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Abstract

This thesis is about a study of English writing and feedback in an upper secondary school in Norway. The ability to express oneself in writing is one of the five basic skills in the Norwegian *LK06* English subject curriculum. However, some Norwegian studies (e.g. Lehmann 1999; Nygaard 2010) indicate that Norwegian students' writing skills in English are inadequate. How teachers teach English writing is therefore important to investigate, and feedback is one important factor of teaching and developing writing.

Theory on L1 and L2 writing is presented in the study, in addition to summative and formative assessment in writing, with process writing as one form of formative assessment. Research on feedback is also thoroughly presented.

The study investigates the students' and teachers' experiences and attitudes to English writing and feedback in the upper secondary school. It looks into how teachers provide feedback to English writing and how students receive feedback. Both the students' and teachers' attitudes to English writing and feedback are investigated. In addition, the study also explores how feedback influences the development of the students' writing by analysing some of the students' drafts.

The study used mixed methods, both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Semi-structured interviews with three teachers were conducted, questionnaires were answered by 83 students and four student texts were analysed. The teacher interviews showed that the teachers provided feedback in a rather similar way, namely that they gave mostly post-product feedback. However, one of the teachers asked the students to revise their texts after they had received feedback and their grades, while the other two required no revisions at all. Process writing, multiple drafts or peer feedback were not common in the teaching of English writing, even though the teachers said there were benefits with, for example, process writing. The teachers gave both written and oral feedback, with an emphasis on written feedback. However, they wished they could give more oral feedback. Thus, the teachers did not always practise what they thought was most beneficial for their students because they felt they did not have enough time.

The questionnaires showed that the majority of the students produced texts in a similar way, namely they wrote one text without drafts and feedback. They claimed to receive mostly written feedback, and the feedback was mostly given at the same time as the grade, in other words it was post-product feedback.

The analysis of student texts showed that the students who were required to revise their texts, improved them as a result of the feedback. However, most of the revisions were done in terms of language, and the teacher's comments on content were not responded to by these students.

This thesis has made a contribution to the research on English writing and feedback in upper secondary education in Norway by focusing on writing and feedback in one upper secondary school and using a mixed methods approach. It has provided insight into the experiences and attitudes to written feedback, both from the students' and teachers' perspectives, as well as including a study of some texts. The study confirms other research in this field (i.e. Vik 2013), namely that written feedback at the upper secondary schools that have been studied is primarily post-product feedback, because the teachers do not seem to have time to practise pre-product feedback.

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1. Introduction

1.1 The present study

This thesis is an investigation of the manner, experiences, beliefs about and effects of feedback to English writing in a Norwegian upper secondary school. It looks into how teachers provide feedback and how students experience receiving feedback to writing in English. The students' and teachers' attitudes towards the topic are also investigated. The thesis also aims to investigate how feedback influences students' writing development. The thesis is based on a case study of written English in the context of three teachers and their students in an upper secondary school, at both first year (Vg1) and second year (Vg2) levels.

The research method that was used in the study was a mixed methods approach, a combination of qualitative and quantitative research; both teacher interviews and student questionnaires were used. To get even richer data, the aim was also to analyse a small sample of student texts to see how they evolved during the process of feedback and revision. With these methods, the aims were to investigate what practices, experiences, attitudes and beliefs the teachers and the students in the study have in relation to feedback to written English, and how the students' writing can develop with feedback.

1.2 Relevance and background

It is important to express oneself in writing in today's society. Many key everyday tasks require of one to know how to read and write (Grabe and Kaplan 1996:3). As the culture in Norway has become more and more Americanized and as the world has become more and more connected, it is also important that Norwegians know how to communicate and, in this case, write in English[1].

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[1] http://www.udir.no/kl06/ENG1-03/Hele/Formaal/, accessed 27.09.13

However, Lehmann (1999) conducted a doctoral study of Norwegian students of English in higher education that showed that Norwegian students often did not acquire the proper skills in English in school needed later in life in higher education and professional careers. Lehmann argued that English teaching had put too much focus on the communicative method at the expense of accuracy. In another study, Nygaard (2010) found that the level of written accuracy in English was generally poor amongst upper secondary level students and that argued that the English writing instruction in the earlier school levels should be improved. These two studies indicate that there seem to be problems concerning the level of English writing skills in Norwegian schools. They have found that Norwegian students' level of English writing skills is not as high as it needs to be, and they have found the results at different points of time: in 1999 and 2010. The time span between the two studies, and the fact that they found similar results at those different points of time, indicates that these problems may still exist in Norwegian schools.

Writing in English is a skill that is mostly learnt in school, and therefore it is important to investigate how writing and feedback are experienced in the school system and the attitudes towards it. Writing is a 'set of skills which must be practiced and learned through experience' (Grabe and Kaplan 1996:6). Learning to write includes amongst other things, training and instruction (Grabe and Kaplan 1996:6), and this instruction is primarily done in a school context.

Providing feedback is an important part of teaching and developing writing, and there are many different approaches to it. As Hyland (2003:177) claims:

> The nature of this response can vary widely and feedback practices differ according to the teachers' preferences as well as the kind of writing task they have set and the effect they wish to create.

For example, there is the difference between teacher feedback and peer feedback, feedback on form compared to content, and written versus oral feedback (Hyland 2003). In these categories there are many variations on how feedback can be given. With so many different ways of giving and receiving feedback, some ways may be more effective than others. Hattie and Timperley's (2007:104) view is that: 'To be effective, feedback needs to be clear, purposeful, meaningful, and compatible with students' prior knowledge and to provide logical connections'.

The *Knowledge Promotion* Curriculum (*LK06*) for Norwegian schools places focus on five basic skills throughout the entire schooling; being able to express oneself in writing is one of these five skills. The competence aims for Vg1 general programmes and Vg2 vocational programmes[2] in upper secondary school are the same and are divided into four main areas: Language learning, Oral communication, Written communication and finally, Culture, society and literature (*LK06* English subject curriculum). English writing is therefore a skill that is emphasized in the curriculum, especially in the main area of written communication. It is important to be able to write, and therefore, the development of writing is also important.

Second language (L2) writing is more challenging than first language (L1) writing (Silva 1993). Research conducted amongst adult second language learners shows that second language composing is 'more constrained, more difficult, and less effective' than first language writing (Silva 1993:668). With this in mind, one cannot simply apply only first language research findings on second language learners. Research on language writing has been neglected and is rather recent (Grabe and Kaplan 1996:27). However, several studies have been carried out in the field of writing research in Norway. Maier (2006) and Vigrestad (2006) are two Norwegian MA studies that focused on written English in lower secondary schools. Maier (2006) focused on how teaching strategies of written English had changed over time. Vigrestad focused on fluency and complexity in the writing of Norwegian and Dutch 7th and 10th graders. Norwegian MA theses that have focused on upper secondary learners are Nygaard (2010) and Vik (2013). Nygaard, as mentioned, focused on accuracy in English writing of students in upper secondary school and Vik focused on assessment in English in two upper secondary schools.

This thesis aims to contribute to the research of second language writing in Norway. It is different from most of the other studies mentioned, since it uses mixed methods instead of only one method. This gives a more holistic approach to the topic and gives the advantage of perspectives from both the students and teachers. To the author's best knowledge, no other research in Norway has focused on the specific topic of feedback on written English at upper secondary level, and this thesis thus aims to fill that gap. It is important that more research

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[2] The upper secondary education in Norway is mostly divided into three years: Vg1, Vg2 and Vg3. Vg1 general programmes is the first year of general programmes, and three years of general programmes lead to admission to higher education.Vg2 general programmes is the second year of vocational training, which usually leads to a profession. The competence aims are the same for the first year of general programmes and the first and second year combined in the vocational programmes.

within the area of English writing in Norway is carried out. This thesis aims to add to the already existing research and also to bring new perspectives to the topic of English writing and the development of English writing skills in Norwegian schools today.

1.3 Research questions

By using the different methods mentioned, the aims are to find out how teachers and students approach the skill of writing and feedback to it. The focus of the study will be on the following research questions:

- What practices and beliefs do teachers in a Norwegian upper secondary school have in connection with English writing and feedback?
- How do their students experience the practices of writing in English and receiving feedback to written English?
- What are the students' attitudes to the practices of English writing and feedback?
- How does feedback influence the development of the students' writing?

The author has different expectations of the possible findings. On the one hand the literature, which is presented in Chapter three, clearly shows positive benefits of providing feedback to writing, and because of this one would expect feedback to be used. Based on the research presented in Chapter three, one would expect that both pre-product feedback (feedback given before a text is finished) and post-product feedback (feedback given after a text is finished) is provided and that both oral and written feedback is used. Process writing, which also will be presented in Chapter three, also seems to provide benefits for the improvement of writing, and one would expect that this method is used.

On the other hand, Vik's (2013) study shows that little pre-product feedback is provided in English writing in the control school of her study, which is a regular upper secondary school. This finding, in addition to the author's personal experiences of receiving little pre-product feedback to English writing throughout Norwegian schooling, gives grounds to expect that pre-product feedback might also not be much used in the school represented in this study.

The author also has low expectations, based on personal experience, concerning the students' motivation for communicating in English writing.

1.4 Outline of the thesis

Chapter two provides background information about English and the curriculum in the upper secondary school in Norway. In Chapter three, theory of developing writing and using feedback will be presented, with special attention to the Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky 1978), L1 and L2 writing, summative and formative assessment in writing, process writing and feedback to writing. Research on writing in a Norwegian context is also presented in this chapter. In Chapter four explanations of the methods used in this thesis are given, and descriptions about how the participants were chosen and the process of collecting the data. In Chapter five, the findings are presented, which consist of the questionnaire answers, summaries of the interviews and examples of drafts of student texts. The findings are then discussed in Chapter six, and conclusions are drawn in Chapter seven.

2. Background

2.1 English in the school system in Norway

In Norway, children start school at the age of six, and attend a 10-year obligatory school that contains primary school (first to seventh grade) and lower secondary school (eighth to tenth grade). They start learning English, which has been a compulsory subject since the 1960s, in the first grade[3]. In primary school and lower secondary school the total of all the English lessons is 588[4]. When learners have finished lower secondary school, they decide which upper secondary school and which programme they would like to attend. The choices they make at 16 years of age decide what the next step of their education will be. Upper secondary education leads either to an occupation or entrance to universities or colleges.

There are two directions to choose from in upper secondary education: vocational and general programmes. The vocational programmes lead to a specific occupation and there are nine different programmes: 1) agriculture, fishing and forestry, 2) building and construction, 3) design, arts and crafts, 4) electricity and electronics, 5) healthcare, childhood and youth development, 6) media and communication, 7) restaurant and food processing, 8) service and transport and 9) technical and industrial production[5]. These programmes consist of two years in school and two years in an apprenticeship. When the students have finished the four years, they receive a crafts- or journeyman's certificate. There are also possibilities to continue with a third year in school instead of the apprenticeship, and students who choose to do this can gain entry to universities or colleges.

The general programmes consist of three years in school and provide access to higher education. There are three courses to choose from: 1) Music, dance and drama, 2) Specialization in general studies and 3) Sports and physical education.

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[3] http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/kd/dok/regpubl/stmeld/2007-2008/stmeld-nr-23-2007-2008-/7/2/1.html?id=512505, accessed 08.04.2014

[4] http://www.udir.no/Regelverk/Rundskriv/2013/Udir-1-2013-Kunnskapsloftet-fag--og-timefordeling-og-tilbudsstruktur/Udir-1-2013-Vedlegg-1/2-Grunnskolen/, accessed 08.04.2014

[5] http://www.vilbli.no/?Falang=&Lan=3, accessed 26.11.2013

English is a compulsory subject in both the general and vocational programmes in upper secondary school. In the general programmes, English is a five- hour-a-week course that lasts the whole of the first year. In the vocational programmes the course is spread over the two first years, with three hours the first year and two hours the second year. The same curriculum and learning goals apply to both courses.

2.2 The *Knowledge Promotion* curriculum (*LK06*)

The *Knowledge Promotion* curriculum (*LK06*) that Norwegian teachers follow was implemented in 2006. There are five basic skills that are integrated in each subject and they are 'the ability to express oneself orally and in writing, the ability to read, the ability to use digital tools and numeracy'[6]. There are specific competence aims for the second, fourth, seventh and tenth year of primary and lower secondary school and for the first year in general programmes (Vg1) and for the second year in vocational programmes (Vg2). The competence aims are divided among four areas: 'Language learning, 'Oral communication', 'Written communication' and 'Culture, society and literature'. The curriculum was revised in 2013, and the three original main areas have now become four instead of three. The original area 'Communication' has now been divided into 'Written communication' and 'Oral communication'. The research of this study took place in a transitional period between the original and the revised version. The main difference of the original and the revised curriculum is that the original area 'Communication' has been divided into two areas.

The 'Language learning' goals for the Vg1 and Vg2 students are for the students to able to evaluate different situations, work methods, strategies and resources in how they are developing their English skills. The second area is 'Oral communication' and the third area is 'Written communication'. The goals are to be able to use relevant vocabulary orally and in writing, to understand the content and details of different texts both orally and in writing, to understand the different variations of English, to be able to express oneself orally and in writing in a precise and good way, to be able to communicate spontaneously and when prepared, to use varied language, to use references in a good way, and to use technical and mathematical information in communication. Some competence goals that are especially

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[6] http://www.udir.no/Stottemeny/English/Curriculum-in-English/_english/Knowledge-promotion---Kunnskapsloftet/, accessed 26.11.2013

relevant for this thesis are those connected to communication in writing. The students should be able to:

- evaluate and use suitable reading and writing strategies adapted for the purpose and type of text
- understand and use an extensive general vocabulary and an academic vocabulary related to one's education programme
- use own notes to write texts related to one's education programme
- write different types of texts with structure and coherence suited to the purpose and situation
- use patterns for orthography, word inflection and varied sentence and text construction to produce texts

The fourth and final area is 'Culture, society and literature'. Important aspects of the goals within this area are to have knowledge about and present, discuss and debate different aspects and topics of the English-speaking world.

2.3 System of grading and exams

In primary school, there is no grading involved. The grading of students begins in lower secondary school, where the students each semester are given a report with their grades (continuous assessment), based on assessment during the semester. The grading scale is from 1, which is the failing grade and a grade that shows 'very low degree of competence in the subject' to 6, which shows 'exceptionally high degree of competence in the subject'[7]. In the English subject at lower secondary school, the students are given two separate grades: one grade based on their written work and one on their oral work. At the end of the students' last semester in lower secondary school, they receive their final two grades in English.

In upper secondary school the grading scale is the same as in lower secondary school, with a scale from 1 to 6. The difference is that the final grade at the end of the course is no longer two separate grades, but one merged grade based on both the students' oral and written

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[7] http://lovdata.no/dokument/SF/forskrift/2006-06-23-724/KAPITTEL_4#KAPITTEL_4, accessed 11.04.2014

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work. This merging of the two grades into one may be challenging both for teachers and students, because the students' proficiency may differ in the two areas.

The Norwegian law on education (Forskrift til opplæringslova § 3-1[8]) states that students have the right to both formative and summative assessment. The students have the right to know what the goals are and what the evaluation is based on. In paragraph 3-2 of the law on education, the purposes of assessment are stated. With the use of both formative and summative assessment, the goal is to promote continuous learning and to describe the competence of the student. The evaluation is supposed to provide good feedback and guidance to the student. Formative assessment is meant as a tool in the learning process (§ 3-11), and can be both orally or in writing. The evaluation is meant to increase the student's development in the subject. The student has the right to at least one conversation per semester with the teacher where the topic is the student's development in the subject. Student self-assessment is also part of formative assessment.

In Vg1 general programmes and Vg2 vocational programmes in upper secondary school, 20 % of the students get randomly chosen for an exam at the end of the school year[9]. The exam can be either an oral or a written exam, and there are various subject possibilities, for example Norwegian, mathematics or English. The students who are chosen for the English exam, will be given an external grade in the English subject, in addition to the continuous assessment grade. Many students may not be chosen at all. The written exams are made and examined by external examiners, while the oral exams are made locally and examined externally.

2.4 Teacher qualifications

In order to teach in upper secondary levels in Norway, the teacher must at minimum have a Bachelor degree, even though it is preferred that the teacher has a Master degree in one of his/her subjects. Another option is that a teacher may have a Bachelor of Education, but it is then required to have at least a full year of study in his/her teaching subjects. If one does not have a Bachelor of Education, but a Bachelor or Master degree in a subject, a one-year

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[8] http://lovdata.no/dokument/SF/forskrift/2006-06-23-724, accessed 27.09.2013.
[9] http://www.udir.no/Regelverk/Rundskriv/2009/Udir-1-2009-Trekkordning-ved-eksamen-i-Kunnskapsloftet/, accessed 10.05.2014

Postgraduate Certificate of Education[10] is needed to gain competence to work at the intermediate, lower or upper secondary level. This course has three focuses: educational theory, didactics connected to the subject and practice with supervision, often one practice period in lower secondary school and one in upper secondary school.

The teacher must also follow the regulations provided by the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training[11] that can be found in the Education Act. These regulations together with the *Knowledge Promotion* curriculum (*LK06*), provide guidelines and regulations for the teacher to work by.

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[10] http://www.uis.no/studietilbud/laererutdanninger/ppu-praktisk-pedagogisk-utdanning/praktisk-pedagogisk-utdanning-heltid/, accessed 10.04.2014.
[11] http://www.udir.no/Stottemeny/English/Norwegian-Directorate-for-Education-and-Training/, accessed 10.04.2014.

3. Theory and literature review

3.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to present theory and research connected to L2 writing, especially feedback to writing. First, in section 3.2, there is a description of Vygotsky's 'Zone of Proximal Development' (ZPD) (Vygotsky 1978). The ZPD is important because of its relevance to the topic of this thesis. Learning to write is often a social activity and the process of writing and giving feedback is a process that has, will be explained later, roots in the Vygotskian view of learning.

Theory and research on writing is then presented in sections 3.3 and 3.4 and theory on assessment and process writing in sections 3.5 and 3.6. Different aspects of feedback follow in section 3.7 and its subsections include indirect and direct feedback, oral and written feedback, effects of feedback, timing of feedback, students' preferences when it comes to feedback and, finally, peer feedback. It is important to review many aspects of feedback in order to explore the topic thoroughly. Finally, research in a Norwegian setting will be presented in section 3.9.

3.2 Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

There is a social aspect of learning that Vygotsky (1978) describes with the 'Zone of proximal development' (ZPD). The ZPD is explained as:

> The distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers.
>
> (Vygotsky 1978:86)

According to Vygotsky (1978:87), it is not enough to look only at the 'actual developmental level' to determine a person's mental development, but one must also pay attention to their ZPD. After a period of time, the ZPD becomes the actual developmental level, in other words: '... what a child can do with assistance today she will be able to do by herself tomorrow' (Vygotsky 1978:87). The ZPD continuously changes, as the child is capable of more demanding tasks.

This theory establishes the importance of social contact. This type of learning is only possible when the learner relates to other people. As Vygotsky (1978:90) puts it: 'Learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his environment and in cooperation with his peers'. When the processes are adopted as one's own, they become part of the actual developmental level.

The ZPD can also be used in connection with the teaching of writing. Grabe and Kaplan (1996:242) point out that a 'socio-cognitive approach to writing development has evolved out of Vygotsky's theories…' The theory of ZPD is applied to writing when the student learns to write in an apprenticeship with a more qualified person in the field, who provides expert assistance. Grabe and Kaplan (1996:243) claim that students learn writing in this manner 'in the process of the writing activity and through feedback on the writing'. In other words, process and feedback are important aspects of learning writing according to Vygotsky's theories of learning. These are topics that will be further elaborated in this chapter.

3.3 L1 writing

In the past teachers presented writing as just 'talk written down' (Nunan 1999:274). However, it is now accepted that though there are similarities between written and spoken language, there are also differences. One major distinction is that written language, at least when it comes to information and communication, is 'used to communicate with others who are removed in time and space' (Nunan 1999:275). A second distinction is that written language must be 'culturally transmitted' in comparison to oral language, which is 'naturally acquired' (Grabe and Kaplan 1996:6). There are certain skills that must be learnt when it comes to written language. Grabe and Kaplan (1996:6) claim that 'Writing is a technology, a set of skills which must be practiced and learned through experience'.

This section will focus on research on L1 writing. Four disciplines, that represent their own dimensions of research in English L1 contexts will be described, based on Grabe and Kaplan (1996:18-23). The four disciplines that Grabe and Kaplan present are education, psychology, linguistics and rhetoric/composition.

The first research discipline is education and how learners obtain writing skills. Researchers have investigated 'socio-educational contexts for learning to write', the need for meaning and purpose to be connected to writing and the different stages young learners learn and mature by (Grabe and Kaplan 1996:18). Ethnography within education has also been explored. Research has investigated how learners with different backgrounds learn in ordinary educational environments, the different views on learning in home environments versus school environments, the effects of the interactional starting point in learning, and attitudes of the students versus those of the teachers. The relevant issue here is to determine how people learn how to write. Results of the research that has been conducted shows that 'exposure to literacy events, attitudes towards school literacy events, attitudes towards school literacy, and the teaching of meaningful literacy tasks' (Grabe and Kaplan 1996:19) have major importance in developing writing skills.

The second research discipline in L1 writing is psychology and the cognitive features of writing. The research has been mostly empirical, but also observational research and case studies have been conducted. The focus has gone from studying the text itself to studying the processes of writing. Research in this area has shown that writers do not compose in a linear process, but move from pre-writing, writing and revising (Grabe and Kaplan 1996:19).

The third discipline is linguistics, or text construction. The focus here is how the construction and organization of texts are carried out in a way that is reader friendly. Themes of this research have been 'lexico-grammatical structures, cohesion, coherence, inferences-making processes, and text processes' (Grabe and Kaplan 1996:20). Research has been conducted by both quantitative and qualitative studies.

The fourth discipline of research on writing is rhetoric/composition (Grabe and Kaplan 1996:20). Research examines variation of writing skills in relation to purpose, topic, genre and audience. The research also examines the social construction of writing, and also the contexts in which one writes. Research in this area has given results that put increasing importance on discourse and social construction in writing.

L1 writing research has given results that guide the writing process and instruction. These four fields in L1 writing research have changed writing instruction in a positive way (Grabe and Kaplan 1996:21). Instead of having one approach to writing instruction, the

research can provide insights into establishing several approaches to writing instruction, and benefit from the strengths of the different approaches (Grabe and Kaplan 1996:33).

The second discipline is the most relevant discipline for this thesis since it focuses on the writing processes instead of studying the text itself, and it is feedback and revision/editing within the writing process that this thesis focuses on.

3.4 L2 writing

Research in L2 writing started to emerge in the 1960s and 1970s in the USA and the UK. It was the field of applied linguistics that paid most attention to writing in L2 in the beginning, but research had also been conducted in education and composition studies in the 1990s (Grabe and Kaplan 1996:27). Hyland (2003:2) claims that the area of L2 writing as scholarship emerged in the 1980s. Thus, it is a relatively new area of research.

Writing is complex and L2 writing is a difficult skill to acquire. It may even be the most difficult L2 skill. There are different approaches that together give insights to understanding the process of L2 writing. Six approaches will now be presented based on Hyland (2003). Writing instruction often uses a variety of these approaches, but some are more used than others at different times.

One approach is to focus on language structures (Hyland 2003:3). This approach focuses on the text as a product. In this view, learning to write is learning about the linguistics, vocabulary, syntax and cohesion in a written language. This view was especially used in the 1960s.

A second approach focuses on text functions (Hyland 2003:6). This approach focuses on that in learning how to write, the learner must acquire knowledge about patterns of writing, for example paragraphs. The different language elements act in different ways of communicating, for example academic texts have certain functions and forms that other genres do not have.

A third approach is to focus on the creative expression of the writer. Writing is a means to create meaning and is personal. Within this view, teachers give learners the space to create meaning. Hyland (2003:9) claims that; 'Writing is an act of discovering meaning'. The important element in this approach is the ability to express oneself, compared to the two approaches mentioned earlier that focus on the form.

The fourth approach puts emphasis on the process of writing (Hyland 2003:11). The original writing process involves planning, writing and reviewing (See also section 3.6). Within this approach there are different stages while producing texts. It starts with pre-writing, which involves for example brainstorming of ideas and outlining the text. It continues with composing text, which involves writing. A central factor in the writing process is the response, or feedback, to the text, which can be given by teachers or peers. The feedback is then acted upon as the writer revises and edits the text. These stages can be carried out multiple times, before the post-writing stage. Post-writing includes follow-up tasks, such as publishing or sharing texts or addressing weaknesses. The teacher's job in the writing process is to guide the students through the process and help them develop their abilities to create, draft and refine ideas (Hyland 2003:12). Giving feedback is an important tool to use in guiding the students through the different stages of the process, and is a crucial factor in the approach of process writing.

The fifth approach focuses on content. Themes and topics that interest the writers may be possible tasks. The topic is the starting point of writing teaching.

The sixth and final approach focuses on genre. The teaching within this approach focuses on the ways of using language for a purpose, and this purpose is met by using different genres. Language is used to reach a goal, and genre and the structures in the different genres are important parts of that. When writing, for example a love letter, an article or a theatre play, the writer uses different conventions connected to the genres. This view is connected to Vygotsky and the ZPD (Hyland 2003:21). Hyland (2003:23) claims that even though many teachers use a mix of the different approaches, the most used approaches to teaching writing are the process and the genre approach.

Approaches to teaching L1 writing are relevant to comment on. Silva (1993:657) claims that some ESL writing teachers have been encouraged to adopt L1 writing practices. This encouragement shows an attitude that L1 and L2 writing practices are similar and comparable. Both writing processes involve composing, planning, writing and revising. Two studies (Jones 1982; Jacobs 1982), cited in Krapels (1990), have concluded that the biggest factor for being a skilled L2 writer has to do with general writing composing competence and writing development, not some special factor when it comes to the L2 language. Both studies showed that L1 and L2 writers in many ways are similar.

Krapels (1990) also refers to Zamel's (1982) case study of the L2 writing process. Zamel interviewed eight university-level L2 writers and looked at their drafts of different texts. Zamel's conclusions were that L1 and L2 writing processes were similar and that 'L1

process-oriented writing instruction might also be effective for teaching L2 writing' (Krapels 1990:40). Krapels claims that the students' writing improved when they considered composing as a process. Another study done by Zamel (1983) also shows that the writing strategies used by L2 students are the same ones as L1 writers' use. Skilled writers plan, write, revise and edit more than unskilled writers, and both skilled and unskilled writers use the same processes as skilled and unskilled L1 writers.

However, as Silva (1993:657) clearly shows in his research, there are important differences between L1 and L2 writing. L2 writing has its own nature and it is essential that L2 writing teachers know the specific traits of this writing so that good choices can be made in terms of which elements one should adopt from L1 writing and which one should not. Because of the differences, Raimes (1985), quoted in Krapels (1990:44), suggests an 'adaption' and not 'adoption' of L1 writing teaching strategies. There is a need to make alterations from L1 to L2 writing teaching.

The results from Silva's (1993:661) research show some main differences in L1 and L2 writing when it comes to planning, the writing process and the production of L2 writing. L2 writers write shorter texts than L1 writers. They spend more time producing as many words as L1 writers. L2 writers have a simpler language and are less accurate than L1 writers. L2 writers also write with less variety and sophistication in their texts (Silva 1993).On the basis of these points, one can infer that L2 writers have more challenges than L1 writers in general.

There are some challenges that are specific to L2 writers and Weigle (2002:36) mentions some of them. Elements in the process of writing that can be extra challenging to L2 writers are text interpretation, being able to interpret source texts and one's own texts, and text generation, the ability to place ideas into writing because of greater lack of language proficiency. This may lead to misunderstandings of the tasks, and to L2 writers not being able to express what they want to express, which may affect the quality of the texts. L2 writers also need to pay more attention to the language, which may lead to less attention to organization and content. The language sets barriers for L2 writers because they need to focus too much on how they formulate and communicate their ideas, instead of focusing on organizing and structuring the ideas. They may also have challenges with the social and cultural factors in writing in the language. With all these challenges, L2 writers have a need for guidance and feedback, even more so than L1 writers.

Although there are many challenges for L2 writers, it is important to keep in mind that it is not possible to find one correct way of teaching writing. As Raimes (1983:5) puts it:

'There is no one answer to the question of how to teach writing in ESL classes. There are as many answers as there are teachers and teaching styles, or learner and learning styles'. The interesting question is not to find the one perfect strategy, but a strategy that works and that shows significant effects in the development of students' writing.

3.5 Summative and formative assessment in writing

It is important in L2 writing, just as in L1 writing, to have writing assessments. Hyland (2003:212) claims: 'Without the information gained from assessments, it would be difficult to identify the gap between students' current and target performances and to help them progress'. Hyland provides five main reasons to evaluate students (Hyland 2003:214). First, is 'placement', which will help the teachers to place students in the right classes and environments. The second reason is 'diagnostic', which is to identify the strengths and the difficulties of the students. The third reason is 'achievement'. The students can show what they have learnt and how their process of writing has improved during a length of time. The fourth reason is 'performance', which is to give information about how the students perform in different writing assignments. The final reason is 'proficiency' and this is meant to give a general picture of ability. There is no doubt that writing assessments are important and necessary.

There are especially two forms of writing assessment: 'summative' and 'formative' assessment. Summative assessment is a tool for 'summing up' how much students know and what they are able to do (Hyland 2003:213), and can be defined as a product-oriented approach to writing. Formative assessment, on the other hand, is an instrument especially for the development of the students' writing and can be explained as a process-oriented approach to writing (Hyland 2003:177). Nunan (1999:274) claims that in classrooms we need 'both process and product'. Gardner (2012:2) also suggests that both types of assessment are needed, but he focuses on formative assessments.

The two different types of assessments, formative and summative, can be described as 'assessment for learning' and 'assessment of learning' (Gardner 2012:2). This distinction suggests that summative assessments do not provide learning, but measurements of it. Formative assessment, on the other hand, is linked with the cognitive constructivist theory (Vik 2013:14), and this theoretical orientation views learning as meaning making. Prior

knowledge, understanding ideas and their correlations with each other and with prior knowledge, lay the foundation for learning, and process work is therefore important in this area. In essence, one can claim that formative assessments support learning and summative assessments measure it (Black and William 2003). Summative assessments are often used at the end of a topic or semester in order to measure the learning of the students or the effects of the program/curriculum. Summative assessment can be described as a judgment or a grade that is decided by all the evidence that has been assessed.

Studies have shown that a process-oriented approach to writing can be an effective tool to use in the second language classroom (Jones 1985; Zamel 1982; 1983, cited in Krapels 1990), in order to both learn and be able to apply the English language, in this case writing (Krapels 1990:42). The next section will present process writing more thoroughly.

3.6 Process writing

One forum for formative assessment is process writing, which involves drafts that the students produce, reflect on, discuss and rework (Nunan 1999:272). Silva (1990) describes how the process writing approach emerged because of dissatisfaction with the earlier writing approaches of that time, namely the 'controlled composition' approach and the 'current-traditional' approach. The controlled composition approach had concepts from behaviorism as underlying views, in other words that learning, in this case learning to write, was 'habit formation' (Silva 1990:12). This approach to writing 'focuses on the lexical and syntactic features of a text' (Silva 1990:20). The current-traditional approach, in contrast, was a reaction towards the controlled composition approach and acted as a bridge between that approach and free writing. The current-traditional approach focused on 'logical constriction and arrangement of discourse form' (Silva 1990:14). Arrangement of texts is important in the current-traditional approach and paragraphs are particularly important.

The process writing approach was a reaction to both these approaches, with the main idea that neither of these approaches encourage 'creative thinking and writing' (Silva 1990:15). The process approach encourages thinking, processing, reviewing and revising, to mention some elements. Content, ideas, communication and accuracy are important factors in this approach. Students, with help from teachers and peers, plan, draft, revise and edit their texts in a workshop setting. The development of the written text is therefore in focus, as well

as the final product. Previously, this type of writing assessment was more challenging because all writing happened by pen and paper. Now there are word processors that make writing, drafting, reviewing, rewriting and editing easier (Nunan 1999:272).

The process approach has been accepted, but also criticized, in the L2 writing context. Even though this approach has been widely accepted, as it was a reaction toward other approaches, it has also raised concerns. Concerns about process writing are that it may not 'adequately address some central issues in ESL[12] writing' and the approach may not prepare students for academic work (Silva 1990:16).

One of the issues to consider when it comes to process writing is the focus of the feedback the teacher provides. There are various ways of giving feedback in process writing and one way, often the recommended way, is to focus on content in the first drafts and on language later on (Ashwell 2000:227). To separate the feedback on form and content is often assumed a good way of giving feedback. Ashwell (2000) investigated this issue, and tried to find out if this separation was necessary. In his study of feedback, he investigated four patterns of feedback in a process writing setting. The students handed in two drafts and a final version of the same text. Ashwell (2000:227) tried out four patterns: 1) the recommended pattern of feedback on content first and then on form 2) feedback on form and then on content 3) mixed feedback on content and form and last 4) no feedback. What Ashwell (2000:227) was interested in finding out was if the recommended feedback pattern was the best of these four patterns and if the separation between content and form was necessary. Ashwell (2000) (2000:243) found out that the recommended pattern of feedback on content first, followed by feedback on language, was not necessarily better than feedback on language first and then on content, or the mixed feedback pattern. There were no big differences on effect between the three patterns.

Ashwell (2000:243) suggests in his study that the mixed feedback pattern was actually the best pattern of the three 'if only in terms of simple mean aims in accuracy ratings and content scores' (Ashwell 2000:243). This claim has also been confirmed by Fathman and Whalley (1990:186), who in their study found out that feedback on form simultaneously as feedback on content did not cause any lack of improvement in the revision of content. This suggests that separate feedback on content and form may not be required in order for improvement to happen.

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[12] ESL is an abbrevation for 'English as a Second Language'

3.7 Feedback

3.7.1 Introduction

Feedback (or 'response') is defined by Hattie and Timperley (2007:81) as 'information provided by an agent regarding aspects of one's performance or understanding'. The purpose of feedback is to reduce the distance between current understandings and the goal (Hattie and Timperley 2007:86). Feedback is an immense topic within L2 writing development and something teachers spend much time on. Some teachers spend much time in giving feedback, doing it thoroughly and detailed, thinking that the student's writing improves 'in direct proportion to the amount of time teachers spend on their papers' (Leki 1990:57). Feedback is the central topic of this thesis.

In this section, the topics that will be elaborated upon when it comes to feedback are the teacher's role, signs of effective feedback, indirect and direct feedback, effects of feedback, oral and written feedback, timing of feedback and, finally, students' preferences in terms of to feedback.

3.7.2 The teacher

The writing teacher has many different roles. Grabe and Kaplan (1996:254) express them as follows:

> In planning a writing curriculum, the teacher must at various times be a motivator, an interpreter of the task, a designer of meaningful tasks, an organizer, a resource, a support person, an evaluator, and a reader for information.

Teachers have many tasks to accomplish while reading students' texts. They have a minimum of three roles to fill in this area (Leki 1990:59). They are readers, in other words the audience, trainers in the field (coaches) and evaluators. This is a complex task with many aspects. However, in a study conducted by Cohen and Cavalcanti (1990), all students involved except one viewed the teacher as a 'judge', in other words an evaluator.

Ferris (2007) points out that giving feedback is very challenging for writing instructors and that preparing future teachers to give good feedback is important. Ferris' approach to teaching future teachers to respond to writing is by using a structure that contains the elements 'approach', 'response' and 'follow-up' (Ferris 2007:166). When Ferris goes through the topic of 'approach', she presents different ways of giving feedback to writing and different questions and issues to be aware of when it comes to giving feedback. First, she asks the future student teachers to reflect on the feedback they have been given by their previous teachers on their own writing as students. Secondly, she asks of different principles of responding, so that they have knowledge of what to do when they need to respond to their students' writing in the future. These principles are, for example, to use a mixture of different types of teacher feedback, as well as peer feedback and self-assessment.

Then Ferris (2007) considers the topic of 'response'. When the future teachers work with this topic, they must decide on which approach they are going to use as teachers. By doing this, they will have thought through principles that will guide them in their future work. Ferris stresses the importance of choosing some areas of importance to comment on, so that there is a balance in the feedback and so that it is easily applicable for the students. The progress itself is the important focus, and if the teachers focus on a few areas in their writing in their feedback, it is more likely that they will apply the feedback to their writing. There are devices that can help the teacher with the choice of what areas to comment in the students' writing. Rubrics, grading criteria, the task type and the individual student give good indicators on where to begin. Ferris continues with suggestions on how to give clear feedback.

The third area Ferris (2007) focuses on with her future student teachers is 'follow-up'. Here three aspects are important. Firstly, the future teachers should teach their students how to apply the feedback. Secondly, they should learn how to evaluate their own feedback. Thirdly, they must practise three ways of giving feedback (handwritten, conference and electronic feedback) with an L2 student writer (they were all connected to one).

3.7.3 Effective feedback

Feedback can lead to improvement and learning. However, improvement and learning depend on how and when the feedback is given. Some aspects that can lead to effective feedback are presented in this subsection. Hattie and Timperley (2007:82) claim that in order to be

effective, 'there must be a learning context to which feedback is addressed'. It is when the students do work with the feedback that learning happens.

There are three questions that the teacher and/or the student must answer with regard to giving and receiving effective feedback (Hattie and Timperley 2007:86). Firstly, they must ask: 'Where am I going?' Secondly, 'How am I going?' The third question is 'Where to next?' These three questions are connected and can be an indicator of effective feedback. The teacher's role and task is to guide and help students move from question one to question two and, finally, being able to answer question three.

In relation to the first question, Leki (1990:57) claims that it is important to know what the goals are in order to give effective feedback. The feedback should be in accordance with those goals. Learning objectives for English in Norwegian schools are laid down in the *LK06* curriculum. In order to be efficient, feedback should also be specific and give guidelines that students are able to follow. The teacher should also find something to praise initially before giving instructions on what to work with (Raimes 1983:143).

Polio (2012:385) concludes with three points that are important to emphasise in order for the feedback to be successful. One is that students need to pay attention to the feedback. As Polio (2012:385) puts it: 'Correcting errors on the final version of a paper seems essentially useless if learners do not have to do anything with the feedback'. The second point is that the feedback needs to be on the right level for the students. This point is based on sociocultural theory, and implies the need of individual feedback in student conferences or with a combination of oral and written individual feedback (Polio 2012:386). Hattie and Timperley (2007:86) also stress this second point. The third point Polio (2012:386) concludes with is that implicit and explicit knowledge and the interactions between them are useful in writing.

It is also important that the feedback and the suggestions for revising are clear, specific and easy for the student to follow. A simple 'revise' will not be enough for the student to know what to do (Raimes 1983:143). This point is supported by a study conducted by Fathman and Whalley (1990). The students involved in the study received feedback on both content and form, but the improvements were most noticeable when it came to form. They suggest that the reason for this is because the feedback on form was more specific and easier to follow than the feedback on content, which was more general.

However, this study also showed that revising without teacher feedback could be effective and valuable. Improvements were found in students' texts even though they had not

received teacher feedback. This shows that simply revising in itself is important and saves teachers' time.

Another study, Chandler (2003), also confirms the importance of feedback and self-editing. It shows that the form in writing improves considerably when the students need to correct their errors, in comparison to if they are not required to do so. When the students in this study corrected their errors before starting on their next assignment, their first drafts improved during the semester. This shows that self-editing and correction gives longitudinal effects. Ashwell (2000:243) also shows in his research that feedback helps students to improve their writing more than if the students get no feedback.

3.7.4 Indirect and direct feedback

Feedback on form has its many different varieties, and one distinction is between indirect and direct feedback. Direct feedback is when the teacher gives the exact correction needed, so that the student only needs to rewrite it in the text. Indirect feedback is when the teacher points out the error, but does not give the correction, so that the student needs to make the right correction him/herself (Ferris and Roberts 2001:163-164). Research has shown that the most preferable type of feedback method is indirect feedback, because it 'helps students to make progress in accuracy over time more than direct feedback does' (Ferris and Roberts 2001:164).

Ferris and Roberts (2001) investigated in their study how explicit the indirect error feedback needs to be in L2 writing classes in order to help students edit their texts themselves. They used three types of feedback, one type for each group of students: Firstly, errors were code-marked in five categories. Code marking is when the teacher categorizes errors and highlights them codes for the categories. One example is that the code 'sp' stands for 'spelling', 'wo' stands for 'wrong order' or 'p' stands for 'punctuation'. When doing this, the teacher does not correct the errors for the students but guides them to correct them themselves. Secondly, the same types of error were only underlined, and thirdly no feedback was used. The results showed major differences between the group that did not receive any feedback and the two groups that did receive feedback. However, there were no big differences between the two feedback groups (Ferris and Roberts 2001:161). Their conclusions were that the feedback does not have to be as explicit as code marking in order to

help students to self-edit their texts well. This means that teachers can use the second type of feedback, underlining, and gain the same effects as if they used the first type of feedback, categorization feedback. This procedure can save much time for teachers, since the underlining takes less time than code marking.

Another scholar, Chandler (2003), investigated how feedback should be given, more specifically in terms of grammatical and lexical errors. When comparing different ways of giving feedback to error, for example the teacher correcting directly, just pointing errors out or coding them, Chandler found that both direct teacher correction and underlining were more efficient than code marking, at least for reducing long-term errors.

The conclusion to be made in this sub-section is that indirect feedback can be an effective way of giving feedback, and is no way inferior to direct feedback. On the contrary, both Ferris and Roberts (2001) and Chandler (2003) suggest that indirect feedback may be the best feedback type of the two.

3.7.5 Oral and written feedback

There is also a distinction between oral and written feedback. Written feedback can be given at every stage of the writing process and can be an efficient way for students to remember the feedback they have received. Oral feedback can also be given at every stage, but one downside with this form of feedback is that students may easier forget it. However, the use of body language and the possibility for asking questions at the same time as the feedback is given, are positive traits of this type of feedback.

Leki (1990:57) suggests that teachers give written feedback because they believe that it improves their students' writing, but also because they need to justify the evaluations they make. She also states that written feedback is indeed time consuming. Polio (2012:376) confirms that: 'Written error correction is probably the most time consuming practice teachers use'. Hyland (2003:178) also suggests that written feedback may not be as effective as one has hoped, because the feedback itself may be of bad quality and misunderstood by the students.

Feedback is one important aspect of developing writing in a ZPD process. A study in the context of written corrective feedback in a scaffolding setting was done by Aljaafreh and Lantofl (1994), cited in Polio (2012). Three students met with a tutor who helped them

develop their ZPD in terms of editing errors in writing. During the eight weeks of the study, the improvement was noticeable and the independence in editing written errors increased (Polio 2912:382). Other studies in this area have been by Brooks and Swain (2009) and Storch and Wigglesworth (2010), cited in Polio (2012).

Oral feedback in, for example, one-to-one conferences, is considered an effective way of providing feedback (Raimes 1983:145), since there is interaction between the student and the teacher. Oral feedback is an effective way of understanding what the students are trying to say in their texts, because they get a chance to explain and answer questions. The dialogue between the students and the teacher is important. Oral feedback also makes it easier for the student to ask questions if there is something that is not understood. However, one unsatisfactory trait with this type of feedback is that it demands much time (Raimes 1983:145).

Research has shown that a combination of oral and written feedback can be a good solution, especially for the more 'treatable types of linguistic error', for example the tenses and articles (Bitchener et al. 2005:202). The reason why this is a good solution is that the teacher has individual time with the students where they can explain the rules that are connected to the errors they have made, and the teacher can make sure that the students understand the feedback. In this setting, the teacher and students can discuss, clarify vagueness and explain in a more individual context. When the feedback is only written, there is less opportunity to discuss and explain on an individual level and the students do not have much opportunity to ask about elements they are uncertain of. A good key to provide effective feedback is to use a combination of the two. The issue here is whether teachers have the time to do this, as oral feedback is time consuming.

3.7.6 Timing of feedback

Another aspect of feedback is its timing. Frankenberg-Garcia's (1999) study explores the timing of feedback on L2 writing. Mostly feedback is given after drafts, in other words when a text has been completed and often when a grade has been given (also known as post-product feedback). When this is the case, many students look at the grade, but are not interested in feedback in their texts. They look at the grade, but often do not even read the feedback, especially if they are dissatisfied with the grades they have been given (Leki 1990:62). Vik

(2013:26) suggests that one important factor when it comes to the timing of the feedback is that the students are given time in class to work with the feedback they have been given.

Frankenberg-Garcia (1999) emphasizes that the feedback needs to be given while the students are actually writing, in other words they need 'real-time feedback on the questions that emerge at the moment they are struggling to put their ideas down on paper' (Frankenberg-Garcia 1990:101). Frankenberg-Garcia suggests focusing on pre-product feedback and writing workshops. The distinction between pre-product feedback and post-product feedback is the timing of the feedback. Pre-product feedback is given before a text has become a finished product, for example after drafts of pieces of the text or the whole text itself. The feedback is then given during the process of writing. Post-product feedback, on the other hand, is given after a text has become a finished product. The feedback is then only given after the writer has finished the process of writing, and is not going to revise it.

Hattie and Timperley (2007:98) suggest that the different timings of the feedback, especially immediate and delayed feedback (feedback not given immediately after the process of writing), may serve different purposes and may be beneficial in their own ways when it comes to the different types of feedback (for example feedback on content versus feedback on form). They refer to research that implies that difficult elements may be best handled with delayed feedback and that easy items do not need this form of delay. The timing of the feedback serves different purposes and a good key may be to use a mixture of the different timings. One example may be that delayed feedback can be used when the students have difficult challenges to work on, and immediate feedback can be given on simpler challenges.

3.7.7 Students' preferences

It is important that teachers take students' preferences about feedback into consideration (Hyland 2003:179), so that there can be cohesion between students' and teachers' expectations and motivation. There are different preferences in various situations, classes and programmes. Students also view feedback differently and some may receive the feedback differently from others. If possible, a dialogue with individual students is preferable. Written feedback in general is highly appreciated by second language writers (Hyland 2003:178).

It seems that students often prefer direct correction, but they also believe that they learn more when teachers simply underline what needs to be corrected (Chandler 2003:291).

Ferris and Roberts' (2001) study found that students first prefer underlining with description, secondly direct correction and last just underlining, so the students' views differ in this area.

Hyland (2003:178) suggests that students prefer feedback on form in summative assessments in order to gain an error-free and fluent language in that respect. When formative, process-oriented assessments are being used, it is suggested that students prefer feedback on content first and feedback on form on later drafts, when the text is starting to be finished.

3.7.8 Peer feedback

There are many different views on peer feedback in second language writing. Saito and Fujita (2004), cited in Miao et al. (2006:180), claim that some teachers believe peer feedback is not beneficial because the students do not have the proper skills and experiences to provide feedback to each other in a good way. Research has also shown that teacher feedback provides better results than peer feedback (Connor and Asenavage 1994; Paulus 1999). However, Raimes (1983:148) argues that peer feedback can be useful in the classroom, but that the students who give the feedback need to have clear instructions for the task in order to give valuable feedback. Other researchers have found out that peer feedback can be a useful instrument and a good tool for the development of writing skills (Berg 1999; Villamil and De Guerrero 1998). In general, the research in this area shows that teacher feedback is more effective than peer feedback, but peer feedback can lead to writing development, increased learner autonomy and critical thinking.

There are different results from research when it comes to students' views of teacher and peer feedback. Some studies have concluded that students prefer teacher feedback (Zhang 1995), while other studies have found that students are open to try out peer feedback (Hu 2005; Tsui and Ng 2000).

A Chinese study by Miao et al. (2006) investigated the differences between peer feedback and teacher feedback in a university. They followed two groups of students for a period of time, and there were 79 students altogether. The students wrote essays in English on the same topic. One group received teacher feedback, while the other group of students received peer feedback. The authors state that the reasons why peer feedback may be interesting are because the students do not get the amount of feedback that is wished from their teachers, due to exam practices and the number of students in each class.

The findings were that the students acted more upon the teacher feedback than the peer feedback. Students found teacher feedback more trustworthy than peer feedback, so they used the teacher feedback more. However, when the peer feedback was acted upon, the revisions were more successful than the teacher feedback revisions. Another discovery was that in percentages peers gave more feedback on content than teachers. This finding can be explained by, for example, the students thinking they were not capable enough of giving feedback on language (Miao et al. 2006:192).

3.8 Research on writing in a Norwegian context

This section gives insights into some of the research done in Norway when it comes to L2 writing and feedback. One study is by Sandvik (2011), who has conducted research in second language learning (with German as the second language), particularly the link between assessment and learning. Sandvik followed one teacher at a lower secondary school and two of her classes (at different points of time) where she taught German language, one tenth grade class and one eighth grade class. She observed and analyzed the use of methods of assessment in the two different classes. She also observed the teacher's and the students' experiences of the assessment method and the development of the students' writing. One discovery was that the students worked thoroughly with their work in a formative assessment process, at least when they understood the aims and purposes with the task and the feedback.

There has also been conducted research on English language writing in lower secondary school. Maier (2006) is one study that investigated the teaching of written English. In his case study, Maier (2006) interviewed ten teachers that had been teaching English for at least twenty years. He investigated the changes that the teachers had made throughout the years with different curricula. He found that teachers had made some changes in their methods of teaching writing. One of the changes was that they taught more about fluency in the teaching of writing than formal correctness. Fewer changes than expected were found by Maier (2006).

Another study, by Vigrestad (2006), was also conducted at the lower secondary level. Vigrestad (2006) compared the complexity and fluency in writing between Norwegian and Dutch students by analyzing 198 picture narratives written by 7th and 10th graders from both countries. The findings of the study showed that the Norwegian 7th graders scored higher than

the Dutch 7th graders, but that this difference was reduced in the 10th grade. Different reasons for the difference in 7th grade and the reduction in 10th grade were discussed in her study, for example the similarities and differences between the students' first languages and English.

There has also been research on upper secondary students' writing in English in Norway. Nygaard (2010) is one of these studies. This case study investigated accuracy in written English, by analysing 190 texts written by 95 students in an upper secondary school. The mistakes in the texts were categorized and measured. The main finding was that the students reduced their number of mistakes in the second semester, even though they wrote longer texts. Three correction methods were used by different teachers and compared. Nygaard suggested that the three correction methods that were used were each effective to a certain extent. She pointed out that there might be explanations for this: language teaching is helpful, correction strategies are effective, and computers help with creating more accuracy. However, she also pointed out that, in general, students of upper secondary school have a low level of accuracy in written English and she gave some recommendations for changes in English language teaching in primary and lower secondary school that would improve the level of the students' writing before they reached upper secondary school.

Vik's (2013) study also focused on assessment of English, including writing, in upper secondary students. The study focused on formative assessment. It was a comparative study that focused on what methods two different upper secondary schools (one control school and one experimental school that emphasized formative assessment) used in connection with assessment. The research method was focus group interviews and two semi-structured interviews. The focus group interviews were conducted with two teacher groups and two student groups and the semi-structured interviews were conducted with the headmaster of the experimental school and the Rogaland County Director of Schools. Findings of this study showed that the control schoolteachers focused more on summative assessment and giving their students grades than providing formative assessment. Sometimes the teachers did not use the method of writing assessment they thought were most beneficial for the students, for example because of organizational challenges and lack of time. The teachers in the experimental school had a different approach to writing assessment. They focused more on formative assessment and giving pre-product feedback than the teachers in the control school.

3.9 Summary

This chapter has presented an overview of theory, literature and research relevant to writing and feedback to writing in a second language context. The starting point was Vygotsky's ZPD (1978) and theory connected to this. Further on, theory and research on both L1 and L2 writing were presented. The difference between summative and formative assessment followed, and then a section on process writing. Feedback, as the fundamental part of this study, was then thoroughly reviewed: the teacher, the indicators of effective feedback, indirect and direct feedback, oral and written, the timing of the feedback and students' preferences concerning feedback. Finally, peer feedback was presented, before an overview of several studies in Norway on the topic was described.

4. Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to describe the methodology that has been used in answering the research questions of this thesis:

- What practices and beliefs do teachers in a Norwegian upper secondary school have in connection with English writing and feedback?
- How do their students experience the practices of writing in English and receiving feedback to written English?
- What are the students' attitudes to the practices of English writing and feedback?
- How does feedback influence the development of the students' writing?

The methods used were a combination of qualitative and quantitative research so that the data collected and analyzed was mixed. Initially in this chapter (section 4.2) there is a description of the mixed method research approach and qualitative and quantitative methods of research (section 4.3). The study and the actual methods are described in detail in section 4.4. Finally, in section 4.5, the process of data collection is described.

4.2 Mixed method research

This thesis is based on mixed method research. Dörnyei (2007:163) defines this type of research as follows: 'A mixed method study involves the collection or analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study with some attempts to integrate the two approaches at one or more stage of the research process'. It is a new approach to research that emerged in the 1970s and onwards and now there is evidence that this form of research can '…open up fruitful new avenues for research in the social sciences' (Dörnyei 2007:163).

This research method has grown in popularity in recent years because of the advantage of employing the strengths from the two research methods, quantitative and qualitative (Creswell 2009:203). Mixed methods research also has a greater possibility to address complex research topics more and provide more insight than only one research method, whether that be qualitative or quantitative. With this research method is it important to actually utilize the advantages of the two methods together, and not just have a study with the two methods simultaneously (Creswell 2009:4).

There are different reasons as to why this type of method is chosen in general, but the main reason why it has been chosen for this study is to obtain as complete a picture as possible and understanding of the chosen topic. The different research methods can complement each other and provide a broader understanding of the topic. Erzberger and Kelle (2003), cited in Dörnyei (2007:164), compare mixed methods research with a jigsaw picture that has many different pieces that need to be connected in the right way. In the same way these different types of research methods can provide a clearer and bigger picture of the object of study.

There are relatively few published studies that have used mixed methods, even though it can be considered as a good overall approach (Dörnyei 2007:174). This study aims to add to the research of this kind.

In the following section qualitative and quantitative methods will be described in general and in more depth.

4.3 Qualitative and quantitative methods

Qualitative methods focus on describing and understanding a human practice and the reasons behind the practice. The importance is not about how representative the study is, but it focuses more on the individuals and the insights they have (Dörnyei 2007:126). The size of a qualitative study varies, but Dörnyei (2007:127) suggests that in an interview study the number of six to ten interviewees would be sufficient. This may seem like a small number, but the case in qualitative methods is that the challenge does not lie in getting enough data, but to obtain purposeful data (Dörnyei 2007:125). Within this study, the number of teacher interviews is three since these are combined with the quantitative research through

questionnaires and student texts, thus providing a triangulation of data and increasing the validity of the study.

Quantitative research, on the other hand, has been described as objective, generalizable and verification-oriented (Mackay and Gass 2005). It focuses on mutual features in groups. An important factor in quantitative research is that the sample (the group of participants) resembles and can represent the population (the group of people that the study generalizes) (Dörnyei 2007:96). Examples of quantitative research methods are questionnaires and tests.

4.4 The data collection

The three methods of data collection that were used in this thesis were teacher interviews, student questionnaires and an analysis of a small sample of students' texts. There were both teachers and students involved in the study in order to get a fuller picture of the issue and increase the validity of the research. The interviews were conducted with three teachers and questionnaires were answered by their students.

4.4.1 The choice of sampling strategy

The most practical sampling strategy was used in this study, namely 'convenience sampling' (Dörnyei 2007:129). Convenience sampling is unfortunately 'the least desirable, but the most common sampling strategy' (Dörnyei 2007:129). The reason why it is not desirable is that there is more practicality than purpose behind the choice of participants. In this type of strategy, the respondents are chosen because of availability. In this study, the researcher chose the teacher respondents after personally approaching them because of previous contact with the school in question. However, there are also positive traits with this strategy and one is that the participants are usually willing to cooperate (Dörnyei 2007:129).

Contact was initially made with one of the teachers in the upper secondary school in question, and this teacher introduced the researcher to the other two teachers involved in the study, i.e. the teacher became a 'gatekeeper'. The rest of the participants were made available to the researcher through the three teachers, as they were their students. The school where the case study was conducted is an urban school with more than 150 teachers and 800 students.

Two issues to think about when initiating quantitative research are how many participants are needed and what kind of participants are needed (Dörnyei 2007:96). The sample needs to represent the population. The sample in this thesis consisted of five classes, with together 83 students, in an upper secondary school and the population in this case was upper secondary level students in Norway. In this thesis, the sample and the population were closely connected since the subjects were five different classes in four different programmes, both vocational and general in the school. The vocational programmes that were included in the study were 1) design, arts and crafts and 2) media and communication. The general programmes that are studied are 3) music, dance and drama and 4) specialization in general studies (with design). Because all the students in the classes (except for a few who chose not to be in the study) were involved, the different ability levels of students were also included. With so many variations in the sample, one can say that the sample is representative of the population.

4.4.2 Interviews

One of the qualitative methods used in this study was interviews, which is 'the most often used method in qualitative inquiries' (Dörnyei 2007:134). The typical length of a qualitative interview is about 30-60 minutes (Dörnyei 2007:134). Some scholars recommend more than one interview with the same participant, but in this study there was one interview with each. Instead, the researcher met with two of the teachers in an informal meeting at the end of September, where the theme of the thesis was discussed and there was also an opportunity to get to know each other better.

All the interviews were conducted in English. Since English was the teachers' second language, they were asked beforehand if it they had any objections to conducting the interviews in English, and they all agreed that this was not a problem. They were all English teachers and were comfortable with communicating in English.

The interviews were semi-structured. This is the most common interview type in applied linguistics (Dörnyei 2007:136). The interview guide was planned in advance but the arrangement was unrestricted and the interviewer had the possibility to ask follow-up questions and ask the interviewee to elaborate on some questions. Often the most interesting data is collected in these elaborations (Dörnyei 2007:137). An interview guide was used (see Appendix 1). It was also important that the interviews were piloted more than once; the

reason for this was to get more detailed information about the time frame of the interview, if the questions were understood and if there was anything that needed to be changed before the actual interviews. The interview guide is an important tool for the researcher in the interview process and it is important that it is planned, worked with and trialed out (Dörnyei 2007:137). The interview was piloted with a fellow student, and with an upper secondary school teacher who did not have any involvement in the study.

There were many different aspects connected to conducting the interviews. One aspect was that the interview was audio recorded in order to make most use of the data. In addition, notes were taken during the interviews. For the interviews, recording equipment was used, and also an extra back-up recorder was used just in case anything went wrong. Even though the interviews were recorded, it was also important that the researcher paid full attention to the participants during the interview and was aware of other non-verbal communication of the interviewees, as the recording was not be able to get this information (Dörnyei 2007: 139).

The interviews with the teachers aimed, among other things, to elicit what practices, attitudes and beliefs they had concerning giving feedback to writing in their English classes (see Appendix 1). They aimed to investigate how and why they practised feedback the way they did, and the pros and cons of their practices. For example, they were asked if they gave feedback on content, on language, or both, what they emphasized most, if they gave pre-product feedback or post-product feedback, and if they gave feedback orally or in writing. They were also asked how they believed their feedback practices affected the students' development of written English. Furthermore, it was an aim to find out if they had other experiences of working with feedback in the past and if they had changed practices during their careers.

4.4.3 Questionnaires

Questionnaires are a common method in quantitative research (Dörnyei 2007:95). Brown (2001:6), cited in Dörnyei (2007:102), defines questionnaires as:

> …any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers.

Questionnaires aim at 'describing the characteristics of a population by examining a sample of that group' (Dörnyei 2007:101). With this tool, one can find out something about a population with the help of a sample of the group. The questionnaires used in this thesis provided both quantitative data, but also qualitative data as there was one open-end question. The latter needed to be analyzed in a qualitative way, in addition to the interviews.

Questionnaires can measure facts, behaviors and attitudes amongst a population (Dörnyei 2007:102). The questionnaire used in this thesis aimed to explore all the three components mentioned (see Appendix 2). The questionnaire aimed to elicit how the students were given feedback, and how they experienced the feedback on their written texts. Some of the main concerns were what the focus of the feedback was, how helpful it was, whether the feedback had any effect on their writing development and if they had views on how the feedback practices could be improved to best meet their needs.

The questionnaires were written in Norwegian. The reason for this was that the students had different levels of English reading skills, and it was important that all the students understood the questions in the questionnaires. Since English is the students' second language, some may have had problems with an English questionnaire, and the importance of the accuracy of the questionnaire answers was emphasised. Because of this, the questionnaires were all written and conducted in Norwegian, and later translated to English

The questionnaire consisted of five sections. The first section was about attitudes to the English subject and writing in English. Examples of questions in this section were: 'I like to write in English' and 'I receive enough writing practice in English at school'. There were six statements and the students had to tick off one box for each statement, either 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree'. This kind of closed-ended item is called the 'Likert scale' (Dörnyei 2007:105). This section provided a general picture of the students' attitudes when it comes to English.

The theme for the second section was experiences about writing in English. Here the questions were formulated as frequencies, 'how often…?', and the students had to tick one of these boxes: 'never', 'once a semester', 'once a month', '2-3 times a month' or 'once a week or more often'. Examples of questions in this section were: 'How often do you write texts in the English subject?' and 'How often do you get evaluation on your writing in form of grades?'. There was also a question formulated as follows: 'How do you work when you write texts?' The students had to tick one of four different options provided: 'I write drafts that the teacher gives feedback on', 'I work alone, with drafts', 'I work alone with the text,

without drafts' or 'Other'. This closed-ended type of item is called 'multiple-choice' (Dörnyei 2007:106).

The third section was about experiences in receiving feedback. There were 15 statements to which the students had to agree or disagree on the same scale as before. This section provided answers on what practices the students had experienced. Examples of statements in this section were: 'I receive feedback on what I write', 'The students give feedback on each others' texts' and 'I receive oral feedback on what I write'. The fourth section revolved around the students' attitudes and beliefs on feedback. Examples of statements in this section were: 'It is important to receive feedback on my writing', 'It is important to receive oral feedback on writing' and 'It is important to receive written feedback on writing'. Finally, the fifth section contained a short open answer question: 'What do you think is the best way of developing writing in English?'.

The questionnaire was also piloted to make sure the items were understandable. A fellow student of the researcher, who is familiar with the teaching and learning of writing at this level, tried out the questionnaire, as well as three upper secondary school students. The questionnaire was on four pages and took approximately 20 minutes to complete. Dörnyei (2007:110) believes that this is an appropriate size for a questionnaire in applied linguistics research.

4.4.4 Student texts

The teacher interviews and students questionnaires provided answers to the first three research questions, but an important aim of the thesis was to answer the fourth research question: 'How does feedback influence the development of the students' writing?' The method used was an analysis of a small sample of student texts. The focus was to analyse what kind of feedback the teachers gave to these texts, how the students responded to it and if the feedback resulted in a development in the students' writing, namely whether the texts developed during the process of writing.

Four texts were randomly picked by the researcher. Four names from a list of the students who had agreed to let their texts be used were chosen. The three teachers had some differences in their practices of writing assessment. One of them wanted the students to revise their texts, and the other two teachers did not require this of their students. Two students from the class where the teacher wanted the students to revise their texts were chosen, and one

student from each of the other two teacher's classes was chosen. The researcher was sent the text from one teacher by email, and gained access to an Internet page where the other texts could be found. The teacher who sent the text by email, sent it after it had been commented on by her, so the comments were present. The second teacher gave access to the Internet page where the researcher could find the text with end comments, but the other comments in the text had been made by hand and handed back to the students. These were unavailable. The third teacher also gave access to the Internet page, and gave the researcher the possibility to download first hand-ins of the texts, the texts with the teacher's comments on, and the revised texts. All the texts were analyzed by the researcher in order to study the feedback and any improvements or changes that were made.

4.5 The process of collecting data and research ethics

The data collection took place in late autumn in order to enable the teachers and students to have had the chance to practise feedback, and also so that the data collection did not interfere with their exams at the end of the semester.

The study was completely anonymous and the students and teachers were made fully aware of this. The Norwegian Social Science Data Service has approved of the study. Before the interviews and the questionnaires, information was given to the participants orally and in writing. An information sheet was given to all possible participants (see Appendix 3 and 4), where there was detailed information about the study and information about what was asked of them. In order to perform the interviews and questionnaires, the participants needed to fill out a form where they agreed to take part in the study. In this study, the participants are anonymous. The school, teachers, classes and students are referred to by pseudonyms in the thesis.

One aspect to pay attention to is the validity of the study, since it is a case study based on less than one hundred participants. Even though this is the scope of the study, there is no reason to believe that the school was not representative of upper secondary schools in Norway. The participants of the study were teachers and students in different programmes in school, and that increases the validity of the study. The participants also represented both men and women, and the teachers had different levels of experience of teaching and different education. The method used in the study was a combination of qualitative and quantitative

methods, thus increasing its validity. Furthermore, the results of the study can be compared to Vik's (2013) study.

5. Findings

This chapter presents the findings from the research that has been carried out. Section 5.1 presents the findings from the student questionnaires. In section 5.2 the summaries of the teacher interviews are presented and, finally, extracts from some student texts are shown and commented on in section 5.3.

5.1 Student questionnaires

The analysis of the questionnaires shows that out of the 83 students involved in the study, 27 (33%) were boys and 56 (67%) were girls.

Table 1 shows the students' attitudes towards the English subject and writing in English.

Table 1: Students' views on English and written English (actual numbers with percentages in brackets)

Item (n = 83)	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Missing
I like the English subject	25 (30%)	32 (39%)	15 (18%)	11 (13%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
I like to write in English	20 (24%)	28 (34%)	24 (29%)	10 (12%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)
I think it is important to develop the ability to write in English	50 (60%)[13]	30 (36%)	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

As Table 1 shows, roughly seven out of ten of the students agreed or strongly agreed that they liked the English subject, whereas 13% disliked the subject. Almost six out of ten of the students (58%) liked writing in English, while 13% did not. Finally, almost all of the students

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[13] Because of rounding up and down to whole numbers, the percentages sometimes add up to 99 or 101 %.

(96%) agreed or strongly agreed that it was important to develop the ability to write in English. These figures show that the majority of the students were motivated for English and writing in English in the classes and considered the development of written English important.

Table 2 shows the students' views on their practice and progress in writing.

Table 2: Students' views on their practice and progress in writing (actual numbers with percentages in brackets)

Item (n = 83)	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Missing
I believe that my writing in English has improved this semester	5 (6%)	22 (27%)	34 (41%)	20 (24%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)
I am pleased with the help I get to improve my writing in English	16 (19%)	28 (34%)	32 (39%)	4 (5%)	2 (2%)	1 (1%)
I receive enough writing practice in English at school	10 (12%)	37 (45%)	28 (34%)	5 (6%)	1 (1%)	2 (2%)

With regard to whether their writing had improved during the semester, roughly four out of ten of the students (41%) were neutral, roughly every third student (33%) believed that they had improved, whereas one out of four did not believe they had improved. Just over half of the students (53%) were pleased with the help they got to improve their writing in English, while 6 % were not. Roughly four out of ten of the students were neutral. Approximately the same number felt they received enough writing practice at school (57%), with 34% being neutral.

Table 3 provides an overview of the frequency of writing practices and evaluation.

Table 3: Frequency of writing practices and written evaluations (actual numbers with percentages in brackets)

Item (n = 83)	Never	1-3 times a semester	Once a month	2-3 times a month	Once a week or more often	Missing
How often do you get evaluation on your writing in form of grades?	0	66 (80%)	11 (13%)	4 (5%)	0	2 (2%)
How often do you get evaluation on your writing without grades?	18 (22%)	31 (37%)	12 (14%)	14 (17%)	5 (6%)	3 (4%)
How often do you write texts in the English subject?	0 (0%)	25 (30%)	27 (33%)	24 (29%)	5 (6%)	2 (2%)
How often do you write those texts at school?	1 (1%)	23 (28%)	24 (29%)	25 (30%)	7 (8%)	3 (4%)
How often do you write those texts at home?	15 (18%)	31 (37%)	15 (18%)	15 (18%)	2 (2%)	5 (6%)

Eight out of ten of the students claimed that they received evaluation in the form of grades on their writing 1-3 times during a semester. However, the question concerning how often the students received evaluation without grades showed a more divided experience amongst the students. Roughly one out of five of the students answered 'never', roughly two out of five (37%) answered '1-3 times a semester', 14 % answered 'once a month', 17 % answered '2-3 times a month' and less than one out of ten of the students (6 %) answered 'once a week or more often'. However, when the two answers 'never' and '1-3 times during a semester' are combined, almost six out of ten of the students (59%) answered in one of those two ways. This means that the majority of the students indicated that evaluation without grades was absent or infrequent.

Three out of ten of the students answered that they wrote texts in English '1-3 times a semester'. Roughly the same number applied to students answering 'once a month', as well as '2-3 times a month'. Almost three out of ten of the students answered that they wrote those texts at school '1-3 times a semester', roughly the same number of students indicated that

those texts were written at school 'once a month' and three out of ten students answered '2-3 times a month'. Nearly two out of ten students said they never wrote the texts at home, while almost four out of ten of the students claimed they wrote texts at home '1-3 times a semester'. Almost four out of ten of the students crossed off that they wrote texts at home either 'once a month' or '2-3 times a month'.

Table 4 provides insight into how the students worked while they were producing texts.

Table 4: Students' processes while writing texts (actual numbers with percentages in brackets)

How do you work when you write texts?	(n = 83)
I write drafts that the teacher gives feedback on	3 (4%)
I work alone with drafts	13 (16%)
I work alone with the text, without drafts	61 (74%)
Other	1 (1%)
Missing	5 (6%)

The way of working used most amongst the students in the survey was clearly working alone with the text. The majority of the students, slightly more than seven out of ten (74%), wrote that they worked alone with the text, without producing drafts. 16 % of the students answered that they worked alone with multiple drafts. Very few of the students (4 %) answered that they wrote drafts to which the teacher gave feedback.

Table 5 provides an overview of the students' experiences with feedback to their writing.

Table 5: Students' experiences with feedback to their writing (actual numbers with percentages in brackets)

Item (n = 83)	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Missing
I receive feedback on what I write	44 (53%)	35 (42%)	3 (4%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
I receive feedback on what I write before the text is finished	0 (0%)	21 (25%)	30 (36%)	23 (28%)	9 (11%)	0 (0%)
I receive feedback on what I write after the text is finished	42 (51%)	35 (42%)	6 (7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
The students give feedback on each others' texts	0 (0%)	12 (15%)	24 (29%)	36 (43%)	11 (13%)	0 (0%)
I receive oral feedback on what I write	9 (11%)	40 (49%)	23 (28%)	8 (10%)	3 (4%)	0 (0%)
I receive written feedback on what I write	31 (37%)	47 (57%)	5 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

More than nine out of ten of the students (95%) indicated that they received feedback on what they wrote. Approximately the same number (93%) indicated that they received feedback after they had finished a text. In contrast, every fourth student claimed that they received feedback before the text was finished, while approximately four out of ten did not.

Table 5 also shows that the students received both oral and written feedback. Six out of ten of the students agreed or strongly agreed that they received oral feedback, while 14 % disagreed or strongly disagreed that they did. The rest of the students (28%) neither agreed nor disagreed. The overwhelming majority (94 %) agreed or strongly agreed that they received written feedback, while none disagreed. More than half of the students (56 %) indicated that they did not practise peer feedback, while 15 % of the students indicated that they did.

Table 6 provides an overview of the focus of feedback.

Table 6: The focus of feedback (actual numbers with percentages in brackets)

Item (n = 83)	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Missing
I receive feedback on content	26 (31%)	47 (57%)	10 (12%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
I receive feedback on language	26 (31%)	51 (61%)	4 (5%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)
I receive on the same level feedback on content and language	24 (29%)	37 (45%)	20 (24%)	2 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Table 6 shows that the majority of the students claimed that both feedback on content and feedback were given. Almost nine out of ten of the students indicated that they got feedback on content, while more than nine out of ten students indicated that they received feedback on language. More than seven out of ten of the students received feedback on content and language on the same level. Hardly any of the students disagreed with the three statements.

Table 7 presents the students' beliefs about feedback in general and their beliefs about oral and written feedback.

Table 7: Students' beliefs about feedback in general, and about oral and written feedback (actual numbers with percentages in brackets)

Item (n = 83)	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Missing
It is important to receive feedback on my writing	69 (72%)	20 (24%)	2 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)
It is important to receive oral feedback on writing	25 (30%)	47 (57%)	10 (12%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)
It is important to receive written feedback on writing	35 (42%)	41 (50%)	6 (7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)
The feedback I receive helps me to develop my writing	36 (43%)	31 (37%)	11 (13%)	2 (2%)	0 (0%)	3 (4%)

As Table 7 shows, almost all of the students (96%) either agreed or strongly agreed that feedback on writing was important. Almost nine out of ten of the students (87%) strongly agreed or agreed that it was important to receive oral feedback, while none disagreed. There was also broad agreement that written feedback was important, as more than nine out of ten students (92 %) strongly agreed or agreed on this. Finally, roughly eight out of ten of the students agreed or strongly agreed that the feedback actually helped them in the development of their writing, while only two of them disagreed.

Table 8 provides an overview of what the students believed about the feedback on content and language and the timing of this feedback.

Table 8: Students' beliefs about feedback on content and language and its timing (actual numbers with percentages in brackets)

Item (n = 83)	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Missing
It is important to receive feedback on language	58 (70%)	22 (27%)	2 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)
It is important to receive feedback on content	53 (64%)	23 (28%)	5 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (2%)
It is important to receive feedback on content before the text is finished	18 (22%)	37 (45%)	23 (28%)	2 (2%)	2 (2%)	1 (1%)
It is important to receive feedback on language before the text is finished	18 (22%)	38 (46%)	22 (27%)	2 (2%)	2 (2%)	1 (1%)
It is important to receive feedback on content after the text is finished	51 (61%)	28 (34%)	3 (4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)
It is important to receive feedback on language after the text is finished	49 (59%)	31 (37%)	2 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)

Table 8 shows that almost all of the students believed that it was important to get feedback on language and content (97% and 92% respectively). Approximately seven out of ten of the students believed that it was important to receive feedback on content and language before the text was finished (67% and 68% respectively). More than nine out of ten of the students believed in the importance of receiving feedback on both content and language after the text was finished (95 % and 96 % respectively). This may indicate that many believed it was important to get this kind of feedback both before and after the text was finished.

5.1.1 Open-ended question

At the end of the questionnaire there was an open question for the students to answer: 'What do you think is the best way of developing writing in English?' Out of the 83 students, 76

answered. Some of the students gave multiple answers, while some of them gave only one answer. The four most mentioned points are presented below.

Twenty seven students mentioned that practising writing was essential when developing their writing. One student answered: 'Write English on a daily basis and avoid abbreviations'. Another example was a student who answered that the best way to develop writing skills in English was to write as much as possible and have more written hand-ins in the English subject. A third student wrote that practising writing, for example stories or articles, was a good approach. Two final examples were: 'Write more' and 'Definitely to write a lot, it's a shame that we almost never do that'.

Twenty four of the students mentioned reading as an important factor connected to writing development. Examples from the answers that students gave were:

Read English books.

I think it helps a lot if you read books in English. You learn new words and formulations that maybe are not so common. You broaden what you already know.

Reading comics.

Ten students wrote that watching TV or films was important for their writing development. One student wrote that watching movies with English subtitles helped develop his/her writing skills. Another student wrote: 'To watch English movies, programs or series.'

Twenty three students considered that feedback was important in the process of developing their writing ability. Some of the comments were:

Feedback and tips from the teacher.

To receive precise feedback, with examples and suggestions, and that the feedback is communicated both orally and in writing.

To have writing sessions where we receive feedback afterwards.

Another example was a student who wrote that he/she wanted feedback on what was written, and maybe to get the opportunity to rewrite the text and give it back to the teacher, without any influence on the grade.

Other answers were:

To talk about the text (oral feedback)

To receive good feedback so that I know what to do better next time.

I think the teacher can spend more time with the student while going through the text.

A final example was a student who wrote: 'To write a lot and receive feedback. To take the feedback to heart and work with it'.

In sum, writing, reading and receiving feedback were factors that students thought highly of when thinking about how to develop their writing ability.

5.2 Interviews

Interview with Maria

Maria had been teaching English for 33 and a half years. She had studied English for one and a half years and had studied a semester of pedagogy in addition. At the time of the interview, Maria was teaching first and second year students in English in vocational studies in the upper secondary school, in addition to other subjects.

The interview started by talking about writing in general and Maria was asked how important writing was in her English courses. Her first reply was that there was too little time. She mentioned that students nowadays were much better at speaking but the level of writing was the same as 30 years ago. The students struggled with the same things, especially grammar, such as verb conjugation, 'Norwenglish', prepositions, spelling, sentence structure, to mention some. Vocabulary had improved and Maria suggested that this could be the case because students met the English language more often in society than before.

Maria felt that writing should have a larger place in her lessons, but that there was a lack of time. There were many other things to focus on, both oral and written work and the

curriculum with the different topics. She concluded with that there was not enough time for practising writing. She ideally wanted to spend time on writing every week, but that was hard to do. In her first year class they had three lessons and it was easier to find time to write with them than with her second year students who only had two lessons a week.

Maria went on to talk about the advantages and disadvantages of teaching English in general and vocational programmes. In general studies, the students finish the English course in one year and during that year they have five English lessons per week. In the vocational courses, where she was teaching at present, the same English course went on for two years, with three lessons per week the first year and two lessons per week the second year. Because of that, the general programme teachers felt they had more time. However, the vocational students had the possibility of maturing between year one and two, but since they did the course over two years instead of one, they needed to have twice as many tests as the students in the general programmes. This was because they needed to have two tests per semester, as the teacher needed to have enough tests in order to grade the students properly. The general programmes students had four tests during the course, while the vocational programmes students had eight tests during the course. The number of teaching hours was the same for both groups, since one of the groups had five lessons a week over one year, and the other had two and three lessons over two years. The written tests lasted normally for two or three lessons, and the last test was a five-hour test that was a preparation for the exam.

It was hard for Maria to specify in detail how much time she spent on writing in class. When planning the English lessons, she included all the components of a language: writing, reading, listening, speaking, and watching. Variation was important. Writing was part of the plan and was often connected to other tasks, so there could be all sorts of written experiences.

Maria believed in putting things in context, so writing was always linked to both reading and understanding the different topics. One example was that she taught grammar and other aspects of the language in connection with the tests the students did. She gave them individual comments on their tests and when she handed the tests back, she gave them time to read and work with the comments directly afterwards. The students focused on particular problems, while she tried to show them individually what the comments meant and how to act according to them. She thought this was a good writing exercise because they received the feedback immediately after they had written the texts and could put the comments into a context straight away.

Maria also mentioned another way of practising exercising writing. That was done in a peer context; the students wrote about a topic and presented that topic to each other. Another

example was that the students were asked to write summaries of texts. The written tests were also part of training writing. The students were mostly asked to write in school.

The reason why Maria taught in the way she did was that she believed in variation. Both brief writing sessions like the ones mentioned above, and long writing sessions like the tests, were valuable. Another important aspect of teaching writing was individual guidance. It was important that the students focused on their own individual challenges, as grammar, vocabulary and spelling. It was also important to try to teach each of the students their own individual techniques. The students were different and used different methods to write texts. The best way of helping students to improve their writing was through individual guidance, so that they could follow the results from test to test, and also to encourage them when they developed their writing skills.

When she graded writing, Maria based the grade on both content and language, so the two counted the same amount towards the grade.

When asked why she gave feedback, Maria answered that there was a discussion on how much the teacher should correct or comment on. She herself commented on everything. But it was also important that the students did not lose courage, so she might follow up her comments with some points the students should focus on. It was important that the students set realistic goals to improve themselves. In the beginning of the year she commented on everything, and gave specific advice about a few aspects. When the students had managed those elements well, they could move on to other aspects of the texts. The comments were more specialized in the beginning of the year than in the end of the year. At the end of the year the comments were more general. Another important point was that it was important to be specific.

> If one only said 'language is good', that's too general and does not mean anything to people. I must tell them which areas they must focus on. In the beginning you can give specific examples but at the end of the year they know what you mean. I evaluate both language and contents so I split those in my feedback. Sometimes I go through the main findings in class after handing out the tests, commenting on the main trends and on the different tasks. But individual and detailed feedback is on the handouts. I comment in relation to the said expectations and achievements.

When asked about when she gave feedback to the students, Maria mentioned the time aspect again.

Process writing, there is no time for that, unfortunately. I think that would be a good way of working with writing and an encouraging way of working with writing. It could give the students a strong interest to develop. But it ends up with giving comments after they have written texts. It ends up giving most comments in connection with grading. I give both oral and written feedback, but one has the time aspect here again. But ideally I would do both. From time to time there is no room for the oral following up, but I try to focus on getting room for both. I think that's important. And it's also good for clearing of misunderstandings. '

The way Maria gave feedback in practice was that she gave the final comments and the grade digitally so that the students could save them and compare the comments for every test. This would give both the teacher and the student an overview of the tests and feedback connected to the texts. She printed out the texts and gave the specific feedback concerning elements in the texts by pen. After that she handed back the texts (with the feedback on) by hand and gave the final comments and grade digitally. When she handed the texts back to the students, she talked to each one of them about her corrections and comments. Sometimes she commented by giving the right suggestion/answer and other times she just underlined the word. She then followed this up individually, so that she was sure they understood what she meant.

One can't tell by looking at a paper what kind of grade it will be by looking at the number of comments, because strong students may need suggestions on how to put things, even though they do not make many mistakes. They may have as many comments as weaker students.

Maria was asked if the students gave feedback to each other. She had tried peer feedback in class. When this has been done, she said she needed to teach them how to do it: she needed to tell them that the comments must be constructive, and that they needed to find something that was good and give a constructive comment, and maybe also try to give the candidate an idea of what they should develop more. She and the teachers she worked with had also established a new tradition of student self-evaluation. She thought that it was a good way for the students to understand their own achievement and their own need to work with certain areas. She did not have time do to that every time, but she did it occasionally.

Ideally, Maria thought the best way of giving feedback was both written and oral. The written comments could be saved and they stayed there so that the teacher and the student could go back and see what the comments were in the beginning of the year. The best way was to give comments that could have a long-term effect. Maria added:

> It is also important to speak with people. The written comments are impersonal. The worst way of giving feedback is to just give general comments. That did not mean anything. The students need specific feedback so that they know what they have troubles with and where they should start.

Maria also felt that feedback affected learning when the students took it seriously and were interested in it. The teachers should try to put effort in giving it and try to individualize it.

When asked about what affected a teacher's choice of feedback methods, Maria answered that the number one factor was personality, followed by education, and then experience. She believed it was great when an English team consisted of many different people because they could enrich each other.

In her final comments, Maria said some teachers may link the rules to the mistakes and expect the students to learn the rules. She did not do that. She would do it in another way. She would personalize the feedback after handing out the texts. The last comment here was that there were hundreds of roads to Rome and this area had much to do with your personal experience, beliefs and education.

Interview with Paul

The second interview was conducted with Paul, a teacher who had been teaching English for six years in upper secondary school. Paul had a Masters degree in Literacy studies and one-year Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PPU). At the time of the interview he taught two vocational courses and one general course in English, all at VG1 level (first year of upper secondary school).

When asked about what training in teaching writing he received during his education, Paul said that while learning the process of writing himself, he learnt much. The expectations at university level were high and he learnt much when working with the MA thesis.

When asked about how important writing was in his courses, he answered:

I focus quite a lot on writing because students tend to struggle more with writing English than speaking English. Most of the students when they come here, and they're fifteen/sixteen, their oral English is usually quite good, of course that varies as well, but their level or written proficiency is not as good. So I tend to focus more on that than practising their oral speech.

During his lessons there were always written tasks and assignments, but he did not have many lessons where the students wrote full texts. Sometimes he asked them to write shorter texts that were related to the topic they had been working on. The longer texts were in connection with their tests where the students wrote everything from one to five pages. They had tests twice a semester, as mentioned in the previous interview. In between those tests, it was pretty rare that he asked them to write full texts. The reason was that if he did that, he felt that he needed to read the texts and comment on them, and it was hard to find the time to do that often. He rather asked them to write shorter texts in class, so that he could go around, read the texts, give individual comments and make sure they understood the tasks.

Paul had different focuses when teaching writing. He focused on the grammar that he thought the students needed to refresh, the style of writing (most importantly the difference between formal and informal English), the structure of the text, the process of writing and the use of sources. It was important that the students had the correct writing style when writing the various tasks, and that they knew how to write the different elements of a text, for example paragraphs, introduction and conclusion. It was also important for Paul to teach the students what to do during the writing process. He tried to tell them that they needed to focus on the content, structure and answering the topic question before they focused too much on the language. The use of sources was also important for Paul, that the students knew how to acknowledge other peoples' contribution and how to use proper citation methods.

He mentioned that he taught writing styles, and was asked to elaborate.

The textbook that they have has a writing course in it, a five part-writing course. This year I've made a new term plan which laid the foundation for the students to go through the entire course before the first formal evaluation, so that they kind of know all the expectations I have of them and the text that they write. So we work through register, linking strategies, paragraphs and sources from this writing course in their textbook before the first formal evaluation. So that I can give feedback on every evaluation that they have this year on all those important things.

Usually Paul has taught those five parts of the course at different times during the year. But he experienced that the last part of the writing course was just before the very final test, and the students only got one chance to practise the last elements of writing before they might be selected for the written exam. He thought it was better for the students to have more opportunities to practise all the different elements of the writing course.

Paul said that the challenges for the students when writing English varied. Some students had a limited understanding of English, a narrow vocabulary, and were struggling with many basic grammatical features of the language. Some students wrote in a very informal way, while other students struggled with knowing what a sentence was. Some students struggled with the structure of language, while other students struggled with the use of sources. Paul inferred that students struggled with everything.

Paul mentioned two factors when he was asked about the best way of helping students to improve their writing. One factor was reading. The students could learn much from reading, for example sentence structure and vocabulary. In Paul's classes the students read a novel in the beginning of the school year. A second factor to help students to improve their writing was the use of feedback; the students needed to use the feedback they were given. Paul expected them to use the feedback and contact him if there were anything they did not understand. There was a small percentage of students who did that. The students would ask in class, but there were only a handful of students who would set aside ten to fifteen minutes where they went through the text with him. Obviously this was complicated, because he wanted them to contact him and have meetings with him, but he did not have the time to do that with everyone. If he spent 10-15 minutes with every student in his spare time, it would eat into his other responsibilities. It was complex, and he was both grateful that they wanted to come for help, but also thankful that he got everything done. In other words, he wished that more students would come to him and ask for help, but at the same time he was glad that not every student did that, because that would leave him with less time for his other responsibilities as a teacher.

When asked about the progress that the students made throughout the course, Paul said that it varied. Feedback had played a positive part in improving writing skills for some, but not for all. Some were happy with their grade and did not bother to work with the feedback, while others felt that there was no need to improve because that would require too much work.

When asked why Paul gave feedback, he explained:

I give feedback almost exclusively just to show them how they can improve and how they can do better. That is the main focus when I sit down and write. I do write about what they have done, that's difficult to avoid, but I do tell them what they need to do to improve, this needs to be done different and etc. It is also to give them an indication of the level that they're at right now. I showed them a brief Power Point presentation explaining the purpose of my feedback the last time I gave them back their texts. The Power Point presentation said the grade given now reflects their competence in writing and in those four areas: content, language, structure and use of sources. I expect that their competence will improve at the next text and during this year, so I expect that the grade will improve as well, because I have the same standards throughout the year, it's not like I raise standards up towards the written exam. I have the standard from the beginning so that they can see, if they produce better, the marks that they get, improve or go up.

When Paul gave feedback, he most often read through the text and focused on what he considered was wrong, incorrect, or could have been improved. He wrote down all his thoughts and ideas of what could have been done to this text and what the students should focus on in future texts in order to produce clearer, more coherent writing, and answer the topic question better. Paul commented on basically everything. The exception was if a student received a grade that was close to a failing grade. Then he would just focus on some areas. He told all his students that one of the most important ways of improving writing was to learn from their mistakes. If Paul did not see any improvements with the texts from a student, he would sit down with the student and ask if he/she understood his feedback and if they were interested in improving. Most students were interested in improving, but not all of the students wanted to sit down and work with the texts. Some students would also associate the negative feedback on the writing with negative feedback on their personalities, when it was only feedback on what they had written. When he wrote feedback, he gave specific feedback in the text, where he highlighted positive elements or mistakes that needed to be fixed, such as structure or grammar. At the very end of the text he wrote end comments that focused on four criteria: content, language, structure and the use of sources. He did that for all the tests so that the students could go back and see if they had improved. Everything was done digitally.

In the year of the interview, Paul had started to use a second method of giving feedback and that was to require the students to read through his comments, correct all the

language-related errors and hand the texts in again. In this way, they were forced to read, understand and do something with the comments. He hoped that they could learn from their mistakes and thereby improve their writing skills. He also hoped that this would inspire them to produce as correct English as they could in the first hand- in, because if they did not do that in the first place, there was more they needed to fix afterwards.

Then Paul elaborated about the third method of giving feedback he hoped to try out that year. He was going to try something he did last year, and that was to take in the texts, read through them, set a grade and then hand them back with no corrections. The students' tasks then were to find all the mistakes in the text and to find the three most common mistakes they had made. Then the teacher had an individual five-minute talk with them afterwards. He would maybe hold the grade back until they had had that meeting and the students had proofread the text and corrected it. He gave his impression on the text as a whole and then he gave feedback orally to the student.

When asked why he used the different methods of giving feedback, Paul answered:

The second one where I expect them to fix the errors that I've highlighted for them, it's to get them to use the feedback. Because often when I've handed out a text to a student they'll sometimes ask me 'why was I given this grade?' Often when they're unhappy with the grade, and I ask them: 'well, what did my feedback say?' and they say 'well, I don't know'. So they haven't looked at their feedback and I've spent 20-30 minutes doing something that is pretty pointless. So I want them to use the feedback and to read through it and to understand it. The final one, where I don't give them any feedback until that oral conversation, it was done out of necessity one year. (…) I simply didn't have time to go through and correct every little thing, so in order to sort of get on top of the situation, I just handed them back and said that I'll give them feedback orally in a conversation. So that was kind of done out of necessity, something I figured could work. And actually it did. They did correct their mistakes. I asked them to set a grade for themselves, saying that their grade would not impact on my grade, but I mean how do they sort of see themselves. This is also a formal requirement, it's a competence aim, that they're supposed to be able to reflect over their writing and see their own sort of strengths and weaknesses. I kind of felt that I accomplished that by having this way of giving feedback, that they were supposed to sort of tell me what they thought of their own writing. And obviously the first one where I just correct everything and give back, that's pretty traditional.

Paul gave feedback on both language and contents, and he mostly gave feedback after the texts were finished. He gave feedback when they had written tasks in class, but he did not give feedback on their tests until they had been written. The reason for this was that it would perhaps be difficult for him to distinguish between giving feedback, helping the student and letting the student be author of that text. If he helped, he was afraid that the text would become his words and formulations, and not the student's. It was difficult for him to give superficial advice; if he was going to do something, he would do it wholeheartedly. He could not do that with thirty students in class and, if he did, the texts would not end up as the students' texts. He wanted them to be their texts to see what they had learned. Another reason why he did it that way was because of the situation for the written exam. He wanted the formal evaluation to be the same as the written exam.

Another topic that was covered during the interview was peer feedback. Paul had not created a program where the students gave each other feedback. Sometimes he created certain situations where students needed to expose their writing to their fellow students, but not in an organized peer feedback way. One of the reasons was that the students were not trained in doing that. Paul said that as the teacher, he should take responsibility for giving feedback and students should take responsibility for learning.

When asked about the best way of ideally giving feedback, the following scenario was portrayed:

I would probably say that if you sit down with the student for twenty minutes, thirty minutes and you have in front of you a text that both you as the teacher and the student have evaluated and read through and all the comments, the student's comments, my comments are there. And we can look through and talk about grammatical features, language, things related to the topic question, the content, the structure, style, sources. If you can have like an individual conversation with the student and the student is prepared for that discussion and motivated to learn and improve, that is in my mind probably the most efficient. Obviously it needs to be based on the written work, and my feedback needs to be there in writing as well because they need to remember what is said in that conversation. That can be difficult if we're talking for twenty, thirty minutes, to remember everything, so we need to have the feedback in writing as well. When they go back, well, if they go back and read the feedback, they might remember, it might trigger some memories from that

conversation (…). I think so, without having given it so much thought. Obviously, that is very time consuming so it's not something we can do, to sit down with a student thirty minutes is a bit of a luxury. I kind of wish we had time to do that, but well, there's a lot to do.

Paul said that feedback could affect learning in a positive way because the student could see that they have a lot of work to do. This can lead to that they see that they need to spend time wisely in class; learning new words, correcting grammar and paying attention to the topics so that they could answer the topic questions. When they saw that the teachers had spent a good deal of time and energy to give good feedback, they could feel that the teacher cared about their progress. Giving feedback could both improve and worsen a teacher-student relationship.

Paul thought that elements that affected a teacher's choice of feedback methods were time, motivation, the students' needs, competence and willingness to work.

Paul had not had a process-writing course yet, but he mentioned that he might want to give it a try. If the students got constant feedback on the text they were writing, they would produce a better product in the end and they would feel a stronger attachment to the text. It would not be something temporary, it would be something that the student would work on for so and so many weeks. The feedback could be used to improve the product while the students were making it.

Paul tried to have a kind of work- in-progress once. When a class had read a novel, they had been assigned homework for each week: write a paragraph about the author, about the plot, main character, etc. The idea was that the teacher would look at their texts in class and give them feedback, while they were working on something else, which happened to a very slight degree. It did not work out because the time he got to spend with each student was so little; he needed more time than he had.

Giving feedback to a work in progress took much time. The students needed to be working with something that took a great deal of time and if they worked with written texts for three lessons and did that every week, it created a very monotonous teaching experience with little variation. The reason why he had not done it since then was due to time constraints and that he learned that it was something that was very difficult to accomplish.

Interview with Sophie

The third teacher, Sophie, had been teaching English for about seven years at the time of the interview. She had a Masters degree in Literacy Studies and the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PPU). She was teaching the first year (VG1) in vocational studies at the time of the interview.

Writing was really important in Sophie's courses. The students spent about a third of her class time on writing in general. She was asked to describe how she taught writing, and she explained:

> Well, it depends. It is so different and you have to vary it. Sometimes you just throw them into it and just say 'here's a topic, give me something'. Or sometimes you have to really guide them and say 'now I want you to do this and now I want you to do this'. So it's individual. Both for the individual classes as well as the individual students. When you have a student there who doesn't know where to start, you have to spend more time with her, try to find words and find out how to put it together. It's so different with the different students. I can´t say that I teach writing this way, because in one class I teach writing in four different ways, pretty much.

The teaching in English was based on topics and the students wrote about those. Often the writing involved answering questions to see if they had understood the topic that had been focused on. Sophie tried to emphasise that the students needed to write in their own words and in full sentences. Not everyone could manage that, but she tried to get most of the students to do that. How often the students wrote complete texts depended on which class it was. Some classes could not do that in the beginning. They had at least two tests a semester. She also organized other hand-ins that she commented on, but those did not count towards the grade.

The reason why Sophie taught writing in so many different ways was that 'it works'. She explained that some of her colleagues were more focused on oral communication. She also encouraged that aspect of the language, but she thought it was important that the students learned how to express themselves in writing, especially if they were going to enter higher education.

The biggest challenge for the students in improving their writing was vocabulary, so the best way to help them to improve their writing was to improve their vocabulary. In order to improve that, Sophie emphasized and recommended reading more English in her classes.

The amount of progress the students made varied. It all depended on how much work they put in themselves. There was also a difference if the students were in the one-year course or the second-year course. The students were able to mature more over two years and had double the amount of tests. During the year of the interview, Sophie was going to be more thorough with the writing course, which was in the textbook and focused on different aspects of writing, such as paragraphs and linking words. She would try to go through the writing course over the year. She hoped to see more improvements that year.

As for feedback, Sophie had a talk with the students individually once a year. That was one way of giving feedback. During that conversation, they talked about, for example, the written tests, the class work, progress and if they did the homework. The reason why she gave feedback was that the students did know what to do next if they did not get any. It was important for Sophie that she gave the tests back in good time before the next test so that the students could have a look at what they did.

Sophie gave feedback mostly through the tests. She corrected them and summed everything up at the end. She tried to give direct feedback to what the students had produced. When they had informal hand-ins, she commented on the same elements, but she gave more general comments because she did not have time to give detailed feedback. She corrected everything in the texts in order to give the students a realistic picture. She needed to get the students to understand what was expected. She also showed them earlier texts that they worked on and talked about them so that they could see examples of texts written by others given certain grades.

Sophie gave feedback at different times, based on the different writing settings. On the tests, she gave post-product feedback. When they wrote in class Sophie gave feedback during the process; she walked around in class to see how they were doing, read what they were working on and gave them feedback to help them improve. The end line was the grade, and in order to get a good grade they needed to produce something on the test. She could not help during the tests, so she needed to them in the class.

Both oral and written feedback was used. She used oral feedback mostly in class and written feedback after tests. She elaborated:

> What I really would like to have time for when they get the texts back do is to take them in and talk about it. Because most of the time they look at the grade and close the page, so we do a lot of work that the students don't even look at.

Sophie had experienced that the high-performing students looked at the feedback, but the low-performing students did not. However, it was usually the low-performing students who needed the feedback most. She elaborated on the topic of feedback:

> Feedback is very, very important. If we had the time, I think it would work better. If we had time to sit down with each individual (…) several times during the semester and talk to them and talk about the writing. We don't have that much time.

The best way of giving feedback was one-to-one, in a way private tutoring. Oral feedback was important, but written feedback was also important, because then both the students and the teacher could go back and check. It was also important to support the written feedback with oral feedback, to make sure everything was understood and so that she and the students could solve possible misunderstandings.

The worst way of giving feedback was the opposite of the one mentioned above, in other words an impersonal relationship with only written comments. That approach could make the students feel that the teacher did not care. For Sophie, it was important to care and to have a personal relationship with the students.

Sophie believed that the main reason for a teacher's choice of feedback methods was individual preference. Sophie tried to be very specific when it came to what was wrong with the text and how the student could improve it. She was a direct person who wanted to give direct feedback. She occasionally tried out peer feedback, but the students were not very good at it. The students were often not capable of seeing if the text was good or bad and how to improve it. Sophie was not comfortable with the method and did not find it very efficient.

Sophie did not use process writing in English in a big manner. She used it on a small scale at school and as homework. She gave feedback and the students worked with it. She had tried to use process writing on a larger scale in the Norwegian subject, but it did not work. The problem was time. Last year she had 160 students and there was not enough time to work in this way. Some people got good results with process writing, but she did not have the capacity to implement this at a larger scale.

In her final comments, Sophie said that one could have many visions and thoughts on how to do things, but in the busy time schedule, it was not easy to try many new things.

5.3 Student texts

This section focuses on the student texts and examples of texts from students of the three teachers in the study will be provided. It is interesting to study the texts to see what kind of feedback that has been given and what significance the feedback has had for the writer. The three teachers (Paul, Maria and Sophie) all have different methods of giving feedback to English writing, and their three procedures will now be described.

In Paul's class the students hand in the texts at the end of the written test lessons, which last for two or three lessons. This procedure is the same in all the teachers' classes because it is something that is decided by the school. The school has decided that the students need to have at least two written tests per semester, in order to get a foundation for the grades they are given. Paul then gives feedback to each text digitally and hands them back to the students. He comments on specific parts of the texts, but he also gives a thorough summary of feedback at the end of each text. He also gives the grade at this stage. However, the students then need to use the feedback to make revisions and resubmit the texts to the teacher.

Parts of two of Paul's students' texts will now be illustrated. The complete texts can be found in Appendices 6,7,8,9,10 and11. The texts were randomly chosen and they happen to be texts of both a high achieving and a low achieving student. The texts were produced by first year students during their first test of the school year, in the autumn, and the topic of the texts was connected to the novel *Lord of the Flies*.

Student 1 was a high performing student and some sections from her text will be presented here. Full versions of the first hand-in, the text with the teacher's feedback and the revised text are in Appendices 6,7 and 8. One section of the text was written as follows in the first hand-in:

> The use of the words "outwitted" and "satisfying" tell us that the savage in Jack enjoys killing, and that the boy thinks he is smarter, and better, than the pig. This foreshadows the upcoming event about the killing of Simon, and it symbolizes the people in the world who think they know best.

In this section, Paul made these comments and changes:

The use of the words "outwitted" and "satisfying" tells us that the savagery in Jack enjoys killing, and that the boy thinks he is smarter, and better, than the pig. This foreshadows the upcoming event ~~about~~ <u>surrounding</u> the killing of Simon, and it symbolizes the people in the world who ~~think they know best~~ (comment: 'vague') <u>feel better than other groups of people</u>.

The revised section was then written like this:

The use of the words "outwitted" and "satisfying" tells us that the savagery in Jack enjoys killing, and that the boy thinks he is smarter, and better, than the pig. This foreshadows the upcoming event surrounding the killing of Simon, and it symbolizes the people in the world who feel better than other groups of people.

In the above section the changes were solely on the language. Paul made some changes and the student revised the section based on those changes.

A second section was as follows:

In this part of the book, most of the older boys have left Ralph for the sake of Jack. Everyone can relate to the feeling of loneliness and to be excluded, which feelings are not good. Ralph still wants to be a part of the crowd, but this leads him to be a part of the killing of Simon.

The comments made by Paul were:

In this part of the book, most of the older boys have left Ralph for the sake of Jack. Everyone can relate to the feeling of loneliness and to be excluded~~, which feelings are not good~~ (Comment: rephrase). Ralph still wants to be a part of the crowd, but this leads him to be a part of the killing of Simon. So what does this tell us about civilisation? Perhaps that it's fragile, unnatural, constructed and made up?

The student was asked to rephrase 'which feelings are not good' and chose to write:

In this part of the book, most of the older boys have left Ralph for the sake of Jack. Everyone can relate to the feeling of loneliness and to be excluded. These feelings do not feel good. Ralph still wants to be a part of the crowd, but this leads him to be a part of the killing of Simon.

The student rewrote the phrase where Paul asked her to do so and wrote: 'These feelings do not feel good' instead of 'which feelings are not good' (one sees that she used a whole new sentence instead of a relative clause). Paul also provided comments on the content, as shown here in the extract and also in the full texts in the extracts, but the student did not make any content changes. The changed elements were related to language. At the end of the text, the teacher gave feedback to four aspects of writing: language, contents, structure and sources:

Language:
Your English is generally quite good, and you are able to communicate clearly for the most part. Some sentences require restructuring, and there are a few grammatical mistakes here and there. On the whole though, your text is easy to read and you show a good command of English vocabulary, sentence structure and grammar. Great!

Content:
You show some genuine insight into the novel that you've read. You answer the task well! You do provide a little too much exposition and not enough discussion to warrant the highest mark. You do touch on some interesting ideas, but don't explore them as much as you could have. That being said, you wrote an interesting and enjoyable text!

Structure:
Your analysis contains an introduction, main section and conclusion. You are able to logically structure your text into separate paragraphs that deal with separate issues. Good.

Sources:
You understand how to cite sources, and you relate the cited passages to your own views in the text. Good. Don't forget to include your sources next time.

It was interesting to find out that the teacher provides end comments on all those four areas on all the written tests. This makes it easier for the students to see how they are developing and what they must focus on. It also provides the teacher with a structural way of comparing the different texts written by the same students.

The second text was written by a low performing student. There were many comments on style, language and content throughout this text, and some of them will be shown here. To see all of the comments, see Appendix 9,10 and 11. One example from the second student's text was that he wrote in the first hand-in:

If we take a look at the character Roger, I think he can make a good point of my view.

Paul asked the student to rephrase this sentence because it did not make any sense. The student wrote: 'The character Roger makes a good example'. This was an improvement. Another example of improved language was that the student first wrote:

They are standing on their own feet, without their parents so they want to have power.

After receiving the comment 'rephrase', the student wrote: 'The children are on their own, without their parents to help them'. The sentence was now clearer and easier to understand. Another section that was changed in this text was the following one:

In the worlds we are living in there are things that are needed more than anything, or things that means more than anything. Food, love, money or power… but what is it with this power that bind our mind? It seems that this "power" thing is some very heavy stuff…

Paul made the following comments:

'~~In the worlds we are living~~ (Comment: Avoid –ing form here) ~~in~~ there are things that are needed more than anything, or things that means (Comment: concord) more than anything. Food, love, money or power… but what is it with this power that bind (Comment: concord) our mind? It seems that this "power" (Comment: Do not use "air quotes" in formal texts) thing (Comment: Avoid) is some very ~~heavy stuff…~~ (Comment: informal. Rephrase)'

The resubmitted version of the text was as follows:

> 'We live in a world were there are things that are needed more than anything, or things that mean more than anything. Food, love, money or power… but what is it with this power that binds our mind? It seems that this power has a big influence.'

The student made many positive changes in this section. He used the feedback to make improvements of the text. The last sentence especially showed major improvement. The edited sentence: 'It seems that this power has a big influence' was clearer, more formal and more fluent than the original sentence: 'It seems that this "power" thing is some very heavy stuff…'

As seen here, the students in these examples correct the texts, at least in terms of the language. However, there were no examples of rewriting the content in the two texts that have been illustrated. The students focused most on editing their texts based on the feedback given on language. Paul mentioned in his interview that he did not require the students to actually revise the texts in terms of content. The main importance was the language and the errors made on form would be revised by the students.

The second teacher, Maria, also provided feedback to the students' written work. She printed out the texts and gave feedback to language by hand. In addition, she made an end comment digitally. Unfortunately, the feedback by hand was not possible to get a hold of, so the only feedback that can be illustrated is the comment made digitally, at the end of the text. The students in Maria's class were not required to hand in revised texts, so any changes they made were not possible to see in the texts.

There is an example of one of Maria's student's texts in Appendix 12. Her end comment was:

> You do an excellent job on part one and two, but include very little about history. Language is of high quality as usual, but take an extra look at my comments on verb conjugation and prepositions.

The third teacher, Sophie, also gave feedback on the students' written work. She gave feedback digitally, both the specific feedback in the text and the end comments. One example

text from one of Sophie's students can be found in Appendix 13. Sophie commented on language and contents, as in the following section from the text:

> 'Jean is one of the characters in <u>Crash</u>. She is the beautiful wife of the DA who is <s>going in</s> running for an election. They live in a big house and they have a perfect (How do you know that?) child living there with them.'

In this extract, Sophie provided feedback on different elements of the text. She commented on content by asking the student 'how do you know that?' with reference to the last sentence. She also gave attention to language by making an adjustment to the second sentence ('running for' instead of 'going in'). Feedback on formal requirements was also given, as the movie title 'Crash' was underlined. Her end comments were:

> You have written a good size text here. I can also tell that you have a fairly wide vocabulary. That is a great start ☺ Now we just have to work on fine tuning your writing. For instance: You see that I have commented several places on the authenticity of your statements. How do you know about the child, or that old people are racists? Make sure that when you state something like that, you back it up.
>
> You are also trying to deal with a lot of big issues in a fairly short text. That makes it difficult to keep focused. Try and sort out and cut down which issues you want to touch on. I think you will do even better if you shorten your sentences. It will make your text flow better and appear more professional. Good first test!

Her end comments focused on vocabulary, content, organization of the text and fluency, and not much on language. Language was mostly commented in the text itself, by comments and corrections and recommendations (see Appendix 13). Sophie's students did not need to hand in a revised text either, so changes are not possible to see and it is also not possible to know if the students actually made changes or not. The students received the grade simultaneously as they received the feedback, a factor that was the same for all three teachers.

Summing up, the teachers gave feedback in a fairly similar way. The biggest difference was that Paul got his students to write revisions of the texts based on his feedback. One could therefore say that Paul's feedback was a form of pre-product feedback while that of the other two teachers was post-product feedback. It is difficult to determine if the students made changes of the texts. The only students that one can be certain of did make changes,

were Paul's students. Sophie's and Maria's students may or may not have made changes, and one does not even know whether or not they have actually read the feedback. This indicates that feedback in itself does not automatically make students work with it, or even read it. However, the requirement of resubmitting revised texts may ensure this. This was also shown by Paul's students, as they were not required to revise their texts in terms of content. Probably because this was not required, they did not make any changes in relation to content, only changes based on form were found. It could have been interesting to see what would happen had the students needed to revise the content as well. Based on the findings in the student texts in the study, it would probably look somewhat different had it been required of them to revise their texts in terms of content as well.

6. Discussion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings presented in Chapter 5. First, the findings from the teacher interviews are discussed in section 6.2, with special attention to the teachers' experiences and beliefs. The main findings from the student questionnaires are then discussed in sections 6.3 and 6.4, where section 6.3 focuses on the experiences the students have with English writing and feedback and section 6.4 focuses on the students' attitudes towards the same two topics. The effects of feedback on writing are then considered in section 6.5. Finally, implications, recommendations and limitations of the study are discussed in sections 6.6 and 6.7.

6.2 The teachers' experiences and beliefs about English writing and feedback

The first research question addressed the practices and beliefs the teachers in the Norwegian upper secondary school had in connection with feedback to written English. This question was investigated by using semi-structured interviews with three teachers.

The teachers had similar approaches to writing. One of the teachers, Maria, said in her interview that the students mostly wrote texts and handed them in as a final product, and that most of the feedback she gave after the students had handed in the texts and the grades was given at the same time. The second teacher, Paul, did not have many, if any, lessons besides the tests, in which the students wrote complete texts. The texts that students wrote during the tests were commented on by him after they had handed in the final product. He also gave them grades at the same time as the feedback. After giving the students the feedback and the grades, Paul asked the students to revise the texts and hand them back in a second time. This concerned the two tests students had each semester. However, Paul did ask the students to write shorter texts in class and he would give feedback to them orally in class. The third teacher, Sophie, said that she organized hand-ins that she would comment on when finished, without giving grades. These were in addition to the tests, where she would give post-product

feedback, like the other teachers. During the text assignments in addition to the tests, Sophie did not have time to comment in as detailed a way as she did on the tests, but she gave more general feedback to these texts.

When the teachers were asked about process writing, only one of them had tried it out before, and none of them were practising it at the moment. Maria thought process writing would be a good tool for working with writing, but she believed that they did not have time to practise it. Sophie did not use process writing either, but used elements of the method in the students' schoolwork. She had attended a major process-writing course in the Norwegian subject once, but failed to make it work in practice because of the lack of time. Paul had tried process writing once before, but it did not work out because he did not have enough time for each individual student and found the method hard to implement. He also said that he might want to try it again at a later time because of the benefits of this method.

However, the benefits of process writing can be seen in the research. The focus on development as well as the product is positive, and the process approach encourages thinking, processing, reviewing and revising. Research has shown that the method can be a good tool for second language learners (e.g. Krapels 1990). This method of teaching writing also uses the principle of Vygotsky's (1978) 'Zone of Proximal Development', where the idea is for a child to be guided by a more skilled adult in order to develop learning (Vygotsky 1978). In this method, social contact is important and a valuable factor. Grabe and Kaplan (1996:49) also argue that this method is important in the development of writing. Because the teachers in this study did not make use of this method of teaching writing, their students are missing out on a valuable opportunity to develop their writing. For example, Chandler's (2003) study showed that the writing of students who revised their texts, improved over the semester.

Process writing has many stages, and the stages that this study is most concerned with are those of revision and editing. The reasons that the teachers involved in this study generally did not use this method of developing writing may be many and complex. One reason that was mentioned in the interviews was that the two tests per semester did not allow revisions after teacher feedback to take place since the tests were summative. Another reason was that the teachers did not have time to arrange process writing, with focus on revisions and editing, in addition to the tests. The marking of the tests and other responsibilities took up all their time.

One way of providing feedback is peer feedback. Maria had tried peer feedback in class, and when doing that she said that she needed to teach the students how to provide feedback. Paul had not used organized peer feedback in class, but some elements of peer

feedback had been used in his class. Paul said that the students were not trained to provide feedback in an efficient way, and that was the reason he avoided it. It is basically the teachers' responsibility to train the students in this method of feedback. The third teacher, Sophie, had occasionally tried peer feedback, but was not comfortable with the method because the students were not especially good at giving feedback to each other and because the method was ineffective. These findings show that most of the students were not used to peer feedback and the teachers were not comfortable with it either.

These findings can be seen in relation to previous research that claims that peer feedback does not have benefits because the students do not have the skills and experiences required for it to be beneficial (Miao et al. 2006:180). The teachers' comments that students need to be trained to do peer feedback in an effective way, support Raimes' (1983:148) point that students need to have clear instructions in order to provide good feedback. Paul's comment that teachers should concentrate on giving feedback and students should concentrate on learning supports earlier research by Connor and Asenavage (1994) and Paulus (1999), which claims that teacher feedback provides better results than peer feedback.

However, other research has shown that peer feedback can also have benefits. It can provide students with more feedback without the teacher having to spend more time on it (Miao et al. 2006), and can be a good tool for developing writing skills (Berg 1999; Villamil and De Guerrero 1998). Even though there may be positive traits of peer feedback, the teachers in this study did not seem to think the positive traits outweighed the negative ones, and therefore did not practise this method of feedback.

Another distinction is between oral and written feedback. The interviews with the teachers made it clear that the teachers valued both forms of feedback. Maria thought that feedback should ideally be given both orally and in writing. She gave comments orally and in writing in her classes as well; she gave the comments in writing and spent time on speaking with the students about her written comments. However, she also said that sometimes there was no time for oral feedback, so then only written feedback was given. Paul also gave both oral and written feedback. The ideal situation was to have 20 to 30 minutes with each student, where both the teacher and the student had evaluated and commented on the text before the meeting, and then to spend time talking about the text and the feedback. However, that would be very time consuming and a luxury that the teachers could not afford.

In his interview Paul described three methods of giving feedback: two of them contained only written feedback and the third method contained oral and written. Sophie had one conversation with the students a year and, besides that, she often used oral feedback in the

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classroom and written feedback after the tests the students wrote. What she ideally would do was to have time to talk to each student after each test to make sure they looked at and understood the feedback.

There are different advantages with oral and written feedback, and those advantages combined make the two together an effective way of giving feedback. Written feedback provides the students and the teachers with the advantage of going back and reading the comments later on. One advantage of oral feedback is that the teacher can make sure the students understand the feedback and the students can ask questions if there any misunderstandings. Based on the findings from the student questionnaires and the teacher interviews, it seems that even though the teachers valued both methods of feedback, the one that was mostly used was written feedback. All the teachers described time as the problem for not using oral feedback, and even though they ideally wanted to use both, that is not what they most often did in practice. The findings from the student questionnaires support this tendency.

These findings are not unexpected based on earlier research. Raimes (1983:145) claims that oral feedback is an effective way of giving feedback, but that it is very time consuming. An interesting point about written feedback is that it can also demand much time, but that teachers feel they have to provide written feedback because it will improve the writing of the students as well as justify the evaluation and grade (Leki 1990:57). Since both of these feedback forms demand so much time, one solution may be to shorten the time spent on written feedback in order to release more time for the oral form. This may be hard to accomplish in the everyday life of the classroom, but is a possibility for how to successfully combine the two ways of giving feedback, as the combination of the two is preferable (Bitchener et al. 2005:202).

The teachers gave feedback to both content and language. Maria did not say how much she gave feedback to each element, but that she evaluated both elements when grading, and that both counted towards the grade. Paul focused on four criteria when giving feedback: content, language, structure and the use of sources. Sophie did not mention what she did, but the student questionnaires suggest that feedback on both content and language was common with all three teachers.

6.3 The students' experiences with English writing and feedback

The second research question addressed the students' experiences with English writing and feedback. This research question was investigated by using student questionnaires.

The majority of the students claimed to receive feedback and grades on their written work one to three times a year. This claim is compatible with the teachers' answers in the interviews, where they reported that the students had two tests per semester. One can assume that grades were then given in connection with the tests, where the students wrote longer texts. When the students were asked about how often they wrote texts and received feedback without grades, their answers varied considerably. Because of the wide range of answers, it is difficult to determine what the practice actually was. The students might receive feedback without grades on their written works at different rates of frequency, depending on the different teachers. Alternatively, the students might receive feedback without grades at the same rate of frequency, but they might experience this feedback in different ways. For example, some students who felt they never got evaluation without grades, actually did. As explained earlier, some of the teachers gave feedback in class when the students wrote shorter texts and the students may have recalled this situation differently. Some may have included this situation in their questionnaire answers, while other students only answered with regard to the written tests they had twice a semester. Another possibility may be that the students did not write that often besides test situations, and some might not have known what to answer at all.

Most of the students had a similar approach to their writing; the majority of them worked alone with texts, without producing any drafts. A small proportion of the students produced drafts by themselves that they worked with on their own. Drafts and editing were clearly not common with these students, and most of them handed in the first text they wrote as the final product. There may be different reasons for this, but the most important one may be the teaching methods the teachers used; feedback was only given by the teachers after the final product had been read. Another reason might be that the students did not have time to revise their texts during the tests, since they only had two or three lessons at their disposal during the test time. The indications that most students did not revise their texts may suggest that they did not exploit their full potential of learning when composing texts. Both Chandler (2003) and Ashwell (2000) claim that feedback and self-editing have significant importance for the improvement of writing. Nunan (1999) states that there is a need for both process and product types of assessment, but in these classes it seems that product-based, summative

assessments were the types most used. One of the teachers mentioned that the two tests the students had each semester were meant to be summative, in other words measurements of learning in order to assign grades for the students. Another teacher, Paul, pointed out that he did not want the students to write long, full texts in addition to the formal tests, because he would not have time to comment on them as properly as he would want to do and did in the formal tests.

A small proportion of the students claimed that they wrote several drafts by themselves when producing a text. A study by Fathman and Whalley (1990) showed that revising without teacher's feedback could also have benefits. Improvements were found even though the students had not received teacher feedback. This shows that revising in itself is important, and that the process of drafting and revising that this small number of students experienced, was likely to be beneficial.

 Most of the students indicated that they received feedback. One out of four students received feedback before the texts were finished while over nine out of ten students received feedback after the texts were finished. It thus seems to be the case that post-product feedback was most common amongst these students. However, there are some negative traits concerning the timing of post-product feedback. When students receive the feedback at the same time as the grade, they are often interested in the grade, but not the feedback, especially if they are dissatisfied with the grade (Leki 1990:62). This means that teachers may have spent valuable time on feedback that the students never even looked at. Frankenberg-Garcia (1990:101) believes that pre-product feedback is important, in order to work with the writing challenges when the students are actually writing.

As confirmed in the teacher interviews, peer feedback was not common in this upper secondary school. Over half of the student body claimed that they did not practise this form of feedback, while only around one in ten of the students did.

Moreover, the students claimed to receive more written feedback than oral feedback. Almost all of the students indicated that they received written feedback, while six out of ten indicated that they received oral feedback. Even though the percentage was high on both accounts, it was highest concerning written feedback. This was also confirmed by the teachers in the interviews. The interviews indicated that the teachers did not provide much oral feedback.

6.4 The students' attitudes towards English writing and feedback

The third research question addressed the students' attitudes towards English writing and feedback. This research question was also investigated by using student questionnaires.

Almost all of the students agreed that it was important to develop the ability to write in English. However, roughly four out of ten did not like writing in English or were neutral to it. So even though many of the students did not like writing in English, most of them understood the importance of developing the ability to write. This suggests that there was a high level of motivation amongst the students concerning the ability to communicate in writing. It would have been interesting to ask the students to elaborate on why they were so motivated, but that was unfortunately a limitation of using questionnaires as opposed to interviews. Possible reasons for the high level of motivation could be the need to develop writing in order to receive a good grade in English, the importance of being able to communicate in English because of the Americanization of the Norwegian culture, or the need for being able to communicate in English later in life as students and career holders. This finding was unexpected as the expectation beforehand was that the level of motivation to communicate in writing would not be so high. This finding is very positive and can act as a good platform for the teaching of writing in English. When the students are so motivated to develop a skill, the teacher can spend time on other aspects of teaching English, instead of spending time on motivating the students.

Some of the students did not believe that their writing had improved this semester, and roughly four out ten answered neutrally to the statement concerning their improvement of writing. That so many students were neutral in answering this question or did not believe that their writing had improved could possibly indicate either that they were not so aware of how their writing may have improved or that they were not used to self-assessing their own writing. As the researcher was present in some of the classes when the questionnaires were handed out, it can be confirmed that some of the students did not understand this question or know what to answer. It seemed that they saw their improvement merely based on the grades they were given by the teacher. At the time when the students answered the questionnaires, some classes had not received their texts back with grades and comments. One possibility is that the students who had not yet received back texts, answered neutrally.

Most of the students were either happy or neutral about the help and practice they received in school in connection with writing. This indicates that even though some students might not realize that their writing had improved, or did not think that it had improved, they

were still satisfied with the help they received. Few of the students were dissatisfied with the teachers' practices connected to writing. This may indicate that both the students and the teachers had similar expectations towards the practices, which is positive. Hyland (2003:179) claims that it is important to have cohesion between students' and teachers' expectations.

When asked about their beliefs about the timing of the feedback, the majority of the students agreed that it was important to receive feedback both before and after the text was finished. Roughly six out of ten of the students agreed that feedback was important before the text was written and over nine out of ten of the students agreed that it was important after the text was finished. Even though more students believed that post-product was more important than pre-product feedback, these figures may indicate that students have those beliefs because they were the experiences they were used to. The feedback was generally given after a finished product by the teachers at the school involved in the study.

The students were asked in an open-ended question in the questionnaire about the best way to develop their writing in English, and one of the most mentioned comments was to practise writing English. More hand-ins and more writing were mentioned by the students. These answers may indicate that the students felt that there was not enough writing practice at school. Oral feedback, more time spent on feedback, revisions of the texts and to work with the feedback were points mentioned in this respect. These answers suggest that the students were aware of the positive effects of feedback. They might also indicate that the students wanted more time spent on feedback and working with it. It is interesting that making revisions was mentioned by some of the students although this was a practice that these students were generally not used to. Even though they did not experience the process of writing, the students may still see the importance of revisions and editing.

6.5 The effects of feedback

The fourth and final research question addresses how feedback influences the development of the students' writing. The method that was used to investigate this research question was a qualitative analysis of some student texts.

The three different teachers used many similar ways of giving feedback to the student texts, but, as shown in Chapter 5, there were some differences as well. Maria's comments were not available because she wrote them by pen on the texts that she handed back to the

students. The end comments were the only comments that were available. Maria commented on both content and language and advised the student to take a look at her comments on grammar. What is not known is if this student actually read the comments or not, which is difficult for the teacher to know as well. She may have been able to tell if the student had worked with the comments or not at the next test, but there was a large time span between the two tests. It requires a good deal of motivation of the student to study such comments and actually work with them when no deadline is given.

Sophie gave feedback and the grade electronically. By looking at her feedback, one can see that she gave feedback on both language and content. The same challenge in her case, as in Maria's, was that since the students were not asked to resubmit anything, it was difficult to know if the students had actually read the comments or worked with their problems. The teachers could, on the other hand, have spent time in class getting students to follow-up this in order to make sure the students worked with their most common mistakes. Vik (2013:26) argues that students should be given time in class to work with the feedback. This could be a good solution to the challenge of making the students work with their feedback.

The analysis of Paul's students' texts showed that the main comments were made on language, while some comments were given on content. If the students received feedback on content, they did not revise it, but only revised comments based on language and style. Possible reasons for this may be that the students were not required by the teacher to make changes to the content, but only the language, or that they were not motivated to make these changes. The texts that were handed in after the revisions had positive changes in them; the language was clearer, more correct and more fluent. This confirms earlier research (e.g. Ashwell 2000; Chandler 2003) that shows that the use of feedback has positive effects.

6.6 Implications and recommendations

The key findings in this study were that feedback was mostly given in writing and after a final product had been written, and that oral feedback, drafts, revisions, editing and pre-product feedback were not so common among the study group. In spite of the fact that this was the practice in this school, earlier research (e.g. Ashwell 2000; Chandler 2003) has shown that pre-product feedback, revisions and drafts are useful and beneficial in improving writing. The

teachers claimed that lack of time was the main reason why they were giving more post-product feedback than pre-product feedback, a finding that supports Vik's (2013) study.

Changes could be made to English in upper secondary school in order to give the teachers the opportunity to provide more feedback and more effective feedback. One possibility is that the education authorities provide more teaching time for English than what they have now. It seems as if the tests and other elements of English teaching, for example oral communication and gaining knowledge about the English-speaking world, take a good deal of the teachers' time. The challenge of providing the teachers with more time would be in deciding how this extra time would be spent. Teachers may choose to spend this time differently. One option would be to spend time on assessing writing and providing feedback to the students' writing. The extra time could also result in teachers developing new ways of giving feedback. If they give mostly post-product feedback to English writing because they do not have time to give pre-product feedback, and they choose this method of feedback because they feel pressured by time, extra time might allow them to work with and improve their methods of providing feedback.

Another possibility is that the tests should become more formative-based than summative-based. This could have been implemented in an organized way in the school. One of the schools in Vik's (2013) study had done this and had made changes to the assessment practices by using formative assessment.

This could have been done in the school represented in this thesis as well. One suggestion is that the two required tests per semester could be written over time as home assignments, instead of being written during three English lessons in a day. This would give the teachers the possibility to provide more pre-product feedback, as this would be a part of the assessment practice. One can infer that the practice of the school influences the choice of the teachers' feedback method. If the school opened up for more summative assessment, with pre-product feedback, the teachers' choices of feedback method would be influenced.

Another recommendation is for teachers to train students to give each other peer feedback. None of the teachers practised peer feedback in a major way. They said that one reason was because the students were not well enough trained in this area. If one could train the students to provide feedback to each other, this might be a way of releasing more time for the teachers to focus on other aspects of teaching. Some research has shown peer feedback to be effective (e.g. Berg 1999; Raimes 1983; Villamil and De Guerrero 1998). This could be a good tool for teachers to use. Peer feedback would give students more feedback, teachers more time and, if it is done well, it would increase the students' ability to evaluate texts and

provide feedback. This would not only be beneficial for the peers, but the students themselves would benefit from it, as they could then use the tools they have learnt to evaluate their own writing and realize what needs to be revised and edited. One of the arguments made by the teacher why peer feedback was not practised was that he wanted the tests to be as similar to the final exam as possible. This is a fair point, but the experience of peer feedback would provide students with tools to evaluate, revise and edit their texts on the day of the final exam. Research shows that self-editing can also give improvement of writing (Fathman and Whalley (1990).

In general the teachers said they needed more time to practise giving feedback the way they ideally would want to do and in ways that would benefit students' writing.

6.7 Limitations of the study

This study is limited as it is a case study of writing in one upper secondary school. The relatively small number of subjects makes it impossible to generalize about the complete population of teachers and students. However, there is also no reason to believe that the school was in any way unrepresentative of upper secondary schools in Norway. It thus provides some impressions of feedback to writing in a typical Norwegian upper secondary school. It also provides a similar picture to that of Vik (2013).

Some topics would have been interesting to ask the students to elaborate on, but that was not possible because of the chosen method, questionnaires. However, the findings of this study confirm those in Vik (2013), namely that the teachers in the studies focus on grades and summative feedback and do not always use the methods that are most beneficial for students' development in writing. Vik's study (2013) showed that teachers in the regular control group school emphasized giving grades to their students although they believed that formative assessment was a good practice. The current study and that of Vik (2013) gives a picture of reachers emphasising summative assessment in writing.

There are also limitations concerning the study of the student texts. They were snapshots of the students' writing at one point in time, not an overview of the development of their writing over time. To study the students' writing development over time would have been a different study, and something that could be done in the future. Even though they were

snapshots of the students' writing, it was interesting to see how students reacted to the teachers' feedback and how that improved the texts.

7. Conclusion

This study has investigated practices and beliefs about English writing and feedback in an upper secondary school in Norway. It has examined how teachers provide feedback to writing in English. It has also studied what experiences the students have with English writing and feedback to written English, in other words how they experience receiving feedback. The attitudes the students have towards these issues have also been investigated. In addition, the study has also explored how feedback influences the development of the students' writing.

This study was a case study that was based in one upper secondary school and was conducted with three teachers and 83 students. Three semi-structured teacher interviews, 83 student questionnaires and four analyses of student texts formed the data collection for the thesis. The method used was a combination of qualitative and quantitative research, thus making the study a mixed methods study, and thereby increasing its validity.

The interviews revealed that the teachers provided feedback in a fairly similar way. One difference was that one teacher required his students to revise their texts after they had received feedback, while the other two did not require this from their students. The teachers did not practise much process writing, writing texts in multiple drafts or peer feedback. Even though they saw benefits with process writing, they did not implement it, because of the lack of time and other organizational issues. The teachers gave both written and oral feedback, with most time spent on the written form. The teachers saw a combination of the two as the ideal way of providing feedback, and wished they could spend more time on oral feedback than what they did at the timing of the interview. This shows that the teachers did not always use the methods they thought were beneficial for the students, which was also the case in Vik's (2013) study.

The results from the questionnaires showed that the majority of the students had a similar way of producing texts: writing the text from start to beginning without drafts or feedback. The data from the questionnaires indicated that the students also had a similar experience about how often they received feedback and grades, while there were diverse answers on how often they received feedback without grades. Feedback was often received at the same timing as the grade, in order words the students received mainly post-product feedback. Some students also claimed to receive pre-product feedback. The students also

claimed to receive more written feedback than oral feedback. The importance of the ability to write in English was high, according to the students. Most of them were happy or neutral about the help and practice connected to writing they received in their school.

The ways that the teachers provided feedback did not illustrate the effects of feedback on a large scale. However, the texts from the students of the teacher who required the students to revise their texts gave some ideas on what the effects were. They showed that the students mostly worked with the comments that concerned language, and not content. The texts that were handed in after the revisions showed positive improvements and showed that feedback can make a difference in improving language.

This thesis has contributed to the research on English writing and feedback in second language education in Norway. It has given insight into how students and teachers in a regular upper secondary school experience English writing and feedback and what their attitudes are towards this topic. This thesis has shown that the teachers in the study felt they did not have enough time to give pre-product feedback, which a good deal of research (e.g. Ashwell 2000; Chandler 2003) shows is beneficial for the development of writing. The research has been conducted with a mixed method approach, which is different from most of the research approaching the topic of the perspectives of students, teachers and texts. The findings of the thesis also confirm earlier research done within the same field, but are at the same time unique in form in Norway.

What can be done in the future is a more longitudinal study of the effects of feedback, which was not possible in this study because of the lack of time and the scope of the study. It would have been interesting to see what effects the feedback gives to the improvements of the students' writing over time. It would also be interesting to implement some of the changes mentioned in sub-section 6.6, and see how those changes would change the effects of feedback and influence practices to do with feedback.

Another possible study to carry out in the future is a study where one could include several schools, and thus be able to interview teachers and have students from different schools answering questionnaires. One could gain more insight into the topic based on research in more schools and with more teachers and students. It could also be possible to carry out similar research in the field, but use different methods. Questionnaires could be used for both students and teachers, one could interview students and one could analyse more student texts.

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Appendices

Appendix 1
Teacher Interview Guide

Opening remarks

The purpose of the interview is to help me get information for my MA thesis in Literacy Studies at the University of Stavanger. The names of the teachers and the school will be kept anonymous. I will be taking notes and recording the interviews in order to keep track of the information and to make it easier for me to continue with the writing of the thesis afterwards. There is no contest or judging involved here. I am only interested in finding out how things really are and listening to your thoughts and experiences.

<u>**Background**</u>

How many years have you been teaching English?

What qualifications do you have in teaching English?

Which classes do you teach English?

<u>**Writing**</u>

How important is writing in your courses? How much time is spent on writing?

How do you teach writing?

Why do you it that particular way?

What kind of training have you had to teach writing in your teacher education?

How often do the students write texts?

What do you emphasize when grading their writing?

What are the biggest challenges for your students when writing?

What do you think is the best way of helping students to improve their writing?

How much progress do you feel students make with their writing during the course?

<u>**Feedback**</u>

Why do you give feedback?

How do you give feedback to students' writing?

Why do you do it in that particular way?

What do you emphasize most when giving feedback?

What does the feedback contain? (praise, criticism +++)

Do you give feedback on content, language or both?

How do you give feedback on content?

How do you give feedback on language?

When do you give feedback to students: before or after they have finished a piece of writing? Why?

Do you give oral or written feedback?

Do your pupils give feedback to each other? How?

What is the best way of giving feedback? Why?

What is the worst way of giving feedback?

Does feedback affect learning? What type of feedback has the most effect?

How does feedback influence the development of the students' writing?

What affects a teacher's choice of feedback methods?

Process Writing

Do you use process writing in English? Why/why not?

If you do, how do you put this into practice?

Final Comments

Would you like to add any final comments about the topic?

Appendix 2

Student questionnaire (translated version, the questionnaire was originally in Norwegian)

Questionnaire about writing in the English subject

This questionnaire is part of a research project at the University of Stavanger. Spend a good amount of time on reading the questions and statements and choose the alternative that best suits you. Thank you for taking time to fill out the questionnaire!

Boy □   Girl □

Class: _____

Part 1: Views on English and written English (Choose ONE alternative)

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1.1	I like the English subject	•	•	•	•	•
1.2	I like to write in English	•	•	•	•	•
1.3	I believe that my writing in English has improved this semester	•	•	•	•	•
1.4	I am pleased with the help I get to improve my writing in English	•	•	•	•	•
1.5	I think it is important to develop the ability to write in English	•	•	•	•	•
1.6	I receive enough writing practice in English at school	•	•	•	•	•

Part 2. Frequency of writing practices and written evaluations (Choose ONE alternative)

		Never	1-3 times a semester	Once a month	2-3 times a month	Once a week or more often
2.1	How often do you get evaluation on your writing in form of grades?	•	•	•	•	•
2.2	How often do you get evaluation on your writing without grades?	•	•	•	•	•
2.3	How often do you write texts in the English subject?	•	•	•	•	•
2.4	How often do you write those texts at school?	•	•	•	•	•
2.5	How often do you write those texts at home?	•	•	•	•	•
2.6	How often do you write articles?	•	•	•	•	•
2.7	How often do you write stories?	•	•	•	•	•
2.8	How often do you write summaries (of novels, movies, etc.)?	•	•	•	•	•
2.9	How often do you write texts in other genres?	•	•	•	•	•

2.10   **How do you work when you write texts? (Choose ONE alternative)**
□ I write drafts that the teacher gives feedback on

□ I work alone with drafts

□ I work alone with the text, without drafts

□ Other: _____

Part 3: Experiences with feedback on writing (Choose ONE alternative)

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
3.1	I receive feedback on what I write	•	•	•	•	•
3.2	I receive feedback on what I write before the text is finished	•	•	•	•	•
3.3	I receive feedback on what I write after the text is finished	•	•	•	•	•
3.4	I receive oral feedback on what I write	•	•	•	•	•
3.5	I receive written feedback on what I write	•	•	•	•	•
3.6	The students give feedback on each others' texts	•	•	•	•	•
3.7	I receive feedback on content	•	•	•	•	•
3.8	I receive feedback on language	•	•	•	•	•
3.9	I receive on the same level feedback on content and language	•	•	•	•	•
3.10	How does the teacher give feedback on language:					
	- The teacher corrects the errors	•	•	•	•	•
	- The teacher underlines the errors and I have to correct them	•	•	•	•	•
	- The teacher uses a marking code on the errors and I have to correct them	•	•	•	•	•
	- The teacher uses other methods	•	•	•	•	•
3.11	My teacher focuses on spelling errors when correcting my writing	•	•	•	•	•
3.12	My teacher focuses on grammatical errors when correcting my writing	•	•	•	•	•
3.13	My teacher focuses on precise formulations when correcting my writing	•	•	•	•	•
3.14	My teacher focuses on the use of paragraphs when correcting my writing	•	•	•	•	•

Part 4: Attitudes about feedback (Choose ONE alternative)

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
4.1	It is important to receive feedback on my writing	•	•	•	•	•
4.2	It is important to receive feedback on language	•	•	•	•	•
4.3	I value the way I receive feedback on language	•	•	•	•	•
4.4	It is important to receive feedback on content	•	•	•	•	•
4.5	It is important to receive feedback on content **before** the text is finished	•	•	•	•	•
4.6	It is important to receive feedback on language **before** the text is finished	•	•	•	•	•
4.7	It is important to receive feedback on content **after** the text is finished	•	•	•	•	•
4.8	It is important to receive feedback on language **after** the text is finished	•	•	•	•	•
4.9	I am pleased with the way we write texts	•	•	•	•	•
4.10	It is important to receive oral feedback on writing	•	•	•	•	•
4.11	It is important to receive written feedback on writing	•	•	•	•	•
4.12	The feedback I receive helps me to develop my writing	•	•	•	•	•

Part 5:

What do you think is the best way of developing writing in English?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Thank you!

Appendix 3

Information letter students

Forespørsel om deltakelse i forskningsprosjektet

"Skriving i engelskfaget ved norske videregående skoler."

Bakgrunn og formål
Jeg heter Elisabeth Nyvoll Bø, og er masterstudent ved Universitetet i Stavanger. Jeg ønsker å invitere deg med på et forskningsprosjekt som omhandler temaet skriving i engelskfaget på videregående skole. Formålet med prosjektet er å redegjøre for hvordan elever og lærere forholder til skriving i engelsk. Prosjektet er anonymt, det vil si at informasjon om deg og det du bidrar med, vil være fullstendig anonymt.

Hva innebærer deltakelse i studien?
Deltakelsen innebærer en spørreundersøkelse, og det vil også være en mulighet for at jeg studerer noen tekster til noen av elevene som er med. Spørsmålene vil handle om hvordan du forholder deg til skriving i engelskfaget, altså hvilke tanker, holdninger og erfaringer du har angående dette. Spørreundersøkelsene vil bli tatt vare på og analysert under arbeidet med masteroppgaven. Grunnen til det er for å sikre nøyaktigheten og hjelpe meg i det videre arbeidet med oppgaven.

Hva skjer med informasjonen om deg?
Alle personopplysninger vil bli behandlet konfidensielt, og prosjektet er meldt til Personvernombudet for forskning, Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS. Det er bare meg og min veileder som vil få tilgang på opplysningene om deg og ditt bidrag. Prosjektet er anonymt og ingen enkeltpersoner kan gjenkjennes i publikasjoner. Prosjektet skal etter planen avsluttes innen juni 2014, og alt datamateriale vil da bli slettet.

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 deg, vil alle opplysninger om deg bli anonymisert. Jeg håper likevel at du har en mulighet og et ønske om være med på dette prosjektet.

På forhånd takk for samarbeidet.

Med vennlig hilsen,

Elisabeth Nyvoll Bø, Masterstudent ved UiS

Samtykke til deltakelse i studien

Jeg har mottatt informasjon om studien, og er villig til å delta

----
(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

☐ *Jeg samtykker til å delta i spørreundersøkelsen.*
☐ *Jeg samtykker til at noen av mine tekster kan tas med i prosjektet.*

Appendix 4

Information letter teachers

<div align="center">

Forespørsel om deltakelse i forskningsprosjektet

"Skriving i engelskfaget ved norske videregående skoler"

</div>

Bakgrunn og formål
Jeg heter Elisabeth Nyvoll Bø, og er masterstudent ved Universitetet i Stavanger. Jeg ønsker å invitere deg med på et forskningsprosjekt som omhandler temaet skriving i engelskfaget på videregående skole. Formålet med prosjektet er å redegjøre for hvordan elever og lærere forholder til skriving i engelsk. Prosjektet er anonymt, det vil si at informasjon om deg og det du bidrar med, vil være fullstendig anonymt.

Hva innebærer deltakelse i studien?
Deltakelsen innebærer hovedsakelig et intervju, og det vil også være mulig at jeg studerer noen tekster til noen elever. Spørsmålene vil handle om hvordan du forholder deg til skriving i engelskfaget, altså hvilke tanker, holdninger og erfaringer du har angående dette. Det vil bli tatt notater og lydopptak av intervjuene, grunnen til det er for å sikre nøyaktigheten og hjelpe meg i det videre arbeidet med oppgaven.

Hva skjer med informasjonen om deg?
Alle personopplysninger vil bli behandlet konfidensielt, og prosjektet er godkjent av Personvernombudet for forskning, Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS. Det er bare meg og min veileder som vil få tilgang på opplysningene om deg og ditt bidrag. Prosjektet er anonymt og ingen enkeltpersoner kan gjenkjennes i publikasjoner. Prosjektet skal etter planen avsluttes innen juni 2014, og lydopptak og annet datamateriale vil da bli slettet.

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 deg, vil alle opplysninger om deg bli anonymisert. Jeg håper likevel at du har en mulighet og et ønske om være med på dette prosjektet.

På forhånd takk for samarbeidet.

Med vennlig hilsen,

Elisabeth Nyvoll Bø, Masterstudent ved UiS

Samtykke til deltakelse i studien

Jeg har mottatt informasjon om studien, og er villig til å delta

----
(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

☐ *Jeg samtykker til å delta i intervju*

Appendix 5

NSD approval letter

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS
NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES

Ion Drew
Institutt for kultur- og språkvitenskap Universitetet i Stavanger
Postboks 2557 Ullandhaug
4036 STAVANGER

Vår dato: 21.10.2013	Vår ref: 35699 / 2 / LMR	Deres dato:	Deres ref:

TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 30.09.2013. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

35699	*English language writing: A case study of the manner and effect of feedback in a Norwegian upper secondary school*
Behandlingsansvarlig	*Universitetet i Stavanger, ved institusjonens øverste leder*
Daglig ansvarlig	*Ion Drew*
Student	*Elisabeth Nyvoll Bø*

Etter gjennomgang av opplysninger gitt i meldeskjemaet og øvrig dokumentasjon, finner vi at prosjektet ikke medfører meldeplikt eller konsesjonsplikt etter personopplysningslovens §§ 31 og 33.

Dersom prosjektopplegget endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for vår vurdering, skal prosjektet meldes på nytt. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/meldeplikt/skjema.html.

Vedlagt følger vår begrunnelse for hvorfor prosjektet ikke er meldepliktig.

Vennlig hilsen

Vigdis Namtvedt Kvalheim

Linn-Merethe Rød

Kontaktperson: Linn-Merethe Rød tlf: 55 58 89 11
Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering
Kopi: Elisabeth Nyvoll Bø Sandeveien 33 4070 RANDABERG

Appendix 6

Paul's student 1, first draft

Savagery versus civilization

Lord of the Flies is a novel by the British author William Golding. He was born in 1911, and as a young adult in the 40´s, Golding served duty during World War II. This affected the way he wrote his novels. In this essay, we will focus on the symbolism behind the characters Jack and Ralph, made by Golding, in *Lord of the Flies*. The whole novel is an allegory, and each person or main object in the novel symbolizes something else. In the novel, we have two main characters named Ralph and Jack. They develop differently throughout the story, and they become the opposite of each other.

What does the character of Jack tells us about the idea of savagery? First of all, the reader sees Jack as the leader of the choir. He is well organized, and the born leader. However, he does not get chosen for leader. The reader understands through Golding´s way of expressing, that Jack would very gladly be a leader, and that he never really accepts the rules made by Ralph. Golding makes this clear through a dialogue between Ralph and Jack: "Why should choosing make any difference? Just giving orders that don´t make any sense" (…) "The rules!" shouted Ralph. "You´re breaking the rules!" Who cares?" (p.114, Golding). This quote represents Jack´s rebelliousness, and what Golding is trying to show the reader, is that in the world today, there are many wars that start with a simple rebellious action. This rebellious action leads to the breakout from the group, and Jack creates his own civilization, which is more of a savagery or dictatorship.

Secondly, the character of Jack thinks it is important to hunt, and to get meat. The first time he sees a pig, he does not manage to kill it. This action symbolizes that the civilization in him has not yet disappeared. Still, after just a short while, he kills a pig. Golding describes Jack´s feelings like this: "His mind was crowded with memories; memories of the knowledge that had come to them when they closed in on the struggling pig, knowledge that they had outwitted a living thing, imposed their will upon it, taken away its life like a long, satisfying drink." (p.88, Golding) The use of the words "outwitted" and "satisfying" tell us that the savage in Jack enjoys killing, and that the boy thinks he is smarter, and better, than the pig.

This foreshadows the upcoming event about the killing of Simon, and it symbolizes the people in the world who think they know best.

Finally, the reader observes how Jack becomes more and more of a savage throughout the story. In the beginning, he hunts, and is in charge of the choir. Gradually, Jack obtains more and more power, and he knows how to use it. He also paints his face, to look more like a savage. This action symbolizes the fact that Jack does not want to take blame for what he does. People in our world do not always want to take blame for their actions either, and then they dissociate themselves from the problem by hiding, or forgetting the case. Jack makes everyone else forget this by making them fear "the Beast", which is not really a physical monster, but the evil inside of them all. The character of Jack then becomes some kind of a dictator, because he rules and manipulates the rest of the group. In the last chapters, he is only mentioned as "the Chief". The Chief is a complete savage at the end of the story. What the reader can learn from this is that savagery can be developed, and is not something that exists in some people and not in others.

On the other hand of the story, we have Ralph. He can be compared with the civilization in the world today, but what does the character of Ralph *tell* us about the idea of civilization? Generally, the people living on earth today are civilized people, who follow the rules. People want to be good; they want to have order in their lives. The character of Ralph also wants order, as Golding shows the reader from the early beginning: "And another thing. We can´t have everybody talking at once. We´ll have to have `hands up´ like at school." (p.43, Golding)

One thing about civilization is that people have rules, but often it is hard to hold on to them. The reader of *Lord of the Flies* understands after a while that it is not always easy for the character of Ralph to be loyal to the rules. In chapter 9, Jack´s tribe dances a wild dance, and Ralph and his friend Piggy, "found themselves eager to take a place in this demented but partly secure society."(p.187) This speaks to the reader and says that even though people are civilized, they can also rebel, or do things as a cause of wanting to join the crowd. In this part of the book, most of the older boys have left Ralph for the sake of Jack. Everyone can relate to the feeling of loneliness and to be excluded, which feelings are not good. Ralph still wants to be a part of the crowd, but this leads him to be a part of the killing of Simon.

In the novel, Ralph is described as the protagonist, the "good guy". Still, the character is not only good, as the reader has seen. This is one of the main points of civilization, and human nature, which Golding really wants the reader to know. "Maybe it (the beast = evil) is inside of us," as Simon indicates on page 111. Therefore, the civilization in the world today does not always shows good behaviour. World War II, for instance, showed the world what man could do. Golding implies these thoughts in his novel to get the reader to understand the fact that during the war, such events as in the novel actually happened. Germans, normal people, had to be a part of the gruesome and cruel events, and some did not even know in the moment that what they did were wrong!

As a conclusion, Jack and Ralph represent the opposite form for a way of living. One can either live as a savage, do what one wants, or one can live in a civilized manner and follow the rules. Either way, there will always be a bit of both civilization and savagery in every human being. This is Golding´s point of view, and this is what he wanted to prove in *Lord of the Flies*.

Appendix 7

Paul's student 1, feedback text

Savagery versus civilization

Lord of the Flies is a novel by the British author William Golding. He was born in 1911, and as a young adult in the 40´s, Golding served ~~duty~~ during World War II. This affected the way he wrote his novels. In this essay, ~~we~~ (Comment: Avoid. Remove all traces of "we") the writer will focus on the symbolism behind the characters Jack and Ralph, ~~made by Golding, in *Lord of the Flies*.~~ The whole novel is an allegory, and each ~~person~~ character or main object in the novel symbolizes something else. In the novel, we have two main characters named Ralph and Jack. They develop differently throughout the story, and they become the opposite of each other.

What does the character of Jack tells us about the idea of savagery? First of all, the reader sees Jack as the leader of the choir. He is well organized, and ~~the~~ a born leader. However, he does not get chosen for leader. The reader understands through Golding´s ~~way of expressing~~ descriptions, that Jack would very gladly be a leader, and that he never really accepts the rules made by Ralph. Golding makes this clear through a dialogue between Ralph and Jack: "Why should choosing make any difference? Just giving orders that don´t make any sense" (…) "The rules!" shouted Ralph. "You´re breaking the rules!" Who cares?" (p.114, Golding). This ~~quote~~ dialogue represents Jack´s rebelliousness, and what Golding is trying to show the reader, is that in the world of his generation, ~~today~~ (Comment: Problematic. Golding is not alive today. Rephrase. E.g. "the world of his generation") there are many wars that start with a simple rebellious action. This rebellious action leads to the breakout from the group, and Jack creates his own civilization, which is more of a savagery or dictatorship. (Comment: Okay, but your comparison would make more sense if you focused on the need for power. Jack wants power, as do everyone else. Most conflicts have to do with the lust for power).

Secondly, the character of Jack thinks it is important to hunt, and to get meat. The first time he sees a pig, he ~~does not manage~~ cannot bring himself to kill it. This action symbolizes that the traces of civilization in him ha~~ves~~ not yet disappeared completely. Still, after just a short while, he kills a pig. Golding describes Jack´s feelings like this: "His mind was crowded with

memories; memories of the knowledge that had come to them when they closed in on the struggling pig, knowledge that they had outwitted a living thing, imposed their will upon it, taken away its life like a long, satisfying drink." (p.88, Golding) The use of the words "outwitted" and "satisfying" tells us that the savagery in Jack enjoys killing, and that the boy thinks he is smarter, and better, than the pig. This foreshadows the upcoming event ~~about~~ surrounding the killing of Simon, and it symbolizes the people in the world who feel better than other groups of people. ~~Who think they know best~~ (Comment: Vague)

Finally, the reader (Comment: Good!) observes how Jack becomes more and more of a savage throughout the story. In the beginning, he hunts, and is in charge of the choir. Gradually, Jack ~~obtains~~ seizes more and more power, and he knows how to use it. He also paints his face. ~~, to look more like a savage.~~ (Comment: This is not his intention, but our interpretation of it). This action symbolizes the fact that Jack does not want to take the blame for what he does. People in our world do not always want to take the blame for their actions either, and ~~then~~ they dissociate themselves from the problem by hiding, or forgetting the case. Jack makes everyone else forget this by making them fear "the Beast", which is not really a physical monster, but the evil inside of them all. The character of Jack then becomes some kind of a dictator, because he rules and manipulates the rest of the group. In the last chapters, he is only mentioned as "the Chief". The Chief (comment: what is the significance of this loss of identity?) is a complete savage at the end of the story. What the reader can learn from this is that savagery can be developed, and is not something that exists in some people and not in others. (Comment: This is quite interesting. You could have embellished on this idea much more!)

On the other hand of the story, we have Ralph. He can be ~~compared with the~~ seen as representing civilization in the world today, but what does the character of Ralph *tell* us about the idea of civilization? Generally, the people living on earth (comment: as opposed to what?) today are civilized people, who follow the rules. People generally want to be good; they want to have order in their lives. The character of Ralph also wants order, as Golding shows the reader from the early beginning: "And another thing. We can´t have everybody talking at once. We´ll have to have `hands up´ like at school." (p.43, Golding)

One thing about civilization is that people have rules, but often it is hard to hold on to them. The reader of *Lord of the Flies* understands after a while that it is not always easy for the

character of Ralph to be loyal to the rules. In chapter 9, Jack´s tribe dances a wild dance, and Ralph and his friend Piggy, "found themselves eager to take a place in this demented but partly secure society."(p.187) This speaks to the reader and says that even though people are civilized, they can also rebel, or do things as a cause of wanting to join the crowd. In this part of the book, most of the older boys have left Ralph for the sake of Jack. Everyone can relate to the feeling of loneliness and to be excluded, ~~which feelings are not~~ good (Comment: Rephrase). Ralph still wants to be a part of the crowd, but this leads him to be a part of the killing of Simon. (Comment: So what does this tell us about civilization? Perhaps that it's fragile, unnatural, constructed and made up?)

In the novel, Ralph is described as the protagonist, the "good guy". Still, the character is not only good, as the reader has seen. This is one of the main points of civilization, and human nature, which Golding really wants the reader to know. "Maybe it (the beast = evil) is inside of us," as Simon indicates on page 111. Therefore, the civilization in the world today does not always show~~s~~ good behaviour. World War II, for instance, showed the world what man could do. Golding implies these thoughts in his novel to get the reader to understand the fact that during the war, such events as in the novel actually happened. Germans, normal people, had to be a part of the gruesome and cruel events, and some did not even know in the moment that what they did were wrong! (Comment: Good!)

As a conclusion, Jack and Ralph represent ~~the~~ two opposite form~~s~~ for a way of living. One can either live as a savage, do what one wants, or one can live in a civilized manner and follow the rules. Either way, there will always be a bit of both civilization and savagery in every human being. This is Golding´s point of view, and this is what he wanted to prove in *Lord of the Flies*.

Language:
Your English is generally quite good, and you are able to communicate clearly for the most part. Some sentences require restructuring, and there are a few grammatical mistakes here and there. On the whole though, your text is easy to read and you show a good command of English vocabulary, sentence structure and grammar. Great!

Content:
You show some genuine insight into the novel that you've read. You answer the task well! You do provide a little too much exposition and not enough discussion to warrant the highest mark. You do touch on some interesting ideas, but don't explore them as much as you could have. That being said, you wrote an interesting and enjoyable text!

Appendix 8

Paul's student 1, revised text

Savagery versus civilization
Lord of the Flies is a novel by the British author William Golding. He was born in 1911, and as a young adult in the 40´s, Golding served during World War II. This affected the way he wrote his novels. In this essay, the writer will focus on the symbolism behind the characters Jack and Ralph, The whole novel is an allegory, and each character or main object in the novel symbolizes something else. In the novel, we have two main characters named Ralph and Jack. They develop differently throughout the story, and they become the opposite of each other.

What does the character of Jack tells us about the idea of savagery? First of all, the reader sees Jack as the leader of the choir. He is well organized, and a born leader. However, he does not get chosen for leader. The reader understands through Golding´s descriptions, that Jack would very gladly be a leader, and that he never really accepts the rules made by Ralph. Golding makes this clear through a dialogue between Ralph and Jack: "Why should choosing make any difference? Just giving orders that don´t make any sense" (…) "The rules!" shouted Ralph. "You´re breaking the rules!" Who cares?" (p.114, Golding). This dialogue represents Jack´s rebelliousness, and what Golding is trying to show the reader, is that in the world of his generation, there are many wars that start with a simple rebellious action. This rebellious action leads to the breakout from the group, and Jack creates his own civilization, which is more of a savagery or dictatorship. Okay, but your comparison would make more sense if you focussed on the need for power. Jack wants power, as do everyone else. Most conflicts have to do with the lust for power.

Secondly, the character of Jack thinks it is important to hunt, and to get meat. The first time he sees a pig, he cannot bring himself to kill it. This action symbolizes that the traces of civilization in him have not yet disappeared completely. Still, after just a short while, he kills a pig. Golding describes Jack´s feelings like this: "His mind was crowded with memories; memories of the knowledge that had come to them when they closed in on the struggling pig, knowledge that they had outwitted a living thing, imposed their will upon it, taken away its life like a long, satisfying drink." (p.88, Golding) The use of the words "outwitted" and

"satisfying" tells us that the savagery in Jack enjoys killing, and that the boy thinks he is smarter, and better, than the pig. This foreshadows the upcoming event surrounding the killing of Simon, and it symbolizes the people in the world who feel better than other groups of people.

Finally, the reader observes how Jack becomes more and more of a savage throughout the story. In the beginning, he hunts, and is in charge of the choir. Gradually, Jack seizes more and more power, and he knows how to use it. He also paints his face. This action symbolizes the fact that Jack does not want to take the blame for what he does. People in our world do not always want to take the blame for their actions either, and they dissociate themselves from the problem by hiding, or forgetting the case. Jack makes everyone else forget this by making them fear "the Beast", which is not really a physical monster, but the evil inside of them all. The character of Jack then becomes some kind of a dictator, because he rules and manipulates the rest of the group. In the last chapters, he is only mentioned as "the Chief". The Chief is a complete savage at the end of the story. What the reader can learn from this is that savagery can be developed, and is not something that exists in some people and not in others. This is quite interesting. You could have embellished on this idea much more!

On the other hand of the story, we have Ralph. He can be seen as representing civilization in the world today, but what does the character of Ralph *tell* us about the idea of civilization? Generally, the people living today are civilized people, who follow the rules. People generally want to be good; they want to have order in their lives. The character of Ralph also wants order, as Golding shows the reader from the early beginning: "And another thing. We can´t have everybody talking at once. We´ll have to have `hands up´ like at school." (p.43, Golding)

One thing about civilization is that people have rules, but often it is hard to hold on to them. The reader of *Lord of the Flies* understands after a while that it is not always easy for the character of Ralph to be loyal to the rules. In chapter 9, Jack´s tribe dances a wild dance, and Ralph and his friend Piggy, "found themselves eager to take a place in this demented but partly secure society."(p.187) This speaks to the reader and says that even though people are civilized, they can also rebel, or do things as a cause of wanting to join the crowd. In this part of the book, most of the older boys have left Ralph for the sake of Jack. Everyone can relate to the feeling of loneliness and to be excluded. These feelings do not feel good. Ralph still

wants to be a part of the crowd, but this leads him to be a part of the killing of Simon. So what does this tell us about civilisation? Perhaps that it's fragile, unnatural, constructed and made up?

In the novel, Ralph is described as the protagonist, the "good guy". Still, the character is not only good, as the reader has seen. This is one of the main points of civilization, and human nature, which Golding really wants the reader to know. "Maybe it (the beast = evil) is inside of us," as Simon indicates on page 111. Therefore, the civilization in the world today does not always show good behaviour. World War II, for instance, showed the world what man could do. Golding implies these thoughts in his novel to get the reader to understand the fact that during the war, such events as in the novel actually happened. Germans, normal people, had to be a part of the gruesome and cruel events, and some did not even know in the moment that what they did were wrong! Good!

As a conclusion, Jack and Ralph represent two opposite forms for a way of living. One can either live as a savage, do what one wants, or one can live in a civilized manner and follow the rules. Either way, there will always be a bit of both civilization and savagery in every human being. This is Golding´s point of view, and this is what he wanted to prove in *Lord of the Flies*.

Appendix 9

Paul's student 2, first draft

The power of symbols

As we may notice in "the Lord of the flies", the children reacts to curtain objects in the book. What does this mean? In the worlds we are living in there are things that are needed more than anything, or things that means more than anything. Food, love, money or power… but what is it with this power that bind our mind? It seems that this "power" thing is some very heavy stuff…

If we are going to look at this in the book, I think it is wise to submit what power is. Power can have many definitions, but in this case we are talking about the power that people wants. If I should describe power in one word it had to be "power", because power are one of the sources to many metaphors or symbols.

The first signs of power that we can see in the lord of the flies is the conch. The conch is the object that gathers the boys in the beginning of the story.

> *The lord of the flies, Ralph talking to Piggy p.22*
> "We can use this to call the others. Have a meeting. They'll come when they hear us."

This is what Ralph is telling Piggy after they find the conch. Later, all the kids are gathered in front of them. Here we can see that the conch has great power. Later we will see that it is decided that the one holding the conch will be the leader of the "tribe" until they are rescued. You can also see when Ralph is chosen to be the leader because he is an old good-looking guy and Jack the more bad guy starts a little fight between those two in the search of power. On this island without adults, the children are free to do whatever they want to. And when Jack, the guy that wants the power doesn't get it, he needs to take it. And as we can see in our world taking power is not a good idea. For example dictatorship. When Jack splits the group to make his own, where the rules are free, he is making a dictatorship. They need to do everything under his control. Jack wanted power, but couldn't get it, so he took it.

Power is a need of humans. We need power. We want power. To be stronger than other humans, and standing taller than other humans. I think this is one of the things that Golding

wants to tell us. That power can drive a man mad. You can get mentally ill by having a lot of power, and that is just what we can see in the lord of the flies. That is what William Golding wants to tell us. It is a jungle out there.

If we take a look at the character Roger, I think he can make a good point of my view.

In Jacks tribe Roger plays a central role. He is Jacks right hand and a close companion. He is a sadistic boy, that means that he likes others suffering. That is something that pleases him. During the book we can see that his respect to the civilized law is gone. He ignore all rules and plays his own game.

The first time he is combined with the word power is when he threw rocks towards the little boy. He doesn't hit the boy but he realises he can if he wants to. This later ends with Roger pushing a big rick towards Piggy. Piggy dies and the conch brakes with him.

Several characters use their independence as a power against the conch and all the rules. They are standing on their own feet, without their parents so they want to have power. This is showing us that the power of the conch is a majestic power. A power of being better than the other, the power of being more important and most important of all the power over all the children.

Another power that might differ to this is the lord of the flies. The sow's head.

The way that it turn their thoughts and drive them "mad" lies in their hearts.

One of the big meanings with this book is about the devil playing with their minds. So this kind of power is about each person.

The lord of the flies, the sow's head talking to Simon p.177

 "You knew, didn't you? I'm part of you? Close, close, close! I'm the reason why it's no go? Why things are what they are?"

This is more a mental power. The children are afraid. What are they afraid for? In the beginning of the book we can read that the children is afraid of something in the forest. But the real thing to be afraid of are themselves. I think the pig on the stack is a brilliant picture of this. They are so afraid for everything that when they try to talk to this "god" or "master" its really their consciousness talking to them, or the devil fooling with their heads if you are superstitious.

If I shall submit the power in the book I would say that there is a power outside (in the tribe) and a power inside (in their own minds). These types of power are different in the way that one of them it's the society who decides and the other is you. Everyday you will face power, and I think Golding is trying to tell us that we can choose what power that shall rule us. But that we still need to follow the law.

Source list

The Lord of the Flies by William Golding;
- *The lord of the flies, Ralph talking to Piggy p.22*
-*The lord of the flies, the sow's head talking to Simon p.177*

Sparknotes:
-http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/flies/
-http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/flies/summary.html
-http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/flies/themes.html
-http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/flies/characters.html

Youtube:
-http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-tXpA3dIEtI
-http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SGIoUuP2fAs

Appendix 10

Paul's student 2, feedback text

The power of symbols (Comment: Capitalise lexical words)

As we (Comment: Avoid) may noticed in "the Lord of the flies" (Comment: Remove inverted commas and italicize titles), the children reacts (Comment: concord) to curtain (Comment: spelling) objects in the book. What does this mean? In the worlds we are living (Comment: Avoid –ing form here) there are things that are needed more than anything, or things that means (Comment: concord) more than anything. Food, love, money or power… but what is it with this power that bind (comment: concord) our mind? It seems that this "power" (comment: do not use "air quotes" in formal texts) thing (comment: avoid) is some very heavy stuff (comment: informal. Rephrase)… (Comment: do not use ellipsis like this in formal genres). (Comment: Paragraph break? Is this an introduction? I still don't know what your text is about. Your style of writing is occasionally far too informal. When correcting your text, focus on style AND on removing all your concord mistakes. Remove all traces of "we", "you" and "I".)

If we are going to look at this in the book, I think it is wise to ~~submit~~ define what power is. Power can have many definitions, but in this case we are talking about the power that people wants. If I should describe power in one word it had to be "power", because power are (comment: concord) one of the sources to many metaphors or symbols (comment: this does not make any sense. Did you proofread this?) (comment: Why don't you use a definition of "power" here? Ordnett Pluss has many).

The first signs of power that we can see in the lord of the flies (comment: italicize the title and capitalize lexical words) is the conch. The conch is the object that gathers the boys in the beginning of the story.

The lord of the flies, Ralph talking to Piggy p.22
"We can use this to call the others. Have a meeting. They'll come when they hear us."
(Comment: this is a short quote. It should be included in the text and not as a separate paragraph)

This is what Ralph is telling Piggy after they find the conch. Later, all the kids are gathered in front of them. Here we can see that the conch has great power. Later we will see that it is decided that the one holding the conch will be the leader of the "tribe" until they are rescued. (Comment: The one who holds the conch has the right to speak. It doesn't mean he is the leader of the group)

You can also see when Ralph is chosen to be the leader because he is an old good-looking guy and Jack the more bad guy (comment: proofread) starts a little fight between those two in the search of power. On this island without adults, the children are free to do whatever they want to. ~~And~~ Also when Jack, the guy ~~that~~ who wants the power doesn't get it, he needs to take it. ~~And~~ Moreover, as we can see in our world taking power is not a good idea. For example dictatorship (comment: incomplete). When Jack splits the group to make his own, where the rules are free, he is making a dictatorship (comment: be more specific. What are "free rules"? A dictatorship is not void of rules!). They need to do everything under his control. Jack wanted power, but couldn't get it, so he took it.

Power is a need of humans (comment: rephrase). We need power. We want power. To be stronger than other humans, and standing taller than other humans (comment: incomplete). I think this is one of the things (comment: avoid) that Golding wants to tell us. That power can drive a man mad (comment: incomplete). You can get mentally ill by having a lot of power, and that is just what we can see in the lord of the flies. That is what William Golding wants to tell us. It is a jungle out there.

If we take a look at the character Roger, I think he can make a good point of my view (comment: rephrase. This doesn't mean anything).

In Jack´s tribe Roger plays a central role. He is Jacks right hand and a close companion. He is a sadistic boy, that means that he likes to see others suffering. That is something that pleases him. During the book we can see that his respect to the civilized law is gone (comment: it's not gone. It's gradually disappearing. Your language lacks nuance). He ignore (comment: concord) all rules and plays his own game. (comment: paragraph break?)

The first time he is combined with the word power (what are you actually trying to express here?) is when he threw (comment: tense issues. Stick to the same tense) rocks towards the little boy. He doesn't hit the boy but he realises he can if he wants to. This later ends with Roger pushing a big rick (comment: proofread) towards Piggy. Piggy dies and the conch brakes (comment: breaks) with him. (comment: breadk?)

Several characters use their independence as a power against the conch and all the rules. They are standing on their own feet, without their parents so they want to have power (comment: rephrase). This is showing us that the power of the conch is a majestic power. A power of being better than the other, the power of being more important and most important of all the power over all the children (comment: incomplete). (comment: your style of writing is occasionally very sloppy. You need to re-read what you've written and make sure you're actually communicating an idea. This is all very vague and incomprehensible).

Another power that might differ to this is the lord of the flies. The sow's head (comment: incomplete). (comment: break?)
The way that it turn (comment: concord) their thoughts and drive them "mad" lies in their hearts. (comment: break?)
One of the big meanings with this book is about the devil (comment: doesn't Golding argue that there is no beast/devil??) playing with their minds. So this kind of power is about each person.

The lord of the flies, the sow's head talking to Simon p.177
"You knew, didn't you? I'm part of you? Close, close, close! I'm the reason why it's no go? Why things are what they are?"

This is more a mental power. The children are afraid. What are they afraid for? In the beginning of the book we can read that the children ~~is~~ (comment: concord) afraid of something in the forest. ~~But~~ However, the real thing to be afraid of are themselves. I think the pig on the stack (comment: stake) is a brilliant picture of this. They are so afraid ~~for~~ of everything that when ~~they~~ Simon ~~try~~ tries to talk to this "god" or "master" it´s really ~~their~~ his consciousness talking to ~~them~~ him, ~~or the devil fooling with their heads if you are superstitious.~~

If I shall submit the power in the book (comment: what does this mean?) I would say that there is a power outside (in the tribe) and a power inside (in their own minds). These types of power are different in the way that one of them it's the society who decides and the other is you (comment: unclear). Everyday you will face power, and I think Golding is trying to tell us that we can choose what power that shall rule us. But that we still need to follow the law.

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- *The lord of the flies, the sow's head talking to Simon p.177*

Sparknotes:
- http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/flies/
- http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/flies/summary.html
- http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/flies/themes.html
- http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/flies/characters.html

Youtube:
- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-tXpA3dIEtI
- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SGIoUuP2fAs

Language:
Your English is somewhat decent, but there are some important elements of writing you need to focus on:
- Clarity – Write down your thoughts and try to communicate them as clearly as possible. There are many parts of this text I simply did not understand
- Grammar - You make a lot of grammatical mistakes (concord, verb tense, spelling errors, etc.) You need to work on your language
- Style – Your English writing is quite informal and "oral". Most of the text you will write this year will require a mastery of formal English.

Content:
You show some insight into the novel that you've read. Although you include some decent sections, others are underdeveloped and vague. I struggle finding the answer to the topic question: In what way is LotF a novel about power and the power of symbols? You present some examples of powerful symbols and what they symbolize, but you don't discuss how Golding's novel as a whole is about symbols and power. Also, this task uses only LotF as a starting point to a wider discussion of how people use symbols to control groups. There are many examples throughout history up until present of people using powerful symbols to control large groups of people. Your text feels a bit lacking and it doesn't seem like the potential of the topic question was realized in this text.

Structure:
Your analysis contains a vague introduction, a decent main section and an attempted conclusion. You need to learn how to indicate paragraph breaks and to remain consistent!

Sources:
You understand how to cite sources, and you relate the cited passages to your own views in the text. Good. There are however numerous paragraphs where citations would have improved your text.

Appendix 11

Paul's student 2, final text

The Power of Symbols

As may noticed in the Lord of the Flies, the children to certain objects in the book. What does this mean? We live in a world were there are things that are needed more than anything, or things that means more than anything. Food, love, money or power… but what is it with this power that binds our mind? It seems that this power has a big influence.

If we are going to look at this in the book, I think it is wise to define what power is. Power can have many definitions, but in this case we are talking about the power that people wants. The first signs of power that we can see in the Lord of the Flies is the conch. The conch is the object that gathers the boys in the beginning of the story.

The lord of the flies, Ralph talking to Piggy p.22
"We can use this to call the others. Have a meeting. They'll come when they hear us."

This is what Ralph is telling Piggy after they find the conch. Later, all the kids are gathered in front of them. Here we can see that the conch has great power. Later we will see that it is decided that the one holding the conch will be the leader of the "tribe" until they are rescued. You can also see when Ralph is chosen to be the leader because he is an old good-looking guy and Jack the bad guy starts a little fight between those two in the search of power. On this island without adults, the children are free to do whatever they want to. Also, when Jack, the guy who wants the power doesn't get it, he needs to take it. Moreover, as we can see in our world taking power is not a good idea. For example dictatorship. When Jack splits the group to make his own, where the rules are free, he is making a dictatorship. They need to do everything under his control. Jack wanted power, but couldn't get it, so he took it.

Power is a need of humans. We need power. We want power. To be stronger than other humans, and standing taller than other humans. I think this is one of the things that Golding wants to tell us. That power can drive a man mad. You can get mentally ill by having a lot of power, and that is just what we can see in the lord of the flies. That is what William Golding wants to tell us. It is a jungle out there.

The character Roger makes a good example.

In Jack's tribe Roger plays a central role. He is Jack's right hand and a close companion. He is a sadistic boy, that means that he likes to see others suffering. That is something that pleases him. During the book we can see that his respect to the civilized law is gone. He ignores all rules and plays his own game.

The first time he is combined with the word power is when he are throwing rocks towards the little boy. He doesn't hit the boy but he realises he can if he wants to. This later ends with Roger pushing a big rock towards Piggy. Piggy dies and the conch breakswith him.

Several characters use their independence as a power against the conch and all the rules. The children are on their own, without their parents to help them. This is showing us that the power of the conch is a majestic power. A power of being better than the other, the power of being more important and most important of all the power over all the children.

Another power that might differ to this is the lord of the flies. The sow's head.

The way that it turned their thoughts and drive them "mad" lies in their hearts.

One of the big meanings with this book is about the devil playing with their minds. So this kind of power is about each person.

The lord of the flies, the sow's head talking to Simon p.177

"You knew, didn't you? I'm part of you? Close, close, close! I'm the reason why it's no go? Why things are what they are?"

This is more a mental power. The children are afraid. What are they afraid for? In the beginning of the book we can read that the children are afraid of something in the forest. However, the real thing to be afraid of are themselves. I think the pig on the stake is a brilliant picture of this. They are so afraid of everything that when Simon tries to talk to this "god" or "master" it's really his consciousness talking to him.

If I shall submit the power in the book I would say that there is a power outside (in the tribe) and a power inside (in their own minds). These types of power are different in the way that one of them it's the society who decides and the other is you. Everyday you will face power, and I think Golding is trying to tell us that we can choose what power that shall rule us. But that we still need to follow the law.

Source list

The Lord of the Flies by William Golding;
- *The lord of the flies, Ralph talking to Piggy p.22*
- *The lord of the flies, the sow's head talking to Simon p.177*

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Appendix 12

Maria's student

Tony's story essay

Leslie Marmon Silko is a writer of Native American ancestry, born in 1948. She grew up in New Mexico in a Pueblo reservation. Here she learned about old legends and myths that had been told from one generation to the next. This is a very important backdrop for her novels, short stories and poetry. Her first novel Ceremony made her the first Native American woman novelist.

It's San Lorenzo's Day, a festival which all the people in the pueblo, a Native American reservation celebrates. The next day they have a spiritual Corn Dance to help the corn grow. Tony meets his old friend Leon, who just came back from the army. Leon drinks when they met, but that's forbidden in the pueblo. Suddenly a state cop run towards them and punches Leon right in his face. Leon falls down to the ground with some broken teeth and blood all over him.

Leon becomes better, but he's very bitter. He wants to take revenge. Tony, Leon and the cop meet again at the highway. Tony seems nervous, but Leon isn't scared so he talked for both of them. The cop is sceptical because he doesn't like Indians, but he let them go and they drives safely back to the pueblo. Tony dreams about the cop and that he points against him with a human bone. The cop is also wearing a black mask and reminds Tony about the evil spirits the old Teofilo had told him.

Tony and Leon drive to the highway again, and they have a gun in their car to protection. Not surprisingly they meet the cop again, but this time the cop moved towards them pointing with his stick –like in Tony's dream- and Tony understands it all. He takes the gun and shoot the state cop. Leon is in shock, but Tony says it was necessary. He meant the cop actually were the evil spirits from his dreams. At the end it's starting to rain.

The theme in this story is suppression and doubt. The state cop was really rude and violent against the Indians. He said he didn't like Indians, but he didn't have any good reason. That tells us how awful the white people behaved against Indians. The message of this story is that it's hard to understand each other. It also tells us that the whites suppress the Indian still.

Tony was more spiritual than Leon, and this story shows us that Tony is right. That he killed the cop was good for them, because they got rain. It was a terrible dry summer, so rain

was exactly what they needed. When Leon screamed to Tony after he killed the cop, Tony answers quietly and the story ends like this:

> *"Don't worry, everything is O.K. now, Leon. It's killed. They sometimes take on strange forms." The tumbleweeds around the car caught fire, and little heatwaves shimmered up towards the sky; in the west, rain clouds were gathering…*

The Native Americans was very vulnerable, and this story shows us that even in the late 20s century, they have been suppressed. They have always been a spiritual people, and in this story the author writes about the difference between the white's "realism" and the Indians spiritual ways to think about life.

Sources:

Tony's story

Understanding Tony's story, Cappelen Damm

Comment:

You do an excellent job on part one and two, but include very little about history.

Language is of high quality as usual, but take an extra look at my comments on verb conjugation and prepositions.

Appendix 13

Sophie's student

Racism

Racism is a belief that a certain person is less worthy than another, because of the way they look and the color of their skin and birthplace. People that are racists stereotype people. They think that just because of their looks, they assume they act a certain way. Such as the Americans when they imported African slaves into America. They treated them like dirt on the ground. Using violence, sexual harassment and rape as a weapon. As well as guns, knifes and axes. (….. yes? These sentences are not finished or complete.). By harming, spitting and cursing at the Africans they felt less worthy (who did? The Americans or the Africans?). With strong forces not many had the guts to stand up for themselves, but those who did got beaten back down again.

We still have racism today. The movie crash (*Chrash)* is a great example about racism today in our society. Other well-known racist movies are American History X, Hotel Rwanda and Green Mile.

Jean Cabot

Jean is one of the characters in Crash. She is the beautiful wife of the DA who is going in running for an election. They live in a big house and they have a perfect (How do you know that?) child living there with them. One night when they're in town, they get attacked by two colored people and get their car stolen. It gets chaotic when they arrive back home. With a hurry they change all the locks in the house. Jean gets mad at her husband because she wants the locks changed again the next morning because the locksmith is a Mexican.

The reason why I mean think Jean is a racist is because she is afraid. She says it herself that she doesn't mean to, but cant obviously can't help it. The first time we saw her in the movie she was having a good time laughing at her husband. As soon as she sees two black colored people on the street, she becomes silent and gets closer under her husbands jacket. (huddles closer to her husband) This creates attention for the two black guys, and they attack. Jean gets all sad and scared. She explains later to her husband that she didn't mean to show herself

frightened over the black guys. But that she couldn't do anything about it and that she didn't mean for it to happen.

The next thing that shows she is a clear racist is when the locksmith is there to change the locks. With his bald ~~hair~~ head and tattoos, she stereotypes him as a prison bird. She assumes that he when he is done with changing their locks, he will sell the keys in the black marked. Jean gets scared and wants the locks changed next thing in the morning.

Multi-cultural society
A multi-cultural society is a society that <u>collects </u>different types of cultures. One great example for this is the melting pot USA. During the immigration years from 1800, many people immigrated to America. Here they escaped from political and religious oppression and poverty. They had the opportunity to start life all over again. With cheap land they were equal ~~as~~ to others. It was up to them what they made of life now.

Racism has a long history. The slaves weren't the first to notice violent treatment. When the Spanish and Englishmen settled in America, the native tribe was driven off their territory and placed into smaller areas ~~landmarks~~. <u>The first time something really big happened in the American history</u> (I can think of quite a few other "big" events in US history before then. ☺) which may have changed many people's lives, was when Barack Obama was elected to be president of USA. To have a colored person which has that much power, must have changed some racist opinions. Because he clearly made some good differences, he wouldn't have gotten a Noble's peace price if he didn't.

To get rid of racism will take a lot of time, and maybe it will never go away. To do something is better than to do nothing. What we can start ~~with to~~ preventing it ~~is to start learning~~ by teaching children at school that each individual is different, no matter color, looks or birthplace. Old people ~~attend~~ to be very racist (What do you base this assumption on?). There is not a lot to do about them, that's why we have to prevent the young ones to become like them. In first grade I think there should be at least one colored kid in each class if it's possible. Then maybe the other children in the class will get a better relation to the colored. Here in Norway we have many immigrants, but still I feel like there is a lot of racism here. I almost constantly hear that we have enough immigrants here and that we should stop having more. It is good to have different cultures in a country, an even better that we learn about

religions at school. To make racism go away every individual has to make an difference in their life.

Sources

http://archive.adl.org/hate-patrol/racism.asp

http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0375679/fullcredits?ref_=tt_cl_sm#cast

http://www.imdb.com/character/ch0003432/bio

http://no.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barack_Obama

You have written a good size text here. I can also tell that you have a fairly wide vocabulary. That is a great start ☺ Now we just have to work on fine tuning your writing. For instance: You see that I have commented several places on the authenticity of your statements. How do you know about the child, or that old people are racists? Make sure that when you state something like that, you back it up.

You are also trying to deal with a lot of big issues in a fairly short text. That makes it difficult to keep focused. Try and sort out and cut down which issues you want to touch on. I think you will do even better if you shorten your sentences. It will make your text flow better and appear more professional.
Good first test!