes they made. One pupil said he now understood more of what he read. Another said she had discovered how enjoyable reading could be and that she now knew how much she learned from reading.

All of the pupils at the end of the school year answered that they had enjoyed the workshop method in their English lessons that year. They responded positively about the workshop method deviating from regular English teaching. Not using a textbook, learning in a different way, and making more choices of their own, were the aspects the pupils said they were most positive about in the final evaluation.

7.0 Discussion

7.1 Introduction

The current study is about the implementation of the reading and workshop method in the English lessons of a Norwegian 8th grade class for a full school year. The previous chapter presented the research results from the study. The current chapter will discuss the main findings in the light of the three aims of the research and in relation to the theory presented in Chapters 3 and 4.

First, section 7.2 discusses the results in terms of the English writing development of the pupils during the school year of reading and writing workshops. Section 7.3 discusses what the results show as the year progressed in terms of the pupils' motivation and attitudes towards reading and writing in English. Section 7.4 discusses the findings in terms of the pupils' motivation and attitudes towards the English subject in general after the year. In section 7.5, the limitations of the study are addressed. Section 7.6 makes recommendations based on the findings of the study. Finally, a summary of the chapter is given in section 7.7.

7.2 The pupils' development of English writing

One of the aims of the study was to follow the development of the pupils' English writing during the year of the reading and writing workshop-based teaching. When comparing the pupils' portfolio texts from the end of the first semester with those at the end of the second semester, it was evident that all of the pupils had improved their English writing. This finding supports Atwell's (1998), who found that the workshop method was beneficial to her pupils' writing development. The current study has shown that Atwell's method can successfully also be transferred to a foreign language context.

The features of the pupils' writing that showed improvement varied. For example, Maria wrote better stories in terms of content and structure. Olivia integrated dialogues into her story instead of listing long dialogues of more than half a page the way she had done previously. Improvement in spelling, punctuation, word choice and general fluency were also visible for the different pupils. In addition, several of the pupils had improved their ability to distinguish between the present and the past tenses in their texts. Many had also dramatically reduced the

number of errors in verb concord. Almost all of the pupils wrote more complex and longer sentences in June than they had done in the autumn.

What was unexpected about the findings was evidence that showed how improvement in the pupils' writing was not linked to one particular feature of writing. In other words, the pupils did not have one particular element in common that had improved. Rather, the pupils had all progressed in different areas. Moreover, all of the pupils had improved in the areas of their writing that had seemed to be the most challenging for them.

For instance, Ben's challenge had been his short and simple sentences, although he had a wide vocabulary. By the end of the school year, Ben was using compound and complex sentences increasingly. In Maria's case, her ability to produce more engaging stories and better content had improved dramatically, as did her ability to be consistent with the verb tenses in her writing, which had been one of the few features Maria had struggled with in terms of formal language. For Olivia, with dyslexia, the English subject was generally challenging. Olivia's low proficiency level caused her to make syntax errors and choose the wrong words, or leave words out. She did not appear to master verb conjugation or to separate between the past and the present tense. Olivia's English writing competence improved in several areas, including a considerable decrease in errors related to wrong or missing words, and verb conjugation.

Overall, this was the case for all of the pupils. It appeared that the workshop method had provided the opportunity for individualized teaching and learning. Three elements in the workshop method seemed to contribute to a more individualized teaching for each pupil. First, the pupils read books of their own choice. This provided them with comprehensible input, which according to Krashen's (1982) Monitor theory (see section 4.2), is the most important facilitator of language acquisition. Second, through writing texts based on their own choice of topics, the pupils were using language in a way that was relevant to them. This was also the observation made by Atwell (1998: 15), when she ceased to assign her pupils with tasks and instead allowed them to write topics based on their choice. In the current study, it is likely that this freedom of choice increased the pupils' motivation to learn new vocabulary that they needed.

Finally, the drafting process allowed the teacher to direct individualized feedback to each pupil in tangible and specific points. In other words, the teacher needed to monitor the pupils' individual zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978) in order to accommodate their progress (see section 4.3). Hyland (2003: 177) confirms that feedback can be viewed as the EFL

teacher's most important task, since it is essential for the development of writing skills. Nevertheless, Bø (2014) found that most teachers in her study in upper secondary Norwegian schools practised post-product feedback, which is less beneficial than pre-product feedback, according to Atwell (1998: 220).

The finding that the workshop method offered an opportunity for individualized teaching can be linked to the case of Jeff, who first inspired Atwell to implement the new workshop approach (Atwell, 1998: 6). Jeff had learning disabilities and was at a low proficiency level in reading and writing. Jeff frustrated Atwell by not writing at school, but only at home. Atwell made various assumptions to explain why he did so, until Jeff finally told her that he simply needed to write in his own way.

The example of Jeff's individual approach to literacy supports the findings of Cambourne and Kamler (cited in Cambourne, 1983) in their kindergarten study. The children had many different strategies and ways to complete a writing task. Their study was based on the theory of emergent literacy, namely that literacy is socially-based and will develop naturally if children are provided with the right learning conditions and input (see sections 4.2 and 4.4).

Extensive reading of self-chosen texts in the research period constituted the major input during the study according to the social interactionism theory and Monitor theory. According to these theories, people learn languages in order to communicate. The focus when communicating is to convey meaning. In the same way, the aim of extensive reading is to acquire overall meaning from reading texts. According to Krashen (2004: 136), extensive reading improves language while reading because readers develop their language subconsciously from the input. Based on this premise, one can argue that the improvement in the pupils' English writing competence in the current study may partly be linked to the extensive reading in the workshops. According to Krashen (1982: 21), one acquires language by looking for meaning, in this case in texts, and as a result, one acquires structures.

These acquired structures can be said to have manifested themselves in the individual improvement in language control and fluency in the pupils' writing. Several of the pupils also developed better organisation and content structure in their texts. This can also be linked to their reading, since, according to Hyland (2004: 135), experienced writers are more successful in visualizing their readers' expectations and then implementing this to their writing. When the pupils read more, it is likely that it became easier for them to place themselves in their readers'

place. Perfetti (1994: 876) goes even further, saying that the only way to learn how to organize texts is to read many of them. Although reading is crucial, it is likely that the combination of reading and writing was beneficial to the pupils. This claim is supported by Hyland (2003: 132), who acknowledges that, although L2 learners cannot learn to write only by writing, they cannot learn to write without writing.

The findings that showed improvement in several areas of the pupils' writing competence also comply with the results reported by Day and Bamford (1998), who summarized several studies on extensive reading in L2 contexts. Day and Bamford found that extensive reading programs had beneficial results in several areas. Pupils gained both increased motivation to learn the target language and also to read in general, and advanced in various aspects of language proficiency, such as vocabulary and writing (Day and Bamford, 1998: 33).

The way the pupils were able to review and improve their own texts may be explained by Krashen's (1982) Monitor theory (see section 4.4.2). The acquisition system is responsible for fluency and production in the L2, while the learning system helps to make corrections in language, either before or after the production (Krashen, 1982: 15). The pupils in this study used their learning system when going through their own composing of texts by looking for mistakes.

Interestingly, Ulrik commented in a writing workshop that he made his revisions on the bus, and would rather spend in-class time to write further on his story. This suggests that he found the production of texts more demanding than revising them. If this also applies to other pupils, then as much in-class time as possible should be spent supporting the acquisition system and the development of fluency instead of teaching language rules. After all, what good is knowledge of grammatical rules if fluency is not developed enough to produce language to which the formal rules can be applied?

The evidence that the reading and workshop-based EFL teaching improved the pupils' English writing competence is an important finding in relation to the emphasis of writing skills in the *LK06* curriculum.

7.3 The pupils' motivation and attitudes towards reading and writing

A second aim of the study was to observe how the pupils' motivation and attitudes towards reading and writing in English developed throughout the year of reading and writing workshops. The pupils' responses to the interviews and questionnaires at the beginning, middle and end of

the year, the way the pupils' reading journals developed, and the researcher's observations, will all function as sources to discuss the development of the pupils' motivation and attitudes towards reading and writing.

In the first pupil interviews in the autumn, Nora was the only pupil who said that she enjoyed reading. Maria said she thought reading was boring. The rest of the pupils said reading could be fun if what they read was interesting. None of the pupils considered themselves to be writers. Ulrik, however, said he wanted to become better at writing, which suggests that he was already motivated to write. Some of the pupils were sometimes happy with their writing, but many also pointed out weaknesses in their writing.

In general, the pupils who appeared to be positive and motivated for reading and writing in the beginning of the year were still positive by the end of the school year. The pupils who appeared negative or neutral at the beginning of the year had not changed their views after the autumn semester. However, they appeared to be more positive after the final semester based on their final evaluation of the year. This corresponded with the researcher's lesson observations from the spring semester, where the pupils appeared quite motivated for reading and writing with only sporadic exceptions.

It is likely that allowing the pupils to choose both their reading texts and their writing topics had positively influenced the pupils' attitudes and motivation. For pupils to read material based on their own choice is common in the teaching of extensive reading. In Atwell's (1998) workshop approach, the principle of pupils' own choice was essential. Several of Atwell's pupils claimed that the simple act of allowing them to choose for themselves what to read and write was what turned them into readers and writers (Atwell, 1998: 37).

In the pupil conferences in the middle of the year, several pupils mentioned that they had never written as lengthy texts in English before and some had not even believed they would have been able to do so. All of the pupils said they would have written longer or more texts, and read more or finished more of their books, if they could have done something differently in the autumn semester. More reading and writing constituted the pupils' goals for English lessons in the spring, which appeared to indicate that most of the pupils were motivated for reading and writing when they started the spring semester, although some pupils, such as Fredrik and Olivia, had not changed their negative attitudes towards reading after the autumn semester.

The findings from the spring semester, and particularly the final evaluation, suggest that the spring semester was the time period which influenced the pupils' motivation and attitudes the most. This suggests that the pupils needed time to become accustomed to the workshop-method and to experience the benefits from it.

During the spring semester, the reading journals became more communicative, and the pupils focused more on their opinions and reflections on their reading. For example, Maria's book report towards the end of the year on *The Fault in Our Stars* clearly showed an increase in her motivation towards reading since she had answered that she still did not enjoy reading in the mid-year conference.

Also in Ben's case, there had been a change in attitude and motivation towards reading since the autumn. In his first reading journal in the autumn, Ben wrote that he did not like having to read for 30 minutes as homework. In the final evaluation in June, however, he answered that reading had been what he enjoyed the most about the workshop method. He also said that he now understood more of what he read. However, in terms of writing, Ben commented at the end of the year that there could have been less writing in the lessons.

However, most of the pupils at some point during the year of had a temporary drop in motivation. The teacher eventually realized that it was unrealistic to expect the pupils to remain equally motivated every single day of a whole school year, regardless of the teaching method. It is, after all, normal for everyone to have bad days occasionally. This occasional drop in motivation was also found in Atwell's workshops (1998: 15). The pupils were therefore taught strategies to overcome their 'bad days' without becoming frustrated and allowing it to influence their work. For instance, they would take a break from their current text or brainstorm with the class for ideas for new books to read.

In one area, there was tension in the results, where these showed a discrepancy between what a pupil said about her motivation and attitudes herself, and how her motivation and attitudes appeared based on the researcher's observations. This was the case of Olivia, who expressed herself negatively after the first semester. However, this negativity was not reflected in the lesson observations made by the researcher in the autumn.

Olivia was particularly negative towards reading after the first semester. She said she had not learned anything about reading, and the reading workshops had not helped her. The only thing she had learned about reading was that she did not really like to read. In the same

questionnaire, however, she said that her goal was to read the entire *Hush Hush* series, and only a few weeks later her goal was to read *The Game of Thrones* series. Her negativity came as a surprise to the teacher, since Olivia was the pupil who had written the longest and most enthusiastic reading journals in the autumn. In the reading workshops, Olivia was visibly motivated once she had a book she liked, which appeared to be rather easy for her to find since she was quite aware of her preferences in books.

A possible explanation for this discrepancy could be Olivia's preconceived resistance towards reading, which ran deep. Her dyslexia had made reading difficult and stressful to her over several years. It was likely that Olivia had many negative experiences related to reading. In other words, no matter how much Olivia clearly enjoyed the content of the English books she read, she still seemed to have a negative attitude towards reading, which for years had represented an activity that she had struggled to master. Her attitude was after all understandable.

In the final evaluation in June, on the other hand, Olivia was more positive, and she said there was nothing that had been negative about the English subject that past year. The reading and writing workshops had facilitated more positive experiences with reading and writing than what Olivia was used to from the past. Both Krashen (2004) and Atwell (1998) are strong advocates for the advantages in motivation that come with allowing pupils to choose what to read. These advantages can be explained by Krashen's (1982) input and affective filter hypotheses. First, the pupils' choice, combined with guidance from the teacher, is more likely to ensure that the input is comprehensible to the individual pupil (see section 4.4.2). If the teacher chooses one text for the whole class to read, a potential risk could be that the text is too difficult for some pupils and too easy for others. Second, when deeply involved with reading stories, reading represents a 'flow' activity, where sense of time and self disappears (Krashen, 2004: 29). This has a positive effect on pupils' affective filter, which influences how open learners are for language acquisition (see section 4.2.3).

The case of Olivia can be compared to the previously-mentioned case of Jeff in Atwell (1998: 6). Atwell supplied Jeff with books about the topics she discovered he was interested in, which motivated him to read more. The way that Jeff approached writing in a different way from what Atwell expected him to could also be seen in Olivia's approach to English writing. Olivia was not motivated to write English texts based on her own ideas in the beginning of the year, but soon abandoned the tasks provided to her by the teacher. She started by copying down short

passages that she enjoyed and that inspired her, before she wrote several poems on her own initiative and later long stories.

It is the researcher's belief that continued work with the workshop-based method would have had an even more positive influence on Olivia's attitude. Krashen (2004: 2) made a compilation of results from extensive programs which confirm that the efficiency of the program becomes more evident the longer the program is applied. Particularly consistently positive are the results from extensive reading programs lasting for one year or more.

In the current study, by allowing the pupils to choose, the workshops became pupil-centred and gave them the freedom to pursue their own ideas and interests. Secondary education is a critical period of young adults' lives. It was evident, perhaps in relation to the girls in particular, that reading and writing became tools for emotional development and growth. This was quite a difference from the beginning of the school year, when none of the three girls in the study could think of, or had any kind of writing, that they liked. The observations and sample texts showed that the girls, as well as the boys in the class, had developed their own styles of writing.

If teachers, as a supplement to the workshop-based teaching, would assign certain types of texts for pupils to write, that would also be plausible. Atwell (1998) would also occasionally ask her pupils to attempt certain types of texts and she used the mini-lectures to teach the features the pupils might need for their writing. By writing about topics of their own choice, the pupils became the experts of their content. Their level of anxiety decreased as production came easier, and the pupils became more confident English writers. This kind of development is supported by Hyland (2003: 14), who argues that it is more likely that pupils will be able to write meaningful texts about topics in which they are interested. The reason for this is that pupils are more likely to possess personal knowledge or the motivation to learn about these topics.

An important implication that can be drawn from this interpretation is that if a teacher does not actually assign reading or writing tasks, motivating the pupils to perform reading and writing based on their own choices becomes a crucial part of the teacher's role. This also includes knowledge about books to recommend for the pupils. These must also be appropriate to the pupils' English reading level. As a consequence, if a book is either too easy or too difficult for a pupil, the motivation for reading would decrease dramatically. This was reflected in the

case of Nora when she read graded readers, or the frustration in Olivia when she said that she did not understand anything in the book she was reading.

Another contribution to the pupils' motivation for writing may have been reading their texts aloud to each other, in addition to the book-writing project in the spring. Both of these created a meaningful purpose for the pupils' composition, which was to write for an audience. Atwell (1998) emphasized the effects of real audiences for pupils' texts, since texts should be produced to be read, and not to be evaluated. Graves (1985) confirms the necessity of audience for pupils' writing development, adding that pupils need training in developing their perception of audience from themselves as a first audience, to their class community as second audience. The second audience plays an important role in improving pupils' writing (Graves, 1985: 193). Providing a real audience should therefore be a priority, either by using the class community or real publishing. Only then can writing be truly meaningful to the pupils (Atwell, 1998: 15).

To influence the pupils' motivation even further, it is possible that the teacher could have taken measures to emphasise the pupils' own learning better, since several pupils said that they had not learned anything in particular in the reading or writing workshops during the autumn semester. The teacher could have implemented short quizzes at the end of workshops, or other visible documentation to the pupils, of their prior knowledge about an area of reading or writing, as well as what was new knowledge and skills for them.

However, almost all of the pupils still answered at the end of the year that their English had improved after a year of workshop-based teaching, and that they had enjoyed the new teaching method. Some even mentioned an improvement in their reading or writing specifically. As expressed in the conferences after the first semester, many would have read and written even more if they could have gone back and changed something after the second semester. This suggests that the pupils were positive about reading and writing by the end of the year.

7.4 The pupils' motivation and attitudes towards the English subject

The final aim of the study was to find out if the year of reading and writing workshops had an impact on the pupils' motivation and attitudes towards the English subject in general. The final evaluation in June, in addition to the lesson observations throughout the year, provided data to address this research aim.

In late September, it was evident that the pupils were experiencing practice and input that made them more confident in the subject and in using the English language. Maria found it easier to write in English than in Norwegian, which also applied to both Nora and Olivia. In fact, Olivia had started thinking in English. In a lesson in the spring semester, Ulrik said that he had accidentally started writing in English when he was supposed to write in Norwegian. These kinds of comments witnessed a growing confidence to use the target language.

According to the final evaluation in June, all of the pupils were positive to the workshop method being different from the regular EFL teaching they had experienced. In accordance with the theory of social interactionism (see section 4.3) and the Monitor theory (see section 4.4.2) it can be said that the workshop method allowed the pupils to focus on conveying meaning in their reading, and on communication in their writing. This allowed the teacher to include a range of relevant topics in the writing instruction of the mini-lectures, such as form and choice of words and titles, since many elements of a text are linked to communication between writers and readers.

A person's L1 is acquired through large amounts of spoken input from the environment. By drawing a link between this mechanism and the process of learning a L2 through the implemented workshop method, one can argue that by providing a large amount of input in the target language, other languages can also be acquired in a similar way to one's L1. This argument is supported by Horst (2009: 43), who suggests that there exist parallels between the learning of a L1 through 'communicative speaking tasks' and learning in, for instance, L2 extensive reading contexts, which in the same way aim to provide learners with large amounts of comprehensible input.

Moreover, Elley (1994: 376) claims that languages can be acquired naturally through extensive exposure to input, for instance self-selected texts, and with only minimal formal instruction. Through both meaningful input and practice, the pupils in the current study improved their writing competence, as discussed in section 7.2. The input that the pupils were exposed to was, however, more written than oral. Krashen and Terrell (1983), cited in Hafiz and Tudor (1989: 5), state that written input alone will not result in spoken fluency, due to the phonological factor, as well as differences in spoken and written language. Norwegian young adults, however, are largely exposed to oral English outside of the classroom. In addition, the teacher spoke mostly English and included listening activities in some lessons. All of the pupils believed at the

end of the year that their general language competence had improved, which was also the impression of the teacher.

It was evident to the researcher that reading and writing based on the pupils' own choices made the English subject meaningful and relevant to them, which led to them being positive about the English subject in general. This was reflected in several remarks in the classroom, for instance Olivia's anticipation of having fun because she was going to have an English lesson. This indicated that not only was she positive and motivated about the English subject, but she was also more positive about English compared to the other subjects she had previously had that day. Also Fredrik, who struggled in most subjects, exclaimed at the end of a writing workshop after working in an engaged way on his text that he would have preferred to have had English the entire day.

7.5 Limitations of the study

Different limitations and weaknesses can be addressed in relation to the findings of the current study. Firstly, challenges occurred with this case study, where the researcher implemented a method to see how it developed over time without having a clear hypothesis to test. This resulted in a large amount of data being collected, much of which appeared to be of interest, but which was challenging to process within the limitations of an MA thesis.

Second, the case study was performed on a small group of only seven pupils. This meant that the group was inadequate as a foundation for generalizing the findings. It would hardly be possible to suggest that the same results would automatically transfer to other groups. Moreover, the small group facilitated an excellent overview of the pupils' reading and writing throughout a year, which would have been more challenging in larger groups of pupils. At the same time, the teacher experienced that the English lessons with the implemented workshop program were time-saving in terms of planning compared to other subjects. This allowed more time to be spent following up on the pupils' reading and writing, and providing the pupils with accurate feedback.

Third, the interview guides and questionnaires could have included more similar questions each time, specifically related to motivation and attitudes, such as if the pupils were more or less motivated for learning English and reading and writing than they were in the beginning of the autumn semester. This would have better ensured that the pupils' motivation and attitudes were accurately monitored throughout the study.

Finally, although the evidence pointed in the direction of a positive development in the pupils' writing competence, a certain progression may also have been expected from regular teaching. The current study did not include a control group, which makes it impossible to confirm whether the workshop method caused a more successful development in the pupils' writing than other teaching would have. A comparison can, however, be made with Nygaard's (2010) research on accuracy, which showed that the pupils in her study in upper secondary education reduced their mistakes in their writing by an average of 25% throughout an academic year. Based on the findings of the current study, the workshop method appeared to be equally efficient (with respect to accuracy), and often more successful, in reducing the pupils' mistakes in writing. A follow-up study, comparing the workshop method with a control group, would be highly recommended.

7.6 Recommendations

The pupils in the current study improved their English writing in several areas, became more motivated for reading and writing in English, and were generally positive about the English subject at the end of the research year. As pointed out in section 7.5, the small research group prevents any generalization in terms of how the method would work in larger groups. The findings, however, indicate that the reading and writing workshop method warrants being the subject of further research in English language teaching. If findings from further research confirm the findings of the current study, it could be argued that the method should be given increased attention in Norwegian EFL teaching, and possibly outside of Norway.

The studies referred to in section 4.5 already support the idea that changes should be made in Norwegian EFL teaching. For example, Vigrestad (2006) found that Dutch pupils gained on Norwegian lower secondary pupils in their writing, even though Norwegian pupils had a head start of five years in their English education. Vigrestad suggested that these findings could be linked to the pupils' different conditions in terms of similarities and differences in pupils' L1 and English, but also directly to the quality of EFL teaching in Norway and the Netherlands.

Bø (2014) found that, although teachers believed drafting, revising and feedback were beneficial methods in the teaching of writing at the upper secondary level, these were not commonly used in EFL teaching. The reason for this appeared to be the teachers' lack of time.

Gilje (2011) addressed how the *LK06* curriculum emphasizes reading by defining reading skills as one of five basic skills that should be integrated into all subjects, but the curriculum does not mention how the teaching of reading skills should be approached. Many decisions are therefore left with the teacher, and Gilje found that teacher cognition might take precedence over curricular requirements. This conclusion was based on her findings that abilities regarded as important in the development of reading skills were not necessarily being addressed by the teachers.

All of these findings portray an educational situation in Norway with EFL teaching that leaves room for improvement in terms of reading and writing instruction. It may even sometimes be failing to meet the requirements in the curriculum, as shown by Gilje (2011). Hellekjær (2007: 29) expected a shift towards extensive reading in EFL teaching with the implementation of the *LK06* curriculum to ensure that pupils became fluent readers before they became strategic readers. Vignjevic's (2011) findings, however, showed that this was not the case, since the textbook was the most frequently used source for reading materials in lower secondary.

Reading and writing skills are heavily addressed in the English subject curriculum. It could be suggested from the current study that the reading and writing workshop method addresses reading and writing skills more successfully than traditional EFL teaching. It was also the case that the pupils enjoyed the workshop-based lessons more than the regular EFL teaching they had been exposed to. If this can be shown to be the case on a more general scale, it would call for more consideration of the use of the workshop method in Norwegian EFL teaching and more emphasis on extensive reading to promote both reading and writing skills, and writing based on pupils' own choice with pre-product feedback.

An alternative to implementing the workshop method as a whole, however, is to integrate elements of it as a compromise. For instance, pupils could read books of their own choice as homework, and occasionally write reading journals. Some periods in the school year could be dedicated to 'Book weeks', where talking about books, authors and reading in class can be focused on more than in other weeks.

Furthermore, pupils would benefit from handing in drafts and being able to revise texts before handing in their final written product, as the teachers in Bø's (2014) study also believed, although they mostly gave post-product feedback due to the lack of time. In cases of larger classes, giving feedback could be restricted to feedback on a few points, which would save

considerable time instead of signalling, for example, every misspelled word in the text the way some teachers may do with post-product feedback. Whether pupils improve their writing at all when given the latter type of post-product feedback is also widely debated, for instance by Atwell (1998: 220).

Pupils could write texts based on their own choice in some periods of their education and then later, when they had gained more confidence in English writing, they could be taught and assigned certain types of text to write. For instance, the pupils in the first two years of lower secondary education (8th and 9th grades) could receive the benefits and motivation from writing texts based on their own choice, and then in grade 10 they could be given more specific writing instruction and assignments in preparation for the final exams.

Atwell (1998) mentions that in teaching situations where she has had to relate to a content-based curriculum, she has dedicated the first semester to reading and writing workshops, and then the second semester to content-based teaching. This could also be an interesting approach in Norwegian EFL teaching. The advantage of such an approach would be that pupils are given sufficient time during the workshop semester to fully engage with and sustain their work.

In terms of younger or lower proficiency pupils, these are also likely to benefit from EFL teaching linked to the workshop method. This was evident from the case of Fredrik with his Individual Education Program (IEP)¹². The two teachers believed his proficiency level was too low for him to benefit from writing and reading texts of his own choice. However, the teachers appeared to be wrong since Fredrik improved his writing competence in several areas when he abandoned the tasks that were assigned especially for him, and instead worked according to the workshop principles.

Finally, in terms of the teacher's time, the workshop method actually proved to be less time-consuming in the preparation of lessons compared to the other subjects that the teacher had that same school year. Only the mini-lectures required preparation, while the teacher could pay attention to each individual pupil during the rest of the lesson.

These are some suggestions as to how teachers can start by implementing elements from the workshop in their English teaching in larger groups and with pupils of lower proficiency. To

¹² Individual Education Program is a written document for pupils with special education needs. The IEP should state the pupil's learning needs, what the school provides, and how progress will be measured.

use the same reasoning as supporters of extensive reading, such as Grabe (2009: 328) and Krashen (2004: 2), if further research proves the workshop method to be equally efficient to regular teaching, if not more so, the method should be considered as an alternative approach to EFL teaching. It was generally motivating for the pupils in the current study. The pupils preferred the workshop method to regular teaching because it did not include a textbook, they were not assigned tasks, and they were allowed to make more choices themselves.

7.7 Summary

All of the pupils in the study improved their English writing after a year of workshop-based teaching. The features of the pupils' writing that improved varied, which suggests that the workshop method was a good way of facilitating individualized teaching. The improvement in the pupils' English writing competence can partly be based on the theories of social interactionism and the Monitor theory (see section 4.3 and 4.4.2), which claim that languages can be acquired naturally through extensive exposure to language input (Elley, 1994: 376), because the purpose of language is communication. Extensive reading can function as the input in L2 contexts.

In terms of motivation and attitudes towards reading and writing, the pupils who appeared to be positive and motivated for reading and writing in the beginning of the year were still positive by the end of the year. The pupils who appeared negative or neutral in the beginning of the year had not changed their views much in the middle of the school year. They were, however, clearly more positive at the end of the school year. All of the pupils had a drop in motivation at certain points during the year, which led to the teaching of strategies to help pupils move on and sustain their work. This transitory drop in motivation was not necessarily linked to the teaching method.

It is likely that allowing the pupils to choose both their reading and writing had a positive influence on their attitudes and motivation for reading and writing. Many of the pupils were not initially confident writers, but when they were allowed to choose what to write about, their knowledge of the content made production easier for them, and several pupils were surprised at how long texts they were able to write in English. The pupils were positive about the English subject at the end of the year in June, and this could be because the workshop method provided them with meaningful and comprehensible input.

The limitations of the study are linked to the small size of the research group and the lack of a control group, which means that the results cannot necessarily be expected to transfer to other groups. Based on the relatively positive results, however, the workshop method could nevertheless be the subject of attention by educators and researchers. After all, other studies suggest that the current situation in Norwegian EFL teaching calls for changes (Bø, 2014; Charboneau, 2013; Gilje, 2011; Hellekjær 2005, 2007; Lehmann, 1999; Maier, 2006; Nygaard, 2010; Vigrestad, 2006).

With reading and writing skills being heavily emphasised in the English subject curriculum, the current study suggests that the reading and writing workshop method carries the potential to promote reading and writing skills in a successful way. It was also a teaching method that proved to be enjoyable and motivating for the pupils.

It would also be possible to integrate elements of the workshop method as a compromise to using the whole method. Elements such as extensive reading for periods, or as homework, drafting and pre-product feedback, could be emphasised. One semester of reading and writing workshops and the other with regular and more topic based teaching is another feasible solution, which Atwell (1998) applied.

In some cases, for instance before final exams, it may be desirable, for instance, to train pupils to master certain skills or types of texts. It would still be important to first get pupils to become confident and motivated English writers. The two first years of lower secondary school, for instance, could be dedicated to reading and writing workshops (or elements from them), while the last year before final exams could be dedicated to the teaching of specific genres or topics. Moreover, it is also likely that the workshop method could prove to be beneficial for lower grades than secondary education. Further research would be needed also in this area.

8.0 Conclusion

The current study was based on the implementation of a reading and writing workshop-based program in the EFL lessons of a Norwegian 8th grade class of nine pupils for a whole school year. The implemented program was largely based on Atwell's (1998) workshop approach, which was designed for a L1 context, while the current study was carried out in a foreign language one. Seven of the nine pupils constituted the research group and these were followed throughout their school year of English lessons. The aims of the research were to study the development of the pupils' English writing competence, the pupils' motivation and attitudes towards reading and writing in English, and their motivation and attitudes towards the English subject in general.

The data from the research period was obtained through classroom observations, the pupils' reading journals, and sample texts. There were also two separate semi-structured interviews with each pupil in the beginning of the autumn semester. A questionnaire and subsequent pupil conference, which addressed the teaching in the autumn semester, was carried out in the beginning of the spring semester. Finally, a questionnaire evaluation of the whole project was carried out at the end of the school year in June.

The findings from the current study showed that all of the pupils improved their English writing after the year of workshop-based teaching. The features of the pupils' writing that improved varied, and appeared somehow to target the distinct feature which each pupil struggled with the most. In terms of motivation and attitudes, the pupils who appeared to be positive and motivated for reading and writing in the beginning of the year were still positive by the end of the year. The pupils who appeared negative or neutral in the beginning of the year were more positive to reading and writing at the end of the spring semester. All of the pupils were positive towards the English subject in general after the year of workshop-based teaching. What the pupils specifically mentioned as positive differences between the workshop-based teaching and regular teaching, were that they did not use a textbook, that they were not assigned tasks, and that they were allowed to make more choices by themselves.

Reading and writing skills are heavily emphasised in the English subject curriculum. The current study has referred to previous studies and scholars who call for changes in Norwegian EFL education towards a more efficient teaching of reading and writing. The contribution of the

current has been to implement and study that seems to have the potential to offer a successful approach to the teaching of English reading and writing in Norwegian schools. It has also contributed by carrying out a longitudinal study of the reading and writing workshop method as applied to an EFL context which, to the best of the author's knowledge has not happened or been researched previously

Considering that the research selection was a small one, of only seven pupils, it is not possible to generalize from the current case study to other groups. However, the relatively positive results from the case study may encourage educators and researchers to initiate research that can follow up on the current study. First of all, studies on a greater scale than that of the current research could be conducted. The research could apply the approach, or elements of it, in larger groups, and could also include a control group to measure the development in the research group with that of a control group. Second, it would be interesting to implement the workshop-method with learners in lower educational levels to see if a certain level of proficiency creates a minimum threshold to experience the benefits of a workshop approach. Finally, as an alternative to applying the method as a whole, different elements of the workshop method could be the subject of further educational research in Norway. It is the researcher's belief that the elements in the workshop that would be particularly interesting to investigate further are the effects of drafting and pre-product feedback on pupils' writing, as well as reading and writing based on pupils' own choice.

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Appendix 1 – NSD Approval

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS

NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES

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Vår ref: 39813 / 3 / LMR

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TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 13.09.2014. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

<i>39813</i>	<i>Reading and Writing Workshop method in a Norwegian EFL classroom</i>
<i>Behandlingsansvarlig</i>	<i>Universitetet i Stavanger, ved institusjonens øverste leder</i>
<i>Daglig ansvarlig</i>	<i>Ion Drew</i>
<i>Student</i>	<i>Hanne Marte Vatnaland</i>

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

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

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

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

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 30.06.2016, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Katrine Utaaker Segadal

Linn-Merethe Rød

Kontaktperson: Linn-Merethe Rød tlf: 55 58 89 11

Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering

Kopi: Hanne Marte Vatnaland hmvatnaland@gmail.com

Personvernombudet for forskning



Prosjektvurdering - Kommentar

Prosjektnr: 39813

Utvalget informeres skriftlig og muntlig om prosjektet og samtykker til deltakelse. Det innhentes samtykke også fra foreldre, til elevenes deltakelse. Deltakelsen skal likevel være frivillig for elevene, selv om foreldrene har samtykket. Dette innebærer at elevene må få tilpasset informasjon og gi sin aksept under datainnsamlingen.

Informasjonsskrivet er godt utformet.

Det legges til grunn at prosjektet i sin helhet er godkjent av skoleledelsen.

Personvernombudet legger også til grunn at forsker etterfølger Universitetet i Stavanger sine interne rutiner for datasikkerhet.

Forventet prosjektslutt er 30.06.2016. Ifølge prosjektmeldingen skal innsamlede opplysninger da anonymiseres. Anonymisering innebærer å bearbeide datamaterialet slik at ingen enkeltpersoner kan gjenkjennes. Det gjøres ved å:

- slette direkte personopplysninger (som navn/koblingsnøkkel)
- slette/omskrive indirekte personopplysninger (identifiserende sammenstilling av bakgrunnsopplysninger somf.eks. bosted/arbeidssted, alder og kjønn)

Appendix 2 – Letter of consent

Forespørsel om deltakelse i forskningsprosjektet

“Reading and Writing Workshop Method in a Norwegian EFL classroom”

Bakgrunn og formål

Jeg planlegger å gjennomføre et prosjekt i 8.klasse på [REDACTED] i forbindelse med min mastergradsstudie ved Universitetet i Stavanger. I engelsktimene med meg som faglærer, jobber vi i lese- og skriveworkshops som innebærer at vi bruker mye tid på å lese og skrive hele engelske tekster, basert på elevenes egne interesser og valg. Prosjektet vil gå parallelt med undervisningen, og undersøke effekten av workshop metoden i engelsktimene. Det vil være veldig spennende å se elevenes utvikling gjennom skoleåret, både faglig men også med tanke på motivasjon og holdning til engelskfaget, og lesing og skriving generelt.

Hva innebærer deltakelse i studien?

Studien vil i hovedsak gå ut på å observere elevene i klasserommet, føre oversikt over elevenes lesing og skriving, bruke elevenes skriftlige eksemplararbeid over tid, og tre planlagte intervjuer med elevene i løpet av skoleåret. Intervjuspørsmålene vil omhandle elevenes motivasjon og holdninger til lesing og skriving, og deres faglige bevissthet. Det er kun skriftlige notater som vil innhentes. På forespørsel kan intervjuguide sendes på mail.

Hva skjer med informasjonen om eleven?

Alle personopplysninger vil bli behandlet konfidensielt. Det er kun jeg som har tilgang til personopplysninger, som i publikasjonen vil bli kodet. Navneliste med koder vil lagres adskilt fra øvrige data. Det vil si at deltakerne ikke vil kunne gjenkjennes når studien publiseres.

Prosjektet skal etter planen avsluttes juni 2016. Alt av datamateriell vil anonymiseres ved prosjektslutt.

Frivillig deltakelse

Det er frivillig å delta i studien, og du kan når som helst trekke ditt samtykke uten å oppgi noen grunn. Dersom du trekker samtykket, vil alle innhentede opplysninger om ditt barn for studieformålet bli slettet. Valget om deltakelse i studien vil ikke ha noen innvirkning på ditt barns undervisning eller resultater.

Studien er meldt til Personvernombudet for forskning, Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS. Ta gjerne kontakt for flere spørsmål vedrørende studien.

Hilsen Hanne Marte Vatnaland, tlf: 92459904

Samtykke til deltakelse i studien

Jeg har mottatt informasjon om studien, og samtykker til at følgende deltar i studien:

Elevens navn

(Signert av foreldre/verge, dato)

Appendix 3 – Question guide about reading for initial interview

Name: _____

Date: _____

1. If you had to guess...
 - a. How many books would you say you owned?
 - b. How many books would you say there are in your house?
 - c. How many books would you say you have read in the last year?
2. How did you learn to read?
3. Why do people read? List as many reasons as you can think of.
4. What does someone have to do or know in order to be a good reader?
5. What kinds of books do you like to read?
6. How do you decide which books you will read?
7. Who are your favorite authors?
8. Have you ever reread a book? If so, can you name it/them?
9. How often do you read at home?
10. In general, how do you feel about reading?

Appendix 4 – Question guide about writing for initial interview

Name: _____

Date: _____

1. Are you a writer?
2. How do people learn how to write?
3. Why do people write? List as many reasons as you can think of.
4. What does someone have to do or know in order to write well?
5. What kinds of writing do you like to write?
6. How do you decide what you will write about? Where do your ideas come from?
7. What kinds of response help you most as a writer?
8. How often do you write at home?
9. In general, how do you feel about what you write?

Appendix 5 – Questionnaire about the pupils’ writing in the autumn semester

WRITING SELF-EVALUATION: SEMESTER 1

NAME:

DATE:

1. Kor mange tekstar skreiv du ferdig dette semesteret? _____
[How many texts did you finish writing in the past semester?]

2. Kva sjangarar var dei?
[What genres were they?]

3. Kva tekst jobba du best med, og kvifor? (kva gjorde du som forfattar?)
[With which text did you perform your best, and why? (What did you do as a writer?)]

4. Korleis brukte du di liste med Writing Territories dette semesteret?
[How did you use your list of Writing Territories in the past semester?]

5. Korleis fekk du idear til det du skreiv om?
[How did you come up with the ideas for what do write about?]

6. Kva nye ting prøvde du som skribent?
[What new things did you try as a writer?]

7. Kva har du lært om skiving dette semesteret?

[What have you learned about writing in the past semester?]

8. Kva har vore nyttig for deg som skribent som eg/me har gjort i Writing Workshops?

[What has been useful to you as a writer that I/we have done during the Writing Workshops?]

9. Kva ville du gjort annleis om du kunne dette semesteret?

[If you could, what would you have done differently in the past semester?]

10. Kva er målet ditt for det neste semesteret?

[What is your goal for the next semester?]

Appendix 6 – Questionnaire about the pupils’ reading in the autumn semester

READING SELF-EVALUATION: SEMESTER 1

NAME:

DATE:

1. Kor mange bøker leste du ferdig? _____
[How many books did you finish reading?]

2. Kva sjangarar var dei?
[What genres were they?]

3. Kva var den beste boka av alle dei du las, og kvifor? Kva gjorde forfattaren?
[Out of all the books you read, which one was the best, and why? What did the author do?]

4. Korleis brukte du di liste med Reading Territories dette semesteret?
[How did you use your list of Reading Territories in the past semester?]

5. Kva har du lært om lesing?
[What have you learned about reading?]

6. Kva har du lært om deg sjølv som lesar?
[What have you learned about yourself as a reader?]

7. Kva har vore nyttig for deg som lesar som eg/me har gjort i Reading Workshops?
[What has been useful to you as a reader that I/we have done during the Reading Workshops?]

8. Kva ville du gjort annleis i Reading Workshops om du kunne gå tilbake dette semesteret?

[If you could, what would you have done differently during the Reading Workshops in the past semester?]

9. Kva er målet ditt for det neste semesteret?

[What is your goal for the next semester?]

Appendix 7 – Final evaluation

FINAL EVALUATION

NAME:

DATE:

1. Kor mange tekstar skreiv du ferdig på engelsk dette semesteret? _____
[How many English texts did you finish writing in the past semester?]
2. Kor mange bøker leste du ferdig på engelsk dette semesteret? _____
[How many English books did you finish reading in the past semester?]
3. Har du likt engelskfaget i år?
[Have you enjoyed English this year?]
4. Kva synst du om at engelskundervisninga har vore annleis enn normalt?
[What do you think about the fact that the English teaching this year has been different from normal?]
5. Kva har vore positivt med engelsk i år?
[What has been positive about English this year?]
6. Kva har vore negativt med engelsk i år?
[What has been negative about English this year?]
7. Trur du at engelsken din har blitt betre? Kva/korleis då?
[Do you think your English has improved? What/how?]
8. Kva ville du gjort annleis i engelsk i år?
[If you could, what would you have done differently during the English lessons this year?]
9. Kva skulle du ønske at læraren hadde gjort annleis i engelsk i år?
[What would you have wanted your teacher to do differently during the English lessons this year?]